

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

The Way of Jesus: A Leadership Development Journey
Within City Church Marietta

Submitted to Dr. Danny Allen

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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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Abstract: The leadership of City Church Marietta has identified the need to create a leadership development process for adult volunteers. This is due primarily to the fact that the church does not currently possess a process that would accomplish this. In addition, there is a lack of understanding amongst the majority of the current volunteer leaders concerning what it means to be an apprentice of Jesus. The research will emphasize the the fact that apprenticeship and leadership are best understood when examined side by side. This research will propose a leadership journey, *The Way of Jesus*, as the remedy to this hole in the leadership development processes within City Church Marietta. This four month journey will be offered to current volunteer leaders. Leaders will be surveyed as they begin the process, as well as when they conclude it. A reflective journal of each of the weekly meetings will also be collected. *The Way of Jesus* will seek to provide a comprehensive approach to apprenticeship as leadership. This journey will be examined for its usefulness and success in achieving the desired outcome of maturing adult leaders who live and love like Jesus. These adult leaders should also possess the ability to produce other leaders who seek to do the same at the conclusion of this process.

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Abbreviations

DMIN *Doctor of Ministry*

LUSOD *Liberty University School of Divinity*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The purpose of this first chapter is to introduce the basic context, problem areas, and overarching aim of this DMIN action research thesis, which is to create a leadership development process for adults within City Church Marietta. This section accomplishes what Aubrey Malphurs referred to as *Assessing the Ministry Setting*. Malphurs defined the setting as, “Anywhere its ministry takes place, any location where there is ministry in some way in the name of Christ. It is where your church has a ministry presence.”¹ This step, alongside several others, must be taken prior to attempting to implement a strategic leadership development plan, as this process deeply influences the direction of those plans. Understanding the setting provides insight into the overall ministry context. One of the most well known “assessments of the setting” in the Bible, found in Numbers 13, illustrated this perfectly.

As God’s people prepared to make their way into the Promised Land, “The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel. From each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a chief among them.’”² The goal for the spies became a process of surveying and reporting. They were to survey everything they saw and report back to God’s people, and only then should they provide a recommendation of how to proceed. When they returned it was revealed that, “They told him,

¹ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 237.

² Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the *English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).

‘We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large.’” This report revealed two important findings, both of which are outlined below.

The first is that the land was exactly as God described it. God had delivered on His promise to His people. This proved to be a reminder to the people that God was keeping His word and promises that He had made with them. The second finding included what appeared to be a surprise to some being the size of the people and the cities. The sight of such large people and cities overwhelmed the majority of God’s people. Eugene H. Merrill unpacked their response in the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* when he wrote, “Caleb urged Moses to go up at once and take ... the land because he was confident they could do it. But 10 of the spies (all except Joshua and Caleb, 14:6–9, 30), discouraged the people and pessimistically maintained that the task of conquest was impossible because of the unfavorable odds.”³ Ultimately, the people opted for safety rather than choosing to live by faith. This led to the discipline of God for forty years in the wilderness and the younger generation then leading the way from that moment forward. Without faith the older generation missed out on the opportunity to watch God miraculously provide for His people as they made their way into the Promised Land.

This account serves as a powerful reminder of a few key principles. The first is the importance of assessing the setting. Without it, God’s people would not have known what was ahead of them. In addition, the significance of following God’s direction once the setting has been assessed and remaining faithful to trust Him to deliver on His promises and leadership. God

³ John F. Walvoord, Rob B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament and New Testaments* (1983, USA: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.), Logos Bible Software 9.

provided clarity, yet the majority of the people refused to move forward following His lead. These observations serve as a guiding influence in the processes to come.

Ministry Context

The ministry context for this DMIN action research thesis is City Church Marietta, a small church of less than 200 adult attenders in Marietta, GA. Located 20 miles north of the city of Atlanta, Marietta is a growing and vibrant city, filled with new life and deeply rooted traditions. Included in those deeply rooted traditions are several historic churches, as well as several young churches. The city is located right in the heart of the “Bible Belt” and has a legacy of religious belief and faith that has grown cold and stagnant over the past two decades. Church attendance and membership has gradually declined throughout this city, mimicking the national trends that are already in place,⁴ and with it, spiritual depth and maturity. This lack of maturity was most exposed, as it has been throughout the United States, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Geographically, this city has 2,451.4 people per square mile, with an estimated total population (as of July 2019) of 60,867.⁵ The total population has grown over the past decade by 7.8%, 1.5% more than the current national average.⁶ The population is also diverse, with the top three categories by percentage being 55.2% White, 30.5% Black or African American, and 15.7% Hispanic or Latino.⁷ Statistically, the Black or African American population is higher than

⁴ Statistics for Church Membership extrapolated from: Gallup, *U.S. Church Membership Falls Below Majority for First Time*. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx> (accessed July 25, 2021).

⁵ Statistics for the City of Marietta extrapolated from: United States Census Bureau, *QuickFacts*. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mariettacitygeorgia,US/PST045219> (accessed Oct. 29, 2020).

⁶ United States Census Bureau, *QuickFacts*.

⁷ Ibid.

the national average, while the White and Hispanics or Latino populations are lower than the national average.

The city of Marietta is a wealthy and well-educated city that would be categorized as mostly middle-class. The average household income is \$54,983 as of 2018.⁸ However, roughly 16% of people are also currently in poverty, which is 6% higher than the current average in the United States.⁹ People with a high school diploma age 25 and over are 85.8%, while 39.2% of that percentage also have a bachelor's degree or higher.¹⁰ Both of those statistics are in line with or above the national average. In addition, the current number of households with a computer present is 93.3%, giving most households the ability to learn and connect digitally.

City Church Marietta began in September of 2015 as several families sensed Jesus calling them to plant this church. The beginning of this calling came when two pastors left their positions at previous churches to start City Church Marietta. This was not a church that was planted by another church or church planting body. It was planted right in the heart of Marietta, gathering for its first four years of existence at The Strand Theatre which is located on the north side of the Marietta Square. In June of 2020, the church moved into its first permanent location on the southeast side of the Square.

As noted previously, the church began with a small group of core families. Since then, the church has grown and is currently comprised of almost 150 weekly adult attendees. The vast majority of those attendees are young singles, young married couples, or families with children

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

in middle or high school. There are a several empty-nesters as well, though they would certainly be in the minority.

As a whole, City Church Marietta has experienced many typical growth trends and patterns of new church plants. In its third year, about half of the people who started the church transitioned, either to change churches or because they moved to other cities. With this transition came a fresh influx of new attenders as well. In modern church culture, the transient nature of people in general has created a shift in the consistency of attenders. Most current adult attenders come to church once per month on average. This, not to mention the many other current cultural challenges surrounding COVID-19, has created several opportunities for leadership growth within the church. The church itself is young in its age, as well as the overall average age of the average attenders. Because of this, there is currently a lack of seasoned leadership throughout the volunteer leadership base within the church. It appears as though this has occurred, at least in part, because of a lack of intentional leadership development. This will be highlighted and discussed further in the next few sections.

It is important, though, to also describe the current cultural moment the church in America is currently facing. Author and Pastor Mark Sayers in his book, *Reappearing Church*, provided the backdrop for this moment with the assistance of perspective from Edwin Friedman. Sayers noted, “A feedback loop is at play; our radical individualism and culture of deconstruction have rejected many of the cultural resources—such as community, traditions of moderation and restraint, and even the valuing of routine—with which we historically absorbed social anxiety.”¹¹ The anxiety of this cultural moment is extremely influential. Concerning this,

¹¹ Mark Sayers, *Reappearing Church: The Hope for Renewal in the Rise of our Post-Christian Culture* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers 2019), 72.

Sayers acknowledge five characteristics of emotional regression in Western culture, which he credited to Friedman. These are described below.

1. Reactivity – The vicious cycle created when individuals and culture continually react intensely to external situations with negative, anxious, angry, and fearful emotions. No longer is the individual or society driven by a set of inner values but instead exists in a state of reactivity, driven by negative external events.
2. Herding – Despite our ideology of individualism, our emotional reactivity and our social natures drive us toward others. As the culture becomes reactive, we begin to act in herdlike ways. A mob mentality takes over. The society lowers itself to pleasing and not offending its most emotionally immature and unhealthy members, who then end up dictating the health of the culture.
3. Blame Displacement – Instead of examining and searching out the underlying causes creating toxicity, we focus on the symptoms, viewing them in isolation instead of seeing them as part of a systemic whole. Rather than taking a proactive approach that examines our ability to effect change in areas over which we have a responsibility, we retreat into a perpetual victim status, blaming others and external forces. As blame is thrown around, a cultural paralysis sets in. A suffocating fear of offending creates a gridlock, which prevents renewal.
4. A Quick-Fix Mentality – Our culture of hedonism has created in us a low pain threshold that prevents us from persevering through the pain that must accompany the processes that lead to breakthrough renewal. Instead, we seek quick-fix solutions, which solve our symptoms rather than the root cause of our crises. We become

addicted to technology, more commentary, and more information as the cure for our ills.

5. Lack of Well-Differentiated Leadership – The above factors create an environment that works against leaders and the kind of leadership that could lead a toxic emotional system into renewal. The influencer must break with the dominant emotional reactivity, toxicity, and blame displacement. Our obsession with the quick fix and low pain threshold ensures that few leaders can push through the isolation of breaking from social herding and reactivity, and the inevitable backlash of the emotionally regressing environment. No matter how intelligent, talented, or well-equipped leaders may be, ultimately their quest for renewal will be undermined by their own (and the surrounding culture's) low emotional maturity.¹²

The current cultural moment in the West is a crisis in a variety of ways. One could even argue that several crises are taking place at the same time. There is a crisis of identity, morality, leadership, and much more. With every crisis, though, comes opportunity. It is against the cultural backdrop that City Church Marietta is presented with the opportunity to develop leaders who can not only survive in their roles, but also learn to thrive and bring renewal to this church.

Values, Vision, and Mission

The Core Values of any church, organization, or business, are critical. Core values inform and direct strategic planning and purposes within a church. Malphurs noted, “Core values signal a ministry’s bottom line. They communicate what really matters. Clearly articulated values drive a stake in the ground that announces to all, ‘This is what we stand for; this is what we are all

¹² Sayers, *Reappearing Church*, 72-74.

about; this is who we are; this is what we can and cannot do for you.”¹³ He defined core values as, “the constant, passionate, biblical core beliefs that go deep and really, truly empower and guide the ministry.”¹⁴ Will Mancini also referred to these as missional motives which are, “the shared convictions that guide the actions and reveal the strengths of the church.”¹⁵ With this in mind, the Core Values of City Church Marietta are called *Commitments*. Considering the calling of the church (mission/vision which will be discussed shortly), the church is committed to: *Changed Lives, Authentic Community, Courageous Faith, Loving People, Investment, The Process, Expectant Worship, and Making It Count*. Each of the statements listed previously inform a key practice within the organization of City Church Marietta.

For the purposes of this research, at least two of these practices directly impact the current leadership development processes. There are several others which are impacted as well, however, these two are the most prominent. For example, because City Church is committed to *Investment*, one of the core aims is to invest into the future generations. The church’s current discipleship structure is aligned in such a way to allow for multi-generational investment to potentially take place. In addition, within the small group gatherings, *Authentic Community* is a concept that is regularly spoken about and participated in by those who engage in this form of discipleship. The goal in both arenas is what Dallas Willard described as, “A revolution of *character*, which proceeds by changing people from the inside through ongoing personal relationship to God in Christ and to one another.”¹⁶ Spiritual formation through the

¹³ Malphurs. *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 147.

¹⁴ Malphurs. *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 150.

¹⁵ Will Mancini. *Church Unique*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 129.

¹⁶Dallas Willard, *10th Anniversary Edition, Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NAVPRESS 2012), 15.

transformation of the heart has been a central desire of City Church Marietta from its early beginnings. The implementation of this, however, possibly needs to be adjusted, hence the purpose of this research being conducted.

Should the leadership of City Church Marietta continue to produce transformed hearts and lives within the congregation, it is imperative that leadership development and transformation continue to take shape. Inattention to spiritual transformation produces the fatigue, irritability, and restlessness that accompany burnout.¹⁷ This requires a willingness on the part of leadership to go back to the leadership development processes of Jesus and learn from the ways in which He led His disciples (apprentices).¹⁸ Learning the concept of apprenticeship as the primary form of leadership and discipleship will be critical in developing this foundation. Jesus' disciples, those He called to be His full-time students, learned practical faith by watching Him in action.¹⁹ This means they did not just stumble upon growing as followers of Jesus, but were intentional in their pursuit of living life the way He did.

City Church Marietta chose from its beginning to not capture a vision statement. In fact, it does not have a mission statement as well, but rather, it chose to adopt a statement of their calling. The calling aligns more with a mission statement, about which Aubrey Malphurs noted the following, "The ministry's mission provides a compelling sense of direction, a target for everyone to aim at, a port to land at, and it serves to focus the congregation's energy"²⁰ The

¹⁷ Jim Herrington, Robert Creech, and Trisha Taylor, *The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 131.

¹⁸ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 18.

¹⁹ Mike Breen, Steve Cockram, *Building a Discipling Culture* (Myrtle Beach, SC: Sheriar Press, 2009), 113.

²⁰ Malphurs. *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 106.

mission should then be clear and obvious and point people towards action. In this case, the calling of City Church Marietta is to “*Bring Life to the Broken Places in our Hearts, Homes, City, and World.*” The belief is that if one can change the heart (especially that of a man), then one can change a home. One home at a time can change a city, and one city at a time can ultimately change the world. The key in all of this is the recognition of the brokenness and need for Jesus to bring His life into the lives of every single individual. By itself, the church does not have the ability to “bring life,” only Jesus does. In summary, as City Church Marietta chooses to live out its calling (mission) and commitments (values), life will come through the Holy Spirit to the people’s lives who participate in the life of this church.

Church Model

The church is a beautiful mystery. Both mega and micro-expressions have some perks and pitfalls, strengths and weaknesses, as well as enemies and allies.²¹ In the church today, one should not be surprised to find many different types of approaches. Pastors and leaders have a variety of experiences that have contributed to why they’ve chosen to lead their given congregations the way they have. These include but are not limited to their personal background, education, denomination, location, and much more. Within the past thirty years or so, two specific approaches have emerged to the forefront of a discussion concerning which approach is best for churches to adopt: missional or attractional. The difference in orientation between the missional church and attractional churches is fundamental, though the two outlooks are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Churches ultimately can and should be scattering and

²¹ Hugh Halter, Matt Smay, *And: The Gathered and Scattered Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 15.

gathering.²² A brief, though not exhaustive, examination of these models is required in order to better understand the model utilized at City Church Marietta.

First, Rick Richardson provided a very simple but powerful insight into the way one should view the missional church approach.

Missional churches move toward challenging the secular, individualistic, consumer-oriented, therapeutic-style, business-imitating, market-driven, building-dominated church of the West. They seek to model an alternative kingdom community oriented toward service and mission and to be the incarnation-like extension of Jesus' ministry, values, and presence into the world.²³

The missional model attempts to provide an approach to church that stands in contrast to the current culture found in America today. Rather than embracing what the popular culture may desire the church to give them, it attempts to remove distractions and aims to offer an authentic experience with Jesus and His gospel. In regards to this model, Jared Wilson powerfully articulated, "Everything good and valuable must come from the Spirit's sovereign working, not from our ministerial machinations."²⁴ Robert Elkington affirmed this when he stated, "The Holy Spirit works within the missional community to ensure that the leadership and mission that emerges fits His, the Holy Spirit's, agenda, such as we see in Acts 13:1-3, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4:7-16."²⁵

Keeping the gospel central is another key theme of missional churches, which directly impacts the overall worship gathering of the church. Simply put, worship is a response to the

²² Rick Richardson, "Emerging Missional Movements: An Overview and Assessment of Some Implications for Mission(s)." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 37, no. 3 (2013): 131.

²³ Richardson, "Emerging Missional Movements," 131.

²⁴ Jared Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto against the Status Quo* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 167.

²⁵ Robert Lionel Elkington, "A Missional Church Model." *SAGE Open* 1, no. 3 (October 2011): 9.

proclamation of who God is and what he has done.²⁶ Ruth Meyers offered support of this viewpoint when she stated, “Thus worship is a participation in the *missio Dei*, enacting and signifying God’s reconciling love for the world.”²⁷ Worship isn’t simply what music type or style a church uses, although music and singing are definitely a part of the equation.²⁸ Worship is a response to the call of God on the lives of His people.²⁹ Therefore, the gospel must be the center of worship, for without it people will naturally gravitate towards bringing their affection to other people and things.

Finally, a missional church that is focused on the gospel recognizes it’s need for prayer as a core component to the health and growth of the church. Wilson wrote, “This means at the very minimum that our ministry, like our Christian life in general, ought to be saturated in prayer.”³⁰ Wilson presents an area of ministry that is often neglected or at the very least overlooked in its importance. Many churches gravitate away from prayer towards their own planning and protocol meetings. A key question to ask is if the leadership of the church invites God to show the plan, or does the leadership make the plan and invite God to bless it? The former represents the robust approach required for a missional model of church.

In contrast to this approach, a definition of attractional would perhaps be something like this: a way of ministry that derives from the primary purpose of making Christianity appealing or attractive.³¹ Regarding this type of approach, Andy Stanley stated, “From the outset we are

²⁶ Wilson, *The Prodigal Church*, 101.

²⁷ Ruth A. Meyers, “Missional Church, Missional Liturgy.” *Theology Today* 67, no. 1 (April 2010): 50.

