

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

Intentional Discipleship: Effective Disciple-Making for Church Growth in Liberia

A Thesis Project Submitted to
the Faculty of School of Divinity
In fulfillment of the requirements for the completion of
the Doctor of Ministry Degree

Department of Christian Leadership and Church Ministries

by
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Lynchburg, Virginia

December 2020

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It becomes essential to this researcher to add the page of acknowledgments to this doctoral thesis project. First and foremost, I appreciate and acknowledge the Almighty God's guidance and strength for taking me through the thesis project. Without the Lord, I would not have been able to complete this research project. I wish to express thanks and appreciation to my mentor, Dr. Jason R. Whitehurst, for his tireless effort to encourage me; his timely critiques and suggestions were constructive. I also thank Dr. Jason Whitehurst for his prayerful support during the process. I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to my family for standing by me during the entire research and writing process. I also acknowledge Rev. Dr. Paul T. Payway for his constant check on me during the process. I also wish to express my thanks to Dr. James Christopher Wreh, whose encouragement I enjoyed as well. I also want to express my appreciation and gratitude to Rev. Dr. Jerome A. Newman, Sr. for being my prayer partner in every step of the doctoral thesis project. I also thank him for his much-needed critique and encouragement. Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank all of my instructors at the Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary for helping to prepare me on this path of propagating the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. May God continue to bless Liberty University as they champion the cause of Christ.

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP: EFFECTIVE DISCIPLE-MAKING FOR CHURCH GROWTH IN LIBERIA

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Liberty University School of Divinity, 2020

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Pastors of extremely effective disciple-making churches are conscious of the degree of church efficiency, and they recognize the significance of intentional discipleship for church growth. The purpose of this study is to investigate intentional discipleship for church growth in Liberia. An anonymous research study of 12 pastors and church leaders (evangelists) from Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) in Kakata, Liberia, West Africa, was conducted to explore why Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) in Liberia is struggling to grow their church numerically and spiritually. The study found that the Ministry does not have adequate and systematic training on intentional discipleship for the church's spiritual growth. Moreover, the Ministry needs to shift focus to qualitative growth rather than quantitative church growth. The study concludes that Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) in Liberia needs to teach its members Christ-oriented values for spiritual growth rather than cultural values; hence, the ministry needs to focus on people-driven activities rather than evangelistic programs. Some key terms to look out for in this thesis are discipleship, evangelism, intentional discipleship, church growth, qualitative, and quantitative, etc.

Thesis project abstract length: 178 words

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Pastors of highly successful disciple-making churches are aware of church productivity; they recognize that disciple-making is a process, not a program; it is about building people, not creating methods and systems.¹ Discipleship occurs when there is an intentional and strategic thrust to facilitate spiritual maturity; as such, local churches must have a ministry philosophy that emphasizes the significance of discipleship and promotes a process for facilitating such maturity.² However, the process will not occur without leadership from the senior pastor.³

According to George Barna, “churches work hard at trying to expand and strengthen the kingdom of God with all types of creative and life-affecting ministries.”⁴ Hence, thousands of churches are fine-tuning their worship services to make them more attractive and compelling to worshippers. The average church labors to integrate numerous programs to influence people’s thinking and behavior.⁵ Discipleship is not merely a matter of information remembered; it is about a lifestyle of absolute abandonment to loving God and obeying God’s commands.⁶ Unfortunately, discipleship has been smothered by the American dream’s quest that real discipleship is often viewed as radical and unrealistic.⁷

¹ George Barna, *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001), 127.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Dave Earley & Rod Dempsey. *Disciple Making Is....How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence*. (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2013), 51.

⁷ Ibid.

Jesus expects all Christians to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Disciple-making is not optional because the Christian faith's viability intimately depends on one's engagement in discipleship. Furthermore, Jesus spent three years modeling the discipleship process, and the strength and influence of the church are wholly dependent upon its commitment to true discipleship.⁸ Thus, African Christianity, particularly Liberia, needs pastors who will play that leadership role in preparing committed followers to become disciples of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

George Barna asserts that the marks of a true disciple are simple:⁹

1. Disciples experience a change future through their acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and the Christian faith as their defining philosophy of life.
2. Disciple undergo a change lifestyle that is manifested through Christ-oriented values, goals, perspectives, activities, and relationships
3. Disciples mature into a changed worldview, attributable to a deeper comprehension of the true meaning and impact of Christianity. Truth becomes an entirely God-driven reality to a disciple. Pursuing the truths of God becomes the disciple's life-long quest.

It can be so frustrating when the church does not meet its goal to grow spiritually and numerically by reaching out to others. Imagine doing everything to launch into the deep through an aggressive line of evangelism with the mind that new members and lost souls won for the Lord Jesus would stay and grow in the church but to no avail. Many people came and left the church without ever becoming true disciples of Jesus Christ. The pastors and church leaders need to determine why these people are leaving the church.

⁸ Barna, *True Disciples*, 127.

⁹ Ibid., 27-28.

Effective discipleship begins with active evangelism.¹⁰ According to Dave Earley and David Wheeler, “evangelism is not a choice but it is a biblical command; Jesus says in Acts 1:8: ‘But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth...’”¹¹ Thus, “the phrase, ‘*and you shall be witnesses*,’ in Acts 1:8 is written as a direct command of Jesus Christ.”¹²

Just passing on information is not evangelism because there are hundreds of ways to share Christ with an unbeliever effectively.¹³ However, evangelism is also not only sharing the right biblical information; always remember that the aforesaid is validated to the world through a consistent testimony of a changed life.¹⁴ Evangelism is also not listed as a spiritual gift in Scripture; the call to evangelism is meant for the entire church.¹⁵ Moreover, evangelism is not just something you do; evangelism must never be minimized to something you perform as a duty to God.¹⁶ In short, evangelism is the essence of who you are as you walk through daily life.¹⁷

Many Christians may think evangelism competes with discipleship. People often minimize evangelism saying, ‘I am a disciple-maker, not an evangelist.’¹⁸

¹⁰ Dave Earley and David Wheeler. *Evangelism Is...: How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence*. (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing), 2010, v-ix.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

The truth is evangelism and discipleship are uniquely depending on each other.¹⁹ While intentional evangelism leads to spiritual conversion, the process is not complete until one is being discipled.²⁰ Based on one's personality, evangelism, as a biblical command, is to be fulfilled by all types of people and characters.²¹

Evangelism is not the same as 'missions.' Evangelism is the passionate proclamation of the gospel's message, and missions is a transcultural enterprise in which the gospel message is taken into another culture.²² The key to effective evangelism is a well-prepared, obedient, loving, and humble heart for God (Peter 5:6).²³ While appropriate fear is rational in certain situations, fear should not apply to the task of evangelism (2 Tim. 1:7-8).²⁴

Some people try to use theological constructs to ignore the Great Commission; in short, theology without evangelism is not Christian theology at all.²⁵ Nothing is more important in church leadership than developing true disciples of Christ.²⁶ Hence, Christian leaders need to get involved in intentional disciple-making because churches urgently need leaders who understand the importance of intentional discipleship.²⁷

¹⁹ Earley and Wheeler. *Evangelism Is*, viii.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

Dave Earley and David Wheeler assert that evangelism is:²⁸ One, telling your friends what great things the Lord has done for you and how he had compassion for you. Two, give your testimony. Three, share your salvation story to build a relationship bridge of understanding that Jesus can walk across into the heart of the lost person. Four, being a witness, not arguing the case, proving the truth, or pressing for a verdict as much as simply reporting what happened to you.

The completion of the evangelism process is to develop faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. A true disciple is also a leader. The pastor and other church leaders must be disciples of Christ if they are to succeed in making disciples that will last in the church's ministry. There must not be any uncertainty that the assets, role, and character of a Christian leader in ministry are essential to any discussion involving Christian leadership. Because ministry leaders are very much called to equipping saints and workers in the church, it is important to accept or acknowledge that the equipping work must involve intentional attention to the Holy Spirit's assets and work in the lives of every believer.²⁹ There is no genuine holistic conversation on discipleship without being in one accord with the good news (gospel) of the Lord Jesus. Discipleship is not only an essential mandate of the Lord where lost souls are won for Him but is also a journey towards a flourishing life and the joy that comes with it for every believer that participate in the process.³⁰

²⁸ Earley and Wheeler. *Evangelism Is*, 250

²⁹ Lemke, Dale L. "A Philosophy of Disciple-Centered Leadership." *Christian Education Journal* 14, no. 2 (Fall, 2017): 270.

³⁰ Niemandt, C. J. P. "Rediscovering Joy in Costly and Radical Discipleship in Mission." *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72, no. 4 (2016): 1.

Effective disciple-making is intentional. Churches and Christian ministries that are most effective in discipleship have a ministry viewpoint that places daily spiritual growth at the core of the ministry.³¹ As a Great Commission church (Christian Ministry), Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) has two of its core values as “Evangelism and Discipleship.” Unity Light Ministries, International mission is: “we exist to make new disciples and restore disciples of Christ to renew fellowship with God.”

According to Malan Nel, there are several reasons why people think disciple-making happens in isolation are:³² First, many pastors have been redirected from their primary calling to equip the saints for the work of ministry. Second, believers have chosen the trend to make disciples through programs: however, the Scripture has given believers a context for growing disciples through relationships. Third, believers have reduced the life of a Christian to the eternal benefits and rewards they get from the Lord Jesus, rather than living the Christian life as people learning from through His Word. Fourth, believers have made it feel that discipleship belongs to super Christians and not to ordinary Christian. Fifth, believers have made disciple-making feel that discipleship belongs to super Christians and not to ordinary Christian. Sixth, leaders and church pastors have not been prepared and willing to call or invite people to discipleship. Seventh, most churches that claim to be bible-believing have no clear, public pathway to maturing as a new believer or member. Eighth, most Christians have not experienced being personally discipled by someone. Thus, Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Church Church) is committed to growing true disciples for Jesus Christ to impact the world for God’s kingdom.

³¹ Barna, *True Disciples*, 31

³² Malan Nel. “Imagine-Making Disciples in Youth Ministry...that Will make Disciples.” *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 71, no. 3 (2015): 2.

Ministry Context

Overview of the Republic of Liberia

Liberia is a small West African country that has a population of over three million people. It was founded in August of 1847 by the free slaves from the United States of America. It is bounded by three West African countries, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, and Guinea.³³ The settlement of free slaves (Americo-Liberians) from the United States of America started in 1822 and further developed into present-day Liberia. Liberia is made of Americo-Liberians and indigenous as well. The first indigenous president of Liberia was William V. S. Tubman from 1944-1971. President Tubman died in office in July of 1971. He did well by promoting foreign investment and while also urging his citizens to take advantage of the economic, political, social norms that existed at the time because his goal was to make sure that there was no tension among the indigenous settlers and the Americo-Liberians (Congo people).

On April 12, 1980, Sergeant Samuel Kayon Doe and colleagues led a military coup that overthrew president William Richard Tolbert who was also President of the World Baptist Alliance.³⁴ Samuel Kayon Doe became president and ruled for about ten years. On December 24, 1989, Charles Ghankay Taylor and his militiamen and women-led their rebel activities against the Samuel K. Doe's government that birthed a 14-year civil war through which president Samuel Kayon Doe was murdered. A short period of relative peace was experienced in 1997. This period allowed for an election that Charles Ghankay Taylor won and took over Liberia later, but significant fighting broke out again among the rebel groups in 2000.

³³ 2008 National Population and Housing Census. Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services. Government of the Republic of Liberia, June 2008. (Accessed, August 17, 2019).

³⁴ World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/li.html>. (accessed August 17, 2019).

In August of 2003, a UN Peace Agreement ended this war and prompted the resignation of President Charles Ghankay Taylor. He was later convicted of committing crimes by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague for his involvement in Sierra Leone's civil war. After two years of transitional government rule in Liberia, a democratic election took place on November 8, 2005. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the next president and the first female president of the Republic of Liberia. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was later reelected in 2011 for another six-year term. Today, the Republic of Liberia has a new president, George Manneh Weah.³⁵

Liberia is saturated with many opportunities to do ministry work. This small West Africa nation has a total population of four million eight hundred and eighty-six thousand people (4,886,000), and this population of people accounts for thirty-nine (39) people groups in the whole country. The primary religion in the Republic of Liberia is Christianity. Hence, most people in this country profess to be Christians or follow the Lord Jesus Christ. According to the data, 39.9 % of this nation is Christian adherent, while 12.57 % belong to the Evangelical segment.³⁶ The unreached population is 10.9 %. The country's official spoken language is the English language because of the free slaves from the United States of America that settled in West Africa. Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) is located in Kakata, Margibi County. While its members are diverse, most of its members are from the Kpelle people group (an indigenous tribe) that resides in central and western Liberia. The home county of the Kpelle of Liberia in Bong County occupies a territorial setting of about 9,000 square miles. This region is rich with farmlands and forests.

³⁵ World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/li.html>. (accessed August 17, 2019).

³⁶ Joshua Project (web site) <http://www.joshuaproject.net/> (accessed September 2, 2019).

The Kpelle people are also noted to be very humble, but they are very particular when trusting others.³⁷ The Kpelle are very attractive people who have an average height like most Liberians, and their skin color light brown to coal black. They are well-liked and intelligent. They speak Kpelle, a language spoken by some Bong County inhabitants and some of the Americo-Liberians in Margibi County and Monrovia.³⁸

Most of the Kpelle indigenous people are farmers. Plots of cleared land provide space to grow rice and vegetables; these plots can only be used for one or two years before the farmer must move to a new plot.³⁹ These plots are prepared by employing the “bush farming” method; this method entails burning off the land and allowing the ashes to serve as fertilizer.⁴⁰ The only trees not cut down are the palm trees, which provide nuts and shade for the farmers and other workers that come to help from time to time.⁴¹ Women and children participate in farming by chasing away the birds and plugging out the weeds from among the new rice within the plots.⁴²

Kpelle people have three types of schooling. The first is the “bush school,” where the girls attend the “Sande Bush School,” and the boys attend the “Poro Bush School,” and the regular traditional school where mixed children attend while others participate in regular English schools to learn the English language. Growing technology in this region is changing the Kpelle indigenous group into a more modernized community that enhance trade with other regions.⁴³

³⁷ Joshua Project (web site) <http://www.joshuaproject.net/> (accessed September 2, 2019).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

Liberia also has two million, six hundred ninety-three thousand, seven hundred, and fifty-eight (2,693,758) adults. The population of the Republic of Liberia consists of 50.2% male and 49.8% female. It is estimated or projected that by the year 2020, Liberia's population will grow to be around five million, one hundred four thousand, nine hundred sixty-two (5,104,962). By 2030 it is expected to be six million, five hundred thousand, one hundred two thousand, ninety-one (6,500,091) and by 2040, the Liberian population is expected to grow to the mark of eight million, seventy thousand, one hundred one (8,070,101).⁴⁴ Liberia has had a huge rise in the percentage of birth rate (2.79%). It is estimated that the average woman in the Republic of Liberia now has a birth rate of 4.57 children annually, and making the growth rate to be at 2.8%. This is expected to continue over the years to come. The Kpelle is the largest people group (or indigenous group) in the Republic of Liberia. They live in the middle and western sectors of the country. Their total population is one million, fifty-six thousand (1,056,000) people.⁴⁵

Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC)

The Unity Light Ministries, International (Unity Community Church) is a viable Christian ministry that is not denominational. This Ministry has a cross-cultural church planted by the Ministry in Kakata, Liberia, called Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church). Unity Community Church seeks to make available a nurturing environment where all loving people of God can come and become a part and grow in a stronger and true relationship with their Father, and while also extending God's love to every human being. Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) believes that God exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1, 26; 1 Peter 1:2).

⁴⁴ [http:// www.operationworld.org](http://www.operationworld.org). (accessed September 2, 2019).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Some core beliefs of Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) are: one, the Word of God is true and inerrant (2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:150). Two, salvation is by grace through Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6). Three, the ministry believes in baptism and the Lord's Supper (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32). Four, the ministry promotes the Christian Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Hebrews 11:25). Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) also has the vision to make available viable opportunities for interested individuals to effect Christ's Great Commission through real biblical relationships with other true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) believes that true disciples of Jesus Christ will also bear fruit worthy of a follower of Jesus Christ.⁴⁶ Discipleship does not happen just because a church exists; it occurs when there is an intentional and deliberate effort to enable spiritual growth.⁴⁷

Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) in Liberia is a blend of a Charismatic and Evangelical style of worship. Its Christian ministry network (or church) comprises people of evangelical Christian heritage (from the Americo-Liberian background) and indigenous Liberian church background. Every people group in Liberia has their own background, and this worldview affects how they view disciple-making. Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) is involved in missions, especially in Liberia. Hence, the goal is to create that avenue where pastors and church leaders of the ministry will be able to share the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and win lost souls but to get involved with making true disciples of God equally. Thus, in the end, the church will experience the growth the ministry needs in Liberia.

⁴⁶ Barna, *True Disciples*, 29.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

In essence, Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) engages in activities that are most instrumental in shaping their members' participation while influencing how they think about their church or ministry. They tend to view their church as a Charismatic and Evangelical church. They tend to practice or engage in spiritual warfare. Boa's alerts in an exciting manner by relating spiritual warfare to the process of discipleship. His work helps this researcher take a closer look at the relationship between discipleship and spiritual warfare. Discipleship helps one take a positive look at resources that God has provided for believers to overcome pressing warfare with the world in this dispensation, the human flesh, and Satan.⁴⁸

Boa posits that spiritual warfare is an ongoing process that differs in intensity every day. As such, discipleship should incorporate three primary dynamics in the discipleship process: exposing, equipping, and encouraging/exhorting, with prayer being the backbone.⁴⁹ Boa is right when he says that spiritual warfare is an ongoing process. The ministry is engaged in spiritual warfare. Scripture talks about spiritual warfare a lot.

The apostle Paul asserts in the Bible that "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses."⁵⁰ Saint Paul tells believers that "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."⁵¹

⁴⁸ Kenneth Boa. *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001, 301.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ John MacArthur. *The MacArthur Study Bible*. 2 Corinthians 10:3-4. The NASB. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006, 1747.

⁵¹ Ephesians 6:12, 1784.

Satan's primary purpose is to oppose God's kingdom in every way possible, depriving God of the praise and glory.⁵² One of Satan's most effective strategies is to let Christians think that reaching out is optional.⁵³ Still, whatever instruction the Lord urges Christians to carry out, each believer has their part to play effectively.⁵⁴ Every believer would have to be involved in some form of spiritual warfare at some point in their Christian life. Thus, it is clear that the pillar for spiritual warfare is to engage in prayer. The importance of prayer in the life of a disciple cannot be overemphasized. Our ministry always encourages its members to engage in prayer meetings. Spiritual warfare dictates that the prayer life and their personal relationship with God must be up to date. The aforesaid is vital because a prayerless follower of Christ would be a contradiction to spiritual warfare.⁵⁵ A prayerful disciple would be helping those engaged in evangelism and discipleship in the church to be functioning church members. The stresses described above that every member feels a part of the ministry. While each member may be different, they still work together as a team.⁵⁶

Problem Presented

Many people, especially in Liberia, think that discipleship is all about evangelizing others to come to church and done. Disciple-making is not just a one-time thing or procedure that a person can undertake. It is something that one has to commit for their entire life on earth.

⁵² Jerry Rankin and Ed Stetzer. *Spiritual Warfare and Missions: The Battle for God's Glory Among the Nations*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010, 27-35.

⁵³ Rankin et al., *Spiritual Warfare and Missions*, 175.

⁵⁴ Andy Stanley. *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016, 111-117.

⁵⁵ Derek Prime & Alistair Begg. *On Being a Pastor: Understanding Our Calling and Work*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2004, 65-68.

⁵⁶ Tom. S. Rainer. *I am a Church Member: Discovering the Attitude that Makes the Difference*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2013, 9-14.

Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) believes that disciple-making involves genuine commitment and obedience to God's principles and His Word.⁵⁷ The problem is Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) in Liberia is struggling to grow their church numerically and spiritually because they do not have an intentional discipleship process.

Making mature disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in Africa is a complicated process, especially in Liberia, where different people groups have different backgrounds when understanding Christianity.⁵⁸ They believe that inviting as many people as possible will help their invitees to grow in Christ and be transformed into being true followers of Christ in every way possible. Even today, many Christians go the extra mile by bringing more people to various churches. But this is not enough to keep people in the church and grow into being true disciples of Christ. In Africa, especially Liberia, many pastors have been diverted from their primary calling to equip their followers for the ministry; they have tried to make disciples through programs to make discipleship for some super Christians, not ordinary believers.⁵⁹ The biblical context for growing or making disciples is through relationships; believers need to die to self and live fully for Christ.⁶⁰

Purpose Statement

Most churches have no real and clear pathway to maturity; most church members have not been personally disciple; and those leaders have more or less reduced the Christian life to whatever benefit realized from the Lord Jesus, rather than being true pupils of Him.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Barna, *True Disciples*, 2-9.

