

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

THE CHRISTIAN ENTREPRENEUR: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE
IMPACT OF CHRISTIAN ENTREPRENEURS AS
DISCIPLE-MAKERS

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Charis Meegan Rooks

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2023

THE CHRISTIAN ENTREPRENEUR: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE
IMPACT OF CHRISTIAN ENTREPRENEURS AS
DISCIPLE-MAKERS

by Charis Meegan Rooks

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

March 10, 2023

APPROVED BY:

Joseph Butler, Ed.D., Dissertation Supervisor

Matthew Vander Wiele Ed.D., Second Reader

ABSTRACT

While Christian entrepreneurs have a diverse range of life experiences and perspectives, there is often an unawareness of the vital role they play in supporting the church, workplace, and community in discipleship. This phenomenological qualitative study was conducted to explore the formative life experiences (positive and negative) that shape Christian entrepreneurs' ability to promote discipleship in the church, workplace, and community. The grounding theory underlying this study was servant leadership, which was used to understand if the church's growth, necessary to fulfill God's Great Commission, can be aided by Christian entrepreneurs willing to serve. Through in-depth interviews with Christian entrepreneurs across various fields, this study was conducted to inform Christian entrepreneurs and church leaders about whether their formative experiences can help bridge the discipleship gap between churches, communities, and workplaces to fulfill the Great Commission. Eight Christian entrepreneurs participated in screening questionnaires and interviews to explore whether they believe their formative life experiences have equipped them to aid and support the local church, community, and workplace in disciple-making strategies. Based on their formative experiences, Christian entrepreneurs have an innate desire to serve their churches, workplaces, and communities. However, few tools exist to teach them how to collaborate with churches to advance the gospel and educate their communities. Participants' in-depth responses to the research questions illuminated their perspectives and allowed further investigation into how to support Christian entrepreneurs in discipleship more effectively.

Key Words: Christian entrepreneur, formative life experiences, spiritual formation, discipleship, workplace spirituality, Great Commission

Copyright © 2023 Charis Meegan Rooks. All rights reserved.

Liberty University has permission to reproduce and disseminate this document in any form by any means for purposes chosen by the University, including, without limitation, preservation or instruction.

Dedication

God, “My Creator.” Before anyone else, I want to thank God for getting me here. This experience taught me much about God’s word and who I am. This journey ranks among the most difficult I have ever taken. However, it is only by God’s grace and mercy that I have reached this point. No one else played a more significant role in my success than God. God, I thank you from the depths of my heart and I eagerly anticipate the path you have laid for me. To one day hear you say, “Well done, my good and faithful servant,” is my only goal for the road ahead.

Kem Brown, “My Mom.” It means the world to me that you are my mother and that I can always count on you for support. My time in school has been far from easy, but I know you have been praying for me and encouraging me the whole while. You have always been there for me, no matter what was going on in your life. When I was young, I used to observe you operate your businesses. I want you to know that you made a difference in my life. My studies are motivated by my observation of the positive changes you, as a Christian entrepreneur, have made in the lives of many individuals. Thanks be to God; you are a gift, and I will forever be grateful for your unending support and encouragement. Please know how much your daughter loves and appreciates you.

Kent Rooks Jr., “My husband.” After years of praying for reconciliation with you, I can finally say that our decision to restore our marriage after the divorce was right for us. What a demonstration of your devotion to me that you can look past the hardships, challenges, and mistakes I have made to continue loving me and working alongside me here. When I divorced, I lost all of my drive and enthusiasm, and it never occurred to me that you are one of the driving forces in my life. When we got back together and remarried, I realized I already had all the drive

and determination I would ever need; all I needed was love and encouragement from you. You are a great husband and a dear friend, and I am incredibly blessed and thankful to God for you.

Briana Rooks and Katelyn Rooks, “My Daughters.” You two are and will always be my motivating drive toward personal growth and advancement. When I first held your tiny hands in the hospital, I knew that my selfish and self-centered habits were finally ending. Knowing I was to be an example for you, I set out to do what God had planned for my life. I pray that whatever God puts on your heart to do, you will have the courage and determination to carry it out as I strive to continue to do this daily. I pray that you two will always have each other’s backs no matter what you decide to do in life. Never forget, “my ceiling will always be your floor.”

Xavier Rook-Fly “My Grandson.” Xay, you are Nana’s favorite little superhero. Maybe someday, when you are older, you will take the time to sit down and read some of Nana’s work, but even if you do not, I want you to know this. God’s blessings has followed you since the moment of your birth. I pray that God grants your Nana a long, healthy life to see you grow into a Godly man with a tremendous purpose. I pray God gives you an enormous sphere of influence to win a record-breaking number of souls to Christ. You, my little superhero, will find that my highest point is your foundation, launching you into an incredible destiny.

Gina Erwin, “My sissy.” All I can say is how much I appreciate and love you. Because we were in the same program, you were one of the few people who could relate to what I was going through. Please know how much I appreciate you taking the time out of your busy schedule to help me and offer encouragement on this path, especially considering how much you had going on in your life. I hope God will guide your steps and help you stay on His chosen path.

I want you to know that your sister cares deeply about you and that I am here for you no matter what. I cannot wait to see what God has for us two.

Marcus Brown, “My Dad.” Your advice has been invaluable, even if we have not always seen eye to eye. I frequently hear from others that my mind is as complicated and complex as yours regarding business. The longer I am in the field, the more I realize how much of your philosophy on work and life I also share. My interest in business stems from you and mom being my role models as entrepreneurs. My ability to observe, access, create, learn, and implement came at a very young age, and I have you both to thank for that. Therefore, please know that I will always be grateful to you.

Martellus Brown and Marcel Brown, “My Brothers.” I pray that knowing you have the power to achieve everything you set your mind to is a source of inspiration for you. Please consider my testimony if you have any doubts about this. When I consider the two of you, the expression “cut from the same cloth” immediately comes to mind. That is to say, if I managed to check off a significant goal from my extensive list of goals, then you can do the same. Thank you for being the source of my inspiration and motivation. I ask God to continue to bless you and your loved ones so that you might be a source of goodwill to everyone around you.

Acknowledgments

Dr. Joseph Butler, “My Dissertation Supervisor.” I have no words to express how fortunate I feel to have you guiding my study. God knew you were the one to push me over the edge into taking decisive action on my research and other important life matters. I appreciate every verse of scripture, every prayer, and every encouraging message. Because of your obedience and commitment to helping and mentoring God's children, I pray that God blesses you and your family abundantly.

Dr. Matthew Vander Wiele, “My Second Reader.” I appreciate your praise of my study. Your keen interest in the topic of my study was evident. This helped me feel certain that my study was contributing to the field. Likewise, I hope that God blesses you with whatever your heart desires, for you and your loved ones.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	3
Copyright.....	4
Dedication.....	5
Acknowledgments.....	8
List of Tables	14
List of Figures	15
List of Abbreviations.....	16
CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN.....	17
Introduction	17
Background to the Problem.....	20
Theological Background	22
Historical Background	24
Statement of the Problem.....	26
Purpose Statement	29
Research Questions	29
Assumptions and Delimitations	29
Research Assumptions	29
Delimitations of the Research Design.....	30
Definition of Terms	31
Significance of the Study	32
Summary of the Design	34
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	35

Overview	35
Theological Framework for the Study	36
The Great Commission Discipleship Model	36
The Great Commission	38
Discipleship	47
Being A Disciple	58
The Apostle Paul Was A Disciple, Evangelist, and Missionary	59
Summary of Theological Framework	64
Theoretical Framework for Study	65
The Great Commission Discipleship Model	66
Leadership	67
Summary of Theoretical Framework	75
Related Literature	75
The Great Commission Discipleship Model	76
The Christian Entrepreneur	76
Characteristics and Behaviors of the Christian Entrepreneur	78
The Apostle Paul—A Christian Entrepreneur	85
Formative (Positive and Negative) Life Experiences	89
The Apostle Paul’s Use of His Formative Life Experiences	91
Formative Life Experiences Aiding Christian Entrepreneurs in The Great Commission	93
Financial Support	93
Prayer	95

Worship	98
Testimony	99
Business and Administration Aspects of the Church.....	102
Business and Administrative Aspects of the Community	109
Business and Administrative Aspects of the Workplace	110
Summary of Related Literature	113
Rationale for Study and Gap in the Literature	113
Rationale for Study	113
Gap in the Literature	115
Profile of the Current Study	116
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	117
Introduction	117
Research Design Synopsis	118
The Problem	118
Purpose Statement.....	119
Research Questions	120
Research Design and Methodology	120
Setting	121
Participants.....	122
Role of the Researcher	123
Ethical Considerations	125
Data Collection Methods and Instruments.....	127
Collection Methods	128

Procedures	131
Data Analysis	133
Analysis Methods.....	134
Trustworthiness.....	135
Chapter Summary.....	140
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS	141
Overview	141
Compilation Protocol and Measures	141
Demographic and Sample Data.....	143
Data Analysis Findings.....	146
Research Question 1.....	146
Research Question 2.....	157
Research Question 3.....	172
Research Question 4.....	182
Additional Research Findings	193
Evaluation of the Research Design.....	194
CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS	197
Overview	197
Research Purpose	197
Research Questions	197
Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications.....	197
Research Conclusions	198
Conclusions for Research Questions.....	198

Study Implications	205
Research Limitations	209
Further Research.....	212
REFERENCES	217
APPENDIX A: IRB Approval Letter.....	231
APPENDIX B: Informed Consent	232
APPENDIX C: Participant Recruitment Letter	235
APPENDIX D: Participant Recruitment Social Media.....	236
APPENDIX E: Participant Recruitment Phone	237
APPENDIX F: Phone Screening Questionnaire	238
APPENDIX G: Interview Guide Template	239
APPENDIX H: Bracketing Journal Guide	241
APPENDIX I: Research Reliability Panel Email	243

List of Tables

Table 1. Comparison and Commonalities of Discipleship, Leadership, and Entrepreneurship	65
Table 2. Respondent Overview.....	135
Table 3. Participant Profile and Demographics	146
Table 4. RQ 1: Research Codes and Themes	147
Table 5. RQ1, Theme 1	147
Table 6. RQ1: Theme 2	150
Table 7. RQ1: Theme 3	153
Table 8. RQ2: Research Codes and Themes	157
Table 9. RQ2: Theme 1	158
Table 10. RQ2: Theme 2	163
Table 11. RQ2: Theme 3	168
Table 12. RQ1: Research Codes and Themes	173
Table 13. RQ3: Theme 1	173
Table 14. RQ3: Theme 2	176
Table 15. RQ3: Theme 3	179
Table 16. RQ4: Research Codes and Themes	182
Table 17. RQ4: Theme 1	183
Table 18. RQ4: Theme 2	186
Table 19. RQ4: Theme 3	190

List of Figures

Figure 1. Overview of the Spiritual Gifts.....	53
Figure 2. Speaking Gifts & Serving Gifts	53
Figure 3. Colaizzi Method of Data Analysis	135

List of Abbreviations

Christian Entrepreneur (CE)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Great Commission (GC)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Liberty University (LU)

Research Question (RQ)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

The great commission model focuses on discipleship by fulfilling the Great Commission. This model believes that the fulfillment of the GC is a ministry; therefore, the people within the ministry will grow and become more Christ-like”. According to Ogden (2018), discipleship “is an intentional relationship between Christian entrepreneurs and the church in which they serve those in need while challenging each other to grow more Christ-like” (p. 3). Discipleship is fundamental to the mission and purpose of the church, especially evangelical churches. Christ’s Great Commission to his disciples was to make disciples and then teach them how to make disciples, a goal that, if fully realized, would have a significant impact on society (Borthwick, 2015).