²⁸ Wilson, *The Prodigal Church*, 93.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 166.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

looking to engage people emotionally. And when I say from the outset, I mean from the parking lot. Our template is designed to create a journey for our attendees.”³² The attractional church, then, tends to think of people as consumers, reinforcing the pervasive practice of church shopping and turning pastors into commodities paid to provide the religious goods, services, and experiences that congregants can consume.³³ The goal is to build and present something to people who have the consumer mindset that makes them want to come back to church, week in and week out.

Andy Stanley built the foundation for this model in his churches by embracing an early church dynamic. He acknowledged that a critical shift took place when the church drifted away from being a gathering, and focused more on a building. He traced the history of this shift back to the reign of Constantine, “Within a decade, the *ekklesia* ceased to be a movement. It was no longer an expanding group of people sharing a unique identity and purpose. It had become a location.”³⁴ This background connects to the struggle many church leaders face in adopting a specific ministry model. Concerning this dynamic in the modern day Mark Yarger stated, “It may be surprising to some to discover that the origin of the problem in the American church today can, in the broadest sense, be traced back to three centuries after the birth of Christianity.”³⁵ One of the primary focuses, then, of the attractional model is to latch onto the idea of the church being more about a movement rather than a location.

City Church Marietta, though not strongly opposed to either of these models, would not

³² Andy Stanley, *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 206.

³³ Richardson, "Emerging Missional Movements," 131.

³⁴ Stanley, *Deep & Wide*, 62.

³⁵ Mark H. Yarger, “Leading the Transition from a Traditional Attraction Based Ministry Model to a Missional Model of Ministry.” (DMin diss. Winebrenner Theological Seminary, 2013), 1.

advocate one or the other as being their specific approach to church. In many ways, City Church has sought to integrate several key themes from both models, including but not limited to: prayerful dependency, gospel centrality, authenticity, and understanding that the church is far more than just a location.

Leadership Structure and Development

Finally, the leadership structure of the church itself is informed and guided by the calling and each of the commitments provided above. These groupings provide the direct influence into making all of these things become a reality. The primary leadership team is the Lead Pastor and the Executive Pastor. Because of the short life of the church, a Board of Elders has not been established to date, but should be in place by the end of 2021. Candidates, requirements, and the overall process for being placed in the role of elder have currently been established. In addition, these two staff members also lead the *Financial Oversight Team*, which provides accountability and wisdom for the financial direction of the church. This team was established early in the life of the church and has been critical to several important stewardship decisions that have been made along the way. In addition to these two teams, the primary leaders of the church from a “ministry function” standpoint are the staff team. There are currently three full-time staff (Lead, Executive, and Youth Pastors), as well as six part-time staff. These staff team members work collectively to accomplish the calling and commitments of City Church. To the best of their ability, the staff team aims to allow volunteers to help shoulder the load of ministry leadership in a variety of capacities. This includes next generation ministry (birth-12th grade), men’s and women’s ministries, welcome team, creative team, worship team, and security team. In total, there are 60 volunteers who help provide leadership within each of these teams.

Problem Presented

One of the most glaring problems that currently appears to exist in City Church Marietta is a lack of mature adult leadership with the capacity to develop and lead others toward growth and maturity. This may be due not just to the transient nature of attendance norms, but also because the church lacks a clear overarching process for leadership development. For example, the majority of current adult leaders and volunteers seem to lack basic knowledge of Scripture, as well as how to develop someone else to grow in their love and knowledge of Jesus. The current leaders within City Church Marietta appear to lack the basic understanding that becoming a disciple of Jesus is about submitting to formation, not absorbing information.³⁶ This knowledge has been obtained through many conversations the staff team has had with those who are currently serving in volunteer leadership at the present time. The church must learn the way of Jesus, the pattern of walking with Him and allowing Him to transform the interior of their lives, first.³⁷ Therefore, an effective development process which grows the faith, leadership, and spiritual depth of the adult attenders outside of a Sunday morning worship gathering appears to be desperately needed.

Purpose Statement

The purpose for this DMIN action research thesis is to create a leadership development process for the adult volunteer leaders within City Church Marietta. This process is grounded in spiritual formation and emotionally healthy leadership, to produce spiritually mature leaders who are equipped to develop other adult leaders in the future. This process is implemented through a four-month leadership journey that is offered twice a year for leaders to attend. Only seven

³⁶ Rod Dreher. *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Sentinel, 2018), 232.

³⁷Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 18.

leaders will be able to attend at a given time because of the nature of the process. This journey provides leaders with the opportunity to grow in their knowledge of the Bible, understand their current emotional health, articulate the story Jesus has written in their lives, and gain an overall understanding of what it truly means to be an apprentice of Jesus. The aim is for each person to understand, articulate, and model leadership as apprenticeship. This process should produce the desired outcome of more volunteer leaders who can develop more volunteer leaders who live and love like Jesus.

Basic Assumptions

There are multiple basic assumptions that this research believes to be true, though there currently may not be any significant evidence for it. For example, there is an assumption that the responses to the leadership surveys provided at the beginning and end of the intervention process are going to be completely honest. One can hope for honest answers, however, because the responses will be read by a staff member, it is difficult to completely state that they will be honest because of the lack of complete anonymity. There is also the assumption that whatever information is uncovered from the journey and the surveys will somehow be representative of the whole church. The size of the group being limited to seven people prevents this from taking place.

Another assumption is that the leadership development process is going to solve the leadership development need. It is possible, though not likely, that the process itself is not necessary for the growth and development of current leadership. In addition, it is also assumed that the leadership development process is needed for the future growth of the church itself. During this study, it may be discovered to not be necessary by any means. Finally, it is also

assumed that the leaders who will take part in the process desire to do it and will see the value of it for their own personal growth and development.

Definitions

Throughout this research, the term spiritual formation will refer to being focused entirely on Jesus, with the goal being obedience or conformity to Christ that arises out of an inner transformation accomplished through purposive interaction with the grace of God in Christ.³⁸

The term leadership development will be understood as a process that leads to change in the life of someone else. It requires thoughtful consideration when developing this process, clarity around the ultimate end goal of the process, and an awareness that leaders can be found and developed anywhere. This understanding is assisted by the definition provided by Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini who defined it as, “The intentional process of helping established and emerging leaders at every level of ministry to assess and develop their Christian character and to acquire, reinforce, and refine their ministry knowledge skills.”³⁹ Finally, the concept of being a disciple or apprentice of Jesus will be defined as, “Organizing your life around three basic goals: 1. Be with Jesus. 2. Become like Jesus. 3. Do what he would do if he were you.”⁴⁰ Each of these definitions serve as important guidelines for what will be discussed in the upcoming chapters of this action research thesis.

Limitations

Several key limitations exist throughout this research process that must be noted. First, the sample being used is not a random sample. The sample will be taken from current volunteer

³⁸Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 22.

³⁹ Aubrey Malphurs, Will Mancini, *Building Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 23.

⁴⁰ John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook, 2019), 77.

leaders within City Church Marietta. It will be a random selection from within this group, but not completely random within the whole church. Because of this, the accessibility to the process will be limited. The process itself will also cover a short period of time, limiting the amount of time that can be given to studying the concept of leadership development over a longer period. This will also limit the amount of data collected regarding the overall success of the leadership process. The more time that is allowed (years rather than months), the more comprehensive the analysis could be regarding its effectiveness.

The group that will be observed will complete surveys before and after the leadership journey. This will create a limitation that is impacted by social pressure during the self-reporting process. Some of the required questions relate to the amount of time spent in prayer, current emotional health, Bible reading, and other personal questions as it pertains to spiritual formation. As noted previously, the accuracy of these responses may be impacted by the fact that a staff member will view the responses that are given before and after the leadership process has been completed. The survey's themselves are also limited to the questions that the participants will be required to answer. The Exit Survey, for example, asked the participants to provide general feedback upon completion of the journey. However, most of the questions will be directed in a specific direction, rather than completely open ended. This in turn may limit the amount of information or feedback that is gained through the surveys that are collected. Lastly, though participants will be required to attend each week of the leadership journey and to complete it, they may by their own choice, choose not to complete it at some point during the four months that it will take place.

Delimitations

In addition to the limitations listed above, there are also several delimitations in the research process. The first is obviously the topic itself. Many topics could have been chosen, but for the purpose of this research, leadership growth and development within the volunteer adults of City Church Marietta will be the focal point. In addition, the overall group size will be capped at seven adults per group. This will limit the size and number of interactions that take place throughout the process. The general population of City Church is primarily White, middle-class. This may be a limitation of the research given that White is not the only ethnic group within the church or the city of Marietta. Another delimitation is that the people who will be attending are current volunteer leaders in the church. This group will not be a completely open group to anyone who would like to join. It will also have a higher level of commitment, which will impact whoever eventually chooses to attend. Finally, the age of the group, because it is being selected amongst volunteer leaders within the church, will most likely be younger than the general demographic of the church. While City Church is a younger church (mostly 25-40-year-olds in attendance), the current leadership presence is younger than that, with the majority being under 30.

Thesis Statement

If City Church Marietta crafts and implements an effective leadership development process, then a spiritually mature leadership pipeline may become readily available within eight months. Due to the size and nature of the leadership journey, time is what is impacted most in this situation. Leaders will need time to grow and develop, as well as the space to process all that they are learning. If they are given this time, this pipeline will produce the desired result of

mature volunteer leaders within the church who are committed to leadership as apprenticeship to Jesus.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this next chapter is to work through relevant content as it pertains to adult leadership development within City Church Marietta. This will include examining critical literature and perspectives that are relevant to this topic, as well as the theological and theoretical frameworks that undergird it.

Literature Review

The primary purpose of this section is to examine relevant content related to the concept of adult leadership development to craft an effective leadership development process for adult volunteer leaders. How this should be accomplished within the context of a small city church must be taken into consideration as these sources are examined. The content that was considered included books, articles, a dissertation, and commentaries. Several themes rose to the surface that will be addressed below.

Leadership Development

The first area to be reviewed was that of leadership development. If an adult leadership development process is to be achieved, many sources must be addressed to gain a clear picture of how this process has worked itself out through the experiences of others. In their seminal work on leadership, James Kouzes and Barry Posner wrote, “The work of leaders is change. And all change requires that leaders seek ways to make things better, to grow, innovate, and improve.”⁴¹ Leadership development implies making a change in someone else’s life. Leaders who are leading other leaders must first grasp and embrace this concept. Only then can a leader seek to

⁴¹ James M. Kouzes, Barry N. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass 2007), 164.

develop other leaders. A word that more accurately describes this in terms of leadership development within a church environment is the word transformation. Leaders should seek positive transformation in the lives of those they are leading.

To build upon this, Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini offered an important definition of leadership development in their book, *Building Leaders*. They concluded that leadership development is, “The intentional process of helping established and emerging leaders at every level of ministry to assess and develop their Christian character and to acquire, reinforce, and refine their ministry knowledge skills.”⁴² This definition provided several key elements of leadership development. First, the importance of an intentional process for development. Leaders are not engaging in something that just happens over night or out of nowhere. It must be thought through, prayed over, and carefully considered. Second, the focus of the process is on both the growth of one’s character as well as their ministry knowledge and skills. Essentially, leadership development transforms who someone is as well as what they do and how they do it. In fact, Paul Petit also noted that, “God is more concerned with the development of the person of the leader.”⁴³ Based on these perspectives, then, one could certainly argue that who a leader is becoming is of even greater significance than the skills or abilities they are developing as it pertains to leadership.

For Malphurs and Mancini, leadership development must be differentiated from discipleship development as it is their belief that leadership is only for a limited number of maturing disciples.⁴⁴ In sharp contrast to this, Kouzes and Posner embraced a different mentality

⁴² Malphurs and Mancini, *Building Leaders*, 23.

⁴³ Petit, Paul, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 180.

⁴⁴ Malphurs and Mancini, *Building Leaders*, 33.

when they wrote, “Leadership is not a gene and it’s not an inheritance. Leadership is an identifiable set of skills and abilities that are available to all of us.”⁴⁵ Therefore, one could conclude from this statement that leadership, and therefore leadership development, can take place for anyone at anytime.

Regardless of which view is adopted, leadership development is deeply connected and fostered within the culture of a given organization. In fact, it is the leader who defines and creates this type of culture.⁴⁶ Throughout history, institutions that endure thrive not because of one leader’s charisma, but because they cultivate leadership throughout the system.⁴⁷ The simple truth is that a team or organization can actually do significantly more than a single individual.⁴⁸ In addition, too often leadership has been defined by how many followers a leader is attracting rather than how many people he or she is mobilizing.⁴⁹ In order for leadership development to grow and prosper in a healthy and effective way, the focus must shift away from being placed on one uniquely talented and gifted person. The entire team or system must embrace it. Leaders are to grow from being focused on how they are feeling and doing to being focused on how to lead their followers to maturity.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 23.

⁴⁶ Breen and Cockram, *Building a Discipling Culture*, 32.

⁴⁷ Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press), 2002, 36.

⁴⁸ Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*. 106.

⁴⁹ Aaron L. Graham, “The Leadership Dynamics of Growing a Missional Church in the City: The District Church, Washington, D.C.” (DMiss diss. Fuller Theological Seminary, 2013), 134.

⁵⁰ Robert W. Hull, *The Christian Leader: Rehabilitating Our Addiction to Secular Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 46.

Klaus Issler also noted the following, “Formation change requires our time and effort...not directly by our willpower but indirectly over time.”⁵¹ Therefore, not only does shifting the development process to embrace a systematic approach take time, but also the process of change itself in the life of those who are being developed. It could be concluded, then, that leaders are not developed through hurry or speed, but time and intentionality.

For leaders to establish a clear development process, they must have a vision for both the process itself, as well as the desired result, for the process to be most effective. Henry and Richard Blackaby wrote the following regarding the importance of vision, “Vision serves as the North Star to help leaders keep their bearings as they move their people forward. Hence, any organization that lacks a clear vision risks becoming sidetracked and failing to accomplish its purpose.”⁵² The importance of a clear vision cannot be understated. Leadership development, then, must have a goal and a purpose. It must not be leadership development for the sake of leadership development. The purpose is not to check it off a list of requirements. To achieve this, leaders must become very focused about the purpose and then clearly articulate it, if the vision is to stick in the system they are currently operating within. Visionary leaders articulate a purpose that rings true for themselves and attune it to values shared by the people they lead.⁵³

Finally, it must also be asserted that faithfulness to God in church leadership is of greater importance than numerical growth. Faithfulness, then, is a greater indication of leadership development and spiritual formation. Jared Wilson has noted, “I think evangelicals have an overinflated sense of the numbers, which in turn distorts the big picture. The presumption is that

⁵¹ Klaus Issler, *Living Into the Life of Jesus* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 75.

⁵² Henry and Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God’s Agenda. Revised and expanded ed.* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2011), 85.

⁵³ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, *Primal Leadership*, 58.

big, attractional churches are the norm, mainly because it is the big, attractional churches that get most of our media coverage.”⁵⁴ Tim Suttle powerfully argued for a different approach when he stated, “The church’s job is to be faithful. Our growth, even our survival, is predicated on the will and power of God. The church’s job is to be the church.”⁵⁵ It is God and God alone who provides the growth, and growth is not limited simply to the number of people who enter a given building during a weekend service. The growth of a leader is often unseen and internal, which moves out externally in through their lives over time.

In summary, leadership development is a process that leads to change in the life of someone else. It requires thoughtful consideration when developing this process, clarity around the ultimate end goal of the process, and an awareness that leaders can be found and developed anywhere. All of this, of course, takes time. Being able to recognize whether a leader has been developed requires the ability to look back and see the growth that has taken place. This means that hindsight is required to assess effective leadership development processes.

Making Disciples

In taking the idea of leadership development a step further, the connection between it and the concept of making disciples must now be considered. It would appear as though leadership development processes are currently ineffective in achieving their desired results. Edwin Friedman concluded, “Leadership in America is stuck in the rut of trying harder and harder without obtaining significantly new results. The rut runs deep, affecting all the institutions of our society irrespective of size or purpose.”⁵⁶ This reality is also true within the walls of the church,

⁵⁴ Wilson, *The Prodigal Church*, 29.

⁵⁵ Tim Suttle, *Shrink: Faithful Ministry in a Church-Growth Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 23.

⁵⁶ Edwin L. Friedman. *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York, NY: Church Publishing, 2017), 3.

as Robert Hull observed, “The American church is not producing mature leaders and followers of Christ who are vibrant, mature, and engaged with their neighbors and communities. The evidence is plainly before us.”⁵⁷ Finally, the Blackaby’s also expressed a similar negative sentiment, “Although the leadership shortage is universally acknowledged, there is little consensus on how to discover and develop them.”⁵⁸ While leadership development content is readily available, the evidence of positive fruit being produced within the church, has continued down a negative path and trajectory. The shift that must take place is one where “Christian leaders must be convinced that following the ways and means of Jesus is superior to, and in the long run more effective than, attractive secular models.”⁵⁹ Francis Chan noted the difficulty of embracing this when he noted, “We expect our church leaders to create some sort of disciple-maker campaign where we sign up, commit to participating for a few months, and then get to cross the Great Commission off our list.”⁶⁰ With all of this in mind, the question should then become; what were the ways and means of Jesus’ discipleship process, and, how was this connected to His overall leadership development process?

To begin, leaders must first accurately comprehend the role Jesus plays in their lives daily. Dallas Willard provided important distinctions as it pertained to this, which is highlighted below.

⁵⁷ Hull, *The Christian Leader*, 33.

⁵⁸ Henry and Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership*, 16.

⁵⁹ Hull, *The Christian Leader*, 34.

⁶⁰ Francis Chan, *Multiply: Disciples Making Disciples* (Paris, ON: David C. Cook, 2012), 34.