⁵⁸ Joshua Project.

⁵⁹ Nel, *Imagine-Making Disciples*, 1-11.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Pastors and church leaders of Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) are to be prepared and willing to call people to discipleship. The purpose of this doctoral thesis project is to survey pastors and church leaders (evangelists) to build a report on the current ministry situation that helps the researcher critically analyze the survey results to suggest ways to improve numerical and spiritual church growth through intentional discipleship in Kakata, Liberia.

Most churches have done an excellent job advocating the significance of spiritual maturity, but they have generally failed to provide an environment where spiritual growth is the lifestyle.⁶² Instead of becoming a natural extension of one's spiritual journey, steady spiritual growth has become an exception to the rule.⁶³ Hence, the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) vision is to focus on providing discipleship relations that support the numeric and spiritual growth of its members rather than discipleship programs.

Basic Assumptions

The first basic assumption is that participants are willing to help new Christians grow into mature followers of Christ. The second basic assumption is the respondents or participants are willing to express the truth about their disciple-making process.

Definitions

Discipleship- is defined as becoming a complete and competent follower of Christ.⁶⁴

Evangelism- the proclamation of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ with the view to bringing about the reconciliation of a sinner to God the Father through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵

⁶² George Barna, *True Disciples*, 29.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Barna, *True Disciples*, 17

Intentional Discipleship -is the intentional training of people to become disciples of Jesus Christ.⁶⁶

Spirituality- the state of deep relationship to God.⁶⁷

Limitation and Delimitations

The first limitation of this doctoral thesis project is that the research is limited to pastors and leaders of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC). The second limitation is that of the sample size. The sample size is small in that it only covers pastors and leaders of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC).

Thesis Statement

Disciple-making can be successful when it starts on a sure foundation of Scripture.⁶⁸ Disciple-making discerning the immense power of producing other disciples or helping other followers of Christ (disciples) to reach the next level of maturity.⁶⁹ Churches that have the intentional discipleship processes are most effective in numerical and spiritual growth.

⁶⁵ Elwell, Walter A. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2001, 410.

⁶⁶ Barna, *True Disciples*, 17-18.

⁶⁷ Walter. *Evangelical Dictionary*.

⁶⁸ Dave Earley & Rod Dempsey. *Disciple Making Is....How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2013, 13-22.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 117-125.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will attempt to capture a conceptual framework of this thesis project. In a nutshell, it is hoped that this chapter will try to talk about why the whole premise (the problem) of this project is being addressed. While other research work is done, particularly in Liberia, may be scarce, this writer fully acknowledges further research adequately that preceded this thesis project. This researcher will also acknowledge how precedent research work has informed the development of this thesis project.

Literature Review

The literature review in this project or study may have been scarce; however, they positively played an essential role in this project's actual quality or substance. By Dave Earley's admission, disciple-making is the fulfillment of the Great Commission. He alerts that the Great Commission has been somehow worshipped but not obeyed. The church has tried over the years to achieve world evangelization without emphasizing disciple-making.⁷⁰ Many believers want to think that the Great Commission belongs only to the Twelve or the Lord's disciples at the time. No, it does not at all particularly say it that way.

The Great Commission does not belong to a single person or believer; it gives and instructs a mandate to all believers in this dispensation. While pastors are clothed with authority to shepherd their members through the preaching of God's Word, they are also expected to remind the congregation that the Great Commission is not just about evangelism. It does not end when lost souls are won for the Lord. To keep those new believers in the church or ministry, they must be taught the Word of God in a manner that should help them grow into being genuine disciples of Christ. The question remains, "how can people in this dispensation or the world

⁷⁰ Earley & Dempsey. *Disciple Making Is*, 1.

markedly be changed to be Christ-like? To exact such a feat in these times and the battles Christians are faced with, and it will take individual believers who are full or overtaken by immense energy, intentional effort, passion and are truly devoted to knowing, loving, and serving the Lord Jesus Christ with all their being and soul.⁷¹

True discipleship occurs when there is an intentional and strategic drive to promote spiritual development and growth in full. Every local church needs to accept and develop a ministry's core values and philosophy that stresses the need and importance of discipleship and promotes a process for emphasizing said core values and spiritual development. Thus, Barna's work informs my research in the following manner. He alerts that disciples must be assured of their salvation by grace alone, and they must learn to comprehend the principles of Christian life.

Barna's work also suggests that disciples must obey God's Laws and Commands.⁷² Barna also argues that true disciples must represent God in the world we live and serve other people (Christians and non-Christian alike); they (disciples) must reproduce themselves in Christ at the end of gaining maturity through the process of discipleship.⁷³ Boa's work informs this research by relating spiritual gifts to the process of discipleship in an exciting manner. Barna's work helps this researcher take a closer look at the relationship between the discipleship process and spiritual warfare. Boa's work also allows this researcher to take a positive look at resources that God has provided for believers to overcome pressing warfare with the world in this dispensation, the human flesh, and Satan.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Barna, *True Disciples*. 17-19.

⁷² Ibid., 20-21.

⁷³ Ibid., 22-23.

⁷⁴ Boa. *Conformed to His Image*, 301.

Boa also argue that spiritual warfare is an ongoing process that differs in intensity every day. As such, discipleship should incorporate three primary dynamics in the discipleship process:

exposing, equipping, and encouraging/exhorting.⁷⁵

According to the Bible, DeVries informs this research by discussing spiritual gifts and how spiritual gifts relate to the local church's qualitative growth. DeVries further argues that spiritual gifts are gifts of grace from God that equip and empower the believing followers of the Lord Jesus Christ through His Spirit so that Christians can fully participate in the building up of Christ's body—the church.⁷⁶ DeVries also argues that two things should happen if Christians must use spiritual gifts to grow the local church or any ministry. DeVries argues that believers must allow the Holy Spirit's presence in their lives,⁷⁷ and the leaders (pastors and other leaders in the church) must likewise motivate their followers about the need to use their gifts in the church to enhance the growth of the church.⁷⁸

Discipleship and Disciple-Making

Nel's work informs this thesis project by making the following arguments in this manner. He argues that there may be so many reasons or factors why Christian churches and Christian ministries tend to be shy or slow in paying attention to the whole concept of discipleship and disciple-making. Nel argues that these reasons or factors could cause the lack of qualitative and quantitative growth in the churches and ministries. Nel further suggests that pastors have taken their attention from their primary calling to equip their members to do the Lord's work in ministry.

⁷⁵ Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 377-82.

⁷⁶ Brian A. DeVries, "Spiritual Gifts for Biblical Church Growth," In *Die Skriflig* 50, no. 1 (2016): 2.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 8

Pastors, church leaders (or believers), for that matter, have replaced the disciple-making process with programs: the biblical context for growing disciples is by relationships. Believers have reduced the Christian life to the everlasting reward they get from the Lord Jesus rather than living as Christ's students. Believers have made discipleship and disciple-making for super-Christians, and not for the ordinary believers. Church leaders have not been willing to take the initiative to call or urge people in the church or ministry to discipleship. Christians have an unsatisfactory view of the church as a discipleship community; biblical discipleship should never be seen as a me-and-Jesus-only relationship because it is a discipleship community. Most churches and ministries do not have any clear, public pathway to growing into a mature disciple of Christ, and most believers have never been disciples personally.⁷⁹

Nel also argues that even though discipleship presupposes community, it puts believers on a road of being a counter-voice for Christ and put believers on a journey of growth. It asks for discipline and unifies humble leaders and humble (or modest) ordinary church members. It should not be confused or mixed with religious mastery or skill.⁸⁰ Suh is another writer whose work informs my researcher project. He lays the foundation when he asserts or argues that a disciple is a reborn follower of Christ and that believers as a whole are people born anew to spiritual life when they choose to follow Jesus. He goes on to argue that being a Christian means being a disciple. Overall, he argues that the Small Group approach is the right method to make Christ's genuine disciples. This method will help my research or investigative process.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Nel, *Imagine-Making Disciples*, 2.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Eunsun C. A. Suh, PhD. "The Complete Book of Discipleship: On being and Making Followers of Christ." *Christian Education Journal* 5, no.2 (Fall, 2008), 484-485.

Anderson and Skinner are other scholars whose work informs the study of this facilitator. They argue by using the following Scriptures as the foundation for making their case: (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 16:24; and John 14:10). They say that an enduring relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of a genuine disciple's life. Indeed, Anderson and Skinner argue that said disciple is one that has the task to learn from, imitate, and emulate Christ's life with their entire being; and while also incorporating emotional health into discipleship models for the kingdom's sake.⁸²

Andrew Burggraff posits that discipleship is the method of learning the Scriptures, internalizing them to shape one's belief system, and then applying them to change one's life.⁸³ Niemandt argues that discipleship has been defined as sharing in the Triune God's life-giving mission and being on a successful life journey.⁸⁴ Burggraff also contends it is the church's role to be enthusiastically involved in following the command given in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19–20). Nevertheless, modern research related to discipleship has revealed several concerns that the 21st-century church must recognize as it seeks to disciple believers.⁸⁵

Dickerson proclaims that discipleship is not only vital and biblically mandated for the growth of believers, but it should also be an essential program of the local church.⁸⁶

⁸² Tamara L. Anderson and Shelly A. Skinner. "Feelings: Discipleship that Understands the Affective Processes of a Disciple of Christ." *Christian Educational Journal* 16, no. 1 (04, 2019): 67-68.

⁸³ Burggraff. "Developing Discipleship", 397-414.

⁸⁴ Niemandt, C. J. P. (N. "Rediscovering Joy in Costly and Radical Discipleship in Mission." *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72, no. 4 (2016): 1-7.

⁸⁵ Burggraff. "Developing Discipleship", 397-414.

⁸⁶ Dickerson, J. S. *The Great Evangelical Recession: 6 Factors that will Crash the American Church...and How to Prepare*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013.

Dickerson further contends that the importance of a “discipleship ministry” is regularly neglected in a busy church, when it is the pillar of believers’ healthy body.⁸⁷ Bosch posits that to convert is to communicate joy; it conveys a positive message exhibiting an attractive lifestyle. The church exists for the sake of the world because people are called to become Christians.⁸⁸

Andrew Burggraff asserts that modern research related to the matter of discipleship has revealed numerous concerns that the church must recognize as it follows to disciple believers:⁸⁹ The first is that there appears to be a decline in biblical literacy among believers today. The second is there appears to be a departure of believers from evangelical churches today. The third concern is that there seems to be an acceptance of inactivity among current evangelical Christians, and the fourth concern is there appears to be a de-emphasis in discipleship.

Kenneth Gourlay argues that the Christian church sees a decline of biblical literacy in believers’ lives today.⁹⁰ Gourlay further asserts that the statistics are staggering due to the lack of biblical knowledge that most believers possess regarding fundamental biblical truths.⁹¹

Volf argues religions can position the pursuit of a life that goes well into a more surrounding account of flourishing life in which life is lived well has primacy over life going well and life feeling good.⁹² However, religion offers individuals a sense of meaning and purpose to manage the numerous crises of life and direction on the relationship between

⁸⁷ Burggraff. “*Developing Discipleship*”, 397-414.

⁸⁸ Bosch, D. J. *Transforming Mission*. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, Orbis, Maryknoll, NY, 1991.

⁸⁹ Burggraff. “*Developing Discipleship*”, 397-414.

⁹⁰ Kenneth Gourlay. H. An Assessment of Bible Knowledge Among Adult Southern Baptist Sunday School Participants. (Doctoral dissertation), 2010.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Miroslav Volf. *Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World*. Kindle ed., Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 2015, 137-141.

individuals, communities, and creation. It guides people regarding how they should relate to others and what good they should strive to accomplish.⁹³ Hence, the discipleship ministry is significant in the local church.

Intentional Discipleship-Making

Indeed, there are so many believers in the world today that profess to be followers of the risen Lord, Jesus Christ. It is essential to assert here that with all the millions of Christians worldwide, it will take people who have a love for God. Accordingly, these believers will be committed people who know Christ intimately with all their hearts, mind, and being and are willing to go out to make a difference in the world.⁹⁴ Christians believe that the process ends when they invite as many of their friends and contacts to visit their churches. They think by asking as many people as possible will help said invitees grow in Christ and be transformed into being true followers of Christ in every way possible.

Barna's work also informs this research that many Christians go the extra mile by bringing more people to various churches even today. But this is not enough to keep people in the church and grow into being true disciples of Christ. In this dispensation, the churches or places of worship have huge followers of Christ-like the same manner one would follow a particular sports team. Intentional disciple-making is not just a one-time thing or process that a person can undertake. Indeed, it is something that one has to commit for their entire life on earth. Intentional disciple-making involves substantial commitment and obedience to God's principles and His Word.⁹⁵

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Barna, 2001, 10-11.

⁹⁵ Volf, *Flourishing*, 142-43.

The Lord has instructed every believer to make disciples (Matthew 28:19). Why every believer needs to personalize this critical instruction to develop such a mindset of the importance of intentional disciple-making to glorify God and also grow the church and maintaining a healthy church in the process, intentional disciple-making means that every follower of Christ should not only be concerned about growing intimately with the Lord Jesus Christ but should also be prepared with the mindset of serving others while helping them to grow in the Lord spiritually as well. At the end of it all, with the right training, it would enhance numerical growth and spiritual growth in the church.

Making mature disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ should not be an optional thing. Even though each believer has been instructed by God's Word to undertake said path, every Christian must accept it as an honor to be a part of such an essential command for their well-being as a true Christian. Intentional discipleship involves many things—stating clearly the church's mission according to the Lord, pinpointing the characteristics of a disciple that has matured or maturing, creating a pathway for the disciple-making process, and measuring the spiritual growth of the church.

In order words, it is a process where one becomes a wholehearted and qualified follower of Christ by full submission.⁹⁶ Most of the time, every new believer needs to grow in Christ by learning more of Him through the Word of God and its teachings, and for some leaders, they too tend to recognize the importance of intentional disciple-making. Malphurs also suggests the vital need for fellowship with others.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Aubrey Malphurs. *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013, 195-208.

⁹⁷ Malphurs, *Strategic Planning*, 195-20.

Intentional discipleship is a genuine process that one has to follow when preparing a disciple of Christ. This process entails exposing, equipping, and encouraging (or exhorting) the individual being prepared. For the first step, the teacher needs to set an example for the learner to follow; the next step focuses on the teaching and fundamental training aspect. The next step considers whether the learner is applying what he has learned and their character. Intentional disciple-making is also making an effort, besides, to help train in the area of having a biblical value system, biblical view of hope, and the role of tribulation in the believer's life among others.⁹⁸

Cost of Disciple-Making

Today Christians are engaged in many wars with their enemies in almost every area of their lives. Paramount to all the various wars is one we are fighting---“the war of truth.” Also, the main challenges of our culture in terms of applying biblical truth cannot be exaggerated. Bonhoeffer's work informs the research in the area of making the sacrifice for the Lord's sake. Also, the nature of spiritual warfare and resources all tend to affect the church's spiritual formation process and spiritual growth. Hence, the cost of making an intentional disciple entails being single-minded when it comes to obedience to the Word of God.

Living the true Christian life is at the center of facing the cost of making intentional disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. It involves prayer, servanthood, carrying one's cross, truthfulness, recognizing Satan and his tricks, leading biblically, and moving people on to God's plan daily. The aforesaid allows one to assert that prayer is a major cost of making disciples for the Lord Jesus Christ. So then, why is prayer so important? It should be the goal of every Christian to be intimate or close to the Savior, Christ, Jesus.

⁹⁸ Boa, 2001, 301-307.

The Apostle Paul admonishes the Lord Jesus' followers by asserting "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Believers can be thankful for everything only through prayer. "Everything" in the above passage could mean whatever good or bad experiences a believer is confronted within any situation.

For that matter, it should not be seen as odd if a Christian is found giving thanks to God because the Holy Spirit empowers Christian to do so. That goes likewise to assert that for a follower of Christ involved in making disciples of Jesus, said individual must entrust their being, soul, and mind to Christ completely. It means their life's experiences must be shared with Christ from moment to moment as God's kingdom work is carried out.⁹⁹ Hence, prayer is the cost of disciple-making. Besides, this is one way Eric's article informs this thesis project. Prayer must play a cardinal part of everything a true disciple of Christ is partaking in. As every disciple of Jesus is also a leader, they can succeed in their life's experiences by committing everything to God through prayer because every battle is God's.

Dave Earley supports this assertion, and he even goes beyond by giving many things to do if one must succeed in leadership. In his book, *Prayer: The Timeless Secret of High-Impact Leaders*, he discusses nine prayer disciplines of high-impact spiritual leaders; and he goes on by positing that whether one is caring for a small group or a church, every Christian leader put in charge of God's people can make the difference through prayer.¹⁰⁰ Dave Earley also discusses prayer discipline topics like "there is value in the power of prayer and prayer being the most important task of anyone involved in discipleship."¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Fairbrother, Erice. "From Dis-Bodied Discipleship to Embodied Relationality: Experiential Formation in the Life of Prayer." *Anglican Theological Review* 98, no. 2 (Spring, 2016): 317.

¹⁰⁰ Dave Earley. *Prayer: The Timeless Secret of High-Impact Leaders*. Chattanooga, TN: Living Ink Books, 2008 ix-xiii.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 1-3.

There is a strong correlation between time spent in prayer or facing success and failure in one's ministry. Thus, Earley urges Christian leaders to "make time to pray" because Jesus set the example by being a "Man of prayer."¹⁰² Earley goes on to assert that one should pray for those being a disciple or led, and warned that even though genuine, effective intercession is costly, it must be undertaken because of the importance of winning lost souls and producing disciples that will last in God's kingdom.¹⁰³

Furthermore, Earley encourages believers to help train followers of Jesus to pray for their leaders; and help teach mature disciples who would, in turn, disciple others for Christ. Earley urged every disciple of Jesus to turn their problems into prayer, among other prayer disciplines, because it works.¹⁰⁴ Hence, Earley's book immensely informs this thesis project in a strong sense by encouraging and urging every disciple of Jesus to prioritize prayer. Earley also alerts that it is vital to pray because God welcomes it and that it empowers believers and it works.

Wesley Carr also supports the whole idea of prayer. He believes every disciple must engage the Living God in prayer in a huge way regularly and consistently through the power of the Holy Spirit. He posits that the prayer of every disciple of Jesus must be intimate, deliberate, and can be noticed religiously. Additionally, he argues that prayer directs one towards God, impacting the believer's unconscious life and mindset in their everyday life's experience. Carr also warns that while there is chemistry between prayer and liturgy, every prayer should not be transformed into an act of liturgy so as not to be diminished.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Dave Earley. *Prayer*, 17-19.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 33-47.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 53-72.

¹⁰⁵ Wesley Carr. *The Pastor as Theologian: The Integration of Pastoral Ministry, Theology and Discipleship*. Marylebone, London: SPCK, 1989, 100-101.

Carr's work informs this thesis project because it supports infusing prayer in every sector of a disciple's life; he likewise warns every true disciple of Christ to be mindful to seek the Holy Spirit's guidance to avoid any adverse effect regarding the misuse of prayer. Another writer argues that while prayer is always a cost related to discipleship, it still plays an integral part in the success of a true intentional discipleship process. Han goes on to submit through the Gospel of Luke (Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9: 18-27; 22: 39-48; 23: 46) that there is a clear connection between prayer and the Cross of Christ. He points out that prayer also links with discipleship according to Luke's Gospel (Luke 6:12; 9:23-25; 9: 28-36). Those mentioned above mean that those who agree to follow Jesus must be ready to partake in the "Cross-Bearing Discipleship" process, and prayer is a critical way to share and participate in the cost of discipleship.¹⁰⁶

Han's article contributes to this thesis project by letting believers know that through prayer, they all share in the cost of disciple-making and become part of Christ's cross-bearing activities. James A. Lang posits that many Christians face blockages in their quest for spiritual maturity that retard that process.¹⁰⁷ These blockages can be spiritual, emotional, and/or psychological.¹⁰⁸ Paul Tanner argues that virtually everything we do in the local church is theologically related to the disciple-making process; Jesus' primary command to the church was to make disciples (Matt. 28:18).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Han, Kyu Sam. "Theology of Prayer in the Gospel of Luke." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43, no. 4 (12, 2000): 686-87.