All Christians, no matter their background or title, are called to grow spiritually to make a difference in the world while spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. According to Ogden (2018), “Faithful followers of Jesus Christ who can serve as a bridge to the generations still to come benefit greatly from the Great Commission and disciple-making process” (p. 7). When Christians walk alongside those around them to train, encourage, and help them, a relationship is formed, which is necessary for disciple-making. About 38% of Americans are regular churchgoers, 43% are unchurched, and about a third (34%) are de-churched (Barna Group, 2017, p. 132). To simplify the ratio, more than two-thirds of Americans (77%) are either unchurched or de-churched. When Christians are not being discipled in accordance with the teachings of the Bible, when they are not being sent out into the world to spread the gospel, and when they are not developing their faith in Jesus and obeying his commands, there is a lack of discipleship.

Furthermore, attendance at American churches is down primarily because of dissatisfaction among churchgoers, broken community links, and a lack of discipleship. Thumma (2018) noted 45% of churchgoers do not participate in church activities. However, the church is constantly faced with the challenge of finding new ways to approach discipleship for those who are unchurched or de-churched (Ogden, 2018). A further complicating factor is that little over half of the 38% of the American population that goes to church participate in volunteer activities within the church. In comparison, 77% of the American population does not attend church at all, so they are not available to assist in volunteering (Ogden, 2018).

There is a deficiency when less than half of the church's normal attendees are present and the pastor is overworked and exhausted. It is assumed that today's typical pastor will carry out at least three major responsibilities (Nelson, 2000). This deficiency contributes to the lack of effective discipleship. It can ultimately lead to even less participation in the church or, in the worst-case scenario, permanently closing the church's doors, which will have a negative impact on the surrounding community. Due to shortcomings within the church, it is more important than ever to address this deficiency issue through a relational approach to evangelism. Through Paul, God provides an example of an entrepreneur who used his skills in the community to function as a bridge builder between the community and the local church. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 stated,

Even though I am free of everyone's demands and expectations, I have freely become a servant to everyone to reach a diverse spectrum of people: religious, nonreligious, scrupulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, defeated, demoralized-whoever. I did not adopt their way of life. I kept focusing on Christ, but I joined their world and tried to see things through their eyes. In my efforts to bring all I encounter into a God-saved life, I've become just about every kind of servant there is. All of this was motivated by the Message. I didn't want to merely talk about it; I wanted to be a part of it. (New International Version, 2011)

In today's society, no church can function without the support of volunteers who do everything from keeping the grounds clean to watching over the children in the nursery to

ushering and collecting the tithes and offerings (Bell, 1990). However, according to Banks (2001), “It is reasonable for a pastor to assume that God is responsible for providing the resources—financial, physical, human, and divine—necessary to carry out the task assigned to him by God” (p. 20). In many churches, pastors have no choice but to simultaneously serve in two or three jobs due to a lack of resources and volunteer members willing to assist. Jones (2017) defined dual- or multi-role ministry as,

A term that may refer to a pastor who is employed and serves in two or more roles within the church, such as a pastor who serves a part-time congregation while also serving as a chaplain in a hospital, on the faculty of a church college, or as a teaching theologian in a seminary. (p. 32)

Entrepreneurs can bring many skills, resources, and versatility to any organization, especially the church. New businesses often benefit from various factors, including economic conditions, social networks, and government aid. However, entrepreneurs are responsible for “identifying and developing company prospects, and they must sustain the motivation to persevere until their objectives are achieved” (Shaver & Scott, 1991, p. 23). As a result, entrepreneur behavior is fundamentally rooted in human choice, leading to concrete acts such as development, resources, acquisition, sales, and marketing. The capacity of entrepreneurs to employ human will to launch acts based on internal decisions and drive to create and build makes these abilities priceless for the church. Since many CEs have already built trust and connections with individuals in the community, they can help the church spread the gospel beyond its walls and carry out the Great Commission. “The heart and soul of cultivating teamwork is trust,” stated Kouzes and Posner (1995, p. 161). Collaboration occurs when CEs make decisions through the Holy Spirit. In contrast, the church has a wealth of CEs at its disposal, but they are not always used in assisting pastors and furthering the church’s mission of

discipleship. A successful Christian business is characterized by its ability to make a difference in people's lives.

The research questions (RQs) shaping this qualitative phenomenological study are explained in detail in Chapter One. Included are an introduction, background to the problem, a statement of the problem, a purpose statement, research questions, assumptions, delimitations, definitions of terms used throughout the research process, the significance of the study, and a summary of the study's design.

Background to the Problem

The Christian community faces a significant challenge due to the high percentage of unchurched and disengaged Christians compared to its active membership. When a church's membership falls, it runs the risk of being unable to sustain itself, which might result in a crisis for the church and the community. According to Altoun (2021), "Crises or unpredictable events can disrupt an organization's operations and threaten to damage organizational reputations. An organization's communicative response to a crisis can limit or even repair reputational damage" (p. 16). One potentially effective but generally overlooked method for mitigating the crisis's effects on the church is for the church to collaborate with Christian entrepreneurs (CEs) in the area of discipleship. Churches are organizations with untapped entrepreneurial resources and skills that can help with sustainability and rapid response to the lack of biblical discipleship within the church. When churches work with CEs inspired by the Holy Spirit, they can substantially benefit the community and individuals. With a potentially beneficial outcome deriving from their willingness to devote time and resources in collaboration. According to Hybels (2002):

Church leaders may learn a lot from entrepreneurial ventures. In terms of innovation, change, creativity, vision, teams, management, new ideas, and the nature of

organizational leadership, the Church falls short. The church may break new ground, launch new ministries, take risks, and assist those in need. This generation's door is wider open than any other in the previous quarter-century. We're being called to take on more responsibility. (p. 37)

Many thriving churches operate on several of the same principles as businesses in the marketplace. As a result, it is not unusual for the church to provide the same services that people pay for in the marketplace. According to "Jesus, CEO" (2005), "America is spawning an industry of faith-based consultancies. ... Computers project the words of the hymns onto huge screens, and the temperature is perfectly controlled" (para. 3–14). America's churches, in their goal of "total service excellence" (Jesus, CEO, para. 10), do not limit themselves to preaching on Sundays and conducting the conventional Sunday service. According to "Jesus, CEO," "Today's churches keep their buildings open 7 days a week, from dawn to dusk, and deliver a truly catholic array of services. Some mega-church complexes house banks, pharmacies, and schools. Counselling and guidance groups are routine. So are children's ministries" (para. 10) As a result, more and more Christians are interested in creating business-oriented missions than praising God.

In contrast, some argue that the church is not a business and should not operate in the same way a corporation would. As a result, some believe Christianity is being used to cover unethical economic practices. Mortiz (2005) stated,

People complain about the co-opting of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln for "President's Day sales" than about things like overpriced "Christian" long-distance plans, high-interest "Christian" credit cards, or "Christian" wristbands being sold at margins that would make pharmaceutical executives blush. (p. 9)

Another source of disagreement is that some believe these thriving churches are more akin to self-help organizations than religious establishments. According to Anthony and Estep (2005), "Adopting a separatist attitude, churches often avoid secular businesses practices construed as conflicting with religious doctrine (p. 14). Hardy and Ballis (2005) argued, "It is

vital to maintain a strong boundary between sacred and secular aspects in church operations in order to retain a biblical approach” (p. 238). This is frequently observed when churches committed to expansion incorporate acceptable business methods into their operating policies. Kurtus (2022) offered, “The emphasis on increasing congregational numbers focuses church efforts on satisfying generational preferences, which often shifts church emphasis from the spiritual to satisfying congregation expectations” (para. 1).

Due to this back-and-forth battle, many churches today are experiencing a crippling effect, which frequently manifests as a lack of growth, making it challenging for the church to operate at total capacity while discipling the community. The problem that appears in many churches that are not thriving is a lack of widely accepted organizational leadership practices, as evidenced by church operational strategies, which have a negative impact on the efficient use of resources such as CEs to aid in the implementation of discipleship within the community. This can be seen in statistics showing the ratio of active church goers verses the unchurched and de-churched population. According to Barna Group (2017), “38% of Americans are active churchgoers, slightly more (43%) are unchurched, and roughly one-third (34%) is de-churched” (p. 132). There is a characterization of regular church attendees. Most individuals today are considered “active churchgoers” if they attend services once a month. Therefore, the fight between the church and business about what is and is not acceptable is neither constructive nor helpful in developing discipleship tactics for individuals who are de-churched or unchurched.

Theological Background

Discovering how to explain and discuss discipleship theory and apply it to the church and entrepreneurship is at the heart of this study’s theological foundation. Ogden (2011) stated, “The discipler model’s transparency by sharing personal struggles, prayer concerns, and confession of

sin. The disciple will gain as much insight into Scripture and the Christian life as those being disciplined” (p. 10). Transparency is not only an essential component of business ethics but also necessary for the Church, which is essentially an institution that tells the truth. Nonbelievers are often drawn to openness because it is perceived as trustworthy, while at the same time, the church is accountable for sharing testimony.

Aside from being a pastor, leader, and disciple, Paul was an evangelist and an excellent transparent leader. While growing up, Paul was taught this skill and how to make money from it, like many other Jewish men his age. Due to the nature of tents, Paul’s greatest customer was likely the Roman army, which used tents for shelter. In 21st-century business dealings, this is similar to winning a contract from the federal government to manufacture tents. According to Shearer (2020), “Paul did not give up his business venture when he started serving Jesus. Instead, this entrepreneurial, tent-making enterprise was a key element of his apostolic ministry” (p. 2). As an entrepreneur, leader, and entrepreneur, Paul spread the gospel and created relationships through his transparency, concerns, and struggles while preaching the word of God.

According to Scripture, God’s plan for the church from the beginning was to unite under the headship of Jesus Christ and serve as a mirror of Himself to the world (Ephesians 4:1-3). (1 Corinthians 12:12-17). Recognizing that we are all unique individuals who are unified in the body of Christ, the church and CEs must not allow differences to form a wedge between them or cause them to be isolated. No one is excluded from being a member of the body of Christ, and just as the church plays a distinctive role in the body of Christ, so too do CEs play a unique role. Bridgebuilders who can unite the church and the world beyond its walls are desperately needed, and here is where gifted leaders with business knowledge come in. Working together to serve others, encourage one another, and bring others to Christ while seeking Scripture as a guide is

incredible to witness and experience. Satan, however, has persuaded many, including many in the church, that they cannot work together because if the body of Christ were genuinely united, there would be no force on earth that would or could even try to stand in the way of God's will. CEs can support this process as bridge builders between the church and the community in areas where there is discontent or friction between the church and community.