Many people think of Jesus as our Savior, as the one who will get us into heaven. So the question often is “Have I accepted Jesus as my Savior?” But we never ask the question “Have I accepted Jesus as my teacher? And that’s the real question. With the disciples, it began there. They began by accepting him as their teacher, and then accepting him as their Savior—which included, of course, their eternal destiny—was a natural outflow of that. But they started with Jesus as their teacher, because we all have to learn how to live.⁶¹

For Willard, it is critical for every follower of Jesus to embrace the opposite of what is typically taught in most modern churches, that being Jesus as teacher, then Savior. This reversal provides the unique but necessary framework for understanding what it means to be one of Jesus’ disciples.

Next, clear understanding of what it means to be a disciple must be established. The word “disciples” is an English translation of the Greek word μαθητής. In Hebrew, this word is *talmidim*, which is usually translated as “disciples.”⁶² John Mark Comer stated, “A better word to capture the idea behind *talmidim* is ‘apprentices.’”⁶³ Eugene Peterson also embraced this perspective when he wrote, “Disciple says we are people who spend our lives apprenticed to our master, Jesus Christ.”⁶⁴ What is the connection between leadership development and discipleship then? To be sure, one cannot make disciples without first being a disciple. In fact, the word disciple is most often used as a noun in the New Testament, not a verb. This means that a disciple, or apprentice, is who one is before it is what they do. The chief effort for Jesus’

⁶¹ Dallas Willard. *Living in Christ’s Presence: Final Words on Heaven and the Kingdom of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 45.

⁶² Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 77.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁶⁴ Eugene Peterson, *Commemorative Edition, A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 11.

disciples then becomes to study and imitate the life of Jesus.⁶⁵ Thomas à Kempis profoundly wrote, “whoever wishes to understand fully the words of Christ must try to pattern his whole life on that of Christ...indeed it is not learning that makes a man holy and just, but a virtuous life makes him pleasing to God. I would rather feel contrition than know how to define it.”⁶⁶ Concerning this, then, Comer concluded, “To be one of Jesus’ *talmidim* is to...organize your life around three basic goals: 1. Be with Jesus. 2. Become like Jesus. 3. Do what he would do if he were you.”⁶⁷ Greg Ogden connected to this first goal of being with Jesus when he wrote: “The scriptural context for growing disciples is through relationships. Jesus called the Twelve to be with him for through personal association their lives would be transformed.”⁶⁸ In being with Jesus, one is transformed to become more like Him. Kierkegaard also concluded, “Christ understood that being a ‘disciple’ was in innermost and deepest harmony with what he said about himself.”⁶⁹ What counted most was the leader’s presence and being, not technique and know-how.⁷⁰ In many ways, Jesus operated like a coach after a game, breaking down the “game film” and helping His followers see the way they should adjust their heart, attitude, and behavior. Jesus did what every great coach does, which is to coach to a leader’s potential, not to their performance.⁷¹ From this flows the final goal of doing what Jesus would do.

⁶⁵ Thomas À Kempis. *The Imitation of Christ* (Dover Thrift Editions. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2003) 1.

⁶⁶ À Kempis. *The Imitation of Christ*, 1.

⁶⁷ Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 77.

⁶⁸ Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 42.

⁶⁹ Soren Kierkegaard, *Provocations: Spiritual Writings of Kierkegaard* (Farmington, PA: Ploughing Publishing, 1999), 85.

⁷⁰ Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve*, 18.

⁷¹ Andy Stanley, *The Next Generation Leader* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003), 122-123.

Though a simple statement on the surface, doing what Jesus would do has become a difficult concept for many of His followers to implement. This is in part due to a misunderstanding of the purpose of the church in the first place. God designed the church to be the avenue where His kingdom is realized and made visible in the local communities where it is expressed. The church does not exist for itself. The church exists to proclaim and demonstrate that the kingdom is near.⁷² To do this, Aubrey Malphurs pointed out that the church must be willing to ask, “What does the Bible teach about reaching your community?”⁷³ This stands in stark contrast to the question many churches are asking, which revolve more around the concepts of relevance and attractive environments. The prophet Jeremiah’s words in chapter 29 provide a clear, alternative template for this below.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

These words were given to God’s people at a critical moment when confusion and sadness would’ve been rampant. The “ways of the world” would’ve been obvious to them and tempting. However, instead of God instructing them to fight back, He encouraged them to seek the welfare of the very place they were living. To not run, but to multiply there. This is a picture of what churches should also aim to do in the current cultural moment, wherever they are located. Whether they love their city or despise it, they should seek God’s guidance and pray for the welfare of their city.

⁷² Eric Swanson, Rick Rusaw, *The Externally Focused Quest: Becoming the Best Church for the Community*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 76.

⁷³ Malphurs. *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 176.

At the same time, though, Peter reminded his readers, who were also in exile, of the following in chapter two of his first letter, “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation (v. 11-12).” This instruction is also critical, as it points out that followers of Jesus should seek the welfare of the place they live, but should also aim to not assimilate. They are to be in the world, but not of the world. They are to look more like Jesus, not less. Jesus’ followers are exiles here and their home is in Heaven and this moment is temporary. But as exiles they shouldn’t seek to preserve themselves and hide from the world, but seek to actively love and reach it with the love of Jesus. The greatest link, of course, between this idea of reaching the community to make disciples is found in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

If the goal of being a disciple is to spend every waking moment in conscious enjoyment of Jesus’ company, to spend our entire lives with the most loving, joyful, peaceful person to ever live,⁷⁴ and then imitating Him, there must also be obstacles that are currently preventing this from taking place. Perhaps the most prevalent in modern society is that of hurry. John Mark Comer quoted Dallas Willard as saying, “Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day.”⁷⁵ The reason for this, Comer noted, is that, “Both sin and busyness have the exact same effect—they cut off your connection to God, to other people, and even to your own soul.”⁷⁶ Issler affirmed this as well when he wrote, “What chokes fruitfulness is simply getting busy and

⁷⁴ Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 107.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

preoccupied with living without much intentionality toward Jesus' kingdom priorities."⁷⁷ This level of busyness has severe implications. Limited reflection usually leads to dangerous reaction.⁷⁸ Rich Villodas concluded, "when there's no space to process our inner worlds, we find ourselves mindlessly and instinctually reacting to the world around us."⁷⁹ Finally, concerning the speed many leaders find their lives moving, Lance Witt also stated, "Following Jesus cannot be done at a sprint. You can't live life at warp speed without warping your soul."⁸⁰ Witt also quoted Quaker Parker Palmer as having written, "A leader is a person who must take special responsibility for what's going on inside of himself or herself...lest the act of leadership create more harm than good."⁸¹ Modern leadership is currently functioning at an unsustainable pace and rhythm that is ultimately doomed to fail.

Many churches through the years, however, have assumed that busyness is the key to leadership development. The more a leader does, the more successful they must be. The church and leadership should be less about making life busy and more about building one's faith in whatever sphere God has placed them in.⁸² Therefore, when considering the spiritual life of a prospective leader, leaders should also not assume that they are naturally growing in their relationship with Jesus. They must be willing to identify whether they have been leading themselves well. Jesus, again as the ultimate example, embraced specific habits and rhythms that

⁷⁷ Issler, *Living Into the Life of Jesus*, 47.

⁷⁸ Rich Villodas, *The Deeply Formed Life: Five Transformative Values to Root Us in the Way of Jesus* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook, 2020), 105.

⁷⁹ Villodas. *The Deeply Formed Life*. 105-106.

⁸⁰ Lance Witt, *Replenish: Leading from a Healthy Soul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 59.

⁸¹ Witt, *Replenish*, 19.

⁸² Andrew Faiz, "Dwell, Work, Be with God: A Primer on the Missional Church." *Presbyterian Record* 140, no. 5 (May 2016): 36.

governed His day-to-day life as a leader. This naturally leads to the next section and a discussion surrounding the leader's character-driven habits.

The Leader's Character-Driven Habits

If a leader is to be developed to follow the example of Jesus, he or she must be willing to examine their own heart, which includes their character and habits. Only after this has taken place can a leader grow from being focused on how they are feeling and doing to being focused on how to lead their followers to maturity.⁸³ In regards to character, Kouzes and Posner explained, "Credibility is the foundation of leadership."⁸⁴ When considering a leader's character, the anchor resides in how they answer this question, "Who am I and who does God say I am?" Joseph Stowell, in his book *Redefining Leadership*, stated, "Who we think we are drives and defines how we live and how we lead."⁸⁵ The leader's identity, and where it is rooted, will provide a clear picture of where the leader is heading in the future. Peter Scazzero took this thought one step further when he wrote, "Who you are is more important than what you do."⁸⁶ In light of this, a clear definition of character should be offered. Andy Stanley concluded in his book, *Louder than Words*, "Character is the will do what's right, as defined by God, regardless of personal cost."⁸⁷ A leader with strong character seeks to do what is right, regardless of what the external "outcome" may be. One of the most important pieces in that definition is that God is the one who defines what is right. It is the leader's role, then, to align their heart with God's and

⁸³ Hull, *The Christian Leader*, 46.

⁸⁴ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 37.

⁸⁵ Joseph M. Stowell, *Redefining Leadership: Character-Driven Habits of Effective Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 57.

⁸⁶ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 38.

⁸⁷ Andy Stanley, *Louder than Words* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2004), 31.

allow Him to form and transform them from the inside out. Mac Lake also offered, “To act with integrity is to do the right thing, regardless of whether or not it’s acknowledged by others or convenient for you.”⁸⁸ Living a life of character, then, involves taking the focus off oneself and aiming to focus on the needs of others.

To bring further clarity to this, Stowell provided a sharp contrast between an outcome-driven leader and a character-driven leader. Outcome-driven leaders are “Focused on motivating others to achieve great organizational outcomes.”⁸⁹ Outcome-driven leaders are centered on success as defined by a specific outcome, be that the score of a game, a company’s sales record, albums sold, etc. In the case of this thesis that could be the number of baptisms, disciples developed, or some other numerical metric that paints a potentially positive picture of success in leadership development. In contrast, character-driven leaders “influence and empower those within the sphere of their authority to achieve great outcomes personally, spiritually, communally, and organizationally.”⁹⁰ The character-driven leader is focused less on the outcome of a specific result. They find the most important result to be their own growth and development, as well as those they have been entrusted to lead. To be clear, leaders should be willing to take risks and try new things. At the same time, this should not be at the expense of crossing over a line immorally. The key, then, is to embrace habits which develop the leader’s character as well as their followers.

In following Jesus’ character and example, leaders can identify several habits from which they should seek to grow. Comer noted about Jesus, “He would regularly get up early and go off

⁸⁸ Mac Lake, *Leading Leaders: Developing the Character and Competency to Lead Leaders* (USA: 100 Movements Publishing, 2019), 57.

⁸⁹ Stowell, *Redefining Leadership*, 24.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

to a quiet place to be with his Father.”⁹¹ Regarding this Hull also stated, “It seems obvious, doesn’t it, that a significant lesson in Christian leadership is to turn your eyes heavenward and talk to your leader about what you should be doing.”⁹² It is clear that in the life of Jesus there was a rhythm of silence, solitude, and prayer that was being modeled to His followers. Jesus drew lines in His relationships that allowed Him to find the space to be quiet before His Heavenly Father. Judah Smith concluded, “Do you want a quiet soul? Do you want a peaceful spirit? Then draw lines. Draw limits. Create a margin and a buffer for your soul...drawing lines and setting limits isn’t irresponsibility. It isn’t selfishness. It’s *wisdom*.”⁹³

While it may be obvious that His followers should also establish this as a habit and rhythm in their daily lives, creating space to be with and hear from Jesus is one of the most neglected steps for modern Christian leaders. Throughout the research, little to no mention of prayer was given with consideration to leadership development. Lake even noted, “Sometimes praying for others is the last step in a series of steps we take to grow our leaders.”⁹⁴ The irony, as Comer pointed out, is that prayer is one of the only spiritual practices that Jesus actually commanded during His time here on earth; the rest are what we simply observe from His example.⁹⁵ The leader must also seek silence and solitude, as Jesus did, because in the silence the leader is still before the Lord in wordless prayer.⁹⁶ Jesus had plenty of moments of nonstop

⁹¹ Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 112.

⁹² Hull, *The Christian Leader*, 173.

⁹³ Judah Smith, *How’s Your Soul? Why Everything that Matters Starts with the Inside You* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2016), 110-111.

⁹⁴ Lake, *Leading Leaders*, 39.

⁹⁵ Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 92.

⁹⁶ Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 139.

activity, yet he remained anchored in attentive presence with His Father.⁹⁷ The stillness slows the leader down to be able to hear the voice of God speaking into their heart and life. Slowing down also helps the leader to combat the desire to get in a hurry. The leader must remember that the point of their walk with God is not arriving. The point is walking. The point is being in relationship with God and experiencing life together. Growth and change are great, but they are not the main goals.⁹⁸

For God to continue the work of transformation within the life of a leader, another extraordinary leadership habit that was modeled by Jesus should be implemented. On a weekly basis Jesus would slow down and take time to experience Sabbath. The Sabbath is simply a day to stop: stop working, stop wanting, stop worrying, just stop.⁹⁹ In the Christian leadership environment, over work and spending countless hours in the office has become the norm, not the exception. Without a weekly rhythm of Sabbath, it is likely that many leaders will eventually burnout, or even quit. Rich Villodas offered support for this, “The fact is, humanity needs to keep the Sabbath, as many in our world are regularly on the brink of burnout.”¹⁰⁰ For this reason, the habit of Sabbath should be observed to sustain any leader, as well as those they are training and developing. Pete Scazzero offered support for this when he observed that Sabbath, “Reminds leaders that their goal is to work from a place of rest, not to get to a place of rest.”¹⁰¹ The Sabbath ultimately reminds every leader that Jesus is in control and perfectly capable of running the universe.

⁹⁷ Villodas. *The Deeply Formed Life*. 27.

⁹⁸ Smith, *How's Your Soul?*, 161.

⁹⁹ Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 148.

¹⁰⁰ Villodas. *The Deeply Formed Life*. 29.

¹⁰¹ Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 171.

One final character trait from Jesus' life that runs counter to the current cultural norm is that of humility. Humility does not come naturally to leaders.¹⁰² However, humility is the antidote to hubris.¹⁰³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer summarized this when he wrote, "He who would learn to serve must first learn to think little of himself."¹⁰⁴ One of the primary goals of leadership, as John the Baptist said, is, "He must increase, but I must decrease (John 3:30)." Becoming a servant leader requires great sacrifice, as Petit noted, "No one enjoys suffering. Yet that is the path through which character is often developed in the life of the Christian."¹⁰⁵ This led Hull to conclude, "The transition of learning to focus on others instead of ourselves is treacherous emotionally because it requires that we own up to our influence on others."¹⁰⁶ This statement introduces the next section concerning the leader's development of their own emotional health, as well as those they are called to lead.

Emotional Health

Leadership has always been about relationships, from a cold, mostly one-sided relationship where followers were only a means to an end, to a warm, interpersonal relationship of caring and cooperation towards a common goal.¹⁰⁷ Due to this important factor in leadership development, one of the most important skills for leaders to develop is that of Emotional Intelligence. Emotional Intelligence has been defined as the ability to recognize and understand

¹⁰² Hull, *The Christian Leader*, 99.

¹⁰³ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 347.

¹⁰⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community* (New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, 1954), 94.

¹⁰⁵ Paul Petit, *Foundations for Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 158.

¹⁰⁶ Hull, *The Christian Leader*, 47.

¹⁰⁷ Jacob J. Breedt and Cornelius J. P. Niemandt, "Relational Leadership and the Missional Church." *Verbum et Ecclesia; Pretoria* 34, no.1 (2013): 6.

emotions in oneself and others, as well as the ability to use this awareness to manage one's behavior and relationships.¹⁰⁸ Friedman also added that, "The word emotional...while it includes feelings, the word refers primarily to the instinctual side of our species that we share in common with all other forms of life."¹⁰⁹ There are very few aspects within leadership development that influence a leader more than their emotions, and great leadership works through the emotions.¹¹⁰

Because of its importance, leaders ought to regularly take stock of their current emotional health, as well as those around them. Scazzero identified a helpful definition of an unhealthy leader when he wrote the following.

The emotionally unhealthy leader is someone who operates in a continuous state of emotional and spiritual deficit, lacking emotional maturity and a "being *with* God" sufficient to sustain their "doing *for* God."¹¹¹

Failure in leadership to recognize this within themselves can result in several unhealthy behaviors that he uncovered. These behaviors include but are not limited to, 1) Lacking a Work/Sabbath Rhythm, 2) Being Chronically Overextended, 3) Low Self-Awareness, and 4) Prioritizing Ministry over Marriage/Singleness.¹¹² Ultimately, Scazzero concluded that emotional health and spiritual health are inseparable. It is not possible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature.¹¹³

What should effective, emotionally healthy leadership look like, then? In addition to the habits established in the previous section, several additions should be noted. Effective leadership

¹⁰⁸ Travis Bradberry, Jean Greaves, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* (San Diego, CA: TalentSmart, 2009), 17.

¹⁰⁹ Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve*, 4.

¹¹⁰ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, *Primal Leadership*. 3.

¹¹¹ Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 25.

¹¹² Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 27-32.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 17.

comes from someone with enough emotional maturity to call a congregation to discern and pursue a shared vision, to remain connected with those who differ with the leader or the majority, and to remain a calm presence when the anxiety rises.¹¹⁴ Anxiety is one of the leading detractors in leadership. When a system or team becomes infected with it, the results can be catastrophic. Anxiety and the search for rapid solutions always result in a failure of nerve within leadership.¹¹⁵ One of the keys, then, is to remain calm. Emotionally healthy leaders are the clearly defined, non-anxious presence that is needed for other leaders to thrive and grow.¹¹⁶ Another important leadership habit is what Friedman referred to as self-differentiation: the ability for a leader to separate his or her own emotional being from that of his or her followers while still remaining connected.¹¹⁷ The leader's ability to calm himself in the face of anxiety increases the likelihood of a well-thought-out, well-differentiated response that reflects beliefs and values.¹¹⁸ Leaders must be trained, then, to interact with their followers in a way that provides confidence, clarity, and decreases their overall level of anxiety.