¹⁰⁷ James A. Lang. "An Evaluation of A Discipleship Process Addressing Christians' Inner Life Issues." *Christian Education Journal* 12, no. 2 (Fall, 2015): 259-81.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Paul Tanner. "The Cost of Discipleship: Losing One's Life for Jesus' Sake." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56, no. 1 (03, 2013): 43-61.

Paul Tanner further asserts that Jesus laid out what he expected from his disciples, who wanted to ‘follow Him.’ Jesus warned those who followed him to be prepared for suffering: rejection and suffering were not limited to him, and thus he warned those who followed him to be ready for suffering, however, practically speaking, lots of churches, struggle in developing a strategy that effectively engages church members in that process or a path for discipleship.¹¹⁰

Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey assert that “there comes the point in every evangelistic relationship where the disciple-maker needs to evangelize (tell the good news) by proclaiming the gospel. Accordingly, Earley and Dempsey cite Romans 10:9-10, 13-14.¹¹¹

If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation... For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on Him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about Him? And how can they hear without a preacher?

Tamara L. Anderson and Shelly A. Skinner claim that Jesus Christ calls believers to be disciples and make disciples of others.¹¹² Anderson and Skinner further assert that to be effective, it is essential to realize the role that emotions (passions) play in our connection with God, others, and our new identity in Christ.¹¹³ Additionally, Saucy explains commitment as “abiding” in Christ and have Him abide in us is to live with Christ in a lasting relationship of life similar to the description of his own relationship with his heavenly Father in John 14:10.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Tanner, “*The Cost of Discipleship*.” 43-61.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Tamara L. Anderson. and Shelly A. Skinner. "Feelings: Discipleship that Understands the Affective Processes of a Disciple of Christ." *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 1 (04, 2019): 66-78.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ R. L. Saucy. *Minding the Heart: The Way of Spiritual Transformation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregels Publications, 2013, 272.

Bekker illustrates the significance of leading a godly life, as described in the New Testament.¹¹⁵ Bekker describes the word “disciple” in the New Testament to indicate a permanent relationship between disciple and teacher (*didaskalos*).¹¹⁶ Bekker also defines the relationship between the teacher and disciple in which the disciple “imitates and emulates” the teacher.¹¹⁷ Robbins contends that a disciple must also walk in childlike faith even when situations are challenging.¹¹⁸ Robbins further notes the differences between childlike, trusting faith discussed in Matthew 19:13-14 and childish faith.¹¹⁹

Robbins also distinguishes the profound disagreements between an immature spiritual development versus a more in-depth insight that following Christ does not eliminate hardships, struggles, temptations, and life challenges.¹²⁰ It is amid these things that disciples find their life very impacted, while their relationship with God flourishes.¹²¹ Robbins points out that “not only can a person have an emotion he does not feel, but he can also feel an emotion he does not have.”¹²² On the other hand, Chandler reminds all disciples that walking with Christ involves the continual repentance, forgiveness, and change process.¹²³ This change is all-comprehensive.¹²⁴

¹¹⁵ G. J. Bekker. Disciple. In M. J. Anthony (Ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001, 206-207.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 207.

¹¹⁸ D. Robbins. *Building a Youth Ministry that Builds Disciples: A Small Book About a Big Idea*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ D. Robbins. *Building a Youth Ministry that Builds Disciples: A Small Book About a Big Idea*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid, 60.

¹²³ D. J. Chandler. *Christian Spiritual Formation: An Integrated Approach for Personal and Relational Wholeness*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014, 112-135

Scazzero also believes that “Christian spirituality should be an integration of emotional health; it can be deadly, to yourself, your relationship with God, and the people around you without it.”¹²⁵

Dave Earley and David Wheeler claim that Jesus equated people’s commitment to the gospel to their commitment to Him:

“For whosoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whosoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it (Mark 8:35). ‘I tell you the truth’, Jesus replied, ‘no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields, and with them persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life Mark 10:29)’”.

Bonhoeffer explains that the actual call of Jesus and the response of single-minded obedience have irrevocable significance.¹²⁶ Bonhoeffer posits that Jesus calls people into a real situation where faith possible; eliminating simple obedience causes an unevangelical interpretation.¹²⁷ Bonhoeffer contends that through the call of Jesus Christ, men become individuals; they are compelled to decide, and that decision can only be made by themselves.¹²⁸ Bonhoeffer further stresses that they do not choose to be individuals. Christ makes them individuals by calling them, and every man is called separately and must follow alone.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Chandler, *Christian Spiritual Formation*, 112-135

¹²⁵ P. Scazzero. *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: Unleash a Revolution in Your Life in Christ*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006. 51-60.

¹²⁶ Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1995, 79-85.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 94.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Discipleship and Missions

According to Moorhead, the essential or underlying duty of a Christian mission is found in the crucial or urgent word in the Great Commission of the Lord in the Gospel: make disciples. He asserts that it is never enough for Christians simply just to do works and mercy. Indeed, it is also never enough to simply seek others to make decisions for Christ but disciples who abide in an intimate relationship with God, who grows progressively in His likeness, and who learn and do all that the Lord commands or instructs in His Word.¹³⁰

Against this background of abiding according to God's Word, church growth can be enhanced numerically and spiritually due to the faithfulness of the congregant's close relationship with the Father. Thus, a clear goal of discipleship is to rightly maintain a vibrant fellowship with the Lord in every respect in such a way that should help produce more mature disciple leaders through intentional discipleship programs. A healthy church would result as more believers become trained by those disciples who have endured a more extended period in said ministry.¹³¹ Moorhead's article informs this thesis project that stresses the importance of recognizing God's plan through the interaction between discipleship and missions.

Discipleship and missions should not be treated in isolation. For instance, a missionary should be a person of concern that has a real relationship with God. Such a person should be a mission companion. Indeed, a mission companion is a Witness who is grounded in the gospel. Such an individual is a Pilgrim who is prepared to learn in an environment of different people. This person is also a Servant of others in God's kingdom and is a Prophet that teaches God's message to others.

¹³⁰ Jonathan Moorhead. "Introduction to Global Missions." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 59, no. 3 (09, 2016): 670.

¹³¹ Moorhead, "Global Missions," 670.

In addition, said person agrees to be an Ambassador of the Lord Jesus willingly and be willing to also a Host of other people involved in the mission of God, even for a while. Lastly, a mission companion should be a Sacrament of Reconciliation in such a way that God's plan of bringing others to Christ is a priority.¹³² That is why a missionary should be a disciple and prepared to be sent by God into the world with His resources to make disciples for His kingdom as instructed in the Great Commission.¹³³

According to Moreau et al.'s account, "if every Christian is already engaged in missionary duties, then all believers can just stay put where they are, and nobody needs to get up and go anywhere to preach and teach the gospel. But if our only concern is to witness where we are, how will people in unevangelized sectors or areas ever hear or come in contact with the gospel? Those mentioned above would mean that the present uneven distribution of Christians and opportunities to listen to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ will continue unchanged."¹³⁴ Moreau et al.'s work informs this thesis project in a manner where their work encourages one to be aware that a successful discipleship program can help or give any believer the opportunity of being a part of God's desire to make disciples through the mission field.

Intentional discipleship prepares a believer to be in a dynamic relationship with the Lord and helps the believer to champion the cause of God's mission plan to the world at large to engage the world in every possible way to the glory of God.

¹³² A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee. *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015, 20-21.

¹³³ Ibid., 21.

¹³⁴ Moreau et al., *World Missions*, 23.

That is why discipleship is not only about the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), it is also about the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:25-37; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-37), where Jesus emphasizes by alerting that the greatest commandment is “one’s love for God and one’s love for neighbor.”¹³⁵ The work of Winter and Hawthorne informs this thesis project in a manner that a good and successful discipleship process can yield a lasting imprint on people desirous of participating in God’s mission work. Hence, making disciples for Christ and propagating missionary pursuits can all be done in love to the glory of God.

McDowell contends that today’s youth are just not interested in God and are just not passionate about spiritual things as previous generations.¹³⁶ McDowell further contends that “the fundamental question is ‘how are they forming their view of God?’; according to McDowell, much of what the youths’ believe about Christianity, truth, reality, and the church comes from distorted view they have gleaned from the world around them.”¹³⁷ McDowell also contends that it is not that they haven’t embraced a version of Christianity; it’s simply that the version they believe in is not built on the true foundation of what biblical Christianity is all about”.¹³⁸

McDowell affirms that different things factor into the youth’s generation belief system:¹³⁹

The first factor is 63% don’t believe that Jesus is the Son of the one true God. The second factors s 58% believe all faith teach equally valid truths. The third factor McDowell lists is that 51% don’t believe Jesus rose from the dead. The fourth factor is that 68 % don’t believe that the Holy Spirit is a real entity. Finally, the fifth factor is 65% don’t believe Satan is a real entity.

¹³⁵ Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne. *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009, 128-29.

¹³⁶ J. McDowell, *The Last Christian Generation*. Holiday, FL: Green Key Books, 2006, 28-39.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 45-52.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

According to Earley and Wheeler, “ninety-eight” percent of professed born-again young people do ‘believe in Christ,’ but they do not reflect Christlike attitudes or actions!”¹⁴⁰ Earley and Wheeler contend “the Great Commission is not the Great ‘Suggestion’”; the word ‘commission’ is a military term meaning, ‘an authoritative order, charge, or direction.’”¹⁴¹ Earley and Wheeler further contend that “commission” is used to denote authority, an authoritative order, and obedience is not an option; it is obligatory.¹⁴² No one can call himself a follower of Jesus Christ, who is refusing to obey His orders.¹⁴³

Dave Earley and David Wheeler also contend that “the Great Commission must be obeyed at all cost.” Earley and Wheeler posit that “the last words of Jesus Christ, the most important person ever to walk the earth should stir, drive, inspire, instruct, and implore everyone who is His follower; Jesus last words were these: ‘But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witness to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8).’”¹⁴⁴ Earley and Wheeler further contend that “Paul said that David had served his own generation by the will of God (Acts 13:36).”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Earley and Wheeler, *Evangelism Is*, 17-24.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

Theological Foundations

The biblical principles of this thesis are very glaring in a manner that instructs the researcher to obey the teachings of the Word of God. As mentioned earlier, those go-to asserts that this thesis project's theological foundations are thoroughly grounded in Scripture as the gospel of Matthew teaches. The Lord Jesus Christ mandates: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."¹⁴⁶ This command relates to this thesis project because it is all about intentional disciple-making, where a professed follower of Christ will live a purposeful lifestyle that is Christ-centered.

It is also stated in Scriptures that the Lord, "Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" And they left their nets at once and followed him."¹⁴⁷ In another part of God's Word, the apostle Paul also asserts to Timothy, "You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others."¹⁴⁸ The Lord Jesus Christ and Saint Paul modeled the whole concept of disciple-making to their followers in an intentional manner so that believers may depict those as examples to follow in doing ministry work. These are clear examples for Unity Light pastors and other church leaders to adopt and practice. These examples are essential and related to this thesis project because they will help the thesis project's intervention design.

¹⁴⁶ Matthew 28:18-20, NIV.

¹⁴⁷ Matthew 4:19-20.

¹⁴⁸ 2 Timothy 2:2.

Discipleship

Discipleship and the process of developing a disciple are often associated with mostly following the Lord Jesus. Believers need to take the time to assert clearly that Christian discipling, in essence, suggests taking someone on a journey with the hope of reaching a destination.¹⁴⁹ The Bible is rich with many examples where the Lord encourages or urges His followers to go out and seek others for His kingdom. In the gospel, the Word of God alerts, “And Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”¹⁵⁰ In this Bible verse, the Lord Jesus fully shows an example by sending believers to “fish for people.” This is a calling by Christ to truly follow Him. This can be done through discipleship or disciple-making. It is indeed grounded in Scripture.¹⁵¹

The fruit of the Holy Spirit as spelled out in Galatians and 1 Peter 1:5 expresses a set of characters that a transformed group of people should always depict. Thus, said character is essential and vital in the discipleship process.¹⁵² For that matter, this is what this thesis project will attempt to show regarding intentional discipleship as embedded in Scripture. Indeed, while disciple-making is somehow personal, the process must be rationally intentional. That is why mature followers of Christ need to rightly identify spiritual gifts in others and duly invest their effort and time to help in the transformational process.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Colin Brown. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975, 481.

¹⁵⁰ Mark 1:17; NASB. (Please Note: All Bible verses are from the New American Standard Bible).

¹⁵¹ Patterson, Stanley E. “Biblical Foundations of Christian Leadership, Part II,” *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 11, no. 1 (Spring, 2017): 89-90.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

Empowering, Sending, and Multiplication

The Lord Jesus allowed or allowed His Disciples to take pleasure in His presence. As a result, they learned and studied because Christ led by example, even as children would learn from their parents. In Luke 10:1-24, the Bible expresses or teaches the relationship between empowerment and sending. The Lord made it very clear and pure the assignment and the field to operate.¹⁵⁴ An imitative faith was the plan of sending the 70, which has an essential link to the discipleship process. It also teaches peer mentoring, where Christ's Disciples relationally learned from one another. This approach, where the Disciples went out "two by two," enhanced multiplication and growth in God's kingdom.¹⁵⁵ Thus, the Scripture gives believers the biblical basis for intentional discipleship, as outlined in Luke 10.

Discipleship and Emulating Christ

Discipleship is very much demanding because it involves one highly walking in obedience to the Word of God. The aforesaid means the believer trying to do everything by the Holy Spirit's power to emulate Jesus. The aforementioned goes to alert that every believer's goal is to develop a Christ-like character as they become mature Christians. For instance, God said to Abram, "...Walk before Me, and be blameless" (Genesis 17:1). God said, "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2). In the gospel, the Lord Jesus said, "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5: 48). The God of Isaac, Jacob, and Moses are very consistent in making sure His followers understand the importance of living a holy life because He is Holy.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Patterson, "Biblical Foundations", 91.

¹⁵⁵ Keith R. Anderson and Randy D. Reese. *Spiritual Mentoring: A Guide for Seeking and Giving Direction*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 15.

¹⁵⁶ Jonathan Lunde. *Following Jesus, the Servant King: A Biblical Theology of Covenantal Discipleship*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010, 88.

Through the Christian way of life, emulating Christ has everything to do with the process of intentional discipleship and disciple-making. One can say that these biblical stories from Genesis, Leviticus, and Matthew depict stories that relate to intentional discipleship. The above-mentioned is because, in the end, the church wants its members to grow into becoming mature Christians that are living righteous lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Gospel and Discipleship

The process of discipleship begins with a true understanding of the gospel of Christ. The gospel is passed on to us through our “fathers” so that no individual has the right to monopolize its message. According to 1 Corinthians 15, the gospel message must be kept intact (unchanged) when passing it on to another person or soldier of Christ. Every believer engaged in the discipleship process must understand very well the gospel message that “Christ died” (1 Corinthians 15:3). Human beings can only be in fellowship again with God the Father through the Lord Jesus by accepting Him as Savior (John 14:6).

The second aspect of the Gospel message is that “Christ was buried” (1 Corinthians 15:4). Jesus endured physical death like any other human being, except that He knew no sin while on earth. Indeed, He is God. The gospel’s next aspect is that “Christ was resurrected by the Father” (1 Corinthians 15:4). In other words, He was raised by God the Father. The expectation now is that because Christ is risen, He becomes the Hope of every believer to the end of the age. This gospel story will continue to be told until the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, the intentional discipleship process will make certain that every mature believer is able to tell this gospel story throughout their human existence to the outermost part of the earth according to their life as God gives them the power to carry out His desire (1 Cor. 15:12-19).¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ John MacArthur. *The MacArthur Study Bible*. (NASB). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006, 1722-1724.

The Holy Spirit and Discipleship

The Lord Jesus rightly suggests in the gospel of Mark (Mark 4:1-20) that it is somehow difficult to ascertain whether a lost person becomes a changed person when the person is ministered to as He was talking about the parable involving the sower. Scripture asserts that no human being on their own merit, can create any transformation inwardly without the indwelled Holy Spirit, as evidenced in the Bible (Romans 8:26-29). Indeed, spiritual formation always occurs in any believer as a direct consequence or work of the presence of God's Spirit within the person's being. Hence, one can safely alert that it is the Holy Spirit that is responsible for filling, guide, gift, and give every power and strength to the believer to fellowship with other believers in dispensation of the universe.¹⁵⁸

The process of intentional discipleship and disciple-making can only succeed in the church or ministry if the Holy Spirit is playing the major role of guiding the whole process and leading those who are matured and the believers that are being mentored in growing spiritually. In a nutshell, no theological foundation can exist without the Holy Spirit; this is what this thesis project will seek to encourage and urge throughout the project from start to finish.

¹⁵⁸ Alan Andrews. *The Kingdom Life: A Practical Theology of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010, 21.

Theoretical Foundation

According to Martin I Klauber and Scott M. Manetsch, the “Great Commission” by Matthew’s gospel experienced huge neglect from professing Christians at some point in Christianity’s history. Notwithstanding, some Christian missionaries ventured to practically embrace Christ’s command to make disciples worldwide very intimately and seriously through hard work. As a result, this enhanced the choice of discipleship to be prioritized. Indeed, this caused the Christian population to increase from 19 percent (in 1500) to 22 percent (in 1900) and 32 percent of the world’s population by 2000.¹⁵⁹

While no one can argue that there is a serious and true need to undertake a wide range of evangelistic mission programs to reach the world with the gospel, it is also vital to equip, model, teach, and train the saints to grow into being mature disciples; and who are entrusted with God’s truth. Indeed, this process should be very intentional. Discipleship must be prioritized, but it likewise requires some experience that is integral to the learning process. While the cognitive segment of gaining knowledge is vital in learning biblical content, its objective should not be to transfer biblical knowledge. Still, it should instead be one that comes about as biblical reality is lived out and experienced. Christians do not see just faith-in spiritual growth. It goes to assert that Christians must deliberately practice what the Word of God says. Believers may listen to different kinds of preaching and attend the best Bible studies. Still, until they genuinely walk the Christian truth, there will be little transformation, and the discipleship process will be indented.¹⁶⁰

This thesis project will benefit from the work done in this journal material.

¹⁵⁹ Klauber and Manetsch. *Great Commission*., 1.

¹⁶⁰ Beard, Christopher B. “Connecting Spiritual Formation and Adult Learning Theory: An Examination of Common Principles.” *Christian Education Journal* 14, no. 2 (Fall, 2017): 261.

The Spiritual Disciplines

It should be essential to note that no one must interchange or perhaps confuse the spiritual disciplines with the whole idea of spirituality itself. The spiritual disciplines are practices that help guide believers for living a godly Christian life. They are the means to godliness. According to I Timothy, “discipline yourself for godliness” (1 Timothy 4:7). In other words, these spiritual disciplines should be able to create a direction for the discipleship process to succeed so that the believer would develop a Christ-like character in the end.¹⁶¹ These are practices that are taking place in some quarters to help new believers to grow in Christ. Some pastors and ministers are still finding it tough to make disciples even after spending many years in ministry, despite preaching many sermons, staging programs, having Bible studies, and even hosting small groups. The aforesaid does not mean those pastors were not experiencing some good things in their ministries. For instance, some of their members experienced growth in the Lord Jesus, and while others came to accept Jesus as Lord, among other good things.¹⁶²

The Lord Jesus knew all His Disciples had faults and character flaws. He chose them anyway, and they turned the whole world upside down (Acts 17:6). From the human point of view, nobody would have selected any of the Lord’s Disciples because they were all full of flaws and ordinary. Christ intentionally trained them best counted in months. Believers must appreciate Christ’s training and work with His Disciples. He was intentional in making them true Disciples to enable them to defend Him after His ascension.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Donald S. Whitney. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991, 15-24.

¹⁶² Dana Allin. *Simple Discipleship: Grow Your Faith, Transform Your Community*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2018, xi.

¹⁶³ John MacArthur. *Twelve Ordinary Men: How the Master Shaped His Disciples for Greatness, and What He Wants TO DO with YOU*. Nashville, TN: W. Publishing Group, 2002, xi-xvi.