From a theological standpoint, this research was guided by Paul's willingness to use his authority to help others and build trusting relationships by entering the lives of others and remaining unafraid to lead them to salvation in Christ. According to Shearer (2020), "Paul is credited with penning approximately 13 of the New Testament's 27 books, and he is frequently recognized as one of the Bible's most influential figures. At the same time, he was also an entrepreneur who made tents for a living" (p. 2). Paul set a precedent for Christian businesses and leaders of the future. To be a successful Christian leader, mentor, and entrepreneur, as Paul was, one must adhere to biblical ideals. Paul accepted his responsibilities and how God wanted him to carry them out. These responsibilities require a leader who can take on many forms, such as a mentor or an entrepreneur. Today, Christians and Christian businesses can turn to Paul as a role model for their endeavors.

Historical Background

Many argue that the church is not a business and should not operate the same way a corporation would. In contrast, CEs directed by the Holy Spirit may offer their time and resources to the church to profoundly benefit, safeguard, and strengthen it in its undertakings. Rather than being merely a site of trade, the church has historically acted as a haven for those in need. The church's generosity can be traced back to the beginnings of religious organizations. According to Westhues (1971), "Religious organizations in the western world historically have

been major sources of both funds and services for social welfare” (p. 60). Many of the earliest origins of benevolence and charity can be traced to religious organizations. According to Langer (2003), “The desire to help others and, therefore, the beginning of social welfare appears to have developed as a part of religion” (p. 137).

Some CEs have worked persistently to assist their communities while honoring God, who are more widely known and recognized in today’s culture than in the past. For example, Robert G. LeTourneau (1888–1969) was a philanthropist, entrepreneur, and inventor who collected around 300 patents during his lifetime. As a devout Christian, LeTourneau was steadfast in his adherence to biblical beliefs. His love for God was more important to him than an obligation, and he eventually donated to the Lord 90% of his own money (Cloud, 2019). The author has spent at least 25 years or more traveling around the United States and a few other countries to spread the message that a Christian businessperson owes just as much to God as an evangelical pastor.

To fulfill the biblical mandate of giving 10% of one’s income to the church, it is customary for business owners to assume that monetary donations alone are sufficient. Like any other business, the church must have a consistent source of income to survive. In addition to knowing that God desires and desires monetary contributions, CEs must recognize that their skills are also valuable and may be an excellent resource for the church. Entrepreneurs driven by their values can better see the big picture regarding income than those driven solely by their personal needs and concerns. According to Mostert (2012), “we are invited to join God in this attempt as co-laborers to bring about lasting change through paradigm-shifting ideas that will demand the full brilliance of Spirit-led entrepreneurs to effect societal change or transformation” (p. 66). This is demonstrated in the Bible when the Philippians financially supported Paul. In return for their generosity, the Philippians assisted Paul financially, allowing him to continue his

mission. Paul acknowledged his gratitude for their generosity (Philippians 4:14). This reflects the mission of the contributing ministry. Following their attempts to aid Paul's mission, the Philippians were cultivating a relationship with him, which is always a prerequisite for generous giving (Philippians 4:15).

Statement of the Problem

A Christian entrepreneur (CE) is, according to Jackson (2004), an “entrepreneur who mixes aggressive commercial aims with God’s compassion for people” and “an inventive Christian leader who is ready to take big risks in ministry to accomplish great things for Christ and the kingdom” (p. 18). These big-risk categories include those in which the church is experiencing limited movement or hampered by outdated practices. Even though CEs may benefit the church, they are generally unaware of their strengths and ability to use their skill set in assisting the church, let alone how to utilize them to support, protect, and strengthen the church. A unique outlet for evangelism will grow if CEs devote their time, business acumen, knowledge, and witness to the church in the workplace and community. This partnership of working together can help the church grow, spread the gospel, and disciple others among its members and the surrounding community.

What can a CE do to help the church, workplace, and community? According to Sanders (2007), “If people in positions of authority fail to shepherd others up the spiritual mountains, the way to the lowlands will be plainly outlined in any type of divinely given spiritual leadership” (p. 19). There is a need for CEs to be held accountable, and there is an expectation that they will be faithful stewards of God’s people and resources in the current era. The duty of being a good steward of God’s people, materials, and financial resources entrusted to them by others can be accomplished by leaders who adhere to James 1:5 and strive for excellence in all they do. If CEs

are not supported, and their skills are not utilized, humanity may experience a lack of progress and development. According to Becker et al. (2011), economist Joseph Schumpeter described the role of entrepreneurs in transformation as “the individual who executes innovation, sweeping away existing methods of doing things, items and technology and replacing them with those that the marketplace considers being more valuable” (p. 4). Entrepreneurs are capable of serving as growth and change catalysts.

In the Christian community, there is a helpful guiding notion that the church’s mission must be carried out diligently in the workplace and community and within the local church. This is where CEs can work with the local church to benefit not just themselves but also the congregation, their workplace, and their community. As churches can learn a great deal from entrepreneurs, CEs can learn a great deal from the local church. Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric, was praised by Hybels (2002) for his ability to connect the two. According to Hybels, his memoirs serve as,

Church leaders may learn a lot from entrepreneurial ventures. In terms of innovation, change, creativity, vision, teams, management, new ideas, and the nature of organizational leadership, the Church falls short. The church may break new ground, launch new ministries, take risks, and assist those in need. This generation’s door is wider open than any other in the previous quarter-century. We are being called to take on more responsibility. (p. 37)

The sustainability of the community, workplace, and local church is jeopardized when churches cannot provide discipleship assistance to needy individuals. CEs can assist but lack the how-to knowledge to support the church’s development. CEs are needed more than ever to defend and strengthen the church, assist the local community and its activities, and facilitate workplace discipleship.

There is currently no compelling phenomenological study on the impact of CEs on their local churches, workplaces, and communities in discipleship. Research on CEs and discipleship,

however, did yield five publications involving religion and the entrepreneur. However, no attention was paid to whether the CEs expertise and formative life experiences (positive and negative) can assist and support local churches, workplaces, and communities in discipleship. One concentrated on the impact of religion on the entrepreneur, not the other way around (Zelekha et al., 2014). CEs have a significant impact on developing and emerging markets, according to two other studies (Wood & Heslam, 2014). The other studies focused on the Christian religion in business but not becoming disciples of God (Beckwith, 2016) or church planting (Baumgartner & Flores, 2017). One of the five articles relevant to this study was located. It addressed whether a business owner's Christian faith influences his or her decisions (Parboteeah et al., 2015).

Researchers looking into whether CEs' (both positive and negative) life experience, education, training, and expertise can benefit local churches and communities in discipleship found almost zero data, indicating a gap in the literature that called for a phenomenological qualitative study. CEs can be effective disciple-makers by using their knowledge, formative experiences, testimonies, and other personal instruments to aid and assist the local churches and their surrounding communities. The lack of this information between the church and CEs is frequently associated with CEs lack of awareness and communication about the importance of their skills and capacity to be disciple-makers for the church, workplace, and community. Historically, there has been a wide gap between church leadership and the typical churchgoer who, for example, might be a businessperson. However, this gap is gradually shrinking in churches that preach that everyone is obligated to obey the Great Commission.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the formative life experiences (positive and negative) that shape Christian entrepreneurs' ability to promote discipleship in the church, workplace, and community. Discipleship, according to Ogden (2018), "is an intentional relationship between CEs and the church in which they serve those in need while challenging each other to grow more Christ-like. (p. 3). The theory guiding this study was the Great Commission Discipleship Model. According to Oates (n.d.), "The Great Commission model focuses on discipleship with fulfilling the Great Commission. This model believes that the fulfillment of the Great Commission is a ministry. Therefore, the people within ministry will grow and become more Christ-like" (p. 1).

Research Questions

RQ1. What defining formative life experiences, whether positive or negative, do Christian entrepreneurs possess that they perceive will help them to be more effective disciple-makers?

RQ2. What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the local church as disciple-makers?

RQ3. What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the community as disciple-makers?

RQ4. What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the workplace as disciple-makers?

Assumptions and Delimitations

The study's assumptions and delimitations are listed to provide a framework for straightforward interpretation from the study's starting point to its bounds.

Research Assumptions

The following assumptions guided this study.

1. For the sake of this study, it was assumed that all participants were CEs motivated by and eager to support the church and community.

2. It was assumed that responses provided by entrepreneurs appropriately reflected their unique lived experiences.
3. It was assumed that each participant desired to contribute to growing their community's church and expanding their business.

Delimitations of the Research Design

The scope of this qualitative investigation was virtually endless; therefore, it potentially could have covered a wide range of subjects and data. The following boundaries were monitored to maintain concentration and prevent misinterpretation.

1. Participants in this study consisted of Christian entrepreneurs who make at least 51% of the organization's decisions. The study excluded participants who were not Christian entrepreneurs and those who did not have 51% of the organization's decision-making power.
2. Entrepreneurs participating in this study were 18 years of age and older. Participants under the age of 18 were excluded from the study.
3. This study focused exclusively on entrepreneurs who established their businesses. Entrepreneurs who inherited or franchised their businesses were excluded from the study.
4. Each participant must possess a minimum of 1 year of leadership experience. Entrepreneurs with less than 1 year of leadership experience were excluded from the study.
5. Each entrepreneur must have at least one staff member or volunteer. Entrepreneurs that did not have at least one staff member or volunteer were excluded from the study.
6. This study did not include entrepreneurs who were engaged in illegal activities. Entrepreneurs engaged in activities that contradict Christian values, such as participation in known unlawful and immoral business operations, were excluded from the study.
7. Entrepreneurs attending Christian churches in the United States participated in the study. Entrepreneurs who attended Christian religious churches outside the United States were excluded from the study.
8. Entrepreneurs must express a desire to disciple others within the church, community, and workplace. Entrepreneurs with no desire to disciple others were excluded from the study.