Given the overall impact of emotions on the leader, a leadership development process that assesses and grows a leader's emotional health is deemed to be critical. With all the background established of leadership development, making disciples, their habits and emotional health, the context has been provided for researching the final key question in the next section which is: How should the development process be formed and built?

¹¹⁴ Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey*, 46.

¹¹⁵ Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve*, vii.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 20, 215.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹¹⁸ Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey*. 69.

Building the Process

In one of the previous sections, it was noted that the process of developing leaders will take time. This is not something that occurs instantly. Additionally, it is important to remember, “God continues to work with me, not on me, for all of my days. His purpose is that I become like him.”¹¹⁹ This should be the aim of any adult leadership development process. With these things in mind, a development process is absolutely worth the time to create and establish.

In beginning to build the process, it is critical for leaders to remember the words Solomon used to begin Psalm 127, “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.” This passage makes clear that though planning and preparation are important in this process, it must be led and directed by the Lord. Leaders must be willing to lay down all their plans before the Lord if they truly desire a favorable outcome. Allen P. Ross noted concerning this verse, “In words that reflect Ecclesiastes (a fitting relationship if Solomon was the psalmist), the author said that it is vain to attempt things without the Lord.”¹²⁰ In order for a leader’s attempts to not be in vain, then, they must be willing to surrender. The best way to do this, considering the previous section, is to pray regularly and frequently during the planning process. Concerning this Mark Batterson wrote, “If your plans aren’t birthed in prayer and bathed in prayer, they won’t succeed.”¹²¹

The ultimate test of leadership is the ability to train other leaders who can sustain what they were leading when they are gone.¹²² When building this process, one should then take into

¹¹⁹ Hull, *The Christian Leader*, 173.

¹²⁰ Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Logos Bible Software 9.

¹²¹ Mark Batterson. *The Circle Maker* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 68-69.

¹²² Malphurs and Mancini, *Building Leaders*, 11.

consideration that no one ever actually finishes the discipleship process.¹²³ If leaders must first be disciples, they will always be in process. In addition, the type of process that is implemented in the short-term must also take into consideration that it's hard to learn leadership abilities effectively in a classroom setting.¹²⁴ Given the nature and dynamics of leadership, a classroom environment will only go so far in achieving desired results. However, as Chan noted, part of the Great Commission is the imperative to teach others.¹²⁵ Therefore, the process itself should involve both a form of reading and study, as well as discussion of that content with the aim of life application. The content itself should center around the core concepts that have been uncovered; spiritual disciplines, emotional health, and character formation, rather than technique and leadership "know-how." One example of this would be for leaders to work through a genogram, which is a way to work through one's family tree from previous generations and identify historical themes, trends, and behaviors that have existed. This process allows a leader to get to the heart of their past to move forward in the present.¹²⁶ Emotional health assessments, as well as specific reading from select books and Scripture are also pivotal in the content process.

As the content becomes clear, the question then becomes; how does one attract other leaders to be developed? Malphurs and Mancini offered a four-step process in their writing for building leaders. Their conclusion was that leaders should be recruited, selected, trained, and then deployed.¹²⁷ Two important elements must be noted from this process. First, this reminds leaders that they must seek out other leaders first if they are going to ever develop them.

¹²³ Chan, *Multiply*, 33.

¹²⁴ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, *Primal Leadership*. 156.

¹²⁵ Chan, *Multiply*, 91.

¹²⁶ Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 93, 104.

¹²⁷ Malphurs and Mancini, *Building Leaders*, 68-71.

Recruitment takes on a variety of forms which could include a personal conversation, email invitation, or announcement at a specific church service or event. Second, once a leader has been trained and developed, they must also be empowered. John Maxwell concluded, “Four out of five of all the leaders that you ever meet will have emerged because of the impact made on them by established leaders who mentored them.”¹²⁸ Though Maxwell did not provide actual data to prove this, his point was still clear, “Empowerment is done by one leader transferring both authority and responsibility over to those they developed.”¹²⁹ In fact, this concept is one of the best ways for some leaders to take a step back from the “firing range” of leadership and equip others for it.¹³⁰

To summarize, a leadership development process takes time to create, requires a clear understanding of content as well as life application, that ultimately sends leaders out to serve and live like Jesus.

Theological Foundations

Given the clarity gained from the review of literature, it is now best to turn the focus toward the theological foundations of adult leadership development. There are several biblical examples of leadership development, perhaps the best of which are Paul’s development of Timothy and Titus, and Jesus’ ministry with the twelve.¹³¹ In fact, a brief survey of the life of Jesus in Scripture quickly revealed that what He did most often was lead by example. Time and

¹²⁸ John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 134.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹³⁰ Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 139.

¹³¹ Scott M. Douglas, "Developing Leaders for Pastoral Ministry." *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 8, no. 2 (2014): 84-90.

time again Jesus is seen acting on behalf of other people, and then teaching His followers about what had just taken place right before their eyes.

Concerning Jesus' life and ministry, the Apostle Paul noted in Philippians chapter two that He "emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (v. 7-8)." Jesus provided the blueprint to His followers to grow in their leadership, and that blueprint was to serve and walk in humility. Consider Matthew 20, when Jesus stated the following.

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (v. 25-28).

For Jesus, the pathway to greatness for a leader in His kingdom is to serve, rather than being served. For the disciples, however, their belief was that the goal of leadership was to be first, not last. Because of that, their expectations misled them and set them up for disappointment, initially. However, as they would soon find out, this was and is the way of Jesus. Jesus invited His followers to do the very thing He would do for them; lay down their lives for other people. In seeking to serve, the leader is much more vulnerable. At the same time, however, that vulnerability gives the leader an opportunity to see Jesus do what only He can do; change lives. This takes place not just in the lives of those the leader is seeking to influence, but the leader's life as well.

As was clearly noted previously, there is a deeply rooted connection between leadership development and spiritual formation in growing as an apprentice of Jesus. The two, in fact, go hand in hand. Growth as an apprentice of Jesus implies learning how to love and lead like Jesus

did. Therefore, those who seek to follow Jesus must root themselves in mimicking His behavior. This is evidenced throughout the New Testament. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth to imitate him as he imitated Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). Paul knew in writing this that he was not the focal point of imitation, but Christ. First Thessalonians 1:6 initially appeared to contradict this when Paul wrote, “And you became imitators of us and of the Lord.” However, Paul’s aim once again was to be an example of what it means to apprentice under Jesus, and so lead others to do the same.

In his letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul strengthened them in their pursuit of this as well. In chapter four, he wrote the following.

So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love (v. 14-16).

As the church faithfully follows Jesus’ lead, Paul reminded them that they would grow in purpose and unity. The key here again is to remain faithful and steadfast in pursuit of Jesus. As they did, they would also mature and grow and therefore function properly as one body.

This concept, then, brings greater clarity to the Great Commission in Matthew 28. When Jesus called His followers to make disciples (v. 19), He knew that in giving them this calling that they were not the “disciple makers.” They were apprentices, being called to point others to apprentice under Him. This is clearly known from the moment Jesus called His first disciples in John 1. Jesus was referred to as a rabbi by them (v. 38), which John clarified as meaning teacher. A teacher must have students who are wholly committed to learning from him. In this case, Jesus was and is the master teacher. All of His followers take the position of apprentice on a moment-by-moment basis. Therefore, the call to “make disciples,” is better understood as a call to

growing apprentices. This means that a select set of people are not the ones responsible for “making disciples.” Jesus is the one who is responsible, and His apprentices humbly take their lead from Him.

As an apprentice seeks to grow and develop under the leadership of Jesus, he or she must regularly take heed to Jesus’ teaching in John 15. In His final teachings before dying on the cross, Jesus met with His closest apprentices to partake in the Passover. In this moment, Jesus knew that the very existence of the group depended on the union of each individual with Christ. To illustrate it, Jesus used the analogy (or parable) of the vine.¹³² He urged them to abide in Him as the true source of their life, for apart from Him they would be incapable of doing what He was sending them out to do (v. 4-5). Concerning this Andrew Murray noted the following,

A vine without branches can bear no fruit. No less indispensable than the vine to the branch is the branch to the vine. Such is the wonderful condescension of the grace of Jesus; just as His people are dependent on Him, He has made himself dependent on them. Without His disciples He cannot dispense His blessing to the world.¹³³

From a posture of abiding, the key to developing leaders based on Scripture, then, is to teach and show them the way of Jesus. This is not a secret way, but one that He made plain to all in Matthew 11 when He gave the invitation to come to Him (v. 28). The burdened and heavy-laden were those who had been chasing hard after the ways of the world, seeking their own pathway and salvation. Jesus gives His apprentices a different way, though. His way is an easy yoke. The writers of the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* affirmed this when they noted the following.

¹³² Merrill C. Tenney, “John” in *John and Acts*, Vol. 9, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), Logos Bible Software 9.

¹³³ Andrew Murray, *Abiding in Christ*, (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2003), 30.

People's weariness comes from enduring their burdens, probably the burdens of sin and its consequences. Rather, they should come and yoke themselves with Jesus. By placing themselves under His yoke and learning from Him, they may find rest for their souls from sins' burdens. By yoking, they become true disciples of Jesus and join Him in His proclamation of divine wisdom. To learn (mathete) from Him is to be His disciple (mathētēs).¹³⁴

The calling of His apprentices is to remain faithful to learn from Him, and then do as He would do. But what should they remain faithful to do?

As Jesus' apprentices seek to imitate and follow His way, several important things He did must be done by His followers. First, clearly articulate the gospel. Jesus regularly testified and bore witness to Himself as the sole means to salvation (Matthew 4:23, John 4:26, 5:36, 6:35-36, 8:12-14, 11:25-26). The gospel is what changes the heart and reaches the lost and it also grows the faith of the found. Again, Paul reminded the Ephesians of this when he wrote the following.

Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (3:7-10).

Paul made it clear that his calling to proclaim the gospel was deeply centered in the purpose of growing Christ's church. He also explained how he himself was enlisted in the service of this gospel, not through any ambition or qualification of his own but solely through the gift and calling of God.¹³⁵ This passage reminds followers of Jesus that the gospel is not just the

¹³⁴ Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Logos Bible Software 9.

¹³⁵ A. Skevington Wood, "Ephesians" in *Ephesians through Philemon*, Vol. 11, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), Logos Bible Software 9.

beginning point of Christianity, not just a prayer that is prayed that commences their journey with God. The gospel is the whole experience.¹³⁶

In Acts 10, Peter provided another clear connection of what takes place as Jesus' apprentices remain faithful. As he proclaimed the gospel of Jesus to the Gentiles gathered before him, Luke wrote that the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word (v. 44). Peter simply explained to those gathered who Jesus was and what He had done for them, and their lives were transformed. With the promise of forgiveness offered "through his name" and to "everyone who believes in him," they were given a reason for hoping beyond their fondest hopes. With their reception of that inclusive message, the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentile congregation.¹³⁷ It was also the Holy Spirit who also came upon Jesus at His baptism (Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22, John 1:32). Therefore, as the apprentices of Jesus proclaim the truth of who He is, the Holy Spirit comes and does the work of spiritual transformation.

Dependence upon the Holy Spirit is critical for Jesus' apprentices, especially if they are to endure the long road of leadership. In connection with that, another cue that Jesus' apprentices must take from His life is that of suffering well. This theme is evident throughout the New Testament as it is passed from the life of Jesus on to His followers and the builders of the early church and continues to this day. For most leaders, to varying degrees, conflict, disagreement, and suffering all go hand in hand because most leaders face opposition of various kinds. Leaders must be equipped to operate within this type of environment. Several passages should be noted concerning the importance of this reality.

The passages to be examined include Luke 12:11-12 and 21:14-15, alongside of Acts 4:5-

¹³⁶ J.D. Greear, *Gaining by Losing* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 42.

¹³⁷ Richard N. Longenecker, "The Acts of the Apostles" in *John and Acts*, Vol. 9, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), Logos Bible Software 9.

12. The context of the passages and their relationship to the overall themes of Luke and Acts must first be noted. Writer Joseph B. Tyson acknowledged, “Whatever one may say about the overall purpose of Luke-Acts, the theme of conflict must be considered.”¹³⁸ Tyson established that one of the primary themes in both books is conflict, which is especially evident within the passages under consideration. He continued with regards to this, stating, “Luke-Acts contains a series of conflicts, with Jesus and later the apostles and Paul occupying one side...on the side opposing Jesus, there are certain groups [as well] (Pharisees, chief priests, scribes, elders) and certain individuals (Herod Antipas, Judas, Pilate).”¹³⁹ These statements play a vital role in confirming that both Jesus and His Apostles faced suffering and conflict.

Closer consideration of the context reveals the nature and degree of this conflict. In Luke 12, Jesus warned his disciples to beware of the yeast of the Pharisees, or the teachings of the Pharisees (v. 1).¹⁴⁰ In light of this, Jesus told them that whatever is said in the dark or in private rooms must be proclaimed in the light and on housetops (v. 3). He also encouraged them not to fear those who kill the body, but to fear the one who has authority to cast them into hell (v. 4-5). After painting this grim picture, Jesus then supported them by saying that everyone who acknowledged Him before men will be acknowledged by Him before the angels of God (12:8). The key here was for them to stand firm and remain faithful. All of this helped to set up what Jesus was ultimately leading them to grasp when he said, “And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend

¹³⁸ Joseph B. Tyson. “Opposition to Jesus in the Gospel of Luke.” *Perspectives In Religious Studies* 5, no. 3 (September 1, 1978) 134-140.

¹³⁹ Tyson, “Opposition to Jesus in the Gospel of Luke.”

¹⁴⁰ Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Logos Bible Software 9.

yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say (v. 11-12).” Amid conflict and great suffering, Jesus reminded them that the Holy Spirit would be present to guide and lead them.

The second section in Luke to be considered with the previous one is Luke 21:14-15. Jesus was once again speaking with His disciples. He had just warned them about the destruction of the temple in verses 5-9. He then foretold of wars and persecution, that nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom (v. 10). Before these and other things occur, though, Jesus told them that they will be persecuted and delivered before the synagogues and prisons, before kings and governors (v. 12). This, He said, would be their opportunity to bear witness (21:13). He then stated, “Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict (v.14-15).” The suffering Jesus’ follower would face would not just be a moment of endurance, but also an opportunity for them to share about who Jesus is and invite others into His kingdom.

Both previous passages offer helpful insight into the final set found in Acts chapter four, but its context also needs to be established. At this stage, Jesus had gone to the cross and risen from the grave and the Apostles had been sent out to invite people into His kingdom, equipped with the Holy Spirit to do this work. Peter and John spoke and taught the people about Christ’s resurrection (v. 2), when the Sadducees came upon them and arrested them (v. 1, 3). The next day, rulers, elders, and scribes gathered in Jerusalem (v. 5). These included Annas the high priest and many of the high priestly family, including Caiaphas (v. 6). These men inquired by what power or name they (Peter and John) did the things they had done (v. 7). Verses 8-12 revealed Peter’s powerful response amid this moment of high intensity:

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Having read the previous sections in Luke, it is clear that there is connection between those and what transpired in Acts 4, continuing to exhibit the strong theme of conflict that is connected throughout these examined verses.

The passages found in the books of Luke and Acts share many similarities as well as some unique differences. It is first helpful to acknowledge that there is support for these verses generally being connected to one another. Richard Longenecker, the writer of the section on Acts in the “Expositor’s Bible Commentary,” also linked specific connections between the verses in Acts four and the verses in Luke 21. Regarding this he stated the following:

Undoubtedly Luke was thinking of many incidents of opposition to the gospel message when he wrote down these words. Indeed, he records a number of such happenings in Acts. But certainly when he wrote about Peter’s first defense before the Jewish Sanhedrin...these words were ringing in his ears. For almost every item of Jesus’ oracle is exemplified in Luke’s account of Peter’s situation, attitude, and message here in Acts.¹⁴¹

These passages are specifically connected to one another. This connection draws together the important link of suffering and opposition that all followers of Jesus will face as they seek to step into leadership with Him. Several important themes regarding this opposition should also be noted below.

First, there is a common theme of rulers that will come against God’s people, specifically His disciples. In both passages in Luke, Jesus was speaking directly to His disciples, though

¹⁴¹ Longenecker, “The Acts of the Apostles,” Logos Bible Software 9.

there was a crowd surrounding Him. He gave them specific words of encouragement as well as instruction for how to behave once they find themselves in the scenario He had outlined. While the scenarios are not identical, they share the common theme of authority figures being opposed to Jesus and the message of His kingdom.

All three passages highlight the “rulers” element, though there are distinct differences with regards to who these rulers are. In Luke 12, the rulers are the Pharisees, who “were being convicted by the Holy Spirit that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, but were rejecting His witness.”¹⁴² In Luke 21 they are plainly described as kings and governors. In Acts 4 they are the Sadducees who believed, “the Messiah was an ideal, not a person, and the Messianic Age was a process, not a cataclysmic or even datable event.”¹⁴³ Though Jesus didn’t specifically say that the “Sadducees would be the rulers,” Peter and John would have remembered the instruction Jesus gave them, and Luke is referring to these instructions.