Today, many churches and believers make disciples by making room for the prevailing culture. In other words, this means truth becomes optional as far as the Gospel of the Kingdom is concerned. The good news of Jesus is then twisted to suit the culture. We must guard against such a practice. The idea that the Christian message should be kept pliable and ambiguous seems especially attractive to young people and the like who are already in tune with the culture and love with this dispensation spirit.¹⁶⁴

The Great Commission

John the Baptist told his followers to “Repent for the kingdom heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2). The Lord Jesus articulated a similar assertion in the Gospel of Mark (Mark 1:15). Jesus prompts that every nation hears the Gospel or the “good news” before the end of the age (Matthew 24:14). But the Great Commission in the Gospel, according to Matthew (Matthew 28:18-20) is not all about telling others about Christ. It is all about making disciples that should stay in fellowship with Christ. That is the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The Lord Jesus also teaches in the Gospel that the good news will be one that helps its hearers to receive it and tell it to others so that His kingdom can be multiplied through those who hear this important good news (Matthew 13: 13-23). The true Gospel of the Kingdom encourages and urges believers to walk in obedience to God’s Word. It is only the Holy Spirit’s work to bring disciples to Christ (Matthew 13:36-42). The above mentioned is why the Holy Spirit is vital in the intentional discipleship process.

Allin posits that discipleship is not about programs or syllable that enacts a particular process; it is about a true friendship one experiences immensely with a faith community and the Lord Jesus.

¹⁶⁴ John MacArthur. *The Truth War: Fighting for Certainty in an Age of Deception*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007, x-xi.

The primary assignment Christ calls every believer is to make disciples for Him. He is interested not only in quantity but quality, which is more important.¹⁶⁵ This thesis project will be focused on helping pastors, and church leaders be very intentional in creating the conditions where their congregations will be making disciples and mentoring others, thereby creating numerical and spiritual growth in the church.

¹⁶⁵ Alin (2018), x-xvi.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This doctoral research project under consideration seeks to find out why the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) is struggling to grow their church numerically and spiritually in Kakata, Liberia. This thesis project was about guiding pastors and church leaders (evangelists, small group leaders) of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) regarding intentional discipleship and disciple-making and reaching out into the community of Kakata, Liberia. In the fifteenth chapter in the gospel, according to Saint John, the Lord Jesus speaks of Christian discipleship as a relational process reaching out for a common purpose (John 15:10). Even though believers are expected to follow Jesus' commands in the process, it is devoid actually of a structure that is coercive in a manner that requires accomplishment.¹⁶⁶

In the research study, almost every church or Christian ministry in Kakata, Liberia, would acknowledge having a discipleship program. But what they meant was that they have an evangelism outreach program where people are extended invitation regularly along with conducting Sunday school services. That is not intentional discipleship.

According to Barna, for church leaders to successfully put together a viable intentional discipleship process, believers must have the passion for setting personal spiritual growth goals for themselves to be godly.¹⁶⁷ In the African setting, especially Liberia, it was widespread when churches and ministries focused on regular evangelism as practiced by many churches and ministries. Other ministries tended to train their pastors and other church leaders of their institutions to practice natural evangelism.

¹⁶⁶ Patterson, Stanley E. "Biblical Foundations of Christian Leadership, Part II," *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 11, no. 1 (Spring, 2017): 82.

¹⁶⁷ Barna, *True Disciples*, 36-42.

Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) does not force people to carry out evangelism just for its name. We believe Evangelism should be done willingly from the heart in a manner that must also be backed by a lifestyle of modeling because of the Lord's sake. A goal of the Unity Light Ministries International is to help our pastors and church leaders rethink the way of doing discipleship in this 21st century. The ministry wants churches to recognize the need to transition from how things were done in the past where ministry was program-driven.

In this 21st century, it is essential to focus on a people-driven ministry. While it is true that every church, especially the Unity Light Ministry Network, should encourage its members, pastors, and other church leaders to carry out evangelism, the focus should not be on seeking God's hand in miracles but rather focus on experiencing and seeing the heart of the Almighty God in true intimacy. Those described above were the real reason God created human beings.

The Unity Light Ministry Network, particularly in this dispensation, needs guidance, especially in discipleship. It is clear from experience that many churches may think that the Great Commission is all about evangelism, but this is not true. Another objective of this research project is to encourage and urge the pastors, church leaders (evangelists, and small-group leaders) of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) is to take a hard look at the old ways the churches of Liberia understood discipleship to be. However, the 21st-century church has its outlook or manner of doing discipleship.

According to Barna, 21st-century discipleship is becoming a full and competent Christ-follower. It is the process of intentionally training believers that, on their own free will, submit their whole beings to Jesus as Lord and desire in their hearts to be Christ-like in their thoughts, words, and deeds.

Twenty-first-century discipleship is a process that neither focuses on a program nor a ministry since it becomes a lifelong commitment to Christ and a personal lifestyle that models the Christian way of life.¹⁶⁸

Many churches in the African setting, especially in Kakata, Liberia, tend to think that it becomes true or right because everybody is doing or practicing a particular process. Unity Light Ministries International encourages and urges its pastors and church leaders to engage in building character. Character is all a leader can depend on to lead God's people. Hence, for the discipleship process to penetrate the recipients' hearts and minds, one must be intentional and strategic. The aforementioned is why those at the helm of affairs in the church's discipleship process are urged by Stowell to be character-driven leaders. Stowell asserts that leaders have to live exemplary lives that influence and empower those within the sphere of their authority to achieve great outcomes personally, spiritually, communally, and organizationally, to the fame and glory of God.¹⁶⁹

The process of discipleship, the character is what makes the difference. It means integrity must be a hallmark. Honest to God becomes paramount in every endeavor undertaken by pastors and church leaders. The aforesaid asserts that the Unity Light Ministries Network (UCC) pastors and leaders are no exceptions when it comes to showing the right character before God in every respect. It is essential for leaders who are engaged in the process of discipleship to seek God's heart and prioritize a purity of character to overcome life's adversities, to the glory of God.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Barna, *True Disciples*, 17-19.

¹⁶⁹ Stowell. *Redefining Leadership*, 23-24.

¹⁷⁰ Barna, *True Disciples*, 69-79.

An explicit goal of this all necessary research was to find out why the Unity Light Ministries Network continues to experience its struggles regarding the whole idea of disciple-making and also to be able to show the importance of intentional discipleship in doing God's kingdom work. The essence of a true disciple could get lost in the way the church does its ministry.

Therefore, it must be crucial for a ministry that focuses on God's work to have a clear and vivid broad picture of what it means to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus. The means described above that the main thing of focus should be a true disciple-follower of Christ must love God with their head (mind), heart (soul), and hand (action) in every step of their life.¹⁷¹ Indeed, this will enhance the spiritual growth and blossom into a mature believer and leader as well.

The importance of a viable discipleship process cannot be overstressed enough. Scripture emphasizes the importance and need for intentional discipleship. Another objective of this research project is to enable and help the Unity Light Ministries Network and its leadership experience and see the importance of intentional discipleship. Thus, a disciple must be assured of their salvation (John 3:16-21; Ephesians 1:13-14); learn and comprehend the precepts and principles of the Christian way of life (Matthew 6:33; 2 Timothy 3:16-17); and walk-in obedience of the Laws and Commands of God (Galatians 5:16-24; 1 John 3:16-24). It goes to assert that a disciple must also be an ambassador of God in the world (Acts 1:8; John 17:14-18); a disciple must learn to serve others in the same faith or otherwise (Philippians 2:1-4; James 2:14-24); and a disciple-follower must also reproduce themselves in Christ (Matthew 28:19; Acts 4:1-11).¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Dana Allin. *Simple Discipleship: Grow Your Faith, Transform Your Community*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2018, 12-13.

¹⁷² Barna, *True Disciples*, 21-23.

Indeed, in the end, the Lord Jesus takes all the glory. Having a viable discipleship process would also mean having a clearer vision for the church's ministry so that its pastors and leaders can be aware of where everyone is heading or going. Yes, this will enable the church or ministry to develop mature disciples, but leaders, which would disciple other disciples of Christ.¹⁷³

Explanation of the Procedure to be Used

The first step will be to create a survey questionnaire to collect the participants' necessary information or data. The survey consists of different components covering essential questions relating to discipleship and disciple-making, intentional discipleship, evangelism, missions, and church ministry leaders being researched or studied. The participants were expected to answer simple “Yes” or “No” questions with such research instruments like, “There is a yearly budget for intentional discipleship in my congregation,” “The researcher’s congregation financially gives yearly to support mission work,” “The researcher’s congregation stresses the need for every follower of Christ to share Jesus by their lifestyles and while also serving others in their local community,” “The researcher’s congregation has intentionally designed programs and services for caring ministries to share God’s love with the local community.” The research questions or instrument also included Likert Scale questions like, “The researcher’s congregation teaches that every believer is called to be a disciple,” “The researcher’s congregation teaches its members that being a disciple of Christ overrides one’s interests.” The participants chose the options, “Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree,” among other instruments.

¹⁷³ Earley and Dempsey, *Small Group*, 68-69.

The pastors and church leaders (evangelists, small group leaders) answered the researcher-designed survey questionnaire. On Saturday, July 18, 2020, the participant answered the survey at Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) at the time approved by the researcher. The participants arrived on the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) premises, where the survey was conducted. The survey was done in Kakata, Liberia, West Africa. All of the 12 participants completed fifteen (15) minutes survey.

The researcher conducted the research survey. Only the preapproved participants or selected by the Assistant Director for Global Missions and Ministry Network of the Unity Light Ministries International participated in this research survey. The research under consideration is mainly focused on pastors and church leaders (evangelists and small- group leaders). The researcher or facilitator did not have any particular interest in choosing any of the research survey participants. The primary criterion for participating in the survey was that each participant would have to be a Unity Light Ministry Network member. For selecting the participants in the research survey, the Assistant Director for Global Missions and Ministry Network of the Unity Light Ministries International considered an additional “in-house” criterion while picking the participants. According to him, participants were chosen based on how they have remained faithful to the Christian faith and the Unity Light Ministry Network.

Against this background, each participant was given direction on how to access the research survey through a web address that was made available to them and a password to ensure that only people approved by the researcher could take the survey. The participants were all members of the congregation of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC), and they were between the ages of eighteen (18) to sixty-five (65). Each participant was able to give his consent if he agrees to partake in the research study.

The consent form was the first page of the research survey questionnaire used to enable each participating person to read and consent before proceeding to complete the research survey. Each participant was not required to sign and return any consent form because the research survey was designed to maintain the participants' anonymity. In other words, the participants (or respondents) in this research survey were utterly unknown or acknowledged by the researcher.

It also alerts further that the researcher was not involved in choosing or selecting any participant in this survey. The selection of the study participants was made by the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC). The participants' anonymity was an essential part of this research survey; every personal or possible identifying element of the participants was not a part of the data collection process. If any participant had decided not to take part in the survey further, the researcher would have honored their decision to stay out. Those mentioned above would not cause any issue to the research process. The facilitator of this research did not intend to use any other research instruments of interest except those instruments approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Liberty University. Therefore, the data collected from this research survey was the primary data. That is, it was a "first hand" one.

Indeed, the researcher reviewed all of the data and categorized them into good themes that suited the respondents' perceptions and the studied problem. After the researcher collected the data, he employed inductive analysis of the data and rightly or adequately put them into a more sound element of revealing information that should make sense. This process entailed moving between whatever would be observed within the database until the researcher arrived at a comprehensive set of concluding themes.

The researcher systematically collected data from the pastors, evangelists, and small group leaders. Participants took part in this thesis project so that the researcher would be able to make the right decision or judgment in a manner that should be able to help the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) employ the best process of discipleship in their church setting. The research survey was anonymous; this means no identifiable personal data (e.g., first & last names, email & home address, date of birth, etc.) were not included in the research survey questionnaire.

The survey required the participants to give answers to twenty (20) questions to describe what characterizes the process of discipleship. The questions also helped the participants to share their understandings about why the pastors, evangelists, small group leaders, and other church leaders of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) are struggling to find the right path to grow the church numerically, spiritually, and by employing the process of discipleship. Twelve (12) participants were chosen or selected to partake in the study. Of course, the study participants were all pastors and church leaders (evangelists, small group leaders) of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) in Kakata, Liberia. The criteria used to select or choose the participants were that every participant had to be a pastor or a church leader (evangelists or small group leaders) from the Unity Light Ministry Network. This specific group of participants was chosen because no other alternative would satisfy the Doctor of Ministry thesis project criteria.

Furthermore, these specific participants were chosen or selected because the group would help answer the research survey questions and that they are all part of the ministry being studied. Undeniably, these participants make up a good sample. No participant will have an advantage over their fellow participants because they will answer the same research survey questions under the same conditions and environment.

The researcher collected or gathered the data when everyone fully completed the research survey questionnaire. Additionally, when the participants complete the survey, the researcher then promptly analyze the data. The researcher accessed the research survey database to analyze the data but did not print out each participant's completed survey. Instead, the researcher downloaded each participant's completed study and saved this information on the researcher's password-locked computer.

When the researcher completed a full analysis of the data collected, the researcher also saved the results on the same computer above. The researcher is the only one who has access to this computer and the survey data. The researcher decided to conduct this research survey at the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) central office; the headquarter of the Unity Light Ministries International in Kakata, Liberia, in West Africa. This survey was a lengthy questionnaire that consists of twenty (20) questions.

The purpose of this research survey is to describe the characteristics or understandings of pastors and church leaders (evangelist and small group leaders) of the Unity Light Ministry Network.¹⁷⁴ The main emphasis of this research survey was about fact-finding. As mentioned above, those are why every respondent (or participant) was asked the same questions. The respondents of the study answered all the survey questions under the same conditions or circumstances as well.¹⁷⁵ The facilitator of this research survey will be the person who organizes and carries out any analysis when the data is fully collected.

¹⁷⁴ Tim Sensing. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Eugene, Oregon, 2011, 115-116.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

The researcher analyzed the information through processes of the description of the framework. The researcher also analyzed the data using essential issues to bring light or illumination to the primary evaluation questions.¹⁷⁶ The researcher intended to probe the research survey data in a step-by-step manner to align appropriately with the problem statement and purpose statement of this thesis project when arranged in any thematic form.¹⁷⁷ The researcher used open-ended questions and the Likert scale form of questioning.

The Intervention Design

Churches that have intentional discipleship processes are most effective in numerical and spiritual growth. Disciple-making in the true sense can be successful by discovering an organizing principle that starts on a sure foundation of Scripture.¹⁷⁸ Disciple-making is also discerning the immense power of producing other disciples through growth, and while also helping other followers (disciples) of Christ to go or reach the next level of maturity.¹⁷⁹ This survey research described above was designed for the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) to discover what is happening with their level of understanding regarding the process of discipleship and disciple-making. Many churches in Africa tend to emphasize the whole idea of only sticking to evangelism and think that it is discipleship. Churches in Liberia behave in the same manner.

¹⁷⁶ Tim Sensing. *Qualitative Research*, 210, Quoting Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2015, 439.

¹⁷⁷ Tim Sensing. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011, 107.

¹⁷⁸ Earley and Dempsey, *Disciple Making*, 13-22.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 117-125.

This intervention design has to help pastors and other church leaders of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) experience or see the relationship between evangelism and discipleship; and while also viewing discipleship as actually one of the central practices of evangelism.¹⁸⁰ This research study was strategically done or undertaking for the Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) in Kakata, Liberia. The research study is also meant for other African Independent churches to benefit, especially those experiencing similar issues. This research's success will be hugely meaningful and essential for all these churches that are willing to learn from the experience of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) in Kakata, Republic of Liberia.

The process of discipleship becomes a journey in search of a life destined to flourish as God's kingdom work is propagated in the church and the world.¹⁸¹ The researcher properly facilitated this research to succeed to the glory of God. Hence, if this study is successful, other churches will have a blueprint to follow in learning the process of intentional discipleship to grow their ministry spiritually and numerically.

The intervention design is put together to help small group leaders of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC). It means the success of this research would lead to or bring about leadership development that would involve leaders (mature disciples) developing other leaders who would be grounded in Christ's instructions and His words. This research study intends to encourage the mature disciples to create a culture of developing other leaders that would take over later on regarding ministry duties. It also means that said mature disciples would teach, model, and champion leadership values.

¹⁸⁰ C.J.P.N. Niemandt. "Rediscovering Joy in Costly and Radical Discipleship in Mission." *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72, no. 4 (2016): 1-2.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 1-2.

Mature disciples weave leadership lessons into every gathering, events, and meetings of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) by illustrating the spiritual disciplines.¹⁸² It has become sporadic to hear or see the discipline of the Christian life these days. Nowadays, it has become difficult for many churches to portray the discipline in the heart of the evangelical way of life. But this study is also intended through this intervention design to help the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) to experience the spiritual discipline of stewardship through the process of intentional discipleship, and all for the real purpose of godliness in the church. As mentioned earlier, those are right for the ministry being studied because to carry out any spiritual discipline minus real direction will be like doing a monotone sequence of work. Hence, for the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) to benefit from its pastors and other church leaders' proper stewardship through the process of intentional discipleship, there has to be a level of godliness that should be a consequence of a disciplined spiritual life.¹⁸³

An ancillary goal of this study is that at the end of everything, it is hoped that the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) will learn that its pastors and church leaders need one another and that they are all part of the big picture of God's priority. But for most people need to become a mature follower of the Lord Jesus Christ is an example. Each pastor, evangelist, and small group leader has to be an example for all to follow.¹⁸⁴ Suppose the church or ministry can experience all of these as a result of this study.

In that case, their ministry can expect to not only depict the process of intentional discipleship, but they can besides achieve their goal of growing their church spiritually and

¹⁸² Bill Donahue & Russ Robinson. *Building a Life-Changing Small Group Ministry: A Strategic Guide for Leading Group Life in Your Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012, 93-97.

¹⁸³ Donald S. Whitney. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991, 131-132.

¹⁸⁴ Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, 2007, 9-20.

numerically, to the glory of God the Father. Indeed, this is biblical leadership. Another intent of this intervention design is that it is hoped that at the end of this study, the pastors and other leaders of the unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) will play a more significant role in making disciples who would, in turn, make disciples for Christ. Such a viable path or tread will only see an immense church growth both spiritually and numerically.

This research study is all about the role of leadership (biblical leadership) in the process of intentional discipleship. Biblical leadership then takes the initiative to influence people to grow in holiness and passionately promise the extension of God's kingdom in the world. The pastors and other church leaders of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) can achieve this by being proactive, which involves taking the initiative to influence (or impact) others; purposive, that is, by focusing on helping people individually, and the church collectively to grow in godliness and to obey God's declared plan of extending His dynamic kingdom; and by being comprehensive, allowing God's dynamic kingdom work to impact the character and conduct of others who seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ genuinely.¹⁸⁵

It means for the ministry to achieve its goal of growing the church, their pastors and other church leaders have to depict that authoritative, unique place of leadership in the church through compliance with the Word of God, so as also to confront the problems the ministry is facing; and to also encourage our exhort other disciples to follow in their stead.¹⁸⁶

Another intent of this intervention design of the research will be to help the pastors and the other leaders of the Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) be in one accord with the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit's gifts.

¹⁸⁵ Don N. Howell, Jr. *Servant of the Servant: A Biblical Theology of Leadership*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2003, 2-3.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 56-61.

If these leaders can identify their gifts, this will help them help or lead others to determine their gifts or purposes. The above mentioned enabled others to engage with their true calling of what God wants them to do in His kingdom as they disciple others through the process of intentional discipleship. Those above helped each leader learn why God made them who God wants them to be as these leaders carry out God's kingdom work.¹⁸⁷ As mentioned above, doing what God has called us to do should not be seen as an ordinary job that people go to every day and can be dismissed because it is temporary.

It should rather be seen as the work (or purpose) for which God has brought us into this world to perform in His kingdom because it is eternal. It means the pastors and other church leaders of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) will let God flow in their work so that what they do as their work will only honor God.¹⁸⁸ Indeed, this will help their ministry to grow spiritually and numerically as well.

The researcher believes that the process of intentional discipleship succeeding requires a team effort. It means teamwork requires the pastors and other church leaders all being on board with the ministry's vision. The intervention design helps the pastors and other church leaders of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) to see the need to work together as a team so that each person can be allowed to contribute to God's plan. It is important to note that God never promised believers to "find a church where every member of the congregation looks just like us." But instead, He wants us to find a worshiping church where every member of the congregation looks like Him! Everyone was created with a gift that His Spirit masterminded.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ John Ortberg. *The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010, 11-22.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 217-224.

¹⁸⁹ Wayne Cordeiro. *Doing Church as a Team: The Miracle of Teamwork and how it Transforms Churches*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2004, 50-51.