Definition of Terms

1. *Christian*: A disciple or follower of Christ (Knight & Ray, 1998, p. 70).
2. *Christian entrepreneur*: A entrepreneur who is an imaginative Christian leader who is a creative dreamer prepared to take tremendous risks in ministry in order to gain great things for Christ and the kingdom (Jackson, 2004, p. 18).
3. *Community connectedness*: The feeling that members have of belonging and being important to each other and a shared faith that members' needs will be met by the commitment to be together (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9)
4. *Disciple*: One who responds in faith and obedience to the gracious call to follow Jesus Christ; A lifelong process of dying to self while allowing Jesus Christ to come alive in us (Ogden, 2018, p. 10)
5. *Discipling*: an intentional relationship in which we walk alongside other disciples to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ. This includes equipping the disciple to make disciples who make disciples (Ogden, 2018, p. 3).
6. *Entrepreneur*: Comes from the French for "one who undertakes." An entrepreneur is a person who spots an opportunity to start a business by creating a new product or offering a new service (Cohan et al., 2013, p. 156).
7. *Evangelism*: The principles and practice of making the gospel about Jesus Christ known to those outside the community of believers (Selman, 2002, p. 193).
8. *Evangelist*: A person who travels from place to place, preaching the gospel (Knight & Ray, 1998, p. 105); A person authorized to proclaim the gospel of Christ (Youngblood et al., 2005, p. 73).
9. *Great Commission Model*: The Great Commission model focuses on discipleship, fulfilling the Great Commission. This model believes that the fulfillment of the Great Commission is a ministry; therefore, the people within the ministry will grow and become more Christ-like (Oates, n.d.).
10. *Leadership*: the action of leading a group towards a common goal. People who lead have three common attributes: they inspire others to share their vision, they motivate others to act on that vision, and they encourage others and help them overcome obstacles in pursuit of that vision (Bridges, 2019, p. 2).
11. *Prayer*: Communication with God (Knight & Ray, 1998, p. 256)
12. *Servant leadership*: the leadership style where leaders put followers first, empower them, and help them develop their full personal capacities (Northouse, 2022, p. 253)

13. *Testimony*: is expressed either as a sign of something that exists (e.g., a memorial) or more frequently in terms of a claim of something that happened, given by a person or a group of people in dialogue with others (Pluss, 2008, p. 11)
14. *Transformational leadership*: a process that changes and transforms people, including assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings (Northouse, 2002, p. 185)
15. *Worship*: Reverent devotion and allegiance pledged to God (Youngblood et al., 2005, p. 269); The praise and adoration of God expressed both publicly and privately (Knight & Ray, 1998, p. 344).

Significance of the Study

In today's fast-evolving society, the GC is a significantly more onerous responsibility than in the past. People are finding it increasingly difficult to connect, find meaning in their life, and let go of their past. Effective approaches to discipleship are becoming increasingly crucial as Christians take the Gospel's unchanging message to the world, especially in a world that is increasingly politicized around spiritual matters. According to Barna Group (2015), "After surveying a random sample of Christians, including both practicing and non-practicing Christians. More than half of the respondents, 43% chose 'becoming more Christ-like,' followed by 'spiritual growth' (31%) and 'spiritual journey' (28%) (p. 1.) *Becoming Christlike* appears to be a phrase that is used more frequently by those who engage in spiritual activities. When it comes to non-Christians, the term *spiritual journey* is most used.

After inquiring about the relevance of the phrase discipleship, among those who did not pick it, only a fifth of those polled thought discipleship was essential. According to the Barna Group (2017),

Church leaders tend to feel that the contrary is true. Fewer than 1% of those polled said that "today's churches are doing extremely well in discipling new and young believers." Six out of 10 people believe that churches are disciplining their members "too poorly" (60%). When it comes to discipling new and young believers, only 8% of churches say they are doing a great job, while 56% say they are doing a decent job. As a result, pastors are more critical of their own congregation than of churches as a whole, yet few believe

that churches, whether their own or others are doing an exceptional job of discipleship. (p. 2)

Because of the importance placed on discipleship, there is a need for the church to assist people in understanding and guidance as it pertains to their beliefs. According to the Barna Group (2015), “Only 40% of non-practicing Christians think their church places ‘a lot’ of emphasis on spiritual growth (73%) compared to three-quarters of practicing Christians (73%) who consider their faith very essential” (p. 2).

Many CEs have devoted as much energy to evangelizing as they have to their business ventures because they feel called to do so by God. CEs may safeguard and strengthen the church, workplace, and community through discipleship while fulfilling God’s calling. All three have a substantial impact on the viability of the local church. According to Cao (2007), “Evangelization and discipleship has become a vital aspect of many businesses’ plans for economic growth. When it comes to coordinating evangelization efforts, Christian businesses have drawn on their strategic vision and managerial expertise” (p. 45).

In general, two-way interaction and resources between the church and CEs are often seen with a lack of communication and understanding of the skills that CEs possess and their ability to use them to aid the church as disciple-makers. According to Zelekha et al. (2014),

Literature suggests that the attitude toward entrepreneurship is one of the channels in which religion might affect economic performance. However, entrepreneurship is a poorly understood phenomenon because the relationship is complex and direct. The theoretical perspectives on the issue are undeveloped, and current empirical data are scarce. Moreover, the relationship between religion and entrepreneurship, at the individual level, is interdependent and affected by a wide range of additional factors such as personality, ethnicity, network structures, education, and risk attitude. (p. 750)

When searching for a study, the researcher uncovered five articles on CEs and discipleship. There was, however, little consideration of how a CE’s expertise and life experiences (both positive and bad) may help and assist the local churches, workplaces, and

communities in their mission of discipleship. In Ephesians 4:7, Paul described God's purpose for church expansion, not so much in numbers as in the spiritual maturity of the members of the Body of Christ. Ephesians 4:7 states, "However, grace was given to every one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift." This study can aid in the understanding the role of spiritual gifts by providing the education, support, and communication needed by CEs to work together more effectively in discipling others. As a result of reading this study, CEs will better understand the value of their formative life experiences and whether they can bridge the discipleship divide between the local churches, communities, and workplaces to fulfill the Great Commission.

Summary of the Design

This qualitative phenomenology study explored the life experiences of CEs that prepared them to serve the church as disciple-makers effectively. This exploratory phenomenological study was conducted to understand better the premise that CEs are untapped resources that the church may leverage for disciple-making. This study employed a screening survey and unstructured interviews to gather information from the perspective of a CE and share it with other CEs and ministry leaders. This phenomenological study included eight participants. According to Creswell (2018), "Sample size depends on the qualitative design being used" phenomenology involves a range of 3–10 participants" (p. 185). The researcher also used snowball sampling as a backup sample method in the event there would be a need for more participants. Chapter Two contains the exploration of the knowledge gap surrounding CEs, their importance in disciple-making, and their relationship to the church.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant to all in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized-whomever. I did not take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ - but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I have become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn't just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!
(The Message, 1 Corinthians 9:19–23)

Overview

This phenomenological qualitative study explored and analyzed the ability of CEs to utilize their formative life experiences (negative and positive) to promote discipleship in the church, community, and workplace. The grounding theory underlying this study was the Great Commission Discipleship Model (GC). The GC approach emphasizes discipleship as a means of completing the GC. This model believes that ministry is how the GC is fulfilled, and as a result, those who participate in ministry will grow and become more Christ-like due to their involvement (Oates, n.d., p. 1). Paul, a disciple, disciple-maker, evangelist, missionary, leader, and entrepreneur who used his formative life experiences to propagate God's word and promote discipleship in the church, community, and workplace, served as the significant biblical model throughout this research (Manyaka-Boshielo, 2018; Shearer, n.d.).

This study determined whether a CE can support and serve the church by leveraging their formative life experiences and skills to bridge the gap between churches, communities, and workplaces. CEs can cultivate trustworthy relationships while fostering discipleship in churches, communities, and workplaces. Developing trust benefits the church. It can foster growth within and beyond the church, resulting in a stronger and more expansive discipleship momentum and the completion of God's Great Commission. This literature review established the commonalities between discipleship, leadership, and entrepreneurship while also exploring and supporting the

theories and facts necessary to analyze the significance, if any, of formative life experiences (positive and negative) for CEs in assisting the church and community in discipleship and leadership. This literature review also examined Apostle Paul's attributes, deeds, and behaviors to build a model for CEs today as a disciple, disciple-makers, evangelists, missionaries, and leaders ready and willing to answer the charge given by Jesus in the form of the Great Commission. The review is separated into five major sections: theological framework, theoretical framework, related literature, the rationale of the study and gap in the literature, and a study profile. The theological, theoretical, and connected literature sections will be followed by a summary of the information presented.

Theological Framework for the Study

This theological framework segment will examine the Great Commission Discipleship Model (GCDM) of discipleship, the Great Commission itself, God, His Kingdom, and His Word through the lens of relationship building, gospel sharing, and word teaching, followed by an explanation and discussion of what it means to be a disciple and disciple-maker according to the Great Commission given by Christ in Matthew 28:16–20. In addition, the concept of discipleship will be defined and investigated in connection to the church, the community, and the workplace. This section will conclude by examining how the Apostle Paul applied the GC theory to leadership and business to fulfill the roles of disciple-maker, evangelist, and missionary.

The Great Commission Discipleship Model

Discipleship models help ministries comprehend how to effectively disciple individuals (Oates, n.d., p. 1). Therefore, it is a discipleship model based upon fulfilling the GC given by Jesus Christ. This commission appears in each of the four gospels of the Bible (John 20:21-23; Luke 24:45-49; Mark 16:15-20; Matthew 28:16-20). Each of these variations contains somewhat

different language, but they suggest the same message: discipleship. John was a fisherman (McGee, 1983a, p. 238), Mark a young boy who followed Peter and Paul (McGee 1983a, pp. 156–157), and Matthew a tax collector (McGee 1983a, p. 3), which explains the difference in their dialect and wording. McGee (1983a), explained the different writing styles and purposes:

The Gospel of Mark was directed to the nation of Israel. It was first written in Hebrew, and it was directed primarily to the religious men of that time. The Gospel of Mark was directed to the Romans. The Roman was a man of action who believed that government, law, and order could control the world. ... The Gospel of Luke was written to the Greek, to the thinking man. The Gospel of John was written directly for believers but indirectly for the Orient, where there were the mysterious millions, all crying out on that day for deliverance. (p. 3)

As is evident throughout the New Testament, Jesus taught through parables and a language that His audience could comprehend. Parables also confuse and hide truths from those who do not value God and His word (Matthew 13:10–16). The GC will be interpreted using Matthew’s translation for the sake of this study. Jesus demonstrated all aspects of a relationship with God. His calling and teaching of others are one of the most evident parts of his example. His influence drew them closer to the Father, and after 3 years of intensive life-sharing, he released them into the care of the Father and Holy Spirit. The exhortation at the end of Matthew’s gospel and the evidence in Acts implies that he wants us to do the same. A mission drives the GCDM.

CEs who embrace a disciple-making approach, pray for an unreached people group, or cooperate with a local mission agency implement the methodology of the GCDM. CEs must pray and seek God’s guidance regarding the most effective means of serving their people. Regarding discipleship, Oates (n.d.), asserted that “all Christ-followers have an obligation to perform” (p. 3). With the aid of these programs, individuals can improve their faith and come closer to God through effective discipleship.

The Great Commission

The Great Commission, as recorded by Matthew, states,

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (New International Version, 2011, Matthew 28:16-20)

Jesus entrusted His disciples with a mission, but what does this entail? Jesus began by declaring,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (New International Version, 2011,

Matthew 28:18). This means that Jesus has control and power over and is the King of both

heaven and earth, demonstrating His Kingship. McGee (1983a) explained,

Matthew is the Gospel of the King. Jesus was born a King. He lived as a King. He died as a King. He rose again as a King. And, my friend, He will be coming again to this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords! I hope you will bow to Him today. (p. 154)

Luke 24 (Luke’s version of the Great Commission) portrays it as a global perspective that will embrace every square inch of the world, not just a single territory. It is about “men bringing witness to men throughout the world about the death and resurrection of Jesus, indicating that people can be saved from the effects of sin by carrying out the great commission” (McGee, 1983a, p. 360). Furthermore, it describes how Jesus will equip people to do so (McGee, 1983a).