Jesus predicted that the disciples would face these trials and difficulties from these rulers in the book of Luke, and then the apostles experienced them in Acts. In fact, John Martin, writer of the “Luke” section in the “Bible Knowledge Commentary,” stated, “Jesus taught that persecution of believers would be common and severe. The disciples did undergo persecution by the authorities (cf. Acts 2–4).”¹⁴⁴ This emphasized the connectivity of Luke and Acts. It also stressed the fulfillment of Christ’s prediction. Without Acts we do not know whether this persecution is something that happened to His disciples.

In undergoing these trials, Jesus also stated that this would be the time for them to bear

¹⁴² Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Logos Bible Software 9.

¹⁴³ Longenecker, “The Acts of the Apostles,” Logos Bible Software 9.

¹⁴⁴ Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Logos Bible Software 9.

witness (21:13). This is one of the clearest connection points between these sections. Jesus' explanation of this ties directly to Peter's speech before the Sadducees in Acts 4, in which Peter boldly proclaims the Gospel and bears witness to Christ's resurrection. This moment Lao provided a link between Luke and Acts in that the Holy Spirit tells Peter what to say, as Jesus also said would occur (Luke 12:12, Acts 4:8). Writer Warren Wiersbe also tied this to Luke 21, "But the Spirit was telling Peter what to say (see Luke 21:12–15), and the apostle quoted Psalm 118:22, definitely a messianic reference."¹⁴⁵

There does seem to be a slight nuance between what Wiersbe noted and what Jesus stated in chapter 21. Jesus never mentioned the Holy Spirit giving the Apostles the words to say in chapter 21, only that He will give them a mouth and wisdom. In chapter 12, though, He gave specific mention concerning the Holy Spirit being the one who would teach them what they are to say. With that said, it is obvious that the Holy Spirit plays a vital role in empowering Peter to bear witness to Jesus in this moment of suffering and opposition. Regarding this Longenecker noted, "The use of the aorist passive (*plēstheis*, "filled") in the expression 'filled with the Holy Spirit' denotes a special moment of inspiration that complements and brings to a functional focus the presence in every believer's life of the person and ministry of God's Spirit."¹⁴⁶ The Holy Spirit empowered Peter to boldly proclaim the truth of Christ to this gathering of people, including his reference to Psalm 118:22, which he also quoted in his own letter in 1 Peter chapter two.

Another connection in these passages is that the section Acts clearly stated that it is Christ's name alone that brings about salvation. In his article, "No Other Name," writer Russell

¹⁴⁵ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), Logos Bible Software 9.

¹⁴⁶ Longenecker, "The Acts of the Apostles," Logos Bible Software 9.

Dilday referred to verse 12 that, “The Bible says clearly, that repentance and faith in Jesus Christ is the only way we can be saved.”¹⁴⁷ Jesus has already stated in Luke 21 that it is for His name’s sake that they will be brought before these rulers (v. 12). Now Peter referred to His name as the only name for salvation. Longenecker pointed out, “There was nothing of compromise or accommodation in Peter’s preaching. As this magnificent declaration shows, he was wholly committed to the uniqueness of Jesus as the only Savior.”¹⁴⁸ The focal point of Peter’s message culminated in salvation not being accomplished by works or good deeds but by the saving work of Christ alone.

Finally, Jesus also offered words that are outside of these selected verses that are also confirmed in Acts. In the second half of Luke 21:15 Jesus stated, “Which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.” This referred to the mouth and wisdom that Jesus would give His disciples. Following Peter’s statement to the Sadducees in Acts four, Luke wrote, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition (v. 13-14).” Once again, Jesus’ prediction of the disciples’ response to opposition came true, as well as the response of those who were opposing them.

Important leadership growth and development themes should be noted from this brief study of suffering and opposition. First, the theme of dependence upon the Holy Spirit when one is in a time of great conflict cannot be overstated. It is easy in a moment of difficulty to rely on

¹⁴⁷ Russell H. Dilday Jr. “No Other Name: Acts 4:12.” *Southwestern Journal Of Theology* 36, no. 3 (June 1, 1994): 52-57.

¹⁴⁸ Longenecker, “The Acts of the Apostles,” Logos Bible Software 9.

one's own skills or abilities. This set of passages confirms the need for leaders to learn how to rely less on themselves and more on the Holy Spirit living within them. Peter was uniquely filled with the Holy Spirit for this task, but this does not mean that God does not want to do the same for any of His people who willingly rely on Him.

This is coupled with another leadership insight discussed earlier: the need to willingly bear witness to Christ, regardless of what others think or say. Sharing the gospel is a part of leadership in the kingdom of God. This command is easier said than done. The Apostles had plenty of reason to fear; they were facing prison and separation from those they loved most. The persecution they experienced for their faith in Jesus was severe and ultimately cost them their lives. On the other hand, in the United States in particular, persecution is much less severe, though increasing, yet it seems many leaders are often more afraid and less willing to trust God to give them the words to say in these moments. Wiersbe provided an important reminder concerning this, "It is not important what people say about our names, but it is important that the name of Christ be glorified."¹⁴⁹ Leaders don't have the power to raise one dead person to life in and of themselves, yet they often fret and worry as if salvation depends on them. By relying on the Holy Spirit and laying aside pride, self-sufficiency, or anxiety, leaders can open the door to living and trusting the Holy Spirit to do what only He can do. The Spirit can empower God's people to reach His people while at the same time proclaim the stumbling block to those who will not believe.

Finally, the necessity of prayer as the key builder of Jesus' apprentices must be brought back into clear view. Though lacking as a point of emphasis in the literature reviewed, the Apostle Paul encouraged Timothy with these words for building the church, "First of all, then, I

¹⁴⁹ Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Logos Bible Software 9.

urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people.” Prayer reminds the leader and all who seek to follow Jesus that God is in charge, not people, not the congregation, the senior pastor, the staff, or the elders.¹⁵⁰ Prayer is one of the primary spiritual disciplines that Jesus commanded of His followers (Matt. 6:5-15, Luke 11:1-13). The rest are discovered by simply observing the life and rhythms of Jesus (Luke 4:16, 4:42, Luke 6:6).¹⁵¹ The difficulty surrounding prayer as being central to leadership development, however, is that it is challenging to quantify its overall impact in each moment. With other leadership principles or techniques, leaders can assess the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a given practice, and then choose whether to continue applying it. For Jesus and His apprentices, though, this was an assumed and necessary practice that was regularly incorporated into their daily lives and leadership.

In conclusion, the New Testament is filled with examples of leadership development being combined with spiritual formation. The way in which this unfolded in the daily life of Jesus’ apprentices has been clearly unveiled. The two, then, must be linked together in forming a leadership development process for the adult leaders within City Church Marietta. The New Testament provided the framework of Jesus’ life and as noted throughout this research, the aim is apprenticeship under Jesus’ leadership.

For these reasons, the Old Testament was not utilized as a point of reference within this section since it fails to capture the daily life of Jesus and the critical observations that can be obtained from it. This does not mean, however, that the Old Testament does not contain wisdom, direction, and insight for Jesus’ apprentices. In fact, to understand much of Jesus’ teachings

¹⁵⁰ Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll’s Living Insights: New Testament Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2014), 34.

¹⁵¹ Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 112-113.

(especially the Sermon on the Mount in particular), one must also have a developed knowledge of the Old Testament, over time, to follow Jesus. For the purposes of this study, though, these connections will not be explored.

Theoretical Foundations

In addition to these theological foundations, several key theoretical foundations must also be considered. These include a variety of approaches which church leaders have utilized throughout recent church history to develop adult leaders. The first is simply a common Bible study group. Some have called it Adult Bible Fellowship (ABF) and others have called it Sunday school class.¹⁵² Regardless of the title, these groups typically gather to study Scripture and share prayer requests with one another. One of the primary focuses of these groups has been the growth in knowledge of the Bible, including the reading of specific books and various techniques that assist in this process.

Within the past two decades, another common approach to leadership growth has been what is now referred to as the small groups model.¹⁵³ Small groups are formed by the church to connect church attenders to people in their community. These groups also share prayer requests, socialize, and use some form of book or video study. The thought process behind this has been that sustained growth takes place where people are personally challenged and encouraged in their relationship with God and others.¹⁵⁴ In order for this to happen, small groups have become the vehicle utilized by countless churches.

¹⁵² Andy Stanley and Bill Willits, *Creating Community* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2004), 95.

¹⁵³ Stanley and Willits, *Creating Community*, 94.

¹⁵⁴ Stanley and Willits, *Creating Community*, 94-95.

Leaders have also been formed and developed through the years by other unique approaches. These include internships, finding a mentor or life coach to walk alongside the leader, or creating a learning community or peer group to discuss and grow in leadership with other leaders.¹⁵⁵ These various approaches provide both one-on-one development opportunities, as well as small group opportunities.

More recently, Peter Scazzero's church created a very specific type of group known as the Emotional Healthy (EH) Discipleship Course.¹⁵⁶ This course specifically aims to lead attenders to deeper emotional health in ways that none of the previous models can. It connects to an important element that is critical in the development of the leader, that being their emotional well being and life journey. This, coupled with learning new rhythms for life with Jesus, empowers leaders to walk confidently in who Jesus has called them to be. One critique of this group could be the short amount of time that is given to the overall process, as it is completed after two separate eight week courses.¹⁵⁷ These courses do not have to be taken in conjunction with one another either. It is at the leader's discretion how they choose to implement the content provided. Additionally, much of the language and approach has an academic, classroom style for learning. It has been previously noted in the literature that the classroom environment is a less than desired place for leadership development to take shape.

In summary, within each of these models and approaches is an attempt to capture pieces of what Jesus did with His disciples, as noted in the previous section. However, each one may currently lack in one area or another. For example, it is possible that Bible study groups can lack

¹⁵⁵ Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey*. 149-151.

¹⁵⁶ Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 301.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 301.

in their willingness to share current struggles they have for a variety of reasons. These reasons could be a fear of appearing weak or less spiritual than other group members, or simply not included in the overall approach to the academic style of studying the Bible. This could also be because the leader of this group has chosen not to focus specific time on life application and personal care for their group members. They may also have chosen to not make authenticity and vulnerability a common practice within their group.

On the other side of this, the small group model has often yielded social connection, but very little in terms of lasting spiritual formation and knowledge of Scripture. The growth is often short-term, with the groups often drifting into being a social club rather than a group that desires to live and love the way that Jesus did. The EH course aims to link these two concepts together. It lacks, however, in length and needs more time to be worked through by those who are attending. In all these approaches, the true sharing of the gospel and dedication to prayer are often either completely ignored or become a small category within the vast offering of the course/model.

Therefore, an adult leadership process will need to take more time than the eight weeks offered by the EH course. It must also be personal and rooted in conversation. This means it should not be in a classroom type of setting but rather a discussion or round-table. Learning how to read, study, and apply the Bible must also remain central. Attenders also need to learn to understand the deep nuances of how their story fits within the story of Jesus. This, then, is more of a journey than a course or class. This journey initiates the realization within each person that they have a purpose, and this purpose is only the beginning of what lies ahead of them as they seek to follow the lead of their master, Jesus. Throughout this journey, the hearts of those in

attendance must be regularly drawn back to the grace of Jesus and the concept of prayer as meaningful, personal interaction with Him.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

With the research completed, the focus of this DMIN action research shifted to the design and implementation of a form of intervention. The purpose of this intervention was to provide a solution to the proposed thesis. The following sections describe in detail what these processes entailed, guided of course by the information gathered in the previous chapters.

Intervention Design

To address the current problem of a lack of leadership development within City Church Marietta, the intervention process offered was a 14-week journey called, *The Way of Jesus*, which was spread out over a four-month period. Approval from the lead pastor was required and obtained for this to take place (See Appendix C). Leadership is not a solo venture to be done by one or two elite people. This is one of the many dangers of leadership that should be avoided. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee discussed the importance of a leader peeling back the layers of their leadership life to discover their “Real Self.” To do this, leaders must avoid self-delusion, which they stated “Is a powerful trap indeed, skewing our attempts to assess ourselves. Because of it, we give more weight to what confirms our distorted self-image—and ignore what doesn’t.”¹⁵⁸ Peter Scazzero affirmed this when he wrote, “I don’t know many people who shed many layers of their false self in order that their true self might emerge unless they have a few trusted mature companions to help them along the way.”¹⁵⁹ In order to embrace this, Kouzes and Posner encouraged leaders to embrace humility, of which they noted, “Humility is the only way to resolve conflict and contradictions of leadership. You can avoid excessive pride only if you

¹⁵⁸ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, *Primal Leadership*, 130.

¹⁵⁹ Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 86.

recognize that you're human and need the help of others.”¹⁶⁰ Finally, Heifetz and Linsky affirm the need for a team in leadership as they noted, “Almost every person we know with difficult experiences of leadership has relied on a confidant to help them get through.”¹⁶¹ For these reasons, the proposed context for leaders to grow in their understanding of leadership as apprenticeship is within a small group. The choice was made in favor of other options such as one-on-one mentoring, on the job training within the direct ministry context and volunteer is leading, or a large group lecture environment.

The process of developing leaders included a variety of content that must be read and interacted with during these four months. These included John Mark Comer's book, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, Max Anders book, *30 Days to Understanding Bible*, and a letter in the Bible that the group read and studied, the book of James.

In addition, group members also learned how to communicate and deliver their life story to the group using a Life Map Worksheet (See Appendix B). This worksheet was adapted from Dr. Andrew Seidel's Life Story Worksheet.¹⁶² It was designed to lead each group member through several key moments in their story including the following: Heritage, Heroes, Hard Times, High Points, and Hand of God. Each of these headings was supported by specific questions. Under Heritage, for example, the group members worked through geographic and ethnic factors which have influenced them throughout their lives. This included uncovering important trends in their family lineage by going back a few generations at minimum. The

¹⁶⁰ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 347.

¹⁶¹ Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 200.

¹⁶² Andrew Seidel, *Charting A Bold Course: Training Leaders for 21st Century Ministry* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003), 47-61, 289-292.

Heroes section considered the key influences that shaped their story and character for the better. These included parents, teachers, coaches, and other influential role models. This was followed by the Hard Times section, which helped group members unpack the painful memories and experiences in each of their story's. The purpose for this section was to identify the difficult moments they remembered clearly impacting them. This could include a cancer diagnosis, loss of loved one, job, abuse, or deep personal wound from a friend. This section also focused on how these moments have impacted their overall emotional health and maturity along the way. The High Points section gave attention to the significant positive experiences that have taken place in their lives. One of the important aspects of this section is the development of gratitude for the significant moments that have happened in someone's story. These experiences also shed light on specific talents, abilities, and unique gifting that each person has as well. Finally, the Hand of God section placed great emphasis on the life changing experiences in their relationship with Jesus. This section is the last one because it helps to put all the pieces together and see the overarching themes of God's work in each person's life. Once the worksheet has been completed, each group member synthesized the information gathered into a 30-minute presentation that they each shared with the group before the completion of the journey. While the point of this exercise was to learn how to share their story, one of the other key findings should be their learning about how Jesus has and continues to work within each of their lives.

Due to the overall content and nature of the journey, each group was limited to a maximum of seven people per offering. The first offering was made available by Sunday morning announcement and church-wide email starting in March of 2021 (See Appendix D for details of the announcement). Potential participants visited the church website, www.citychurchmarietta.org, to complete an Entrance Survey that made them eligible for the

group. In total, eight people completed the survey and six participants and six were accepted into *The Way of Jesus*. Two of the eight chose not to participate due to time constraints or not currently seeking to serve within the life of the church at the time of their submissions. The six participants completed a Consent Form to partake in this journey (See Appendix E for sample). Upon completion, each member of the group also took an Exit Survey, which asked specific follow up questions in relation to the entrance questions. Note Appendix A for a sample of the questions each participant was required to answer when they applied to join the group, as well as the exit questions which were completed upon finishing the journey. These questions will be examined in more detail in the Results section.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

With the overarching design established, the focus now shifts to the way this design was implemented. The group itself began on Sunday, April 11, 2021. It took place between 8:30 AM and 9:45 AM prior to the church's Sunday Gathering which began at 10:30 AM. The group gathered for seven consecutive Sundays, took a break for roughly two months, and continued with the next seven weeks culminating on Sunday, August 29, 2021. This journey will ultimately be offered twice a year, with each taking place within four months per offering. Below is the detailed breakdown of the content flow of each week in the journey. During each week, a brief journal entry was also captured to provide more insight beyond the basics of the content, which will be uncovered in the Results section. The goal in providing this is to ensure that the depth of the conversations and goals of each week are given more clarity.

Week 1 – The first week included an introduction to the journey ahead, including a brief description of apprenticeship. This description outlined the goal of teaching the leaders how to live and love like Jesus by growing in their desire to be with Jesus and seeking to

imitate Him with their lives. The books were briefly described, and the week concluded with the group leader explaining the Life Map Worksheet and sharing their Life Map with the group. The homework for next week is to read Part One of *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*.

Week 2 – This week, the primary focus for the group was to discuss Part One and the homework was to read Part Two. In addition, group members were encouraged to explore two key questions as they continue their reading: Why am I in a hurry? Where is our culture going considering its current pace and technological dependence?

Week 3 – Part Two of *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* was discussed this week.

Group members were also asked to answer the question; Why am I in a hurry?

Homework for the next week was to read the first chapter in Part Three titled, *Silence and Solitude*.

Week 4 – The group discussed the chapter centered on the practice of silence and solitude from the life of Jesus. At this point, group members began to recognize that ways in which each of these practices, as well as those to yet to be discussed, were informing their being with Jesus, as well as their ability to live like Him. The homework for next week is to read the chapter focused on the practice of Sabbath. Group members are encouraged to also come ready to discuss their current Sabbath rhythm if they have one.