At the end of the study, it is also the hope that the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) will be able to mine the leadership gifts in their church to build a true leadership base because nothing is more or extremely impressive than seeing mature disciples' dreams released and being used for God's own glory to be showcased for all to experience in the open. In this way, every leader in the church would be expected to feel secured and be willing to overlook others' flaws while also giving away credits to others and remaining anonymous for the sake of the success of the ministry and God's kingdom work.¹⁹⁰

For the individual, a spiritual gift is God's enablement for personal spiritual service (1Corinthians 12:11). For the church or ministry of God's kingdom work, a spiritual gift is a person uniquely chosen and equipped by the Holy Spirit to edify the church into maturation (Ephesians 4:11-13).¹⁹¹ As leaders of the church being researched or studied, they will learn that spiritual gifts are not natural abilities; they differ. The source of natural talents is God, but through our parents, they are possessed from birth, and their purpose is to benefit mankind on the natural level.

They are processed by being recognized, developed, and exercised by the individual. As a matter of function, believers ought to be dedicated to God for His use and glory. On the other hand, spiritual gifts are from God but independent of the believer's parents and probably from conversion. Their purpose is to benefit mankind on a spiritual level. These spiritual gifts must likewise be processed by recognition and be developed and exercised by believers, and they, too, ought to be used to the glory of God.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Cordeiro, *Doing Church* 87-101.

¹⁹¹ Paul Enns. *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2008, 280-81.

¹⁹² Ibid.

These are all things that could result according to the intervention design to benefit the pastors and church leaders of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC).

The researcher who undertakes this research or study is also a member of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) family. The researcher is the one responsible for the entire study. He was permitted by the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) community to do this research or analysis. He collected and interpreted the data and passed the result over to the Unity Light Ministry to make the best innovative and perhaps transformative decisions in the ministry's interest at large.

This research project is not designed to understand the geometry behind the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) problem in Liberia; it is also hoping to address why this church ministry does not have an intentional discipleship process for numerical and spiritual growth. The researcher attempted to find the answer(s) to the “so what” question that should be intended to bring alive the whole research findings. At the end of the study, the researcher will recommend a specific plan of action to the church's authorities or ministry being studied. The researcher's recommendations would enable the authority leaders to make the right decisions that should reverse this trend that led to the problem faced by the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC). This research contributes to ministry leadership because there was no real academic study in the Liberian context on the process of intentional discipleship that would address the above church's problem. No one has drawn attention to such an issue that hinders the church's spiritual and numerical growth in the African context, as it relates to Liberia.

Analysis and Evaluation

As stated earlier, the action research method was employed. In such a primary action research method, the facilitator or researcher was expected to carry out the following: gather the right or vital information (data), define and describe the situation according to the survey conducted. The researcher also thought, explored, and analyzed what was occurring or happening, interpreted, and explained how or why things were the way they are by theorizing. The researcher then acted by giving the appropriate recommendation to the leadership of the ministry being studied. That is, the researcher defined a course of action based on analysis and interpretation. The facilitator also guided the church regarding the recommendation and then gave an evaluation due to the study.¹⁹³

This researcher intends to be fair and unbiased to enhance the right products through proper research. This facilitator's role was not to push his agenda to not influence the result of the study.¹⁹⁴ The researcher made sure to keep the unity in the analysis of the data by focusing it from the perspective of the participants of the research survey so that it makes it complete meaning according to whatever was gleaned from other writers in the literature review of this thesis project. This research was qualitative. It means that the critical focus of this researcher was to learn the participants' understanding of why the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) is struggling to grow their church numerically and spiritually in Kakata, Liberia. It is imperative because it helps the researcher address the issue being studied as a whole.

This researcher used textual analysis based on the research questions in terms of language, images, or the researcher's observations to analyze the research principles and types related to intentional discipleship. The participants' answers would be analyzed thematically.

¹⁹³ Ernest T. Stringent. *Action Research*, 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2014, 7-8.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 19-20.

The research survey questionnaire's responses were organized into common themes and patterns as the researcher would get from observing the information gathered. The researcher also classified the results into the survey answers into categories and quantified the results to draw up pie charts and bar graphs from illustrating results. This research has a vocational intention to bring out the best description of the results given the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) practices and see how said practices can be retooled to suit a 21st-century church that practices intentional disciple-making.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

The implementation aspect or stage was done upon the approval of the thesis project proposal by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). After the approval, the researcher proceeded with the research process by creating the appropriate condition for data collection and making available the survey to the various participants. But the researcher allowed each participant to read an informed consent form to make their decision to partake or not in the research survey. The researcher also got a permission letter from the Unity Light Ministries International and Ministry Network Executive Director. The aforesaid means the researcher obtained the participants' consent after thoroughly explaining the project rationale and all that concerned the project. The participants were not asked to physically sign any document or show any personal identifier because the research survey was anonymous.

After the Institutional Review Board's (IRB's) approval, the survey did not go on in February or March of this year, as was promised or stated earlier in this chapter. A should have been done on a Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to noon either in February or March during the summer season. The facilitator ensured that all logistics be available to enable every participant to be fully engaged in the survey.

Well, the survey could not be done as scheduled in February or March because of a travel ban imposed by the Liberia Government. The travel ban imposed came about because of the Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic situation that had already spread in Liberia. It then became impossible to conduct the research survey, as indicated earlier. Today, we see that the COVID-19 is now a pandemic that has already affected the whole world. The ban in Liberia was ended or lifted in late June of 2020.

Initially, the research survey was scheduled to be done on a single day, Saturday, from 9:00 in the morning to noon. But that was not possible due to some other logistical reasons and COVID-19 rules (guidelines) that were being observed in Kakata, Liberia. First, the generator at the Unity Community Church got out of order. To ensure electricity, the facilitator had to use a generator to cover the research survey period. There was a social distancing guideline to follow. The computer was also out of order, so the researcher had to get additional computers from the Assistant Director to be used specifically on the survey days.

The participants had to study one person at a time instead of two persons with two computers. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic situation among those other obstacles, the facilitator had to make some changes. He created or established a three-day window from Saturday, July 18, 2020, to Monday, July 20, 2020, to allow every participant to have the chance and opportunity to do the survey. The researcher had to create a password to enable each participant to participate in the study. Each participant still used the same number of time to survey logging on. The survey was done at the Unity Community Church in Kakata, Liberia, from July 18th to 20th, 2020. All twelve (12) participants took part in the survey; no one opted out even amid all the obstacles.

The survey consisted of five (5) “yes or no” questions, fourteen (14) questions in a five (5)-point Likert scale, and one (1) short answer question, making it a total of twenty (20) items.¹⁹⁵ The researcher carried out a full analysis and evaluation of the data, and the results were documented accordingly. The researcher implemented the intervention design by carrying out the following:¹⁹⁶ First, the researcher identified the major issue (s) for which the investigation or survey is focused. Second, the researcher reviewed other concerns and issues that emerged from the analysis of the information gathered or surveyed. Third, the researcher organized the issues according to the degree of difficulty (this was often best to commence with activities that were likely to be successful). Fourth, the researcher chose the issue (s) that should be worked on initially. Fifth, the researcher ranked the rest in order of priority for final action or recommendation.

According to this research survey, the specific research tool used was a survey questionnaire. The criteria for evaluating this intervention was the data gathered from the study. The researcher used the appropriate data analysis method that brought out the proper or right results according to the data. The researcher used the content analysis method to analyze the data collected from the survey. The data was arranged into common themes. This method was used to analyze the specific aspects of the Unity Light pastors and leaders' characteristics regarding the intentional discipleship process. The researcher used the survey manner of collecting data because it is cheap or less costly and not time-consuming. Also, it suits the kind of research because the data collection procedure had to be anonymous. The survey questionnaire was a fast way to gather the data.

¹⁹⁵ See Appendix B to examine the research questionnaire.

¹⁹⁶ Stringent, *Action Research*, 167-68.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

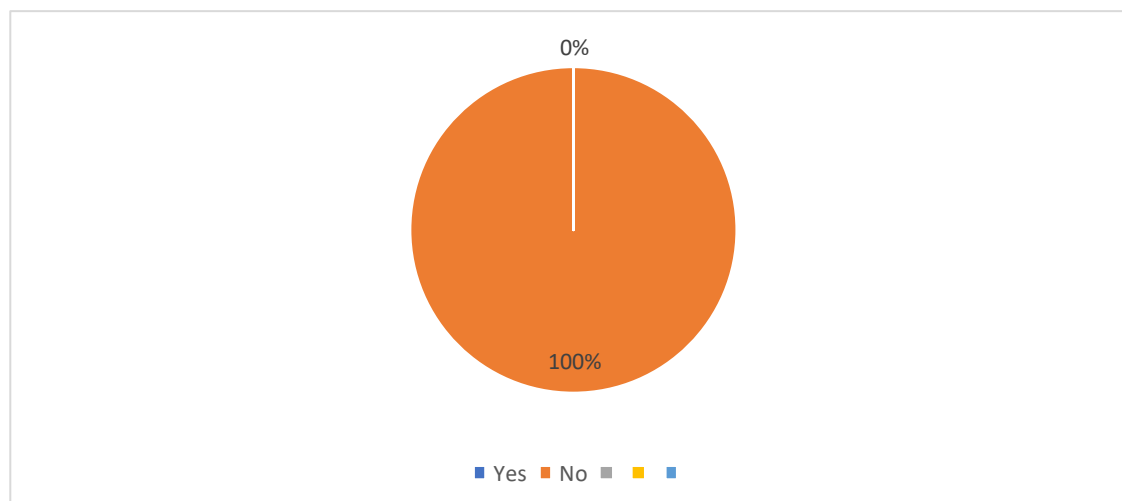
The research survey was carried out as planned by the researcher. The survey was done at the Unity Community Church in Kakata, Liberia. Twelve (12) participants completed the survey questionnaires on the ministry's computer according to the time specified. The results for each question surveyed are represented by a table and a chart (bar or pie). Pie charts are used for items 1 to 4 and 17, and bar charts are employed for questions 5 through 16, and questions 18 and 19. Here are the results from the survey, as depicted in this chapter.

Q1. There is a yearly budget for intentional discipleship in my congregation. Yes () No ()

Frequency Table 1

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Yes	0	0%
No	12	100%
Total	12	100%

Figure 1



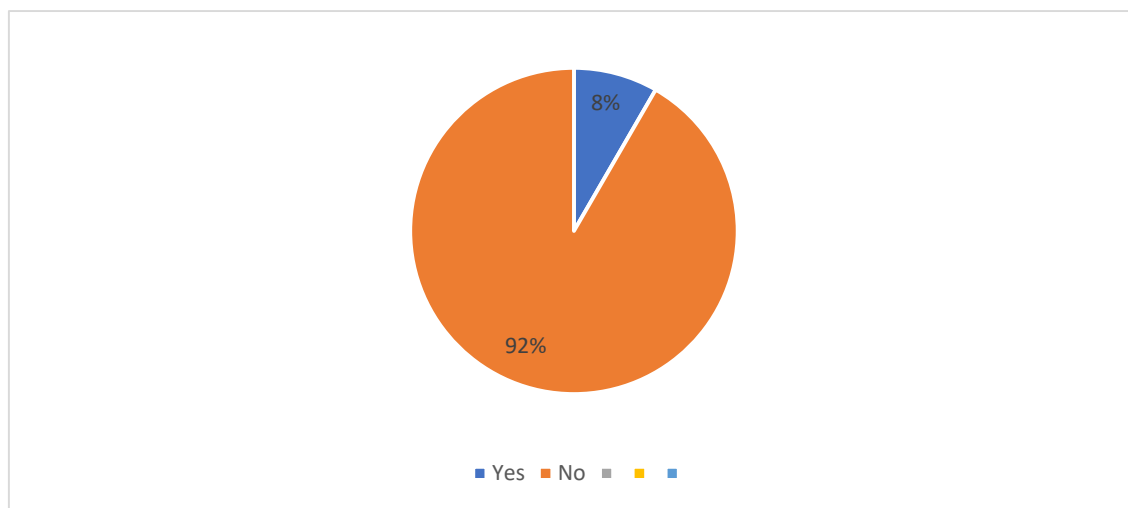
According to the results from question #1, all twelve respondents agreed that their congregation does not have a yearly budget for intentional discipleship. That can be seen from the table and graph. One hundred percent (100%) answered “no,” while no respondent answered with a “yes.”

Q2. My congregation financially gives yearly to support mission work. Yes () No ()

Frequency Table 2

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Yes	1	8%
No	11	92%
Total	12	100%

Figure 2



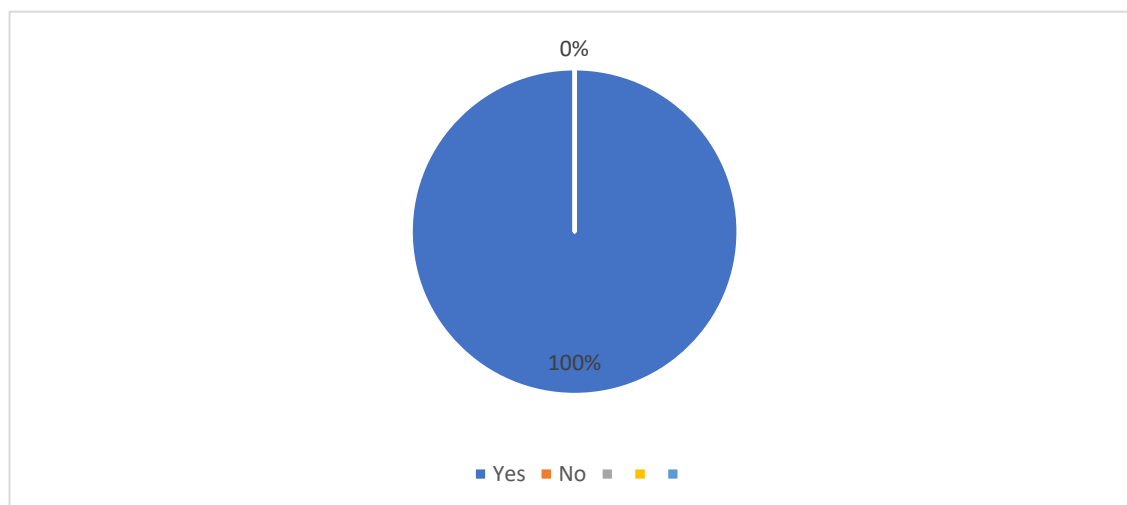
The results from this second question show that one (1) respondent answered “yes,” and eleven (11) respondents answered “no.” Those above means eight percent (8%) of the respondents agreed or suggested that they believe that their congregation makes a yearly financial contribution or support to their ministry's mission work. On the other hand, ninety-two percent (92%) of the respondents also expressed their concerns that their congregation did not give any yearly financial support to their church’s mission work.

3. My congregation stresses the need for every follower of Christ to share Jesus by their life-styles and while also serving others in their local community. Yes () No ()

Frequency Table 3

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Yes	12	100%
No	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Figure 3



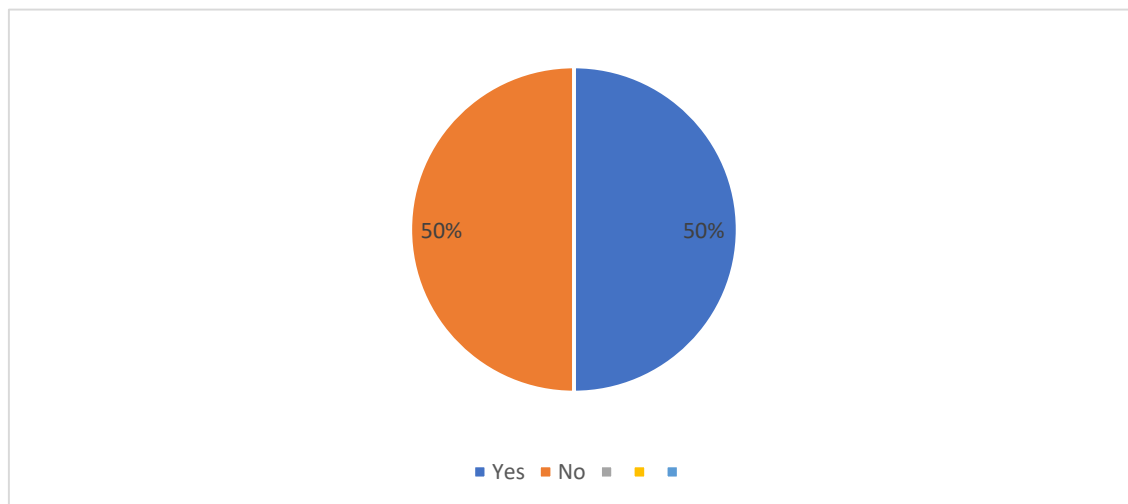
According to the results from question #3, all twelve (12) respondents answered “yes,” and nobody answered with a “no.” From the graph, it can be noticed that every respondent shared the view that their church always stresses that their members (or every follower of Christ) for that matter should be able to share Jesus by their daily living, and while also extending into the larger community through service to them. That is why the graph shows a hundred percent (100%) in agreement.

Q4. My congregation has intentionally designed programs and services for caring ministries to share God’s love with local community. Yes () No ()

Frequency Table 4

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Yes	6	50%
No	6	50%
Total	12	100%

Figure 4



The frequency table shows that six (6) respondents answered “yes,” and six (6) respondents answered “no.” As mentioned earlier, half of the respondents shared the view that their church did not have any intentionally designed programs and services for caring ministries that should help them share God’s love with the local community. On the other hand, half of the respondents also thought otherwise. In terms of percentage, the results can further be depicted in the manner that fifty percent (50%) of the respondents agreed that their congregation has intentionally designed programs and services for caring ministries to share God’s love with the local community, and while fifty percent (50%) did not accept such a statement or assertion.

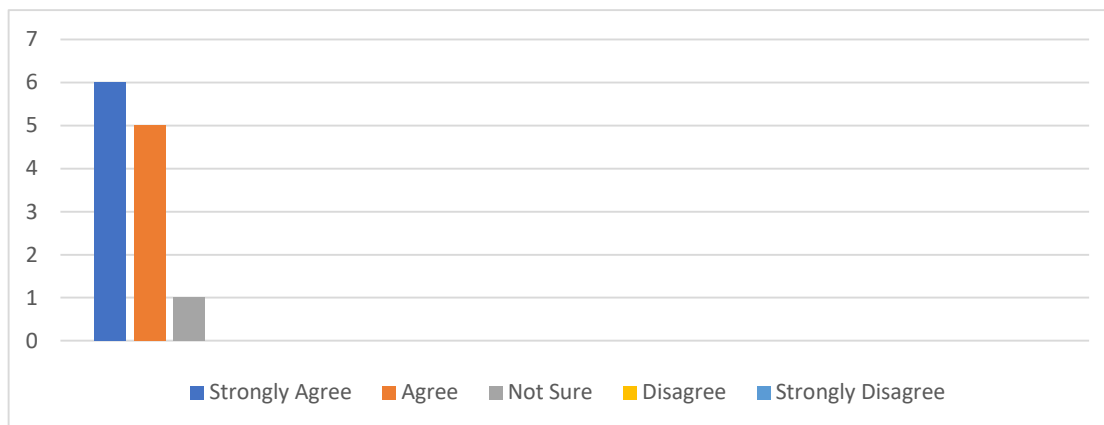
Q5. My congregation teaches that every believer is called to be a disciple.

Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Frequency Table 5

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	6	50%
Agree	5	42%
Not Sure	1	8%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Figure 5



The results from this question show that six (6) of the respondents strongly agreed that their congregation teaches that every believer is called to be a disciple. Five (5) of the respondents also agreed with that statement. Only one (1) respondent was “not sure.” It can also be further said that fifty percent (50%) of the respondents, while forty-two percent (42%) agreed to that assertion. The aforementioned means ninety-two percent (92%) of the respondents were in agreement of some form with the statement. But eight percent (8%) of the respondent was not sure that they got such teaching from their congregation.

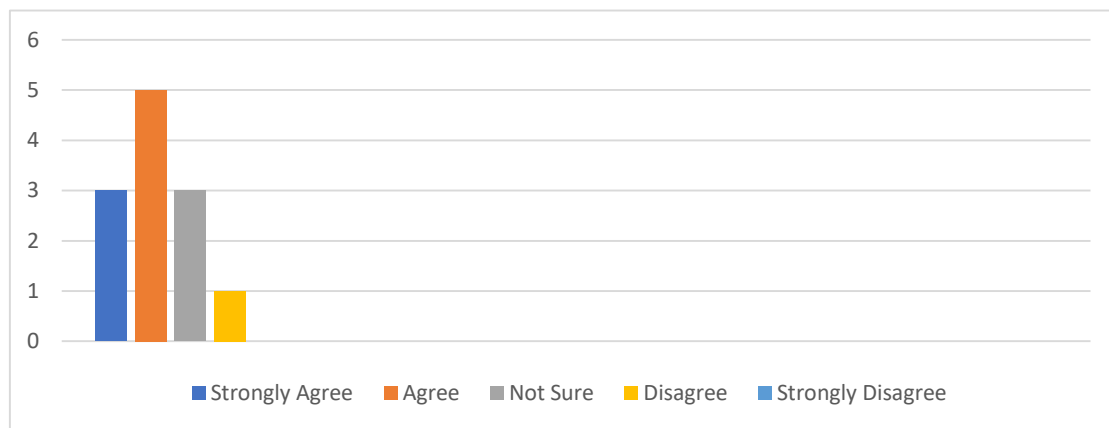
Q6. My congregation teaches its members that being a disciple of Christ overrides one's own interests.

Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Frequency Table 6

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	3	25%
Agree	5	42%
Not Sure	3	25%
Disagree	1	8%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Figure 6



The table results show that three (3) strongly agreed, while five (5) also agreed. Three (3) respondents were not sure, and while one (1) disagreed. The means as mentioned above, twenty-five percent (25%) and forty-two percent (42%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that their church teaches them that being a disciple of Christ means that this will also override their interest. On the other hand, twenty percent (25%) of the respondents were not sure that such teaching exists. Finally, eight percent (8%) of the respondents disagreed with such an assertion.

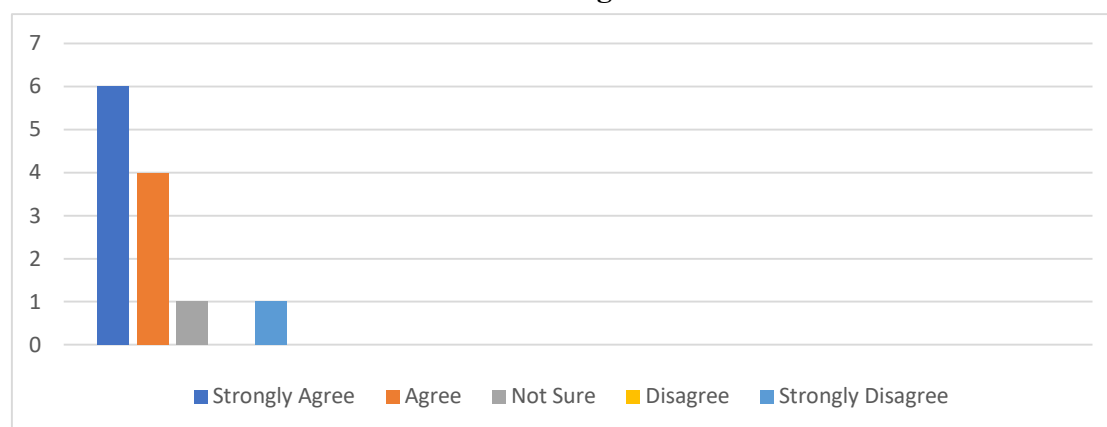
Q7. There is a difference between evangelism and discipleship/disciple-making.

Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Frequency Table 7

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	6	50%
Agree	4	33%
Not Sure	1	8%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	1	8%
Total	12	100%

Figure 7



The results from question seven (7), according to the frequency table list, half or six (6) of the respondents strongly agreed that there is a difference between evangelism and discipleship/disciple-making. Four (4) respondents agreed with that statement, and one (1) respondent was not sure. Lastly, one (1) respondent strongly disagreed that there is a difference between evangelism and discipleship/disciple-making. The aforesaid means that fifty percent (50%) of the respondents strongly agreed, and thirty-three percent (33%) also agreed. Eight percent (8%) were either not sure or disagreed that there is a difference between evangelism and discipleship/disciple-making.

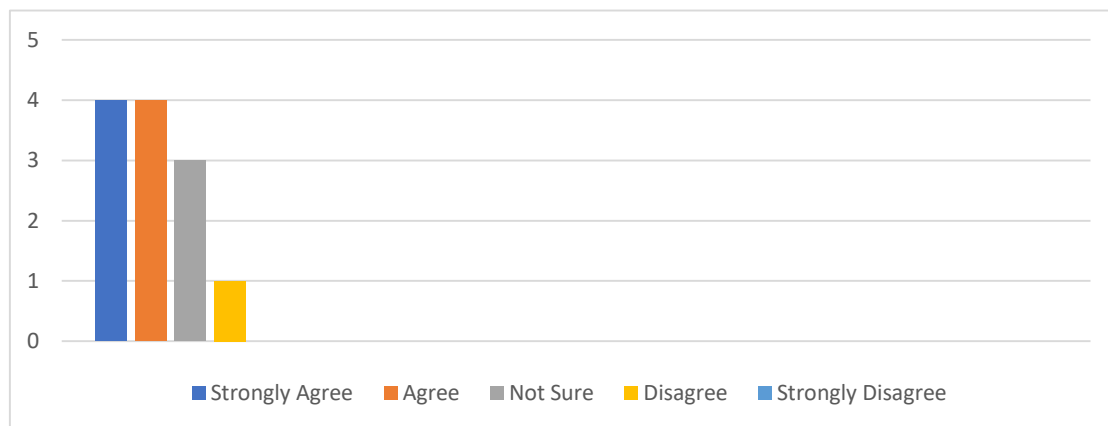
Q8. My congregation/ministry teaches that only disciples can help others become disciples of Christ.

Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Frequency Table 8

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	4	33%
Agree	4	33%
Not Sure	3	25%
Disagree	1	8%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Figure 8



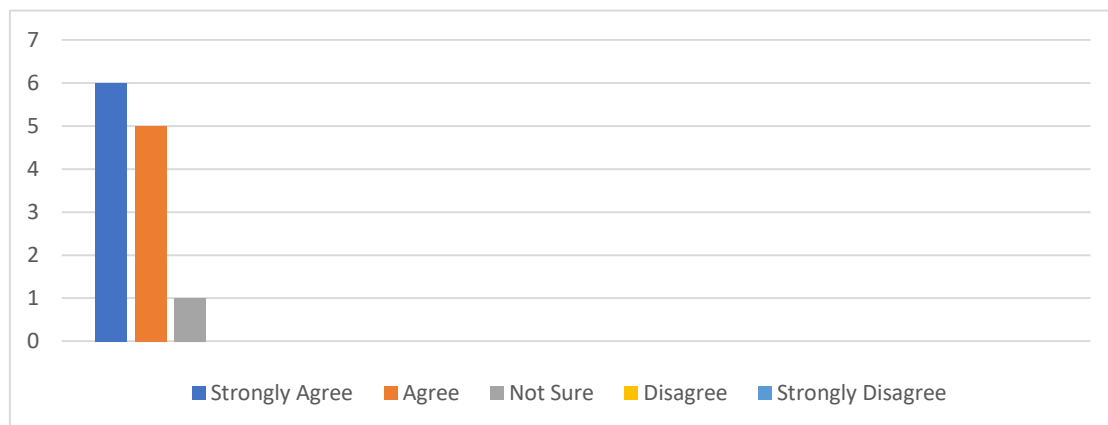
The table's results assert that four (4) respondents strongly agreed or agreed respectively that their congregation/ministry teaches that only disciples can help others become disciples of Christ. Three (3) respondents were not sure said assertion, and while one (1) disagreed. According to the graph, those respondents who strongly agreed or agreed makeup sixty-six percent (66%) of the results. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the respondents were undoubtedly not sure, and while eight percent (8%) disagreed that their congregation/ministry teaches that only disciples can help others become disciples of Christ.

Q9. My congregation teaches that a disciple must be an example in every area of their life.
Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Frequency Table 9

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	6	50%
Agree	5	42%
Not Sure	1	8%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Figure 9



The frequency table results show that six (6) respondents strongly agreed that their church or congregation teaches that a disciple must be an example in every area of their life. Five respondents also agreed with the statement, and while one (1) respondent was not sure of such a teaching in their congregation. The aforesaid asserts or explains that fifty percent (50%) of the respondents strongly agreed while also forty-two percent (42%) agreed. Only eight percent (8%) were not sure such teaching was done in their congregation.

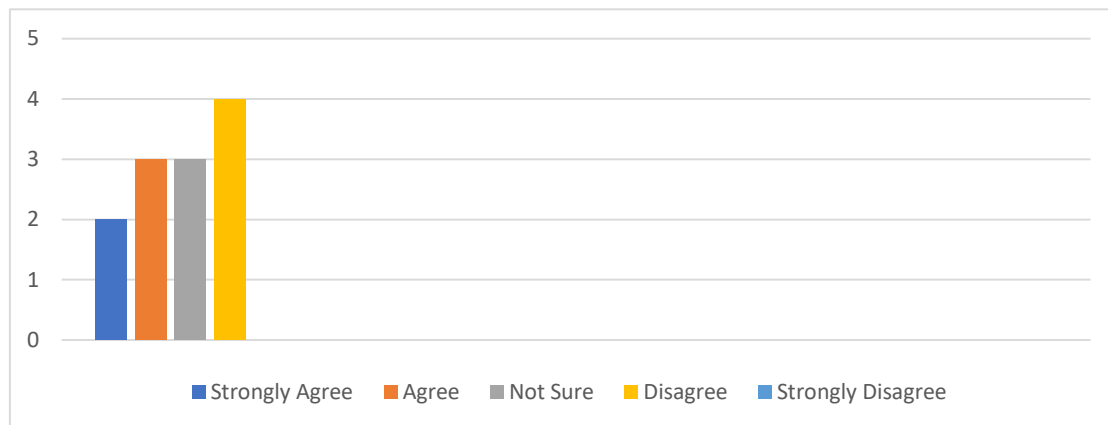
Q10. My/I pastor makes it his/her/my duty to always preach/teach messages on intentional disciple-making.

Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Frequency Table 10

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	2	17%
Agree	3	25%
Not Sure	3	25%
Disagree	4	33%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Figure 10



According to the results portrayed by the frequency table, two (2) respondents strongly agreed that their pastor makes it their duty always to preach/teach messages on intentional disciple-making. Three (3) respondents agreed, and while three (3) were not sure of such an assertion. Lastly, four (4) respondents disagreed with any such statement that they experienced from their church pastor. According to the graph, that goes to assert that seventeen (17%) of the respondents strongly agreed. Twenty-five percent (25%) agreed, and while twenty-five percent (25%) were not sure. Finally, thirty-three percent (33%) of the respondents were in disagreement with any such event taking place in their church.

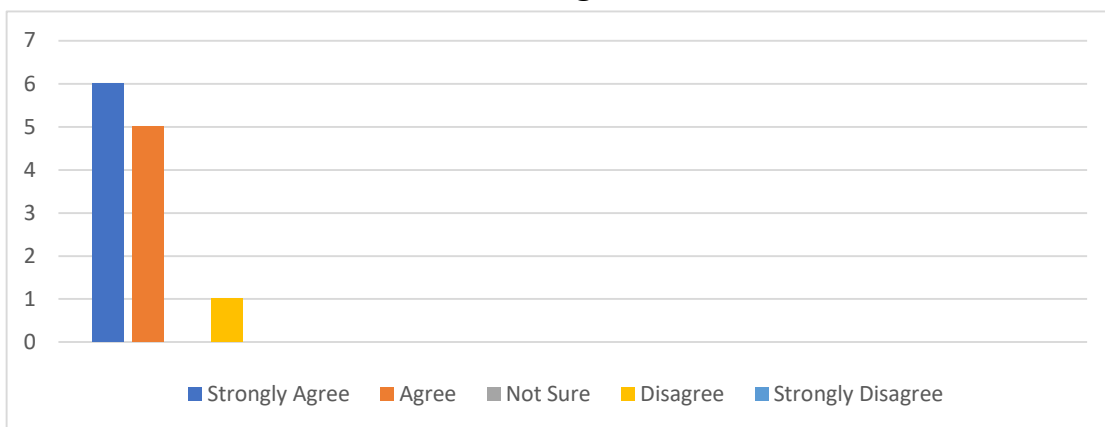
Q11. My congregation is a disciple-making church because it stresses disciple-making in their vision or purpose statement, and its leadership shows example.

Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Frequency Table 11

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	6	50%
Agree	5	42%
Not Sure	0	0%
Disagree	1	8%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Figure 11



The results from the frequency table suggest that six (6) respondents and five (5) respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, and while only one (1) respondent disagreed with the statement. That means fifty percent (50%) strongly agreed, and forty-two percent (42%) agreed as well. Eight percent (8%), on the other hand, disagreed with the assertion.

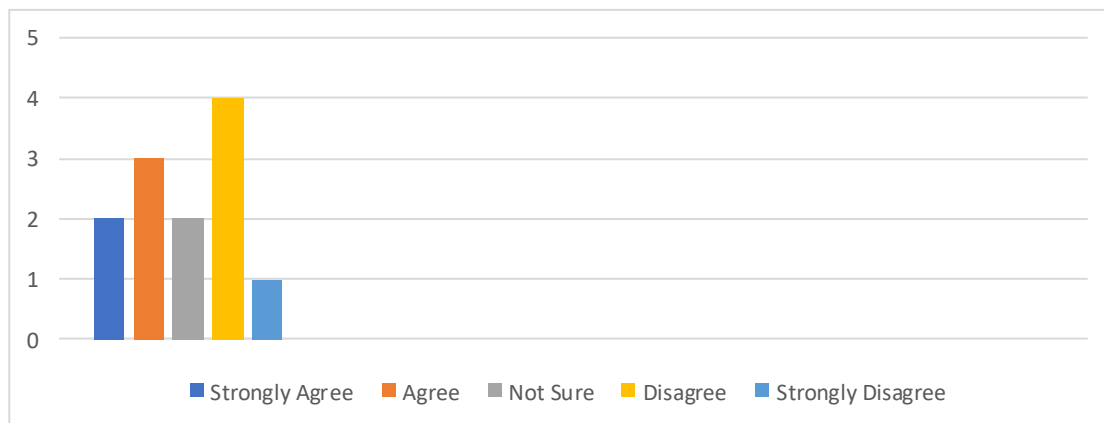
Q12. My congregation has many discipleship programs in place to equip and train new believers.

Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Frequency Table 12

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	2	17%
Agree	3	25%
Not Sure	2	17%
Disagree	4	33%
Strongly Disagree	1	8%
Total	12	100%

Figure 12



The survey results depict that two respondents strongly agree while three respondents agreed that their congregation has many discipleship programs to equip and train new believers. Two respondents were not sure, whereas four respondents disagreed with the statement. There was one (1) respondent who strongly disagreed as well. That means seventeen percent (17%) of the respondents strongly agreed, and twenty-five percent (25%) agreed that their congregation has many discipleship programs in place to equip and train new believers. Seventeen percent (17%) of those respondents were not sure of such a statement, and whereas thirty-three percent (33%) and eight percent (8%) disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively.

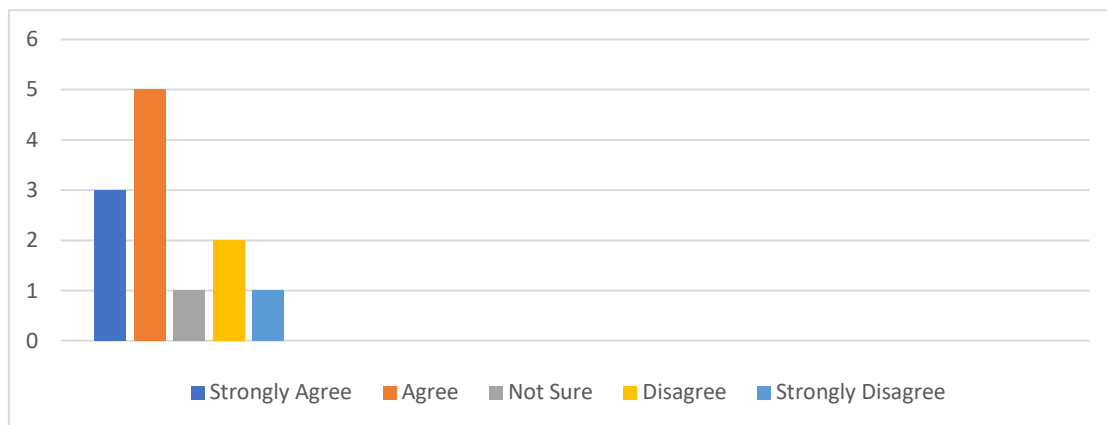
Q13. My congregation does not have an intentional discipleship path because of lack of budget.

Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Frequency Table 13

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	3	25%
Agree	5	42%
Not Sure	1	8%
Disagree	2	17%
Strongly Disagree	1	8%
Total	12	100%

Figure 13



The results from question thirteen (13), as shown in the frequency table, send the message that three (3) respondents strongly agreed, and five (5) also decided that their congregation does not have an intentional discipleship path because of a lack of budget. One (1) respondent was not sure. Two (2) respondents disagreed, and one (1) respondent strongly disagreed with the assertion described. That means, according to the graph, twenty-five percent (25%) of the respondents strongly agreed, and forty-two percent (42%) further agreed with the statement. On the other hand, seventeen percent (17%) and eight percent (8%) strongly disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively.

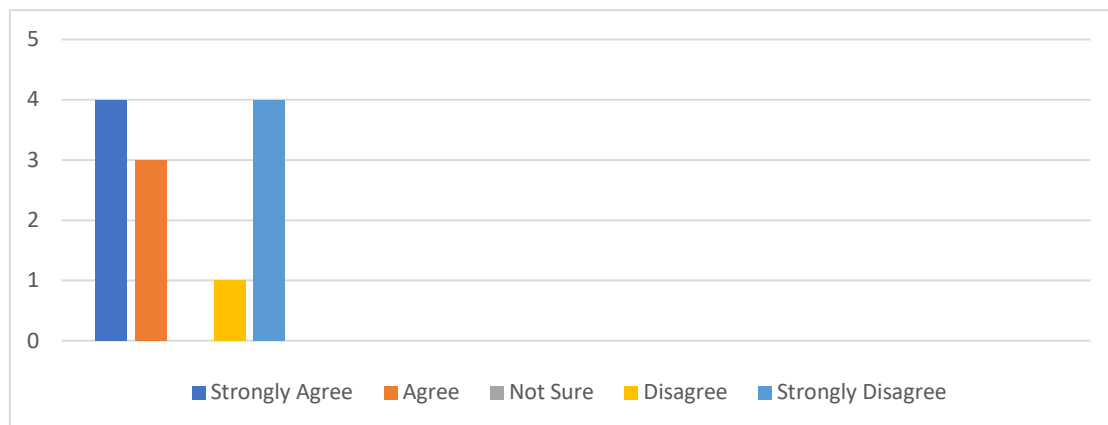
Q14. My congregation keeps track of the spiritual condition of its members.

Choose one: Strongly agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Frequency Table 14

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	4	33%
Agree	3	25%
Not Sure	0	0%
Disagree	1	8%
Strongly Disagree	4	33%
Total	12	100%

Figure 14



The frequency table results show that four (4) respondents strongly agreed, and three (3) more further agreed that their congregation keeps track of the spiritual condition of its members. One (1) and four (4) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. The graph further explains that thirty-three percent (33%) and twenty-five percent (25%) strongly agreed and agreed, respectively altogether. On the other hand, eight percent (8%) strongly disagreed, and while thirty-three percent (33%) strongly disagreed. Hence, fifty-eight percent (58%) of respondents were in some agreement, whereas forty-two percent (42%) thought otherwise.

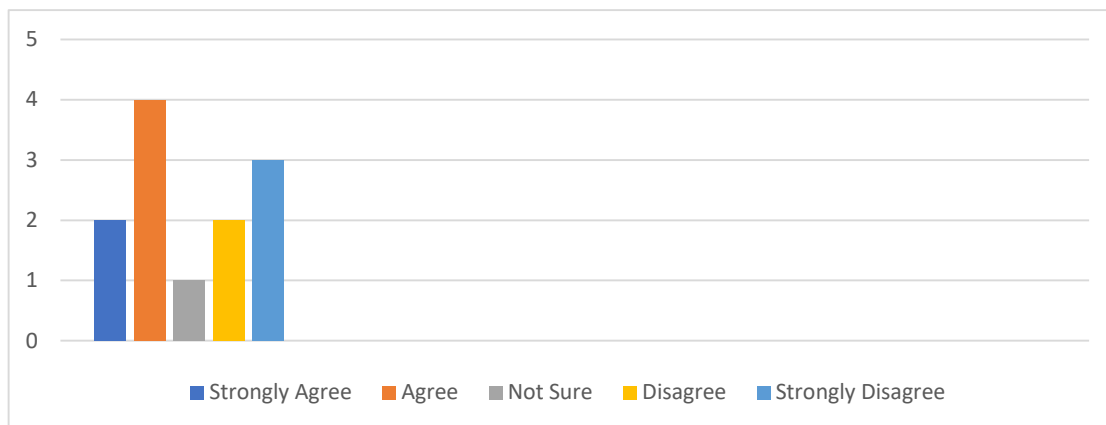
Q15. My congregation has an intentional and spiritual nurturing program.

Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Frequency Table 15

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	2	17%
Agree	4	33%
Not Sure	1	8%
Disagree	2	17%
Strongly Disagree	3	25%
Total	12	100%

Figure 15



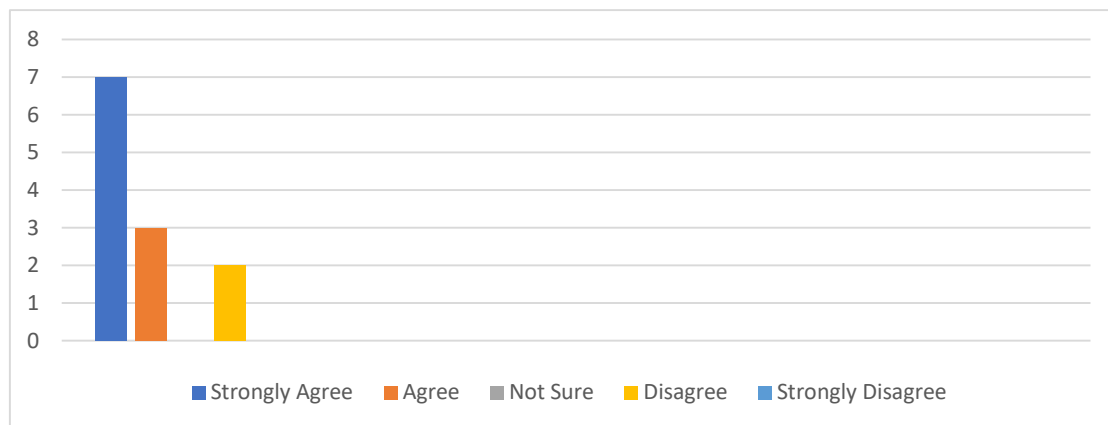
The table shows that two (2) respondents strongly agreed, and four (4) also agreed, only one (1) respondent was not sure. Going forward, two (2) respondents did disagree, and three (3) even strongly disagreed with the statement surveyed. Seventeen percent (17%) and thirty-three percent (33%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that their congregation has an intentional and spiritual nurturing program. Eight percent (8%) was not sure so far. Seventeen percent (17%) and twenty-five percent (25%) disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. Thus, 50% (fifty percent) of respondents agreed somehow, while 42% (forty-two percent) were in some form of disagreement with the assertion.

Q16. My congregation places emphasis on spiritual maturity.

Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Frequency Table 16

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	7	58%
Agree	3	25%
Not Sure	0	0%
Disagree	2	17%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Figure 16

The frequency table results above assert that seven (7) of the respondents strongly agreed that their congregation emphasizes spiritual maturity. Three (3) also agreed, and while two (2) respondents entirely disagreed with such a statement surveyed. Thus, the graph also depicts that fifty-eight percent (58%) of the respondents supported the statement by strongly agreeing that their congregation places emphasis on spiritual maturity, and with two other respondents agreeing with that assertion. Those two other makeup twenty-five percent (25%). On the other hand, seventeen percent (17%) disagreed with the statement that their congregation emphasized spiritual maturity in their church.

Q17. There is a yearly budget for evangelism in my congregation. Yes () No () Not Sure ()

Frequency Table 17

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Yes	4	33%
No	5	42%
Not Sure	3	25%
Total	12	100%

Figure 17

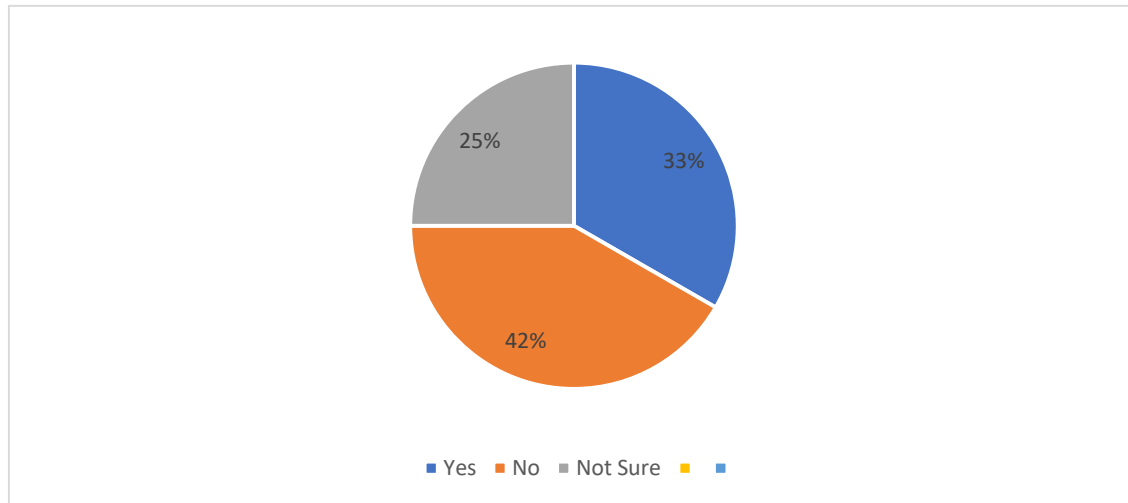


Table 17 suggests that four (4) respondents answered with a “yes,” and while five (5) respondents said “no” to the statement, “there is a yearly budget for evangelism in my congregation.” So far, three (3) of the respondents were not sure of the assertion under consideration. The aforesaid goes to assert from the graph that thirty-three percent (33%) of the respondents accepted that there was a yearly budget for evangelism in their congregation. Notwithstanding, forty-two percent (42%) of the respondents did not take an annual budget for evangelism in their congregation. Further, twenty-five percent (25%) of the respondents were unsure whether any yearly budget plan existed in their congregation.

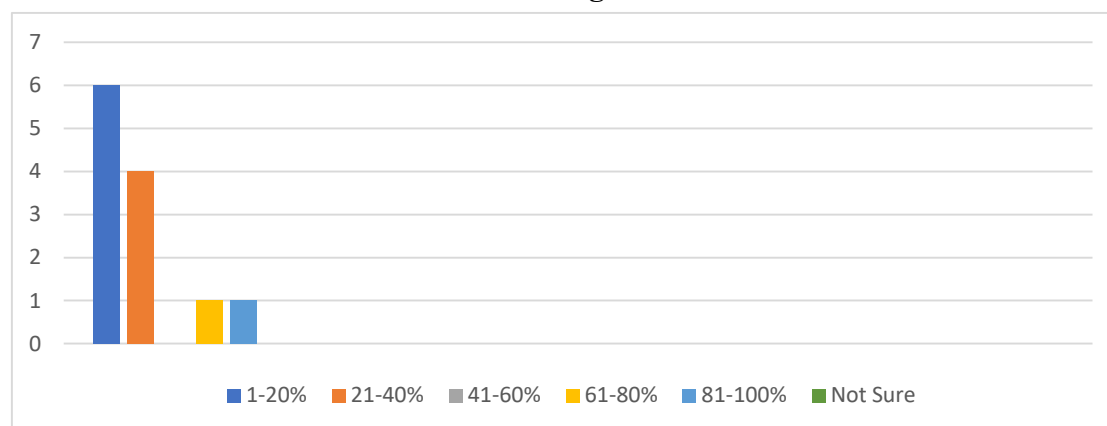
Q18. About ____ percent of my congregation is comfortable in sharing and modeling the good news of the gospel.

Choose one: 1-20 % () 21-40 % () 41-60 % () 61-80 % () 81-100 % () Not Sure ()

Frequency Table 18

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
1-20 %	6	50%
21-40 %	4	33%
41-60 %	0	0%
61-80 %	1	8%
81-100 %	1	8%
Not Sure	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Figure 18



According to the frequency table results, six (6) respondents thought one to twenty percent (1-20%) of their congregation was comfortable in sharing and modeling the good news of the gospel. Four (4) of the respondents believed that twenty-one to forty percent (21-40%) could carry out according to the statement under consideration. One respondent accepted that sixty-one to eighty percent (61-80%) of their congregation could effect that statement. One respondent also thought that eighty-one to one hundred percent (81-100%) could correctly perform such an idea.

Given the graph, it means that fifty percent (50%) of the respondents agreed that (1-20%) of their members were comfortable in sharing and modeling the good news of the gospel, and while thirty-three percent (33%) also thought that (21-40%) of their members were comfortable in sharing and modeling the good news of the gospel. The categories (61-80%) and (81-100%) each received eight percent (8%) of the respondents that accepted that their congregation was comfortable in sharing and modeling the good news of the gospel.

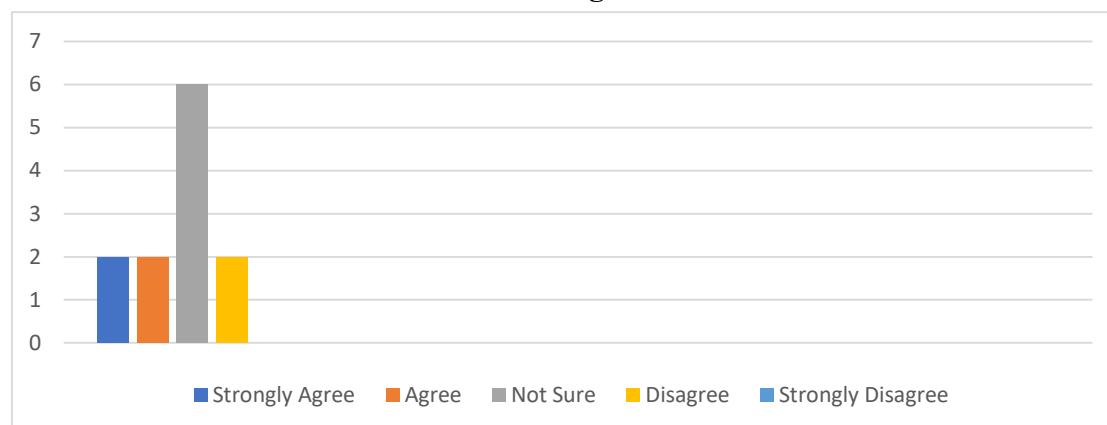
Q19. My congregation absolutely accounts for every new believer.

Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Frequency Table 19

Valid Responses	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	2	17%
Agree	2	17%
Not Sure	6	50%
Disagree	2	17%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Figure 19



The frequency table results suggest that two (2) of the respondents strongly agreed, and another two (2) also decided that their congregation accounts for every new believer. Of the twelve respondents, six (6) were unsure that their congregation accounts for every new believer. Lastly, two of the respondents also disagreed with the assertion under consideration. It can also be seen from the graph that thirty-four percent (34%) of the respondents did agree in some form that their congregation accounts for every new believer. Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents were unsure of any such assertion, as shown on the graph. Also, seventeen percent (17%) of the respondents did disagree with the statement from the graph.

20. In a brief statement, what do you think could be done to improve the discipleship process or program in your congregation?

This last question (question #20) was an interesting one. In this question, respondents were given the ardent opportunity to express their own words as to what could be done to improve the discipleship process or program in their congregation. So far, each respondent searched their reservoir of experiences from their ministry and thoughts and suggested or wrote down at least three (3) items or things they thought could improve the discipleship process or program in their congregation or ministry. Some things the respondents were concerned about had to do with the need to stress the importance of prayer and having a regular prayer life as a congregation, and paying attention to activities and events that should enhance the qualitative and quantitative growth of the church or ministry. Some of the respondents also talked about the need to show seriousness about the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20; and the need to truly instruct or teach from the Word of God Christ-oriented values for spiritual growth rather than encouraging only cultural values, and developing more disciples through mission work.

According to the survey conducted, the respondents acted well according to their experiences and understanding of the questionnaire on the aggregate measure. On the “yes” or “no” questions, the respondents answered “yes” forty percent (40%) of the time, depending on the question. The respondents also answered “no” sixty percent (60%) of the time, depending on the question or statement surveyed. On the Likert scale measure, respondents chose “strongly agree” fifty-one percent (51%) of the time. The respondents also selected “agree” thirty-four percent (34%) of the time, and the respondents chose “not sure” eleven percent (11%) of the time. Respondents selected the choice “disagree” thirteen percent (13%) of the time, and while respondents chose “strongly disagree,” seven percent (7%) of the time depending on the questions or statements at every choice made.

All participants indeed expressed their thoughts according to how they perceived their ministry or congregation to be functioning throughout being in existence. The information gathered speaks for itself. The respondents discussed having separate opportunities for mentoring other believers; and paying regular visitations to members and local communities in their church’s environs, among other suggestions or thoughts expressed concerning what could be done to improve the discipleship process or program in their congregation rightly.

Common Themes

Some of the common themes that the researcher discover during the research included: one, establish discipleship training programs. Two, teach members of the congregation about the importance of becoming a disciple of Christ. Three, encourage the personal spiritual growth of church members. Four, establish a budget to support ministry outreach programs and disciple-making. Five, quarterly raise mission offering.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

There are so many questions that need to be answered in this part of the research work. This aspect of this thesis project will attempt to give answers to questions like: “Where should research regarding this problem go from here?” How do the research project results compare to the information gleaned from previous studies or the published work analyzed in the literature review? What did the researcher learn about implementing the project? How might the results apply in other settings? Did anything emerge during the study that merits future research? Indeed, this researcher will attempt to address all of these questions accordingly to the best of his knowledge regarding the results from the data shows and the researcher's experience during the survey research. But let me talk briefly about evangelism and discipleship.

In the Great Commission found in the Gospel (Matthew 28:18-20), most Christians cling to the theme “evangelism” because that is how they perceive the mandate to be. They think it is all about evangelism. They sometimes even neglect the word “disciple.” But that word exists right in verse 19 of the text. The reason you find at least more than fifty percent (50%) of the respondents talked about reaching out (evangelism). The Lord urged all of His followers to “GO” out into the world (Mark 16:15). He told believers to fear Him and be prepared to answer for our faith (1 Peter 3:15). His Word reminded Christians that we are workers in His kingdom (2 Timothy 2:15). Scriptures also tell us that we are His ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20). Nothing is even being said about servant evangelism (Acts 1:8; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6) in the Liberia setting. In the ministry setting in Liberia, for the most part, churches encourage general evangelism.

There is no real strategic plan where the congregation would be organized to practice sharing God's word with others. Many people think it is the work of the pastor. They are often basically quick to invite people to revivals and to attend church services than reach out. That is why it was not shocking that most of the survey participants suggest that church members be encouraged to reach out to the community.

In the Liberia setting, as people go-ahead to do ministry, evangelism is seen more as a general mandate, but individual members of the church can also carry it out. They believe that real evangelism takes place when people are invited to partake in church service. After that, the invitee or new member can keep on coming until said individual becomes a member after a long time (or while). The person then starts to pay their church due every Sunday or monthly, depending on the agreement. Sometimes evangelism is done through Sunday school programs. Because of poverty, most ministries in Liberia find it challenging to engage in servant evangelism as well. Those mentioned above also affect overall evangelism in many respects. At least most church members in Kakata, Liberia, think that by staying very long in a church makes one a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is not true. This research shows a clear need for training the leaders regarding the discipleship process and evangelism, and why the church or ministry needs the two to succeed in growing the church numerically and spiritually.

So then, why the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) is struggling to grow their church numerically and spiritually in Kakata, Liberia? Thus far, it is worth noting that many (if not all) of the respondents were more or less aware of the problem their church was facing or grappling with. Almost everyone suggested that they needed a training program where pastors and church leaders would take advantage of being trained into learning how to grow God's church. The church leaders and pastors need to be re-introduced to the biblical instruction and mission the

Lord left believers to effect after His ascension to His Father in heaven. Scriptures talk about this instruction and mission in the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20).

Meanwhile, where should research regarding this problem go from here? Well, let me just alert readers that this thesis project or research covered only pastors and church leaders (evangelist, small group) of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC). Also, the sample size was small in that it only took into account twelve (12) participants of the ministry under consideration in this study. While this researcher may be in tune with the study results, he believes these results could be even great if the sample size were more significant and to include regular congregation members instead of only church leaders and pastors. Also, triangulation was not used in this research. The researcher used a research tool known as “questionnaire.” But another researcher might opt to use the questionnaire, interview tool, and a focus group tool; and expand the sample size. A larger sample size, along with those additional research tools, could see the emergence of other topics that might lead to additional research materials.

How does this research project compare to the information gleaned from previous studies or the published work analyzed in the literature review? There are many ways the results of this research project compare to the information learned from other studies found in the literature review. For instance, Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey admitted that the church has tried over the years to spend more time focusing their attention on evangelizing the world, and not even putting emphasis on discipleship or making a disciple.¹⁹⁷ The aforementioned is the same problem the church or ministry faces in Kakata, Liberia. Over many years the church in Liberia has spent their time and effort focusing only on evangelism. But even this evangelism focus has not been strategically organized or planned to rightly cover every sector that needs to be taken off among

¹⁹⁷ Earley and Dempsey. *Disciple making*, 1-2.

believers or the church members they control. Likewise, George Barna informed this research by positing that true disciples must be able to walk in agreement to the Word of God and His instructions, and be able to serve as Christ's ambassadors anywhere in the world we reside and while also reproducing themselves through other believers in the Lord Jesus, and getting more matured also through the discipleship process.¹⁹⁸

In Kakata, Liberia, the church does not even have a discipleship process or program to help its members learn and become mature believers. Notwithstanding, the church has robust evangelism programs. Almost every participant in the research echoed this point. Indeed, there is a need for such a training program to be established. The purpose of this thesis project or study was to guide pastors and church leaders (evangelists, small group) of the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) regarding the process of intentional discipleship and disciple-making, and in reaching out into the community, the church resides along with the community at large in Kakata, Liberia. As such, that is exactly what this researcher will do—analyze and evaluate the results, and then give some guidance to the board and leadership of the Unity Light Ministry Team.

What was also gleaned from Malan Nel is that the church community should never be looked at as a me-and-Jesus-only relationship. The aforesaid is essential because many churches and ministries do not have any transparent and open path to growing into a fully mature disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Often, most Christians have not even been disciples by anyone as a role model.

¹⁹⁸ Earley and Dempsey, *Disciple making*, 20-23.

Discipleship brings about a Christian community, it helps lead the way for followers of Christ to be a counter-voice for Him and still be on the path of growth, discipline, and unity of everybody in the church or ministry; and this should not be confused or integrated (mixed) with skills mastery of some religious event.¹⁹⁹ The church in Kakata, Liberia, does not have any path that should help lead a new member of the young believer to become a mature disciple. That should also help them train other believers into developing a Spirit-led lifestyle.

What did the researcher learn about implementing the project? The aforesaid is another question that is important to consider. One may safely assert that there are many things that the researcher learned during the implementation of this thesis project. One thing was very certain in the midst. There may be many approaches or ways employed by believers in carrying out the Great Commission instruction the Lord Jesus Christ left for us in His Word.

According to Matthew, the Lord said to His disciples, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.²⁰⁰ It was noticed or realized that most people still believed in the old ways of doing church or ministry. They confused evangelism and discipleship. They place or put more emphasis on evangelism. They practice evangelism through personal invitation to visit the church service and decide for himself whether the church is the right place for said person to be a member of at the time. They do evangelism to tell the invitee to “come and see” what significant experience our church could provide as far as worshipping God was concerned.

¹⁹⁹ Nel, “*Imagine-Making*”, 2-3.

²⁰⁰ John C. Maxwell. *The Maxwell Leadership Bible: Lessons in Leadership from the Word of God*. (Matthew 28:18-20), Dallas, TX: Thomas Nelson, 2012, 1223.

The researcher learned quickly from the study that new believers or converts are just left dangling in the ministry fighting for themselves because of the lack of opportunities to grow in the Lord. There is no room to disciple others for Christ. While prayer meetings are held sometimes, such programs are now enough to enhance evangelism and strengthen new converts or believers in the Lord's kingdom work.

Budgeting is one area that surfaces in terms of importance when doing discipleship and evangelism. The aforementioned has to be done deliberately. There was nothing on budgeting that was done on a deliberate level in the ministry. It was done on an ad-hoc basis, which meant the whole idea of evangelism and discipleship was not taken very seriously. In this era of twenty-first-century (21st century) church or Christian ministry, everything regarding God's kingdom work should be done deliberately. That means there should be *intentional budgeting* that would cover evangelism and discipleship in every respect.