This commission is essential for the advancement of discipleship. The Great Commission is carried out and accomplished through discipleship. Jesus established the guidelines for the GC and sent the Holy Spirit to assist those who accepted the responsibility (New International Version, 2011, John 16:1-15).

McGee (1983a) argued that “we are to be His witnesses and endowed with divine power” and that “the great commission can be carried out in His authority.” McGee further emphasized that obeying this summons immediately submits to Jesus (pp. 153–154). According to Ogden

(2018), Jesus' instructions are usually known as the Great Commission (p. 4). They imply and encourage the formation of relationships, the dissemination of the gospel, and the teaching. Each of these objectives is a divine command, and the GC Discipleship Model reflects them. The GC invites all men and women to become disciples and proclaimers of God's kingdom. Tomlinson (n.d.) advocated, "We are aware of countless exceptional Christian leaders, yet each of us is called to carry out the Great Commission" (p. 4).

God has existed from the start of time. Nothing except blackness remained. There was no planet, no life, and no human beings. God created the universe in 6 days and has a purpose for humanity (Genesis 1). Along with the command to "be prolific and multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it," God empowered man to rule over the Earth and everything on it (Genesis 1:28). In addition, God instructed Adam and Eve that they could eat from any tree in the Garden of Eden except the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:15-17). This was always God's intention. Adam and Eve rejected God by eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thereby bringing sin and death into the world. They were expelled from the Garden of Eden and required to cultivate their food and resources (Genesis 3). McGee (1981), stated,

While man did not create himself – no one disputes that - God was not capricious in the conditions He established. "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely perish." He said to man (Genesis 2:17). That was not the only tree in the garden that could be eaten. It would have been extremely arbitrary if man had died of starvation if he had been unable to eat from the tree and had also been informed, he would die if he did eat from it. There were an abundance of fruit-bearing trees in the garden, so man did not need to eat from this tree at all. As a result, we discover that man enters the picture as a responsible creature (p. 23). ... This is man's judgment. Man is now confronted with death. ... Man, in the end, must answer to God. Whether he is saved or lost, he must account to God. However, Adam did not perish physically on the day he ate. He did not die for over 900 years. Simply put, he died spiritually the instant he rebelled; he was cut off from God. Death is a state of separation. (p. 27)

This was a loss for the human race but not for God. God is capable of absolutely everything. At the same time, He created a plan to rescue, save, and restore humanity, as

revealed by the prophet Isaiah in God's Word (Isaiah 14:24). John 3:16-17 describes God's plan for the redemption, salvation, and restoration of humanity,

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Perfect because of love, Jesus deliberately left Heaven, assumed human form, was crucified and died to atone for the sins of humanity. Jesus ascended to heaven and will return to rule God's kingdom. McGee (1981) provided the following summary of God's plan of redemption:

Man must have a substitute between himself and God's vengeance. That is necessary even in these days for man to ponder. The hardest thing in the world is for man to take his true position before God... Salvation comes when you and I assume our proper place as sinners before God.... This does not mean that God put up a roadblock. It signifies that the route of life was kept open for man to get to God. But now that road is not through the tree of life. Salvation must come through a sacrifice, and as man looked back, the blood of the sacrifice is what he saw. (pp. 27–28)

The Kingdom of God will eventually replace all previous and current earthly kingdoms. Numerous kingdoms (empires) have existed throughout history, including the Babylonian and Roman kingdoms. All these fragile and impure kingdoms will be annihilated by the Kingdom of God, ruled by Jesus Christ. Never will the Kingdom of God be destroyed (Daniel 2:36–49).

According to Nelson (2005), God's Kingdom is,

God's rule of grace in the world, a future period foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament and identified by Jesus as beginning with His public ministry. The kingdom of God is the experience of blessedness, like that of the Garden of Eden, where evil is fully overcome and those who live in the kingdom know only happiness, peace, and joy. This is the main expectation of the Old Testament prophets about the future (Matthew 6:10). (p. 140)

Knight and Ray (1998) defined God's Kingdom as,

The spiritual reign of God in the hearts of believers (Luke 17:20-21). Partially attained in this life for those who seek God's will, God's kingdom will be fully established in the world to come (John 18:36). Jesus preached the "gospel of the kingdom" (Mark 1:149) and taught His disciples to seek His kingdom (Matt. 6:33) and to pray for its arrival on

earth (Matt. 6:10). Unrepentant sinners cannot inherit this kingdom (Eph. 5:5). It is reserved for those who repent (Matt. 3:2) and experience spiritual rebirth (John 3:3-5). Other phrases for this kingdom are “kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 4:17) and “kingdom of Christ” (Col. 1:3). (p. 179)

God cares for us and has a plan for our lives, as evidenced by the preceding definitions. During His mission on earth, Jesus recruited 12 disciples (Matthew 10:1-4; Luke 5:1-11). It is essential to emphasize that none of the 12 disciples possessed a flawless character. They were ordinary men performing mundane chores. Some of them engaged in immoral conduct, such as customer fraud and overcharging (Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 1:19-18; Luke 5:8). Jesus nevertheless selected them as His disciples and taught them how to live virtuous lives. After His resurrection (Matthew 28:1–10), Jesus instructed His disciples on what to do when He ascended heaven (Acts 1:9).

Jesus walked beside Matthew, instructing him on God, discipleship, and the impending Kingdom as shown in the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and equipping him to follow Him as a disciple and disciple-maker. For example, when Jesus employed Matthew, Matthew worked as a tax collector who overcharged people and kept the difference. “Tax collectors were notoriously unethical,” recalled Zavada (2021), “since they demanded far more than was owed to ensure their profit.” No one dared to question their decisions because Roman soldiers were enforcing them. (p. 1). According to Zavada,

Matthew displayed one of the most radically changed lives in the Bible in response to an invitation from Jesus. He did not hesitate; he did not look back. He left behind a life of wealth and security for poverty and uncertainty. He abandoned the pleasures of this world for the promise of eternal life. (p. 2)

Paul was a person who persecuted Christians before his conversion (Schneidervin, p. xvii). As he had done for Matthew and the other disciples, Jesus instructed and prepared them to become disciples who would make disciples. Jesus changed ordinary fishermen into fishers of men and disciples (Matthew 4:19).

The GC is a process that will continue until Jesus' return (Cotrado, 2020, p. 336). The GC and Jesus' ministry involved relationship-building, sharing the gospel, teaching God's Word, being a disciple, and making disciples who will become future disciple-makers (Henderson, n.d., pp. 1–8). The following sections will examine each of these facets of carrying out the Great Commission.

Building Relationships

Organizing in every given community begins and concludes with relationship building. Relationship development is an essential aspect of human communication. Friendships and connections facilitate the development of a person's trust and dedication, which assists them in achieving their objectives. Relationship building is a divine mandate, an act of love, and a crucial component of sustaining discipleship. It demands involvement with and investment in the lives of others (Henderson, n.d.). Relationships are formed in households, churches, corporations, and communities. Relationship building requires knowledge and concern (Henderson, n.d.). God is the most significant relationship a person can form. Individuals form relationships based on their love for others in order to become one community with God (1 Thessalonians 2:8). McGee (1983b) stated, "Paul had a genuine affection for the Thessalonian Christians, and he was willing to lose his life for them." (p. 381). McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined community connectedness as "the sensation that members have of belonging and importance to one another, as well as a shared belief that their needs would be met as a result of their commitment to be together" (p. 9).

Relationship-building requires disciple-makers to invest in their disciples. Relationship building includes spending time with, inquiring about, listening to, encouraging, and exposing oneself to the individuals one is discipling. This will display your true affection for them

(Henderson, n.d., p. 3). This is a chance for disciple-makers and CEs to gain personal insight by aiding their participants with any queries or concerns. Preparation allows the leader to strategically support the follower's adjustment to the approaching situation. According to Ogden (2018), "the disciple exhibits transparency by disclosing personal struggles, prayer concerns, and confession of sin" and "is not necessary to know all the solutions to scriptural and theological difficulties" (p. xiv). After establishing a relationship, the next stage for a disciple-maker is to communicate the Gospel, God's Word, or the Bible.

Paul advised the Colossians at Colossae to "let the word of Christ live in you fully, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual melodies, giving thanks to God in your hearts." To share is to give or distribute something to another person (Colossians 3:16). Paul also wrote in Ephesians,

And do not be dissipated by wine, for that is debauchery; instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, the Father. (Ephesians 5:18)

Sharing the gospel involves communicating the truth about God, His Word, and His imminent kingdom. This includes sharing the Bible with others, helping folks understand it, and assisting church and community members in becoming Christ's disciples and living godly lives. Because it transforms, convicts, and is the truth, God's word is crucial to the discipleship of the GC. By spreading the Gospel, the disciplined person incorporates God's word into his or her life (Henderson, n.d., p. 3).

In addition, worship, discipleship, and outreach are essential to making disciples. Tozer and Snyder (2006) stated that,

Inspiring evangelism and discipleship through worship, emphasizing evangelism and discipleship, and maintaining a healthy balance of worship, discipleship, and evangelism. Worship, discipleship, and outreach have been viewed as intertwined in the past. When

the Corinthian church gathers, Paul advises them to “let all things be done for edification.” (p. 41).

Teaching the Word

Religious and secular approaches to education are both valid. Instruction in this study is intended to advance the GC. Teaching the word involves teaching knowledge of the Bible, the Word of God. Youngblood et al. described teaching as “enable one to comprehend (John 3:2); the act of instructing or conveying knowledge or information to students” (p. 240). From a biblical perspective, Knight and Ray (1998) defined a teacher as “a person who imparts knowledge or religious truths to others” (p. 316).

While teaching can be rewarding, teaching should be taken seriously, therefore not everyone is equipped to teach because not everyone has a calling to teach, can bear the responsibility of teaching, and some may teach there on views instead of the truth. “Not many of you should become instructors, my fellow believers, for you know that we who teach will be judged more rigorously,” James 3:1 warns. This shows how seriously one must take the responsibility of instructing. ‘James is stating that a teacher has a bigger responsibility, and the reason for that is the significant danger of teaching the wrong thing,’ argued McGee (1983). Not everyone can or should be a teacher. Those who have been given the Holy Spirit’s gift of teaching, whether as Pastors or CEs, bear a heavy burden to spread God’s truth and bring about the GC. Some CEs have the gift and the potential to assist the GC in the church, community, and workplace.