Week 5 – This week focused solely on the practice of having a weekly Sabbath. This discussion allowed group members to wrestle with a concept that is lost in many modern churches. Next week, the discussion turns to the chapter titled, *Simplicity*. Due to the fact that this chapter focuses on the ways in which we view and utilize our time, treasure, and

talents, group members were also asked to assess the way in which they've been raised to view and utilize money.

Week 6 – In addition to discussing the chapter that focuses on the practice of *Simplicity*, this week will also include the first group member sharing their Life Map. Each group member that shares their life map is given at least one month of advance notice to give them plenty of time to work through the worksheet and prepare to share. The homework for next week is to read the final chapter of the book, *Slowing*.

Week 7 – This final week discussing the book put all the pieces together as it pertains to eliminating hurry so that each person can be with and live like Jesus. This week another group member shared their Life Map as well. At this stage, the group will break for about two months. During this break, each group member is asked to read all of *30 Days to Understanding the Bible* prior to the next gathering in July.

TWO MONTH GAP – This gap exists for several reasons. The first is to provide ample time for each of the group members to complete the assigned reading and work in *30 Days to Understanding the Bible*. In addition, the two-month gap will take place in the summer, a time in which many people take time off for vacation, travel, or to spend more time with friends and family. One of the keys to this methodology is consistent attendance, therefore, it is also best to avoid group members potentially missing several weeks at a time.

Week 8 – Returning from a two-month break, the group spent most of the time discussing the reading of *30 Days to Understanding the Bible*. After this discussion concluded, the group leader gave instructions to the group for reading through the book of James over the next five weeks. One group member concluded the group by sharing

their Life Map as well. Homework for next week is to read James 1 every day and returning next week ready to discuss observations that were made.

Week 9 – This week introduced the groups journey through an entire book of the Bible. The group leader began the group by providing context to the book of James. One group member then read chapter one out loud for the entire group. The group then discussed and shared insights from this chapter. The homework for next week was to read James 2.

Weeks 10 and 11 – These two weeks followed a similar script to week nine with each week moving forward into another chapter.

Week 12 – During this week, the group read and discussed James 4, like previous weeks. At the end of the discussion, though, one group member also shared their Life Map with the group. The homework for next week was to complete the final chapter of James.

Week 13 – The group closed out their time in the book of James this week. This final chapter provided a significant emphasis on the importance of prayer in the life of Jesus' followers. Because of this, the homework for the next week was for each group member to analyze their current prayer life and come ready to discuss it next week as the group concludes. The group closed with another Life Map being shared.

Week 14 – To bring the journey to an end, the group focused on the importance of prayer in the life of Jesus' apprentices. This week was critical due to the lack of importance prayer is often given in the growth and development of leaders. Group members shared their own experiences with prayer. The group leader recommended each member purchase and read either Mark Batterson's book, *Circle Maker* or Timothy Keller's book, *Prayer*. Both books provide next steps for growth in this area. The group closed with the last member sharing their Life Map.

Upon completion of the journey, each member of the group was commissioned and prayed for by the church on their final Sunday. This was a moment in which the church recognized their growth and development as a group of leaders. The church prayed corporately for their future development to continue. This moment also provided visibility of this leadership growth process to the whole church. The benefit of this is that it not only encouraged those who completed the process to push forward in their apprenticeship, but it also invited other leaders to register for the next opportunity. It provided a much-needed vision moment that should compel others to want to be a part of this journey in the future. Finally, this also served as one more way to communicate to the church that this is something that is being pursued throughout the year by the church's leadership.

The week after all of this has been completed, each member was emailed the Exit Survey to complete within one week. Once received from all the participants, the surveys were analyzed and compared with those that were received at the start of the journey. This analysis required taking note of specific themes such as growth in emotional health, a desire to read Scripture, and a deeper knowledge of how to live a life of apprenticeship to Jesus. Participants were also able to provide feedback for future changes or adjustments that may be needed to the intervention process design.

Overall, this intervention plan should allow for at least 14 leaders to go through the process per year. This is roughly ten percent of the adult population, and twenty percent of the leadership population. Therefore, the church should be able to grow a large portion of leaders in both their leadership and spiritual formation as a result. This also expanded the capacity and abilities of those who currently find themselves in leadership roles.

Several other successful outcomes were envisioned through the process of this intervention. One is that those who attended would grow in their understanding and desire to be healthier emotionally. By this, they would make changes to embrace emotional health, as in seeking to have someone in their life holding them accountable to pay attention to their emotions. They were also given tools to understand the ways in which their emotions have contributed to their decision making in the past through the Life Map Worksheet. Secondly, they would grasp the importance of apprenticeship under Jesus' leadership and want to submit to His leadership in their daily lives. This concept is more a change of perspective that leads to a change in their daily lives. Third, they would desire to love and be loved by Jesus. This means when they read their Bible, pray, fast, or approach Jesus through other spiritual disciplines, they would desire Him, not the discipline itself. Lastly, upon completion they are telling other leaders about the process and are encouraging them to attend in the future.

One final area needing to be addressed is that of continued leadership opportunities moving forward for each of the group participants. First, the group leader will make it their aim to assist group members in finding more leadership opportunities, both inside of City Church Marietta, as well as outside. Given the intensive work that is done by each of the group members, some will be more capable of taking on more expansive leadership capacities. The group leader will also pay close attention to see if any of the group members, over time, could be potential group leaders for future *Way of Jesus* groups.

The success of this journey was mainly measured upon receipt and examination of the Entrance and Exit Survey's. These surveys provided insight, which will be explored in the next section, into what took place in the hearts and lives of each individual. Ultimately, leadership growth and development is proven through hindsight. The evidence of one's growth is most

obvious when they can look back six months, a year, or five years and see that there has been a change for the better. True growth as an apprentice, then, requires hindsight. It should be noted that this study was limited in its ability to gauge this as well. The assignment was ready for full submission by October of 2021.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Having completed the overall intervention process, it will now be best to outline the data and results which have been gathered from, *The Way of Jesus*. One of the primary goals of this section will be to not just simply present the data, but to begin to understand the meaning of what has transpired in the lives of those who partook in the journey. In this section, a reflective journal will be provided from each week of the journey. In addition, the surveys that were received at the beginning and end of the journey will be analyzed.

Reflective Journal Entries

As noted above, though very helpful in the results process, the surveys themselves will not be the only information to be analyzed. The researcher has provided insight into the weekly gatherings that took place through a reflective journal. This journal provided deeper insight into the conversations, realizations, and potential changes that can be made in the future to improve the implementation of this intervention process. Each entry is provided below with a brief description of each week, as well as several important discoveries and tensions that were obtained by the group.

Week 1 Journal Entry – In anticipation of the first session, the group leader devoted focused prayer time for each of the group members. This took place the morning of this first gathering. The leader prayed for maturity, emotional growth, self-awareness, and a deeper understanding and willingness for each person to become an apprentice of Jesus. The group leader also prayed for humble, open hearts for each person. During the introductory session, which took place on Sunday, April 11, which took place on Sunday,

April group members were given a basic understanding of what was in front of them in the journey to come. The leader provided helpful information regarding the books which needed to be purchased, why they were important, and how they would be utilized. The group leader also explained the importance of understanding what it means to be an apprentice of Jesus and how this differs to some of the modern church understandings of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Finally, the group leader introduced the Life Map Worksheet and proceeded to share their story to model to the rest of this group what was expected of them when it was their turn to share in a future session. Finally, the group leader prayed for the weeks ahead for this group, for patience, clarity, and wisdom.

Week 2 Journal Entry – The second week provided the first opportunity for group members to begin to discuss the material in John Mark Comer’s book, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*. The required reading and discussion focused on Part 1 of this book. In this section, Comer highlighted his own personal struggles with hurry throughout his early ministry life, which led to a moment of burnout. One of the pivotal moments for him was a conversation he had with John Ortberg, in which Ortberg charged him with something that Dallas Willard had previously charged him with; to ruthlessly eliminate hurry from his life. Group members utilized this content to discuss the current cultural norm of hurry, how it has invaded their personal lives, and especially impacted their relationship with Jesus. Consensus was quickly achieved amongst the group that Comer’s thesis surrounding the sickness of hurry is not only accurate but needs to be responded to through changes in lifestyle habits and patterns. Group members shared many specific life examples of the ways in which hurry is a normal but unhealthy pattern in their daily lives. For some, this meant never slowing down to be with Jesus on a consistent basis.

For others, this meant ignoring their own anxiety or worry throughout the day and just pushing forward with their work. Another shared that one of their struggles is simply enjoying a day off or down time. To close the time together, the group leader gave everyone two questions to ponder for discussion in the weeks ahead: 1) Why are you in a hurry, specifically? 2) Where do you see the culture trending, or what direction is it going, given the prevalence of hurry?

Week 3 Journal Entry – During this meeting, the group began to discuss part of the solution, which became more of a recognition of the obstacles, rather than practical solutions. The group wrestled with the concept that while we're all in a hurry, the answer isn't having more time, because each person would likely just fill the time with more stuff to do and things to accomplish. The group shared specific examples from their own lives of how hurry and poor time management are often linked together. In addition, each group member shared specific reasons why they are in a hurry. The vulnerability of this time was very encouraging. Some key examples of this included group members sharing their desires to achieve, fear of missing out, as well as the belief that their ability to advance in this life is linked to the amount of time they work. Members also expressed a desire to not disappoint anyone, which has influenced their constant use of technology. Further discussion was also had surrounding the distracting nature of technology in the modern world in which the group also conceded that technology is deeply distracting as well as addicting. The group leader invited one of the members to pray for the group and this collective struggle.

Week 4 Journal Entry – For this fourth gathering, the group began to focus on some of the solutions to the problems of hurry and technology use in their daily lives. The focus

of this discussion was primarily centered around the importance of silence and solitude as a regular practice of Jesus' apprentices throughout history. Consensus among the group was established concerning the importance of these practices, as well as the lack of current use of them in their daily lives. Group members placed a higher value on solitude than silence, viewing silence as something that is increasingly difficult to do in the current culture. This is due in part to the hurry that exists in everyone's lives, but also due to a fear of being silent and what may be heard in the silence with the Lord. The final discussion included answering the question: where is our culture heading given this current norm of hurry and distraction? This conversation included a generally negative view of the future given the prevalence of hurry and technology, though one group member had a positive, hopeful perspective. Negatively speaking, group members anticipate a culture filled with more anxiety, less dependability amongst peers, and a general angst that is out of control. The group also expressed fear for the younger generations having to navigate this world.

Week 5 Journal Entry – This week, the group took the next step in the discussion surrounding the solutions to the hurry sickness in Western culture. The focus of this week's conversation centered on the practice of Sabbath. John Mark Comer's chapter unpacked the historic importance of this practice, as well as the way in which it has become lost amongst many Christians today. The group communicated a strong desire to make Sabbath a weekly rhythm in their lives, but also expressed an uncertainty about how to go about executing this practice. The discussion was very helpful in clarifying the heart and intention behind Sabbath, both Biblically and practically. The group also processed various steps they could take to begin making Sabbath a weekly routine, even

it they practiced it for a half day or a few hours to start. To set up the conversation for the next week, the group leader asked everyone to survey over the next week how they grew up viewing and interacting with money.

Week 6 Journal Entry – To begin the sixth week of this journey, group members described the ways in which they grew up viewing and interacting with money. This included a discussion of how each person was impacted by their parents and other influential role models in their lives. Group members discussed having a generally conservative perspective around saving rather than spending, while also acknowledging the strong pull within society to spend and consume. Many of the group members came from family's whose income bracket would not be considered high. This discussion was critical because of the content in Comer's book surrounding the practice of simplicity in the daily lives of Jesus' followers. Many group members found this practice inspiring but also difficult to embrace practically given the affluence of our current cultural moment. For this reason, much of the conversation centered on the difficulties of living in a country and city with great affluence and the pressure to keep up with the affluence of those around them. The group concluded with one of the participants sharing their Life Map.

Week 7 Journal Entry – To wrap up the first half of the journey, the group discussed the final chapter in Comer's book, which centered on the practice of slowing. Slowing down, as the group collectively acknowledged, is one of the most difficult things to do as a follower of Jesus. This conversation brought everything full circle from a content perspective. Group members shared specific habits they would like to implement to slow down their lives at regular intervals. Slowing down is critical to growth as a follower of

Jesus because it makes us available to hearing His voice and following His lead. The group leader closed the discussion with a quote from Thomas A Kempis' book, *The Imitation of Christ*, reminding each group member of the need continue to imitate Christ as they press forward. The gathering closed with another participant sharing their Life Map and the group leader providing instruction concerning the reading of *30 Days to Understanding the Bible* during the gap.

Week 8 Journal Entry – Upon returning from a break for a month and a half, the group resumed meeting on Sunday, July 18. The primary goal of this first discussion was to unpack the reading of *30 Days to Understanding the Bible*. Each of the group members were given the opportunity to share insights and ask questions to the group about the content. Half of the group members completed the entire reading, while the other half were unable to complete it. This was primarily attributed to the lack of desire to continue reading through the section focused on the doctrines of the Bible. The entire group agreed that learning the overarching themes of the Bible was extremely beneficial. A few group members shared that this understanding would help them in their future reading and understanding of the Bible in the future. The group also discussed why they believed knowing doctrine is important while also finding it difficult to read and comprehend. The leader reminded the group that everyone has a set of doctrines that they live their lives by, the key is knowing what you believe and how it impacts the way you live. After this discussion, the group leader outlined the next five weeks, given parameters for the upcoming study of the book of James. The group was given instruction to read chapter one once each day, making note of their observations as they read through the chapter. Each week the group will discuss one chapter, making observations and interpretations

based on the reading. One of the group members closed the group by sharing their Life Map. This participant shared that they were grateful for the process and realizations they gained in working through the Life Map template. A different group member concluded the time by praying for everyone.

Week 9 Journal Entry – This week marked the first of five weeks in which the group studied the book of James together. As mentioned previously, prior to attending this week, each group member was required to read the first chapter. To begin the group, one of the members, who had to miss the previous week, was given the opportunity to share their experiences with *30 Days to Understanding the Bible*. This member expressed several positives. These included the benefit of the journey through the major themes of the Bible, in addition to theology, which were concisely placed in this one book. They also expressed that this book was, “right up their alley,” in terms of the content and their desire to learn more on these topics. After this brief discussion, the group opened the time by reading James chapter one out loud. One of the group members did this and will do this each week prior to discussion of the chapter. Following the reading, several themes were observed: trials, perseverance, wisdom, and prayer. One group member posed the question: “Is it a bad thing to be rich?” This was based on some of the comments James makes concerning the rich early in the chapter. The group discussed this concept, and several insightful answers were provided. The group leader also recommended the group wait until next week for more clarity, as James will come back to this topic in chapter two. The group also discussed the emphasis of James writing on trusting in the character of God, most notably exemplified by the Father’s heart towards His people as someone who longs to answer His children and provide good, perfect gifts to them. The discussion

was thoughtful, helpful, and showed great depth and desire for more knowledge of Jesus. Group members expressed a desire to not just know or understand the passages, but to live them out in their daily lives and to think critically about how to go about doing this.

Week 10 Journal Entry – During this Sunday, the group spent the entire time discussing James chapter two. Like the previous week, the group read through the entire chapter out loud, prior to the discussion. This week was a continuation of some of the content that was covered in the previous Sunday, namely, James' emphasis at the beginning of chapter one on the rich and the poor. In chapter two, James expounded greatly on this by focusing on the sin of partiality that the church was showing between these two groups. The primary tension centered on why this was an issue back then, and, why this continues to be an issue within the church today. Additionally, the group invested a considerable amount of time working through the difficulty of wanting to live the way Jesus has called us to live but merging our faith and deeds together in this regard. The group also connected the section centered on faith and deeds with the previous section, seeing them as a unified whole, rather than two separate ideas. In closing, several group members talked through how to better care for the poor in Marietta, as well as anyone else within their sphere of influence. The time ended with everyone agreeing to allow this tension to continue into the discussion next week.

Week 11 Journal Entry – This week, the group focused the discussion entirely on James chapter three. In this chapter, James powerfully conveyed the impact of the words that are spoken, especially by those who are in leadership. The group spoke extensively about the current cultural moment both inside and out of the church. For example, the group openly discussed the acceptance in the current culture of one using their words to tear down

someone else. Over time, this type of behavior has not only become acceptable, but praised by many. The current culture in the United States is one that encourages speaking your mind and sharing your opinion. There are pitfalls to this, most notably the way in which this has created an extremely divided country. This type of behavior has also grown throughout the church. The group referenced and discussed the recent podcast by Christianity Today, *The Rise and Fall of Mars Hill*, centered on the tragic rise and fall of Pastor Mark Driscoll. His behavior, especially the use of his words to harm and inflict pain on his fellow staff members and church attenders, was highlighted. The group also wrestled with the differences between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom from God. This is highlighted by James toward the end of the chapter and provided a powerful connection to the way a leader uses their words to display either the wisdom of God or the wisdom and strategies of this world. Finally, the group discussed the ways in which the fruit of this wisdom is evident in the life of a leader. Given the consistently tragic falls of many church leaders in America, how does one know they are producing the fruit of wisdom that comes from God? Many in the church today equate growth and health in the church simply to numeric growth in the building, as well as the number of followers a church has accumulated. The pitfalls of this are obvious as well, but the ability for leader to be held accountable is often lacking. The group closed in prayer, looking forward to continuing the discussion of James chapter four next week.