The church leadership must learn to design a plan to evangelize with a budget in mind to reach out to work in the best way possible. A budget should not be an ad-hoc thing. It must be done deliberately to encourage and urge church members to be sold out in evangelizing beyond the church and fully through the community. That's how a church could attain numerical or quantitative growth to some extent. It is always essential to intentionally budget for any work under consideration. The researcher's experience in the implantation of this project presents a good case in that matter. Had this researcher not have a deliberate budget plan ahead of time, it would have been a disaster for the process. Because of the intentional budget plan, the researcher was able to purchase a generator to generate electricity and get a computer, among other things, to make sure that the survey was successful in the end.

Many respondents echoed this problem from the research regarding the lack of budgeting in their church or ministry, as they were responding to question #20 of the survey questionnaire. This comes as no surprise because, according to the British Broadcasting Corporation, Liberia is presently among the group of poorest third world countries in the world. But this should not be an excuse for any church or ministry not to have a budget plan for their institution since God is One of order, and He supports excellent planning regarding His kingdom work. He desires leaders that should garner interest in *intentional budgeting* for His kingdom work here on planet earth. Hence, deliberate budgeting is always needed if church leaders are to provide logistics for evangelism and discipleship.

It was very glaring to recognize that the process of discipleship is essential in this dispensation, where too many distractions make it difficult for believers to stay focused. There is a need for *an intentional process of discipleship*. This process will enable the church leaders to create a genuine plan of action from the beginning to a place of maturity for the believer. This process of being intentional is essential because usually, every congregant or believer who is interested in being a maturity follower of the Lord Jesus would need to have an idea about how to become initiating such a path or process.

In order words, this would somehow beef up the expectation of whoever it is that decides to be a complete follower of the Lord Jesus Christ should be aware that there is a way or structured process available to help them get there at some point in time. Moreover, this does not mean that such a guide would be perfect, but at least there would be a way to follow since every person would be interested in knowing where they are at a certain level of their journey to serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

Another important reason for having *an intentional process of discipleship* is that making a disciple is a severe command or instruction of the Lord Jesus found in the Great Commission, according to the Gospel of Matthew.²⁰¹ Such a process is not found in the Liberian church setting. The aforementioned makes it challenging to grow the church spiritually and numerically. Many people would love to follow Christ, but sometimes they just need that little (or extra help) to follow a guide or process to realize their goal of becoming a true follower of Christ.

The researcher found that there are clear or vivid ways to achieve the process of discipling people deliberately. The journey should begin by individual repenting of their sins and accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior (Romans 10:8-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3). Liberian Christians need to be eager to learn more about the Lord Jesus through His Word and any activity that will help a person achieve their goal of being a disciple of Christ (Luke 8:25).

Another step would be to be desirous of being more intimate with the Lord Jesus Christ by putting Him first and forgetting everything else (Luke 14:26-33). The above-mentioned helped the believer build a solid foundation in Christ. The next walk would be to seek God in a manner that should create the urgency of being completely committed to the Lord Jesus and doing church or ministry work (Matthew 6:33; 19:28; Mark 10:29). This would finally lead to creating an environment of *intentional discipleship*. The way mentioned above in which a believer makes a mindful promise to be a disciple-follower of the Lord Jesus in every area of their life (Luke 5: 4-10; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15). The researcher noted that there is no strategic plan to get people to come up to the Lord Jesus's saving grace in the Liberian setting. Still, for instance, when those people accept Jesus, there is not even a baptismal class, not a new believer's class, to start the ball rolling as a follower of Christ.

²⁰¹ Matthew 28:18-20.

In such an environment of letting believers grow up and learn God's things on their own, it becomes challenging to get spiritually experienced to help teach other babes in the kingdom. *Intentional discipleship* is a way of creating a Christian mindset of living a purpose-driven lifestyle that honors God in a logically ordered manner. Such a disciple would not walk in the company of sinners, but would be obedient to the Lord Jesus, and be protected by Him (Psalm 34:7-8). The Holy Spirit becomes the One in control for a disciple-follower in every area of their life, honoring the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a result of this research conducted, this researcher learned that there is a strong need for leadership to develop a discipleship training program. In the Liberian setting, the people listen to their leaders; and the church is no exception. They positively listen to and respect their church pastors and leaders. This aspect is very much crucial for the growth of the ministry. Whenever the pastor or leader plays an integral role in the discipleship process, it helps transformational discipline-making and shows how people grow spiritually while doing God's kingdom work. It is about making an intentional effort and taking offensive actions that should show reactions against Satan's deception.²⁰²

This researcher learned from most of the respondents that many believers from their ministry setting in Liberia would hide behind the idea of lack of budget to be isolated from playing a central role in making disciples of Christ. It is like they tend to act like "fans of a football (the name for a soccer game in Liberia). Even in the United States of America (U.S.A.), many fans know the terms of the players of their favorite teams or clubs. They even know the players' spouses or dating partners and children's names, among other things. That should be the same attitude of a true disciple of Christ.

²⁰² John M. Whittaker. "Developing an Intentional Strategy to Disciple Adults." Order No. 10307066, 2016. In ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (Accessed 08/06/2020).

Disciples are not just ordinary fans of the Lord Jesus. They are people who desire to personally be intimate with the Lord in every aspect of their lifestyle. They are people who yearn to have an overflowing relationship with Christ based on trust and the Word of God. A mature disciple must be one that is completely sold out and fully committed to following Christ in every way.²⁰³

The researcher also learned from the results that there is a need to create or form a new member/young member class that should contain the following topics: The assurance of salvation, The tenets of the Christian faith, Bible study and prayer life, Mission Statement of the church, purpose statement, church's core values, and witnessing, among other interesting topics. The researcher also found out the need to organize a discipleship process class that should include evangelism, discipleship, disciple-making, the meaning of a role model, and church leaders and congregants' role.

The researcher also learned from implementing this thesis project that people are hungry to be trained and role models. The church needs people who would act as real examples to new believers and young members. These role models will be people with good behaviors that are socially and occupationally acceptable by others that should make them want to mimic such actions. Indeed, this would more or less have a huge impact, basically at three levels, personal, interpersonal, and organizational. The aforesaid means it would help on a personal note by enhancing each church member's individual development. It would also help with the interchange of valuable knowledge and acceptable behaviors between mentors and mentees. This would also help with a pool of useful resources that might be gotten through formal and informal relationships.

²⁰³ Kyle Idleman. *Not A Fan: Becoming A Completely Committed Follower of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011, 23-25.

While church growth and spiritual growth are significant for the church in Kakata, Liberia, the church leadership has a vital role by being facilitators of the discipleship process.²⁰⁴ Pastors, church staff, and the church leaders at Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) engage in all kinds of strategies to reach the world for Jesus Christ. Unity Light Ministry is inviting people in the local community to evangelistic crusades, revivals, or other outreach events. Additionally, the Unity Light Ministry has fine-tuned its worship services to make them more attractive and captivating. Barna asserts that discipleship is not a program; it is not a ministry, but it is a life-long commitment to a lifestyle.²⁰⁵

Accordingly, George Barna further says that some strategies to improve disciple-making in the church are as follows:²⁰⁶ One, shift from program-driven ministry to people-driven ministry. Two, change from an emphasis on building consensus to building character. Three, de-emphasize recalling Bible stories; emphasize applying biblical principles. Four, move from concerned about quantity (people, programs, square footage, dollars) to concern about quality (commitment, wisdom, relationship, values, lifestyle). Five, retool developmental ministry efforts from being unrelated and haphazard to bring intentional and strategic. Six, replace ministry designed to convey knowledge with efforts intended to facilitate holistic ministry. Seven, alter people's focus from feel-good activities to an absolute commitment to personal growth, ministry, authenticity in their faith.

Churches and Christian ministries need to rethink what discipleship means and what it looks in their churches. Discipleship is becoming a complete and competent follower of Jesus

²⁰⁴ Whittaker (2016).

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 8-9.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

Christ; it is about an intentional training of people who volunteer to the Lordship of Christ and who want to become imitators of Him in every thought, word, and deed.²⁰⁷ Compared to information gleaned from previous studies or published works analyzed in the literature review, this research project is similar in that Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) is working at trying to expand and strengthen the kingdom of God with all types of life-affecting ministries.²⁰⁸

One thing that the researcher learned from implementing the project is the cost of discipleship. According to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “the call to follow implies that there is only one way of believing in Jesus Christ, and that is by leaving all and going with the incarnate Son of God.”²⁰⁹ Furthermore, “he who is called must go out of his situation in which he cannot believe, into situations, in which, first and foremost, faith is possible.”²¹⁰ Accordingly, Dietrich Bonhoeffer posits the follows:²¹¹

Discipleship means allegiance to the suffering Christ, and it is there not all surprising that Christians should be call to suffer; ...the act of early Christian martyrs are full evidence which shows how Christ transfigures for his own the hour of their mortal agony...by granting them the unspeakable assurance of his presence;...to bear the cross proves to be the only way of triumphing over suffering. This is true for all who follow Christ because it was true for him.

The essence of the training program of Jesus simply had his disciples with him; to train men for world conquest, he just drew them close to himself and the church today is slow to come to grips with the principle described above.²¹² Creating intentional discipleship programs to train

²⁰⁷ Barna, *True Disciples*, 17.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 2.

²⁰⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *The Cost of Discipleship*. (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster), 1995, 57-61.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 62.

²¹¹ Ibid., 91.

²¹² Robert E. Coleman. *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group), 1993, 33.

people for follow-up ministry is a current imperative facing every church that does not already have such a program.²¹³

Most churches want to organize discipleship programs, but they failed to prioritize evangelism. It is challenging for a church to have effective discipleship programs if they do not prioritize evangelism. Even Jesus' disciples fail to prioritize evangelism; unfortunately, many Christians today have the same perspective.²¹⁴ Hence, one of the critical issues facing evangelical Christians in today's world has to do with an overall evangelism strategy.²¹⁵

According to the Gospels, discipleship is the matter of taking the next step; it is a progressive relationship based on increasing levels of faith, obedience, and commitment.²¹⁶ Discipleship matters because Jesus modeled it and commanded it; it also matters because discipleship is necessary for the church to become healthy and productive.²¹⁷ Moreover, issues of discipleship because we cannot reach our potential without spiritual growth.²¹⁸ Most churches have done an excellent job advocating the significance of spiritual maturity, but they have generally failed to provide an environment where spiritual growth is the lifestyle.²¹⁹

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Earley and Wheeler, *Evangelism Is*, 129-130.

²¹⁵ Coleman, *Master Plan*, 34-35

²¹⁶ Earley and Dempsey, *Disciple Making*, 105.

²¹⁷ Barna, *True Disciples*, 33.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ George Barna, *True Disciples*, 29.

Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) have healthy evangelism programs but no corresponding qualitative growth; the Ministry has no clear path to discipleship. Hence, the Researcher decided to establish an intervention designed to address the aforementioned ministry situation.

One theme that emerged from this study is the participants did not fully understand the difference between evangelism and discipleship; for the most part, the participants believed that evangelism and discipleship are mutually exclusive. Overall, this doctoral thesis results were similar to most of the information gleaned from previously published research except that Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) in kakata, Liberia, has no intentional process of making disciples. The Ministry needs to establish intentional disciple-making processes to increase spiritual growth. Furthermore, this study's findings can generally be applied to Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) and in most indigenous Liberian churches in Kakata, Liberia.

Future Recommendation

The Researcher learned from the implementation of the intervention that the Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) needs to teach its members Christ-oriented principles and values for spiritual growth rather than encouraging cultural values that do not develop more qualitative disciples for Christ. The Researcher strongly recommends that future researchers study the relationship between intentional discipleship for qualitative growth of the church and faulty interpretation of scriptures regarding topics like the prosperity gospel.

According to George Barna, "most believers say their faith matters, but few invest much energy in the pursuit of spiritual growth."²²⁰ Notwithstanding, it is generally accepted in Christian circles that most believers rarely share their faith with another unsaved person.²²¹

²²⁰ Barna, *True Disciples*, 33.

²²¹ Earley and Wheeler, *Evangelism Is*, vii..

The Findings

The researcher found that participants of the research study did not fully understand the difference between evangelism and discipleship. Evangelism is sharing the Lord Jesus and His gospel with lost souls. While discipleship is the believer developing or growing to emulate the character of Christ and reproducing other disciples of Christ. Even though most congregations had lots of evangelistic programs, they did not have effective disciples-making programs.

The researcher also found that the Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) needs church members to understand that discipleship is not optional; every Christian is commanded to make disciples for Christ. Moreover, the Ministry does not have adequate and systematic training on intentional discipleship for the church's spiritual growth. Moreover, the Ministry needs to shift focus to qualitative growth rather than quantitative church growth. Qualitative growth is more concerned with a Christian growing into Christ-like character whereas, quantitative growth has to do with the local church focusing its attention on growing in the number of members (church size). Finally, The Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) does not schedule regular and monthly discipleship meetings; invite more people to church, crusades, revivals, and other evangelistic programs or events.

According to the Gospels, “discipleship is about much more than the accumulation of information; true disciples always result in spiritual transformation and reproduction.”²²² Discipleship must lead to loving, community penetration, and it ultimately ends up catalyzing spiritual multiplication and church planting.²²³

²²² Earley and Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is*, 105.

²²³ Ibid.

Intentional discipleship is pivotal to the Christian faith; the church's strength and influence are dependent upon its commitment to true discipleship (producing transformed lives and seeing those lives reproduce others).²²⁴

Research Recommendations

Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) needs to: one, develop intentional disciple-making programs and encourage church members to commit to the discipleship program (disciple-making). Two, teach new converts to make an absolute commitment to personal growth, church ministry, and increasing their faith in Jesus Christ. Three, teach its members Christ-oriented values for spiritual growth rather than cultural values; hence, the ministry needs to focus on people-driven activities rather than evangelistic programs. Four, inspire every leader to be a part of the intentional discipleship making team to track how new converts can develop to become disciples of Christ because disciples are made and not born. Five, set a budget to facilitate outreach programs and raise quarterly offering to train church members with a passion for disciple-making and missions.

Conclusion

The results from this research study can be applied to many Liberian churches, predominantly indigenous Liberian churches, because many churches and Christian ministries in Kakata, Liberia, are faced with the issue of intentional disciple-making. As such, this research results may apply to a lot of churches and Christian ministries in Liberia. Those, as mentioned earlier, is what Liberia needs in the Christian community.

²²⁴ Barna, *True Disciples*, 24.

True mentors and disciple followers can help to be role models for the younger Christians or believers who would be of great help to Liberia.

One theme that emerged from this study was the relationship between evangelism and discipleship. The relationship between evangelism and discipleship in indigenous Liberian churches is pivotal to the survival of the church. This research study will be trailblazing because there is no context scholastic research on this topic. Even though there are numerous studies on evangelism and separate studies on discipleship, there is no study in the Liberian context that addresses the relationship between evangelism and discipleship for producing genuine followers of Jesus Christ. Discipleship is not about reading books and storing up knowledge; it is about intentional training of people who voluntarily submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ and who wants to become imitators of Him in every thought, word, and deed.²²⁵

According to George Barna, reaching the level of excellence called for within the church will demand three commitments from us:²²⁶ First, we must rely upon God. Those mentioned above is a battle we cannot win on our own strengths and abilities; we must lean heavily on His Word, His power, and His guidance. Second, for the church to be the church, we must commit to personal growth. That commitment intimates that we are willing to change in ways that may be uncomfortable or unexpected. Third, we must recognize that the church is not a private, individual endeavor but a corporate venture. We must be willing to minimize ourselves for the good of the whole, using our abilities and resources in harmony with those of other believers for the church's benefit at large.

²²⁵ Barna, *True Disciples*, 24.

²²⁶ Ibid., 127.

Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) needs to develop intentional discipleship programs for effective disciple-making to increase the church's quantitative and qualitative growth. Moreover, Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) needs to be committed to the knowledgeable practice of following Jesus Christ by reaching out to the community in Kakata, Liberia.

Pastors of extremely effective disciple-making churches recognize the significance of intentional discipleship for church growth.²²⁷ These pastors also recognize that disciple-making is a process, not a program; it is about building people, not creating methods and systems.²²⁸ Moreover, discipleship is about a lifestyle of absolute commitment to loving God and obeying God's commands.²²⁹ Intentional discipleship is pivotal to the Christian faith; the church's strength and influence are dependent upon its commitment to true discipleship (producing transformed lives and seeing those lives reproduce others).²³⁰

This study found that Unity Light Ministry Network does not have adequate and systematic training on intentional discipleship for its spiritual growth. Notwithstanding, the church has robust evangelism programs. As such, the Ministry needs to shift its focus from quantitative growth to qualitative church growth. Unity Light Ministry Network (UCC) in Liberia needs to teach its members Christ-oriented values for spiritual growth rather than cultural values. The study concludes that the Ministry needs to focus on more people-driven activities like intentional disciple-making rather than expanding its evangelistic programs for church growth.

²²⁷ Barna, *True Disciples*, 127.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid., 24.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
3/18/2020 to --
Protocol # 4169.031820

Intentional Discipleship: Effective Disciple-making for Church Growth in Liberia
George Lorpokollie Suah
Liberty University
School of Divinity

You are invited to be in a research study on intentional discipleship. You were selected as a possible participant because you are 18 years of age or older and either a pastor or church leader (evangelist, or small group leader) in the Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church). Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

George L. Suah, a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background: In this study, the researcher is hoping to learn why the Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) is struggling to grow their congregation numerically and spiritually in Kakata, Liberia. The purpose of this research is to help provide guidance to pastors and church leaders (evangelists, small group leaders) of the Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church) regarding the process of intentional discipleship and disciple-making and to reach out into the larger community.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following:

1. Complete an anonymous online survey that should take about 10 to 15 minutes.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- The participants will not be required to give any personal identifiers like name, date of birth, address etc. The research survey will be anonymous.
- The research data will be stored for three years. I will delete the data after three years.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Unity Light Ministry Network (Unity Community Church). If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question, or you can withdraw at any time, prior to submitting the survey, without affecting those relationships

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
3/18/2020 to --
Protocol # 169.031820

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is George L. Suah. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at glсуаh@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Jason Whitehurst, at jrwhitehurst@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I consent to participate in the study.

Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire

Intentional Discipleship: Effective Disciple-Making for Church Growth in Liberia

1. There is a yearly budget for intentional discipleship in my congregation. Yes () No ()
2. My congregation financially gives yearly to support mission work. Yes () No ()
3. My congregation stresses the need for every follower of Christ to share Jesus by their life-styles and while also serving others in their local community. Yes () No ()
4. My congregation has intentionally designed programs and services for caring ministries to share God's love with local community. Yes () No ()
5. My congregation teaches that every believer is called to be a disciple.
Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
6. My congregation teaches its members that being a disciple of Christ overrides one's own interests.
Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
7. There is a difference between evangelism and discipleship/disciple-making.
Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
8. My congregation/ministry teaches that only disciples can help others become disciples of Christ.
Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
9. My congregation teaches that a disciple must be an example in every area of their life.
Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
10. My/I pastor makes it his/her/my duty to always preach/teach messages on intentional disciple-making.
Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
11. My congregation is a disciple-making church because it stresses disciple-making in their vision or purpose statement, and its leadership shows example.
Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
12. My congregation has many discipleship programs in place to equip and train new believers.
Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
13. My congregation does not have an intentional discipleship path because of lack of budget.
Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

14. My congregation keeps track of the spiritual condition of its members.
Choose one: Strongly agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
15. My congregation has an intentional and spiritual nurturing program.
Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
16. My congregation places emphasis on spiritual maturity.
Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
17. There is a yearly budget for evangelism in my congregation. Yes () No () Not Sure ()
18. About___ percent of my congregation is comfortable in sharing and modeling the good news of the gospel.
Choose one: 1-20 % () 21-40 % () 41-60 % () 61-80 % () 81-100 % () Not Sure ()
19. My congregation absolutely accounts for every new believer.
Choose one: Strongly Agree () Agree () Not Sure () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
20. In a brief statement, what do you think could be done to improve the discipleship process or program in your congregation?

Appendix C: IRB Approval Letter**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY**
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

March 18, 2020

George Lorpokollie Suah

IRB Exemption 4169.031820: Intentional Discipleship: Effective Disciple-making for Church Growth in Liberia

Dear George Lorpokollie Suah,

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

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

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

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

Sincerely,
Research Ethics Office

LIBERTY
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