Teaching can be accomplished through direct instruction and through witnessing the actions of others. David, a young shepherd kid, taught others important biblical principles. David not only had a heart for God but also opposed everything that went against God and His people (1 Samuel 17:45-47). David destroyed the giant Goliath with nothing but a slingshot because of

his faith in God (1 Samuel 17:48-50), and despite having committed a grave sin, he taught repentance, conviction, acceptance of his penalty, and the forgiveness and restoration of God (2 Samuel 11 and 12). David was not a CE, but his life was a powerful witness to God. God knows everyone's heart was one of the most important truths taught by David. McGee (1982a) explained,

God knew his heart. He was God's choice. God knows what you and I do not know about him. Although David failed, down underneath was a faith that never failed. David loved and trusted God. He wanted to walk with Him. God took him to the woodshed and punished him within an inch of his life, and David never whimpered or cried aloud. He wanted that fellowship with God, and God loved him. He was a man after God's own heart. (p. 156)

It is safe to say that Abraham was a CE. According to Genesis 13, Abraham owned many livestock, gold and silver. At the time of Lot's deliverance in Genesis 14, he had approximately 300 trained warriors, most likely skilled with weapons. Abraham was an entrepreneur and a Christian in addition to his fortune. The story of Abraham and Lot's separation and subsequent relocation to the fertile plain in Genesis 13 provides supporting evidence. The region was so beautiful compared to the Garden of Eden. Abram presumably was given a less desirable and productive place, yet he flourished. Lot's financial and spiritual situation declined due to his decision. Though he began life with as much wealth as his uncle Abram, he eventually found himself forced to live in a cave (Genesis 19). Abram's wealth and relationship with God increased after he acquired the smaller plot of land. Abram was already negotiating alliances with rulers and military leaders by the end of Genesis 21. Abraham left his house, obeyed God, and saw the mission through because he had confidence and was given a vision of the future.

In contrast to David and Abraham, the Israelites demonstrated that they did not obey the law and had no love for God, which is offensive to God. According to Regoli (2020),

The children of Israel were not faithful to fulfill the obligations of the Law, but even worse, their hearts had completely turned away from God. God does not care if we offer

sacrifices or serve Him with an unrepentant heart; this is hollow worship that only serves ourselves. We should instead devote ourselves to God's mindset and passions for others. Justice, kindness, and humility are all signs that our lives are fully committed to God and that we have renounced anything that separates us from His love. (“#23 Remember What God Desires,” para. 2)

As witnessed with David, Abraham, and numerous others in the Bible, their lives and formative life experiences convey additional important lessons. Jesus guided His 12 disciples and invested in them by spending time with them, instructing them, and setting an example (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts). Paauw (2018) explained, “Jesus stated disciples must be instructed; the peoples of the world are asked to know, comprehend, and carry out the Bible's narrative.” To follow Jesus, one must understand the narrative of which he is a part (p. 2). In the Old Testament, God spoke to chosen individuals (Abraham, Noah, etc.) and the anointing of the holy spirit was upon them and briefly empowered individuals. Hearing, listening, being, and doing were tied to isolated events. It's through these transient actions that there are many examples of the Holy Spirit at work in the Old Testament. One of the Holy Spirit's most crucial roles in the New Testament, however, is regeneration, the process through which He alters the character of our hearts and subsequently permanently takes up residence or dwelling within us. The Holy Spirit works within us to sanctify us and make us more Christlike. It is from this place that the Holy Spirit of the New Testament is said to reside within each believer.

In the New Testament Jesus died for all mankind (John 3:16) the gift of the holy spirit was given to all mankind. Even when Jesus ascended to Heaven, He did not leave the then disciples and all future Christians alone. He sent Holy Spirit to guide and protect them (John 15:26). Establishing relationships, sharing, and teaching are necessary directives given by Jesus to His disciples and are essential components of the GC (Matthew 28:16–20) issued by Jesus

Christ that leads to sustained discipleship. The Holy Spirit's abiding presence in each believer is the key to a disciple's effectiveness in the Church.

Discipleship

Discipleship is a divine act in which God employs people to lead others to live Christ-like lives. Ogden (2018) explained,

God works through disciples to model life in Christ for those who desire maturity” and “the disciple embodies the principles in life patterns and convictions” because “modeling will be where the real instruction occurs.” (p. xiii)

According to Conner (2016),

Christian discipleship, at an analytical minimum, can be defined as responding to and following Jesus Christ with the goal of union with God through Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit ... [which involves the] importance of shaping and forming people to be and do certain things in response to the missionary calling of a missionary God ... [and that] Christian disciples are often framed in terms of the people of God who are being shaped and formed. (pp. 246– 247)

This study is based on the functioning mechanism of the GC and the Great Commission Discipleship Model (GCDM) (Oates, n. d.). Through encouragement, equipping, and accountability, disciples aid one another in growth. It involves serving God and appreciating all He has done, is doing, and will do for humanity. It includes worship and evangelism that reach beyond the church's doors into the surrounding community. To reach the world, disciples who persevere in theology and personal fellowship will produce new disciples (Cotrado, 2020, p. 338).

Discipleship is typically carried out in the context of local churches and communities (Cotrado, p. 338) and is not a simple procedure. Bredin (1981) stated that “true discipleship will always be difficult, demanding, and highly uncommon” (p. 415). The number of church members does not measure discipleship. It is about the number of individuals equipped by Christian leaders to become Christian leaders, improve their lives, implement godly principles,

and continue to make disciples. This continuous method will continue to grow the number of disciples in the future.

The discipleship process is not coercive; it is open to everybody and requires a commitment to cooperate, contribute, establish cohesion, and strive toward answering the GC (Bredin, 1981, p. 424; Henderson, n. d., p. 1). It shows acknowledgment of Jesus' reign, gratitude, reverence, and devotion to God (Cotrado, 2020, p. 338). According to Paauw (2018), "These followers of Jesus from all nations, who live by their allegiance to King Jesus, are God's new global structure, the place where He is settling down" (p. 2). It is not something that imparts merit or benefits to the disciple. However, it does leave the disciple with the understanding that he or she has finished something God commanded (Matthew 25:21). In the parable of the talents, the master assigned responsibilities commensurate with his servants' ability. McGee (1983a) explained,

For the child of God, there are two important things: (1) Find out what God wants us to do, that is, determine what the talent is that He has given us, and then (2) be faithful in the use of it. To some, God gives a very small ministry, and that may be upsetting to us, but if we are one-talent people, God expects us to be faithful with that. (p. 136)

The task of the GC can be accomplished by applying the gifts God has given us. Paul supported his ministry with his entrepreneurial skills. When people came to purchase tents from him, he was surrounded by individuals from all walks of life, allowing him to share the gospel with them. This demonstrates that those whom disciples of Christ regularly contact are potential disciples and disciple-makers who can seek out and follow the GCDM to fulfill Jesus' command to the GC.

Support is necessary to answer the call of the GC, but it does not come from man. Christian leaders, educators, and disciples all need God's help. Although other leaders and

teachers can aid in the process, God is the primary source. God supplies His disciples with the necessary aid through Holy Spirit. Bredin (1981) described,

We need this support if we are not to be bound to what is familiar or chained by the well-tried by well-tried or confirmed the comfortable. We need to be led out of self-imposed bondage and directed towards the new and the not yet and nudged into the infinite comprehensibility of mystery. (p. 427)

God bestows His leaders with understanding to disciple and aids the lost. During His time on earth, Jesus did not merely instruct His disciples; He also set the standard for them to follow. Jesus prepared His disciples not just for their roles as disciples but also for His crucifixion and second coming. He presented them to those in need, taught them from the Scriptures and parables, introduced them to God and to one another, shared biblical concepts, equipped them for service, and modeled their responsibilities as disciples and disciple-makers (Putnam, n.d.; Schuller & Crilly, 2016). Additionally, Jesus granted them the authority to cast out devils and heal the sick (Matthew 10:8; Luke 9:1; Deffinbaugh, 2004). McGee (1983a) explained,

When our Lord was here on earth, He gave the gift of healing to His apostles. It was one of the “sign” gifts. It served as the credential of the apostles—to demonstrate that they are who they claim to be. (p. 285)

Discipleship is a lifestyle choice. It is a lifestyle dedicated to God. It has never been and never will be an easy process (Bredin, 1981). When one considers what God has done and continues to accomplish for humanity, one should desire to be a disciple and disciple others, as did Jesus, Paul, and many others. Regarding discipleship and living for God, there is considerably more to gain than to lose (John 3:16). McGee (1983a) explained,

His name is Jesus because He is the Savior of the world. Anyone who will believe in that name is no longer under condemnation but has everlasting life” and that “He did not come to condemn or to judge the world but to save the world. (p. 386)

Discipleship is a worldwide ministry, yet it is observed and practiced primarily in local churches and communities. The subsequent two subsections will explore the perceived role of the local church and community concerning discipleship.

In The Church

The church is defined as “a local community of believers” (1 Corinthians 4:17), as well as “the redeemed of all ages” (1 Corinthians 10:32) who follow Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Youngblood et al., 2005, p. 41). Knight and Ray (1998) expand on this concept:

The word church is a translation of a Greek term which means “an assembly.” Christ is the head, and His body is the church, and His will is to be preeminent (Col. 1:18) by virtue of His redeeming work and Lordship (Col. 1:14; 3:15-17). The Church’s mission is to win the lost (Luke 4:18) and minister to others in the world. (p. 70)

When God founded the church, HIS Word proclaimed that it would be a congregation of people united under Christ (Romans 6:5) who would represent and reflect Him to the rest of the world as one body with many members (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). McGee (1983a) explained this unity with Christ as follows:

If we are united by being grafted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also united by growth – grafted, virtually connected – in the likeness of His resurrection. We share the life of Christ somewhat as a limb grafted into a tree shares the life of the tree. The life of Christ is our life now. (p. 682)

McGee (1983b) notes on the church and its members, “There are numerous members in the body of Christ. Some of them we never see again” (p. 60). He explained, “It is the Holy Spirit who places us in the body of believers and gives each member a special gift. We are to function in this body and utilize this gift” (p. 60). As a result, the purpose of the church is to bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds and give them chances to participate in God’s work as disciples and disciple-makers. In addition to assisting the community in forming relationships, the church prepares individuals to carry out God’s mission within and without the church. The church needs pastors, teachers, missionaries, and many more leaders to foster

discipleship. In the area of discipleship, each member and their skills play crucial responsibilities in the church.