Week 12 Journal Entry – The focus of this week was divided, with half of the time centered on James chapter four, and the other half with another group member sharing their Life Map. The group began with the chapter in James, with a strong focus on the struggles of following Jesus in a world that is deeply fragmented and divisive. The group

focused considerable effort discussing how to follow Jesus in a world where people are reckless with the use of their words. This conversation in some ways continues what had been started the previous week. However, one important shift that took place was that the group attempted to discern how to navigate this cultural moment with the wisdom, grace, and humility of Jesus. The group leader encouraged everyone to consider steps they may need to take to protect themselves from the recurring cultural backlash that exists against followers of Jesus. It is becoming increasingly difficult to truly be an apprentice of Jesus, rather than being a Christian in name only. The group also discussed the impact of the world, flesh, and devil amid this environment, given the emphasis James gave to each of these in chapter four. Each of these elements plays a critical role in preventing followers of Jesus from growing and maturing in their relationship with Jesus. After some great discussion, one of the group members shared some powerful ways in which Jesus has worked through their story, especially over the past year, to draw them closer to Jesus and the community within City Church. The group concluded by praying for and encouraging this person as they continue to navigate some difficult life circumstances.

Week 13 Journal Entry – This morning marked the final Sunday in the group’s journey through the book of James. Chapter five is a powerful conclusion to James’ instruction to leaders within the church. The group began the discussion focusing on the final verses, which at first glance appear to be an odd way for him to conclude this letter. Upon discussing, though, the group concluded that though it is odd, it does connect to the general theme of much of James’ writing, being our dependence on God to grow others in their relationship with Him, while also having an active role to play in this growth process. The group then changed gears to briefly discuss the stern words James had for

those who are rich in material things but use it for foolish and selfish gain. These verses provided helpful clarity to prior discussions surrounding this topic for one of the group members. The group then closed the discussion on the topic of prayer. This is another theme James shares about in multiple chapters. The group discussed the difficulty of establishing a prayer rhythm, as well as the struggle to trust that God wants to answer our prayers. The group leader offered one resource recommendation for group members to read in the future, *A Praying Life*, by Paul E. Miller. Applying this to previous discussions concerning hurry and busyness, the group leader shared with the group that Miller noted in his writing that efficiency kills intimacy. Often, leaders are simply only looking for the way to do things more efficiently. Because of this mindset, leaders neglect the need to pray. It also is much more difficult to quantify. The group leader closed this discussion by asking everyone to return next week to have further discussion surrounding their current prayer lives. After this, another group member shared the Life Map. This group member was authentic and vulnerable, as has been the case throughout the journey, in sharing many of their previous, as well as current, struggles. To conclude the group time, the group leader sent each of the members a summary of James' encouragement to all leaders; It's Difficult (1:2-4, 12-15, 5:7-11), Love Everyone Regardless of Status or Position (1:9-11, 2:1-12, 5:1-6), Watch Your Words (1:19-21, 26, 2:12-14, 3:1-12, 4:11-12, 5:12), Choose Wisdom (1:5, 3:13-18), Humble Yourself (4:5-10), and Pray Often (1:5-8, 4:2-4, 5:13-18).

Week 14 Journal Entry – This final week of *The Way of Jesus*, the group spent the entire time continuing to discuss prayer. As noted in the research, prayer is clearly one of the most neglected areas of leadership growth and development. The concept of praying

that God would send leaders to a church, as well as equipping the church to teach those leaders how to pray, has been a missing piece for quite some time. The discussion during this final gathering provided further evidence of this. The group began by sharing their current prayer habits or patterns. Several group members noted that it isn't where it should be. The group leader asked for clarification concerning what they believed it "should" be. One member stated that it should be more frequent. Another noted that they wanted there to be more detail and dependency, rather than just coming to pray when they were in a difficult circumstance or felt overwhelmed. Several group members noted that they often either pray before meals or at night before bed. The group leader noted that though both are great rhythms, the importance of praying before a meal is not mandated in Scripture. It seems, at least based on this group, that the importance of praying before a meal is a much higher priority than carving out ten minutes to honestly speak with the Lord each morning. The group then discussed why prayer is such a difficult rhythm to establish. For some, there have been previous church leaders who have manipulated the use of prayer in their lives. They in turn view prayer as something that is unsafe. Others noted that they fear that God won't come through for them if they choose to pray. Because of this, they would rather avoid it entirely so as not to be left disappointed if God doesn't answer their request. The group leader noted that this is a transactional perspective rather than relational. A few other group members shared that they view prayer as a performance, or have at least struggled with this in the past, which also impedes their ability to experience personal intimacy with the Lord through prayer. The group leader offered several helpful tools to assist the group moving forward in their navigating and growth. First, the group leader reminded them of a quote from Paul Miller

in his book *A Praying Life*, “We don’t need self-discipline to pray continuously; we just need to be poor in spirit.”¹⁶³ This quote reminded the group that the pressure of being discipline can be taken off their shoulders, because the aim to poorness of spirit, a recognition of their need for Jesus on a regular basis. This is the beginning of developing a stronger prayer life. Second, the leader also reminded them of the balance of being with God and doing for God. This is the great Mary and Martha dilemma many apprentices of Jesus wrestle with. In western culture especially, leaders have been told that being a great leader equates to doing something first. The opposite is true, though, for Jesus’ apprentices. The power of God comes from being in the presence of God. Doing things for God is great, however, the motive can easily become tarnished when the leader isn’t centered in their time with Jesus. To help with this, the group leader also recommended two more books, Mark Batterson’s *The Circle Maker* and Timothy Keller’s *Prayer*. Both resources should provide traction for group members to also expand their prayer lives moving forward. The group leader closed the final group time by sending out the Exit Survey’s that each member will be required to complete this next week. The leader also encouraged and thanked each group member. After the group closed in prayer, everyone attended the 10:30 AM worship gathering. During this gathering, the group leader invited each of the group members to stand before the church. The group leader encouraged them and invited the church to pray for each of these individuals as they move forward in their pursuit of apprenticing their lives under Jesus’ leadership.

¹⁶³ Paul E. Miller, *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2017), 54.

**It must be noted that due to a family emergency, one group member was unable to share their Life Map as previously scheduled for this final week. The group member will be given an opportunity to share in the future with the group leader.*

This concludes the weekly reflections of the intervention process.

Survey Summary

In this section, the surveys that were received at the beginning and end of the journey will be analyzed. As noted previously, the goal will be to take note of themes of growth in the areas of emotional health, apprenticeship, and a deeper overall love for Jesus. Additionally, opportunities for improvement will be noted. These surveys should also provide insight into ways in which participants did not gain the desired outcomes of the designed intervention. Recommendations for improvement will then be made in the Conclusion section.

Entrance Surveys Examined

As noted previously, there were six people who submitted and were accepted into, *The Way of Jesus*. To be accepted, each participant was required to submit an Entrance Survey, which was made available to them online at citychurchmarietta.org (See Appendix A for the full list of questions). Several important results were achieved through this process that will be outlined below.

To begin, each of the participants described themselves as being disciples of Jesus. Each of the participants noted in one way or another the importance of living the way Jesus did as a mark of being a disciple of Jesus. While some of the questions were open-ended, many required a rating answer between one to ten. Each of these questions rated one on the low end and ten on the high end of the scale. The first question focused on general knowledge of the Bible. The average score for the participants came out to 5.5. The next question, which centered on their

ability to apply the Bible to their daily lives, had an average score of 5.6. The third question asked for their rating of their current prayer life, with the extremes of the scale being none at all to a daily practice in their lives. The participants scored an average rating of 6.2 in this category. The next category was spiritual maturity. Participants also rated themselves a 6.2 on average. Finally, the last question focused on emotional maturity. The participants provided their highest overall average score for any of the categories, giving themselves a 6.5 average score for this area of their lives. In total, the group members rated themselves average to slightly above average in each of these categories.

For the questions that were open-ended, the following results should be noted. Participants expressed that they read the Bible on average three times per week. They also expressed that their current rhythm of prayer was daily. The length and content of these daily prayers was not provided. Regarding the practice of Sabbath, only one of the participants was currently taking part in this weekly rhythm from Jesus' life and ministry. Finally, only one of the participants noted having previous experience with a Life Map.

Exit Surveys Examined

As noted previously, there were also six Exit Surveys that were administered and returned by each of the group members. This survey was also made available to them online at citychurchmarietta.org (See Appendix A for the full list of questions). Several important results were achieved through this process that will be outlined below.

To begin, each of the participants were asked to provide their definition of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus based on their experience in the group. They were also asked to share how their view has potentially changed regarding their understanding of this. It was clear that each of the group members walked away with a more comprehensive and improved

understanding of what this meant. One group member stated concerning the journey, “It has given me a lot of new insight and practical ways to view the way of Jesus.” Another shared, “This process has definitely made me shift my perspective on what it actually means to truly be an apprentice of Jesus.” One final statement from a group member regarding this question was, “My view of being a disciple of Jesus has changed to an understanding of following Jesus by what he did and who he was, rather than a verbal expression of my Faith. Truly following in my heart and living like he did.” Each of these statements appear to provide “proof of concept,” which will be explored more in the Conclusions section.

Regarding their knowledge of the Bible and ability to apply it to their lives, group members expressed that this had at the very least increased because of this process. This was most evident based on their collective ratings in this survey compared with the Entrance Survey. The average score for the group prior to beginning was 5.6 out of ten. This increased to 7.2 out of ten on the Exit Survey, which is a substantial increase. Regarding their prayer life, more than half of the group members noted that this area of their lives had expanded because of the journey. Other group members simply noted that their prayer lives had remained the same, but there was no negative regression in this arena for any of the participants. A potential key piece of missing information is what this expansion means for their day to day lives.

Each participant was also asked to provide insight into their growth as a leader, if possible, because of this journey. One group member stated that they, “Feel like [they] can relate to a more board age of people when it comes to faith.” Another noted that they were able to learn a lot about living with a healthy balance and avoiding burnout in this area. A group member also concluded that, “I believe I have learned how to listen much better, which has improved my leadership.” Finally, another member wrote, “I’ve seen a lot of exhortations for leaders in James

which I hadn't really seen before. The Holy Spirit is doing a lot of work with my speech and moving me to be much quicker to listen and much slower to speak." In connection to the previously noted issue of burnout, most group members also affirmed growth in the area regarding the Sabbath, though a few noted no significant change. This is also an area of growth compared with the Entrance Surveys, as only one member noted that this had been implemented in their lives prior to beginning this journey. Growth in application of the Sabbath could prove to be instrumental in the lives of many of the group members as they seek to avoid burnout in the future.

Two final areas that were examined by the group members was the impact of the Life Map, as well as their growth in confidence in sharing their faith. Concerning the Life Map, the overarching impact was profound. One member noted that it opened new spiritual windows for them. Another wrote, "It helps to have a lot more grace and love for others when you know what major events led them to where they are currently." It was also noted by a group member that this caused them to think about the significant moments that have impacted their spiritual journey thus far. Finally, another member mentioned that the Life Map process revealed patterns of brokenness and how these patterns have affected their view of God and how they relate to Him.

The Life Map also assisted in bringing an increase in overall confidence in sharing their faith for several group members. This was not an anticipated result but one that several group members noted as being connected. Every group member affirmed a growth in confidence in this area due to the content and conversations gained in this journey. This is another significant result as it affirms that group members were not only given content and information that was designed

to transform their inner lives, but that the content motivated them to be more confident in sharing their faith with someone else.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This final chapter compares the research and proposed intervention methods from the earlier chapters with the results that were obtained through the overall intervention in the last chapter. One of the primary aims of this section is to interpret and understand the meaning of the results, seeking themes and insights in the process. To accomplish this aim, the results will also be compared and analyzed to other similar leadership development situations which have taken place in the past within City Church Marietta. These results will provide necessary insight into the success or failure of this intervention. Consideration will also be given to whether these results could be replicated elsewhere if it is deemed to be a successful leadership development process. Lastly, questions regarding areas that will require additional investigation, as well as recommendations for the future, will also be noted. It will be important to recognize whether this implementation design should be continued in the future at City Church Marietta. If this is to be the case, the reasoning will be clearly articulated and explained.

Conclusions Summarized

As noted above, the purpose of this section is to interpret the findings that were obtained through *The Way of Jesus*. This intervention process yielded several helpful insights. The first is that the intervention process achieved its aim in developing leaders who grasp the concept of apprenticeship and desire to align their lives with Jesus' on a moment-by-moment basis. Not only did each group member affirm this in their Exit Survey's, but several other data points that were collected in the surveys and the reflective journal, bore this out as well. Time and time again, leaders were making connections with their pace of life, the need to slow down, be with

Jesus, and listen more for His direction in their lives. This is what being an apprentice is all about; seeking to be with Jesus, become like Him, and do what He did. From this heart posture and life position, leaders are equipped with the critical internals designed to empower them to be resilient leaders in the future.

Secondly, and in close relation to this, was regarding the growth in the group's ability to apply the Bible to their lives. The significant increase in this arena also supports this as one of the keys to being an apprentice. One of the key elements of becoming an apprentice of Jesus, as noted in the Literature Review, is not just knowing what He said, but also doing what He did. Group members noting not only an increase in their knowledge of the Bible, but also an ability to apply it to their lives, provides critical support for this journey being about personal transformation in the heart of a leader, and not simply a Bible knowledge or study group. It must be noted here that the primary calling of leaders is to a living and dynamic relationship with God.¹⁶⁴ This affirms the journey as offering something unique to what other church's have offered in the past for leadership growth and development as noted in the Theoretical Foundations in chapter two.

In connection with the previously stated results, the fact that most group members noted that their prayer lives also grew because of this is another positive, confirming result. This confirms first that many leaders have a plenty of room to grow in the way they approach prayer, as noted in the Literature Review. It also affirms that leaders have previously received little to no training in how to pray and seek God and grow in this pivotal piece to their relationship with Him. Based on the depth of the discussions surrounding this practice during weeks 13-14, it

¹⁶⁴ Petit, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation*, 198.

could even be argued that even more time and energy should be devoted to prayer than the journey had previously allotted.

An important implication must be drawn between the application of the Bible in a leader's life, as well as their commitment to prayer. In his book, *What's Best Next*, Matthew Perman provided a link between these ideas, as well as a leader's character when he wrote, "This means that the Scriptures are at the foundation of our productivity because the Scriptures are one of the chief ways God brings about this transformation and builds our character...Related to this, prayer is also foundational to our productivity because in prayer we call on God for help and strength."¹⁶⁵ Therefore, it can be concluded that both of the disciplines create a more productive and impactful leader. Growth in both areas confirms the importance of the intervention design, as well as the benefit it supplies to City Church Marietta moving forward.

Another significant result, which was an unexpected outcome, was the connection between the Life Map journey and group members growing in their confidence in sharing their faith. This was unexpected in that the primary goal of the Life Map was to allow for group members to take a closer, more intimate look into their inner lives and story. The Life Map is not a tool that is designed to help leaders articulate their faith better, however, group members going through this process grew in this ability as byproduct. This is an important result because it provides an added layer of significance to the overall *Way of Jesus* journey. Through the Life Map process, this journey equipped leaders to not only understand where they've come from and how they've been shaped by various past events, but it gave them confidence to tell other people about the work Jesus has done in their lives. Some of this may have been aided by the fact that

¹⁶⁵ Matthew Perman. *What's Best Next: How the Gospel Transforms the Way You Get Things Done* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 126.

each person had to share their Life Map with the entire group. It's possible that some of the group members had never shared their Life Map with anyone before, and especially not with a small group. If this were the case, the outcome of growing confidence is at the very least a correlation to being in the journey.

Several group members also noted the importance of being in a group setting while learning about each of these leadership concepts and practices. This assisted them in remembering that leadership requires a team of people. As noted in the Intervention Design, one of the many myths of leadership is that it should be done alone, or that the greatest leaders arrive on their own. This could not be further from the truth, however. This “team” approach to leadership is modeled throughout Scripture. It is well documented throughout the New Testament that the Apostle Paul did not travel alone as he accomplished the various tasks on his missionary journeys. Instead, he was accompanied by people who possessed the same desires for spreading the good news of Christ. Some, as with Barnabas, remained with Paul until their parting of ways towards the end of Acts 15. Interestingly though, scholar Stanley Toussaint stated in the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, “The Apostle Paul owed much to Barnabas, and it appears they remained friends despite their contention over Mark.”¹⁶⁶ Others also accompanied Paul during his journeys, including Silas, Luke, and Timothy. Scripture’s depiction of Timothy’s relationship with Paul provided great evidence of the way their team approach came together on a day-to-day basis. Paul candidly shared with Timothy many of his ministry experiences in both of his letters to him. He was also honest about some of his own sinful choices and the way Christ worked through them (1 Timothy 1:12-17). This same transparency and dependence upon one

¹⁶⁶ Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 396.

another can also be said for Paul's relationship with Titus. In each of Paul's relationships, there was a pattern of disclosure and support for one another, yet clear imperfections and disagreement as well.

King David also possessed several close, meaningful relationships that assisted him as a leader. The first and more well known is with Jonathan, Saul's son. Jonathan was the heir to the throne; the same throne that David was promised. Eugene Merrill stated the following concerning their friendship, "So close did this friendship become that Jonathan, though heir apparent to the throne of Israel (cf. 20:31), stripped himself of his own royal regalia and placed it on David in recognition of David's divine election to be king (18:4; cf. 23:17). More than once the covenant of friendship between the two men would work to David's advantage.¹⁶⁷" For David, this was more than a cordial friendship. In fact, Matthew Henry recorded in his commentary, "There was between them a very near resemblance of affections, dispositions, and counsels, which made their spirits unite so easily, so quickly, so closely, that they seemed but as one soul in two bodies."¹⁶⁸ David also experienced a meaningful relationship with the prophet Nathan. It was Nathan who came to David and confronted him of his sin with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 12. Terry Francis explored the importance of this relationship in David's life when he wrote the following:

¹⁶⁷ Eugene H. Merrill, "1 Samuel," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 449.