To the same extent that one's spiritual gifts benefit the GC, so too can one's skills benefit the greater society. As a plumber wouldn't touch a patient's heart, a doctor wouldn't act as their legal counsel. The knowledge and abilities that each member of the body of Christ acquires are used for the good of the church and the world at large. Think of the story of David and Goliath. David used the skills he gained as a shepherd to help him in his battle against Goliath. Shepherds, noted for their resiliency, frequently resort to using slings to defend their flocks. David killed Goliath with a weapon he was familiar with and competent in using as a shepherd, and he did so in a way that benefited everyone around him. (1 Samuel 17). McGee (1982a) described,

When Saul heard David would go against Goliath, he tried to put his armor on him. David, however, was just a boy. He said, "I can't fight with these because I have not tested them. I will just have to fight with the equipment I am used to." What a lesson there is for us in this. Let us not try to be something we are not or try to do something we are really not called to do. If God called you to use a slingshot, friend, do not try to use a sword. If God called you to speak, then speak. If God has called you to do something else, well, do that. ... Too many people are trying to use a sword when the slingshot is. (p. 157)

Due to a shortage of resources and voluntary members, pastors are typically tasked with performing two or three duties inside the church. According to Nelson (2000), the modern pastor of a church must assume at least three major roles (p. 32). According to Nelson (2000), the three fundamental roles of the clergy are ministry, management or administration, and leadership (p. 41). Due to the large responsibility placed on church leaders, many churches have failed to sufficiently teach and supply the curriculum required for the community and its members to effectively carry out God's mission inside and beyond the church. The Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d.-b) defined skills as "the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in

execution or performance.” Youngblood et al. (2005) defined spiritual gifts as “special gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit upon Christians to build the church” (p. 236). CEs have skills and gifts that can be used in tangent to fulfill the GC. Consequently, community members may underutilize their God-given tools to assist the church because they lack knowledge about how to utilize them in a way that aids the church. God endows all believers with spiritual gifts that assist them in fulfilling their tasks within the church.

For the church to function in an orderly manner and continue to produce disciples, many roles must be fulfilled. 1 Corinthians 12 describes the gifts that God offers us. God gives us the gifts He wants us to have and the ones the church requires us to perform to function (v. 18). (McGee, 1983b, p 61). Verse 12 indicates that, like the parts of a biological body, church members must work together for it to function (McGee, 1983b, p. 60). Each member is dependent on the others, and no one member is superior to the others (McGee, 1983b, p. 61). At Pentecost, in the upper room, when Jesus sent Holy Spirit for the first time, all the disciples fell under the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues (Acts 1:12-14). This was the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

God gives each person spiritual gifts. The Bible mentions the Spirit’s gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4. These verses make it abundantly evident that each person should use their spiritual gift to advance God’s people, plan, and purpose. Figure 1 provides an overview of the gifts of the Spirit from each of the aforementioned Biblical books.

Figure 1*Overview of the Spiritual Gifts*

1 Corinthians 12	Romans 12	Ephesians 4
Wisdom		Evangelist
	Encouragement	
Knowledge		
	Giving	
Faith (vision)		
	Mercy	
Healing		
Miracles		
Prophecy	Prophesying	Prophet
Discernment		
Tongues		
Interpretation		
Apostle		Apostle
Teacher	Teacher	Pastor-teacher
	Service	
Helps		
Administration		
	Leadership	

Figure 2 illustrates the breakdown of the gifts of the Spirit into speaking gifts and serving gifts.

Figure 2*Speaking Gifts & Serving Gifts*

Speaking Gifts	Serving Gifts
Word of Wisdom	Faith
Word of Knowledge	Healing
Prophecy	Miraculous powers
Tongues	Service
Interpretation	Discernment
Apostle	Helps
Teacher	Administration
Encouragement	Giving
Leadership	Mercy
Evangelist	
Pastor-teacher	

As seen in Figures 1 and 2, there are various ways gifted individuals can utilize their gifts. For this literature review, three gifts will be employed to demonstrate the entrepreneur's

predisposition to contribute to discipleship and the Great Commission's fulfillment.

Administration, evangelism, and service are the three spiritual abilities. Each gift is unique yet potent and an excellent instrument. The administration gift will be discussed first. Ritchie (n.d.) defined administration as:

Administration (Greek: kubernes). The spiritual ability to give guidance, pilot, or steer. The spiritual ability to be a helmsman for a local church in helping direct its life and order. One who deals with people and not paper. The idea of governing as seen in the ministry of Stephanas (1 Cor 16:15-18). (p. 4)

Responding to the call of the Great Commission demands direction and guidance. The CEs formative life experiences and administrative skills offer doors for the church's growth, prosperity, and outreach to the masses. A CE possesses both learned skills and spiritual gifts. Anyone of the gifts (teaching, faith, and leading) can be used to assist the church, community, and workplace. A CE who has successfully navigated their firm can provide others with the necessary knowledge to accomplish the same through the direction of the Holy Spirit. Ritchie (n.d.) defined the spiritual gift of evangelism and the evangelist,

Evangelist (Greek: eulangelistes). The spiritual ability to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ's redemptive story to a dying world lost in their sin and shame (Romans 3:23). Jesus modeled this gift of evangelism with Nicodemus (John 3:16). The good news is, in the words of Paul; "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Rom. 10:9,10). The evangelists were also called of God to equip others to develop their spiritual gifts (Eph. 4:11,12). Philip was known as an evangelist (Acts 8:4-13, 21:8). (p. 2)

CEs, with the gift of evangelism, can use their formative experiences with people to convey the good news of God's kingdom while equipping others to develop their spiritual gifts as God enables them. This is done with love, as everything should be. The heart of a CE will guide his mouth as he testifies and equips others. McGee (1983a), citing Romans 10:9-10, adds, "Man must bring his confession and his life into harmony." The mouth and the heart should say

the same thing in unison. Your heart represents your complete identity and being” (p. 718).

Ritchie (n.d.) defined the spiritual gift of serving as,

Serving (Greek: diakonia, the root for deacon). The spiritual ability to meet the physical needs of people within a given community of believers or unbelievers. One of the first examples of the serving gifts in action was re-corded in Acts 6:1-6 when the apostles selected seven men out of their group to minister to the poor Hellenistic Jewish widows who needed food. This, in turn, set the apostles free to minister with their spiritual gifts (Phoebe, Acts 16:1). (p. 2)

Jesus clearly stated He came to serve, not to be served. The Bible states:

Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many (New International Version, 2011, Matthew 20:25-28).

If Jesus is King and He served, why should His followers not serve one another? The CEO is renowned for taking risks in developing and sustaining his businesses. The CE's formative experiences will likely enable him to serve the church, the community, and the job. This does not imply submission to anyone or anything other than God. It does not imply being superior to others in your field of expertise. Serving entails supporting those who are disadvantaged. According to McGee (1983a), “Our Lord makes it obvious that the way to be great and to serve Him is to adopt the lowest position.”

As stated, gifts come from God through the Holy Spirit and must be used for His purposes. No matter what spiritual gift a person possesses, it should be used to honor and glorify God. Through discipleship the church should extend their reach into the community to foster expansion. Acts 2:42-47 demonstrates how communal life contributes to the growth of the church since the church's unified aim suggests a peaceful atmosphere that fosters love and togetherness (Cotrado, 2020, p. 330).

In The Community

From a global viewpoint, a community is a group of individuals who share similar demographics and behaviors and live in the same place. Members of a Christian community are more likely to have shared experiences, such as a devotion to Christ and a longing for the fulfillment of the GC. The Bible teaches that a community consists of all individuals without distinction (Romans 2:11). Exist within the global society are hamlets (villages). When God's people, regardless of origin, come together, they create a community of believers (Galatians 6:9-10). McGee (1983a) explained,

God plays no favorites He has no pets. All men are alike before Him. Justice is blindfolded, not because she is blind, but that she may not see men in either silk or rags; all must appear alike. Church membership, a good family, being an outstanding citizen or having a fundamental creed give no advantage before God at all. Do you have a Savior, or don't you? That is the all-important issue. (p. 658)

In communities, just doing good is not enough. Communities must have the right foundation. McGee (1983b) stated,

I believe in doing good, but you have to have the right foundation under the good deed. The right foundation is the gospel of the grace of God and walking in the Spirit of God. When you walk in the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is produced. Then, my friend, you are doing good. You will do good for all men, especially for other believers. (p. 200)

Individuals commonly pray for community unity when assistance is required, regardless of the circumstances (Roach, 2020). When God created humanity, He did so to include everyone in His marvelous design, a single community of believers. When an entrepreneur seeks a way to give back to the community, he or she may consider sponsoring a non-profit as a local business. Consequently, the community is affected. Local nonprofit organizations typically seek corporate sponsors to assist in paying the costs of large events and even a portion of their operating expenses. Service-based entrepreneurs could create a business model in which a portion of income is donated to a charity or other non-profit organization. It is great when entrepreneurs

aim to improve their local community, and it is even better when they share faith in Christ and the GC. Additionally, entrepreneurs can contribute to the local economy through purchases and investments. Here, strong relationships with other vendors and partners are forged as the company grows and gains a positive reputation.

In The Workplace

The Bible and prayer have been repeatedly banned in public schools. The discussion of God in the workplace is judged improperly. Employees observed engaged in similar activity have been penalized and reprimanded by their employers. Due to this behavior, some individuals have even been dismissed. (Starnes, 2015, 2018; Straeter, 2019). This is a fantastic opportunity for CEs to restore Christ to the public sphere. The Bible instructs, “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves and the rights of all the impoverished.” Speak up and judge honestly; defend the rights of the impoverished and needy” (New International Version, 2011, Proverbs 31:8-9). As the command in Matthew 28:16-20 indicates, CEs have a responsibility to advocate for people unable to do so and the power to assist businesses in embracing spirituality and its advantages in the workplace, as Jesus did when He was on the earth.

To preserve the rights of all individuals and in conformity with the United States Constitution, the government decided to implement an establishment clause that separates church and state. (Ryman, 2009). This allowed persons to successfully push for the removal of the Bible, prayer, and all religious activity from non-Christian institutions such as schools and businesses. At some organizations, employees are allowed to pray and read the Bible during breaks, so long as they don’t try to convert coworkers or cause a disruption. Certain employees who do not believe in God or seek religious comprehension are opposed to allowing others to do

so. Employees have been terminated due to their religious beliefs and conduct. (Giordano, 2015; Starnes, 2015; Straeter, 2019). There are several perspectives on religion and religious freedom.

Permitting God in schools and workplaces exacerbates unpredictability and challenges caused by the need for new resources, diverse perspectives, traditions, and beliefs. Until Christian and secular world leaders establish stricter laws and measures regarding the presence of God in schools and workplaces, it is illegal for individuals to disobey existing laws, regulations, and restrictions to keep God at the center of their lives. Everyone, whether they recognize it, needs God.

According to the Bible, “when my word goes forth from my mouth, it will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I wish and complete the goal for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11). God’s members in the form of disciples will fill the void and reach these persons in a godly manner. At the same time, world leaders attempt to exclude God. This may be the church’s primary focus, but it is far less critical in business. Discipleship in the workplace faces challenges today, yet if it is God’s will, He will use the workplace to reach individuals. Bredin (1981) explained that “we must be guided out of self-imposed captivity, pushed toward the new and the not-yet, and prodded into the limitless incomprehensibility of mystery” (p. 427). To fulfill the GC through discipleship, it is vital to be a disciple and to make disciples.

Being A Disciple

Rieke (2020) defined a disciple as a combination of “one who follows Jesus Christ,”; “one who observes all that Jesus has ordered,” and “one who makes and prepares Christ-followers so that they can teach others to do the same” (p. 1). The inference from these definitions is that discipleship is a continuing activity that increases the number of disciples daily. Rieke demonstrates this by stating, “Jesus’ disciples multiplied from a handful of men and

women meeting in a room after His death to a worldwide movement spanning 2,000 years and millions of people” (p. 2).