¹⁶⁸ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 415.

The scriptures suggest that Nathan was more than just a prophet of God. Nathan was informed of David's desire to build God a temple (2 Sam. 7). David's second son was possibly named after the prophet Nathan (2 Sam. 5:14). Nathan named David's second son by Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12:25). Nathan remained loyal to David during the rebellion of Adonijah and anointed Solomon as king (1 Kings 1). The Lord didn't just send a prophet to confront David, He sent a friend.¹⁶⁹

Nathan ultimately proved to be a key person during a significant turning point in David's leadership.

Finally, Jesus also modeled this team approach to leadership. Regardless of where He went, His disciples were usually right there by His side. Jesus would give them special insight into things that weren't yet revealed to the crowds that followed them. This is most clearly documented in Matthew 13:10-23 (See also Mark 4 and Luke 8). Here, the disciples come before Jesus seeking insight into why He chooses to teach in parables. Jesus discloses to them why and spends considerable time explaining the meaning behind the parable. Jesus developed a closer relationship with a few disciples, namely, Peter, James, and John than He had with the others. Aubrey Malphurs summarized this concept powerfully, "The reason that we see teams so often in the Bible is not complex—the simple truth is that all of us can do more than one of us."¹⁷⁰

Most importantly, as it relates to this DMIN action research thesis, group members expressed growth in their own leadership abilities because of this process. In fact, one group member specifically asked the group leader after one of the group meetings to meet with them offline to discuss further development opportunities. This individual desired to learn more about

¹⁶⁹ Terry Francis, "Nathan and David: Confronting a Friend." *From the Preacher's Study Blog, Study on Loving Your Brother*. October 13, 2009. Accessed September 6, 2021. <http://franklinchurchofchrist.com/?p=3414>

¹⁷⁰ Malphurs. *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 210.

ways in which they could even assist with future *Way of Jesus* journeys, should they be offered again by City Church Marietta. The group leader is currently in the process of placing this group member in a volunteer ministry role discipling elementary age kids within the church on a once-a-month basis. This allows the group member to put into practice the things they have been wrestling through over the past four months.

Finally, due to the current age of the church, there is very little information to compare by way of an “old approach” to strategic leadership development. As stated in the Introduction of this research, a leadership development process was not in existence prior to creating this intervention design. This approach has offered something brand new within this church, rather than offering something in place of a different implementation that currently exists at this current time. While that does not mean that church has not tried to develop leaders, per se, there has not been an intentional process like this developed in the past in which leaders who are seeking to be developed could join and be a part of within the life of City Church Marietta.

With these beneficial findings established, the focus now shifts to adjustments that could be made in the future. In addition, a final recommendation regarding future implementation of this intervention process for City Church Marietta will also be provided.

Recommendations and Further Study

Several recommendations need to be mentioned based on the feedback received from the group members. This feedback came through the Exit Survey’s or through verbal feedback during each of the discussion weeks. The first that was emphasized concerned the book, *30 Days to Understanding the Bible*. As noted previously in the reflective journal, several group members expressed during week eight that they encountered difficulties in the doctrine section. At the same time, though, group members emphasized the helpful way that the book clearly outlined the

Bible's major themes and improved their knowledge of the Bible. There was a disconnect between the impact of these two sections. In addition, the group seemed to lack a desire to learn theology and apply it to their own lives. Group members recognized that their lives are informed by the way they view God and think about Him, but there remained a tension between this mindset being true and wanting to apply it to their own lives. Because of this discrepancy, one recommendation is that it may be best for future groups to read the first half of the book and avoid the doctrine section. There could also have been fatigue in reading and learning each day, which may have hindered some participants from wanting to engage with the theological content. Members noted that information like this can be more difficult for them to grasp in a short amount of time, so the reading could require more focus and attention. Instead of avoiding the section entirely, it is also recommended that the group leader encourage future members to persevere through the reading though the content may not be as interesting as the other content provided. This is recommended because some of the group members may not initially understand the benefits of what they are journeying through until they complete the reading and have time to discuss it with the group.

Several time-related adjustments were also recommended by the group members. The first recommendation was to allow more time to discuss the content each week by extending the time by 15 minutes. Instead of giving an hour and a half each week, the recommendation is that there be a minimum of one hour and 45 minutes. This also helps to accommodate for weeks when the group doesn't start on time for various reasons. These reasons included group members arriving late, or the group having an extended conversation unrelated to the content that carried into the official start time of each group meeting. Another time related adjustment that was offered to the group leader was to consider shortening the number of weeks down from 14 to ten

consecutive weeks. This recommendation was made with the belief that condensing it somewhat could create more momentum week to week. One group member noted that they believed the group lost momentum in the conversations during the second set of seven weeks. Based on these observations, it is recommended that the group times be expanded in the future by 15 minutes each week. It is not recommended, however, that the number be condensed down from 14 weeks. Most group members did not express any issue with the number of weeks. The current schedule allows ample time for content to be explored, Life Maps to be shared, and room for group tangents, when necessary. Eliminating weeks could provide less margin for the whole group, as well as impeding on the groups ability to provide ample time for each Life Map to be shared.

To further the depth of connection within the group, one member suggested there be more time to communicate with one another, if needed, outside of the regularly established gathering points. Whether this be by email, group chat, or a food get together, this member noted that the group may be better served in the long run by having this additional time. This group member also believed that this would allow group members to exchange thoughts and ideas in real time, rather than having to wait until each Sunday to begin working through the content. This could also aid in the group remaining prepared for each Sunday and not get caught up in busy schedules and losing focus throughout the duration of the journey. This recommendation should at the very least be considered but is not considered to be a critical adjustment that would significantly improve the overall effectiveness of the weekly connection points for the group. In fact, for many people, less is often more when it comes to having to pay attention to another communication medium amongst the many others that currently exist and vie for the attention of each person.

Finally, it is recommended that City Church Marietta take note of an important limitation to this intervention process that was not highlighted in the Introduction. Though the intervention process has provided the desired outcome in the short term for each of the group members, the long-term growth in each of their lives because of this journey remains an unknown variable at this stage. The journey itself produced the initial desired result, but this intervention process should not be embraced with the belief that it will continue to yield long term results for these group members six month, a year, or more from now. This is primarily because the intervention process currently does not allow for an examination of this growth timeline.

Benefits of the Intervention Process to City Church Marietta

One question the remains to be answered is; how does all of this stand to benefit City Church Marietta and the community surrounding it? Since leaders were developed through this intervention process, what are the implications of this for this church in the future? As noted earlier, the church will be able to add to its volunteer base, and therefore grow future ministry leaders. Several of the positive outcomes of the intervention processes also included growth in the arena of spiritual disciplines. Leaders who are growing and becoming healthy in their inner lives are leaders who can withstand the pressure that comes with the territory. It is important to remember that leadership, especially in ministry, is a dangerous and complicated endeavor. As noted in the Theological Foundations, suffering and opposition come with the territory of choosing to be a leader. Each person that can be a part of this intervention process is better equipped for the challenges that life ahead.

There are also many problems to solve and people to love and serve, both of which appear to be never ending this side of Heaven. Regarding leadership in general, authors Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky stated, “Leadership would be a safe undertaking if your organizations

and communities only faced problems for which they already knew the solutions.”¹⁷¹ Because of this natural danger, the health and inner life of the leader is critical to their future success. Each of the leaders who journeyed through this process were equipped, then, to navigate the choppy waters of leadership in ministry and future leaders will be offered the same opportunities for growth and development. Resilient leaders with the internal fortitude to lead in a complicated environment are essential to the future leadership of the church.

In addition, due to the complexity of ministry, leaders regularly face the struggles of burnout and fatigue. Author and Pastor Carey Nieuwhof has observed the growth of this trend throughout modern culture. He concluded, “Burnout has become an epidemic. The more people I meet and the more I look around our culture, the more I think there may be many people suffering from burnout or what I might call ‘low-grade burnout.’ By that I mean the joy of life is gone, but the functions of life continue.”¹⁷² In support of the intervention process, one of the group members noted how this process, and specifically learning the practices of Sabbath and Slowing Down, have assisted in their ability to avoid this in the future. A contributing factor to this reality is also that, “people in ministry rarely feel understood and seldom have anyone with whom they can openly talk about their experiences.”¹⁷³ As noted previously, the context of the *Way of Jesus* allowed for leaders to find that open space and develop that skill, which will also serve them well in their leadership future.

Each of these growth areas drive home an important development in the lives of each of these leaders, and that being maturity. Maturity is something that is severely lacking within

¹⁷¹ Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 13.

¹⁷² Carey Nieuwhof, *Didn't See It Coming: Overcoming the 7 Greatest Challenges that No One Expects and Everyone Experiences* (New York: Waterbrook, 2018), 150.

¹⁷³ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), p. 12.

American culture at large, but also within the church. Based on the conversations, observations, and decisions many of the group members are currently making because of this intervention process, it is clear that each of them have taken significant steps to mature in their faith and leadership. For City Church Marietta, this means that there are six leaders who are maturing, and with maturity comes trust. This means that each of these leaders are capable of being entrusted with more leadership opportunity in the future. The importance of this for City Church lies in the fact that trust is not a leadership skill that can be cultivated but rather a necessary relational component that must be earned over time.

Another implication of this growth in maturity is the potential for these leaders to go and develop other leaders based on the principles and concepts they have gained in this journey. Leadership as apprenticeship is engrained in the hearts and minds of the participants, which is also critical to their ability to see themselves as having the necessary tools to help other leaders along this way of living. A leader who knows how to walk with Jesus and follow His lead is a leader who will continue to grow in the future. This type of leader is also magnetic for other future leaders who are seeking to follow the in the way of Jesus.

Maturity amongst the volunteer leadership base within City Church Marietta will also help to weed out prideful leaders seeking to build their own kingdoms through the vehicle of ministry. A group of leaders that understand leadership as service, like those who have participated in this process, not only care for others well, but send the message to prospective leaders that the goal is not self-exaltation or personal glorification. Leadership is not an opportunity to build a name or brand, but to point other people to find their self-worth, satisfaction, and purpose in serving Jesus with their lives.

To summarize, each of the leaders who journeyed through this intervention design developed the following:

1. Extensive growth in their practices of the Spiritual Disciplines.
2. Transformed levels of productivity as a natural byproduct.
3. Increased listening skills.
4. Balanced approach to work, life, and rest to avoid burnout and fatigue.
5. Confidence in sharing their faith.
6. Greater awareness of their false versus true selves.
7. Deepened desire to live their lives with a team approach.
8. Overall growth in maturity as a follower of Jesus.

Ultimately, given the overwhelmingly positive results that were obtained by *The Way of Jesus*, it is recommended that City Church Marietta adopt this leadership development process twice a year, at minimum. This process has yielded positive results of growth and depth for those who are currently in leadership or looking for further opportunity to serve and lead others. The benefit to City Church Marietta is not only the ability to offer this process, but to watch leaders develop and become better equipped to lead in a variety of future ministry contexts within, as well as outside, the church. Adopting this intervention process would equip the church with a minimum of 14 trained leaders each calendar year. Given the size of the church and current leadership group size noted in the Introduction, this would provide a substantial increase to the maturity and competency level of the overall leadership team. Leaders multiplying at this rate would also allow for other leaders to be exposed to the growth and maturity they have experienced as apprentices. The more leaders that grasp leadership as apprenticeship, the greater the impact will be to the various ministry areas within City Church Marietta.

It is also recommended that the intervention process be implemented, on a trial basis, in other ministry contexts as well, such as other local churches, parachurch organizations, or even within church staff teams. This would create an opportunity to learn more about the overall effectiveness of the intervention process within these other contexts.

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IRB Approval

February 11, 2021

Eugene Fidell Danny Allen

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY20-21-585 The Way of Jesus: A Leadership Development Journey Within City Church Marietta

Dear Eugene Fidell and Danny Allen,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) 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 does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research for the following reason:

Your project will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word research with the word project throughout both documents.

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

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office

Appendix A
The Way of Jesus Entrance Survey

Name

Email

Phone

Age

Marital Status

Will you need childcare?

Do you consider yourself to be a disciple of Jesus?

If so, in your opinion, what does that mean and look like in your daily life?

How often do you currently read your Bible?

How often do you currently pray?

How would you rate your overall knowledge of the Bible (on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being no knowledge and 10 being highly knowledgeable about the majority of the Bible)?

How would you rate your ability to apply the Bible to daily life (on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being no ability and 10 being very capable in my daily life)?

How would you rate your overall prayer life (on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being that you never pray and 10 being that it is a daily practice in your life)?

How would you rate your overall spiritual maturity (on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being no maturity at all and 10 being very mature in your thoughts and decision making)?

How would you rate your overall emotional maturity (on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being none at all and 10 being extremely self-aware of your emotions)?

Do you currently practice a weekly rhythm of Sabbath rest?

Have you ever journeyed through a Life Map process in the past (a process that helps you unpack your past and the story of God throughout)?

The Way of Jesus Exit Survey

Name

Email

Phone

Age

Marital Status

Based on the journey over the last few months, what does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?

Do you consider yourself to be a disciple of Jesus?

How has your view of this changed, if at all, based on the content of this journey?

Has your desire to read the Bible increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

Has your prayer life expanded, contracted, or stayed the same?

How would you rate your overall prayer life?

How would you rate your ability to apply the Bible to daily life (on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being no ability and 10 being very capable in my daily life)?

Describe how you have grown as a leader because of this process.

Do you now practice a weekly rhythm of Sabbath rest?

How did the Life Map process impact your emotional and spiritual maturity?

Do you feel more or less confident to share your faith with someone else because of this journey?

How can this process be improved in the future?

Appendix B

The Way of Jesus Life Map Worksheet



YEAR(S) AGE:				
HERITAGE: What Geographical, ethnic, or family factors influenced you? How? Why?				
HEROES: What key people played a major factor in influencing your character or shaping your direction? How?				
HIGH POINTS: What experiences illustrate your special abilities? What did you enjoy about them?				
HARD TIMES: What experiences were especially painful? Why? How did you feel?				
HAND OF GOD: What were your most life changing experiences or discoveries about God?				
OTHER: Key events, trends, or relationships				

Appendix C
Permission Request and Approval

February 22, 2021

Brent Shoemaker
Lead Pastor
City Church Marietta
176 Roswell Street
Marietta, GA 30064

Dear Brent Shoemaker:

As a graduate student in the Doctor of Ministry Program at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The title of my research project is The Way of Jesus and the purpose of my project is to explore leadership growth and development within the adult attenders of City Church Marietta.

I am writing to request your permission to contact members of your church to invite them to participate in my project study.

Participants will be asked to go to citychurchmarietta.org and click on the link provided to complete the participation survey. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, respond by email to efidell@citychurchmarietta.org. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Eugene Fidell
Executive Pastor

February 23, 2021

Eugene Fidell
Executive Pastor
City Church Marietta
176 Roswell Street
Marietta, GA 30064

Dear Eugene:

After careful review of your project proposal entitled, The Way of Jesus, I have decided to grant you permission to access our adult attenders and invite them to participate in your study.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

- The requested data WILL NOT BE STRIPPED of identifying information before it is provided to the researcher.
- I am requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.

Sincerely,

Brent Shoemaker
Lead Pastor
City Church Marietta

Appendix D

Recruitment Email and Announcement Drafts

Want to swim against the current?
Join us on a 14-week journey to living like Jesus did.

In today's fast-paced world, learning to live as Jesus lived is extremely difficult. There are distractions at every turn, quickly moving us away from having a growing and thriving relationship with Jesus. Our desire, though, is to swim against that current. We want to be people who live and love just like Jesus. In order to do that, we have to learn *The Way of Jesus*.

To learn more and to register, visit the link below.
The deadline to register is Sunday, April 4th

[LEARN MORE](#)

There will be a title slide on the screens that says "The Way of Jesus" when the announcement is made. Below is the verbiage that will be used during the announcement.

In today's fast-paced world, learning to live as Jesus lived is extremely difficult. There are distractions at every turn, quickly moving us away from having a growing and thriving relationship with Jesus. Our desire, though, is to swim against that current. We want to be people who live and love just like Jesus. In order to do that, we have to learn *The Way of Jesus*. If this is your desire, we invite you to learn more and to register for this 14-week journey by visiting our website, citychurchmarietta.org. *The deadline to register is Sunday, April 4th*

Appendix E

Consent

Title of the Project: The Way of Jesus

Principal Investigator: Eugene Fidell, Executive Pastor, Liberty University D.Min. Program

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years or older. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to grow and develop leaders within City Church Marietta. The goal is to equip and prepare leaders to be apprentices of Jesus, following His way and model for their lives within their spheres of influence.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. Attend, to the best of your ability, all 14 meetings from 8:30 AM-9:45 AM on the following Sunday's: April 11, 18, 25, May 2, 9, 16, 23 July 18, 25, August 1, 8, 15, 22, 29.
2. There will also be required reading/study that will take place prior to each meeting. It is expected that you will complete the required assignments and participate in weekly discussion.
3. Finally, you will also be asked to share your story during one of our meetings using a Life Map Template that will be provided to you during the first meeting.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are growth in their love for and knowledge of Jesus. Participants will also gain greater insight into their family history and the work Jesus is doing in and through their story.

Benefits to society include the transformation of the hearts of the people within this study as they seek and follow Jesus.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

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

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

What are the costs to you to be part of the study?

To participate in the research, you will need to pay for the required study materials that will be utilized in this journey.

Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

The researcher serves as the Executive Pastor at City Church Marietta. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

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

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Eugene Fidell. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at 770-714-3740 or efidell@citychurchmarietta.org. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Danny Allen, at deallen6@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

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

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