As the preceding section demonstrates, discipleship exists everywhere, including churches, communities, and businesses. How do disciples continue and progress this movement today? Simply, people must follow Jesus and His original 12 disciples’ example. Jesus served as an example, instructed the disciples, coexisted with them, and fitted them for discipleship (Deffinbaugh, 2005; Ogden, 2018; Putnam, n. d.; Rieke, 2020; Schuller & Crilly, 2016).

Being a disciple and a disciple-maker is a decision, and a tremendous duty that requires trust, for all that Jesus instructed them to do could only be accomplished through faith (Deffinbaugh, 2004). Today’s disciples and disciple-makers must possess faith, just as the original twelve disciples did (Hebrews 11:1-2). McGee (1983b) explained,

Faith is not a leap in the dark. Faith is not a hope-so. Faith is substance and evidence for the scientific mind and evidence for a legal mind. If you really want to believe, you can believe. You can believe a whole lot of foolish things, but God doesn’t want you to do that. God wants your faith to rest upon the Word of God. (p. 581)

Walking by faith and imitating Jesus Christ’s example will empower and advance both the disciple and the disciple-maker to continue the work of the Great Commission until the return of Jesus. Next, the Apostle Paul, himself a disciple and a disciple-maker, will be examined.

The Apostle Paul Was A Disciple, Evangelist, and Missionary

Paul embodies the characteristics of a disciple, evangelist, and missionary. He assisted in the creation of God’s people by preaching, teaching, and discipling in several churches and communities. As Jesus instructed, the following part will explore Paul’s example as he interacted with Christians and non-Christians to advance God’s kingdom in the church and community.

This study is centered theologically on Paul’s selfless use of his leadership to serve others by entering their lives while remaining unconformable to lead them to a God-saved life. God

inspired Paul throughout his life and profession to write fourteen books of the Bible (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon). Paul's career required him to play various roles, including disciple (apostle), evangelist, and missionary. Paul is an inspiration for Christians and others today.

Paul's works emphasized the importance of discipleship. In Paul's day, the distinguishing characteristic of the churches was that they were open to everyone, regardless of social standing or influence. According to the Bible, in Christ's family, there is no distinction between Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us, you are all equal. In other words, we all share a relationship with Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:28, *The Message*). In Jesus Christ, no racial, demographic, denominational, economic, or any other division is made by man (McGee, 1983b, p. 175). Additionally, see Acts 10:24–38, Romans 2:9–11, and James 2:1–13. According to the BBC, "Paul the apostle had vastly extended the church far and wide, flinging open the doors to Gentiles, strenuously fighting for his conviction that the gospel was for all people and that no barriers should be put in the way of Gentiles" ("Paul the missionary," para. 3). Paul was available to disciple people in the church, society, and the workplace. Paul's dual roles as a follower of Jesus and a business owner allowed him to serve the Body of Christ uniquely. God used Paul and will continue to use His disciples to lead and direct people toward Him in all spheres of life. Paul's ministry was not to the Jews (the chosen nation); it was to the Gentiles (all nations) because God had now opened salvation to all mankind, not just the Jews, due to their disobedience (Romans 10:21; 11:7-14). Due to this, Paul was attracted to a diverse array of audiences in various contexts.

Paul began his ministry in Corinth, moved on to Athens, and then returned to Corinth during his second missionary tour, where he experienced opposition. When Paul visited their tent shop, he met Aquila and Pricilla. They had fled to Corinth from Rome because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave the city. They made his acquaintance and offered him to reside with them. These circumstances and relationships enabled Paul to disciple many people and bring them to Christ (Acts 18:1-3; McGee, 1983a p. 592). Tents were purchased by private citizens and the Roman government to house soldiers. During his second missionary journey, Paul experienced opposition and was accused of influencing people to worship contrary to the law. (Acts 18:11–17; McGee, 1983a, pp. 593–594). Ultimately, the man who accused Paul, Gallio, understood that the accusations were false and released him (Acts 18:11–17; McGee, 1983a, pp. 594). Paul established personal contacts with the members of the seven churches he controlled (Schneidervin, 2019). Paul extended out to those who did not know God and served as a conduit to the church for them. Paul’s ministry benefits CEs because he leads with purpose, forethought, and integrity. Cherry (2016) argued,

God calls those who are active in discipleship. It does not follow from this, however, that because those who are to be entrusted with positions of representational and liturgical Leadership, and the care and cure of souls, are rightly subject to a rigorous and moderated educational process, something analogous applies to discipleship. (p. 195)

Paul preached to a diverse group of Gentiles from many different places, cultures, and backgrounds (believers and unbelievers) throughout this time by entering their worlds and experiencing life through their eyes to develop more efficient and effective evangelistic strategies. Paul performed everything without ulterior intent. He did it freely (1 Corinthians 9:19-27). McGee (1983b) stated, “Neither Paul nor I preached the Gospel for ulterior motives.” However, God has promised a recompense” (p. 42), and “in an athletic competition, there can be only one winner. However, we may win the spiritual race if we spread the word” (p. 43).

God chose Paul to serve as a vessel for the release of others. Largen asserts, “A Christian is an obedient servant to all, a humble servant to all” (Largen, 2013, p. 234). On his journey, Paul stated openly that he would become a Jew in order to contact Jews and that he would be allowed to approach them in the same manner as a person without the law. This action showed the application of the law of addition. “Using the law of addition” was defined by Maxwell (2007) as “first adding value to others: approaching them before asking them to take a step” (p. 150). Paul possessed the same dedication and passion for serving others that God expects of his kingdom-minded businesspeople. In addition to his devotion, Paul was also disciplined. Corinthians 9:24–27; 1 Corinthians 9:24–27. Paul was similarly driven by concern for others rather than a desire to endanger his position as God’s anointed leader (1 Corinthians 9:22). Due to his insight and discernment of God’s priorities, Paul’s ministry was more focused on persons than on procedures. Paul addressed the crowd from this location, instructing them in the ways and purposes of the Lord.

Paul’s leadership spanned various cultural backgrounds, and his activities were unprecedented for their time. Culture and people dictate to individuals, Christian and non-Christian alike, how they should behave and who they should be. Christians and non-Christians alike are instructed by God’s Kingdom and Word as to who they are, what they were created to be, and how to act and live in accordance with God’s will and purpose for their existence. Whom people choose to listen to impacts their results and success as disciples in life, the church, the community, and ultimately the world during his lifetime and mission.

The biblical hero Nehemiah also exemplifies Paul’s principles. In order to accomplish God’s will, he demonstrates that communication, worship, community, and the Word of God are all vital in discipleship. Nehemiah demonstrates, similar to Paul that a Christian businessperson

or entrepreneur may contribute to discipleship. McGee (1983a) stated that Nehemiah is a noble businessman representative (p. 501). Nehemiah's narrative centers on the destruction of Jerusalem's walls, the burning of its gates, and the subsequent reconstruction of the walls. This is confirmed by McGee (1983a), who wrote, "in the Book of Nehemiah, the emphasis is on the reconstruction of Jerusalem's walls" (p. 501).

Upon their return from Judah, Nehemiah's brother and a few other men briefed him on the destruction (Nehemiah 1:1-3). As a result, Nehemiah's heart was filled with unspeakable humility. Even though Nehemiah occupied a prestigious and significant position, he was concerned about God's people, work, and plan (McGee, 1983a, pp. 503-504). Nehemiah showed compassion, humility, and trust by weeping, fasting, and praying to God (Nehemiah 1:4:11; McGee, 1983, pp. 504-506). Nehemiah requests God for permission to rebuild the wall, respecting God's promises, after begging for forgiveness for himself and the people (Nehemiah 1:11). As part of the process of becoming a disciple of Christ, Nehemiah demonstrated the need for spiritual formation, worship, studying God's Word, and seeking forgiveness (Nehemiah 1).

Nehemiah was the king of Persia's cupbearer, a layman (minister), and a "decent, moral, honest man" (McGee, 1982a, p. 503). According to Patton (2017), "Nehemiah derived a great deal of his influence, role modeling, adaptability, and foresight from the king he served" (pg. 8). Nehemiah asked King Artaxerxes for permission, aid, and security to follow God's plan to rebuild the walls of Jesus' community, Jerusalem while waiting on God (Nehemiah 2:1-8). Furthermore, it is essential to highlight that Nehemiah did not complete the work alone (Nehemiah 2:9). Nehemiah's position and reputation earned him the king of Persia's favor, not only to rebuild the temple but also to receive army officers and horsemen to defend and assist him (Nehemiah 2:9; McGee, 1982a, p. 508). Lowe (2017) observed that Christian relationships

resemble teeter-totter playground equipment. Because of their give-and-take, up-and-down nature, they can only be successful with the cooperation of both parties (p. 171).

Nehemiah, like so many others in the Bible (Noah, Daniel, Ezra, among others), had faith in God and His Word and utilized his formative experiences (captive, layperson, cupbearer), relationships (King Artaxerxes, his brother, men of Judah, captains, and horsemen), and talents (organizational skills and builder) to rebuild not only the temple walls but also individuals and disciples of Christ (McGee 1983a, pp. 501-542). In the twenty-first century, Paul and others like Nehemiah exemplified much of what God desired from Christian leaders, disciples, disciple-makers, evangelists, and missionaries. In addition to their commercial pursuits and devotion to God, their Christian missions were effective and fruitful in bringing people to Christ.

In the twenty-first century, Paul and others like Nehemiah exemplified much of what God desired from Christian leaders, disciples, disciple-makers, evangelists, and missionaries. In addition to their commercial pursuits and devotion to God, their Christian missions were effective and fruitful in bringing people to Christ.

Summary of Theological Framework

As demonstrated by the preceding theological analysis, Jesus has issued an urgent command, the GC, demonstrating a worldwide need for disciples, evangelists, and missionaries. Discipleship is God's divine act that manifests worldwide through local churches, communities, and businesses. It is not easy. Indeed, this is an uncommon, intricate, and time-consuming procedure. Discipleship is a lifestyle and a personal choice that requires God's help. It assists Christians in their spiritual development and encourages others to do the same. As Paul's example indicates, all of these traits and practices of discipleship apply to churches, communities, and workplaces worldwide. They can integrate elements of an enterprise,

entrepreneurship, and leadership. Table 1 outlines the similarities between discipleship, leadership, and entrepreneurship.

Table 1

Comparison and Commonalities of Discipleship, Leadership, and Entrepreneurship

	Discipleship	Leadership	Entrepreneurship
Types	Christian; Pastors; Evangelists; Apostles. Teachers, Deacons, etc.	Christian; Teachers; Firefighters, Police; Presidents; Mayors; etc.	Christian; Businesspeople; Financial Investors; etc.
Forums	Church; communities; world	Church; communities; world	Church; communities; world
Level of difficulty	Difficult and demanding	Difficult and demanding	Difficult and demanding
Support Needed	God, family, fellow Christians, and followers	God, family, fellow leaders, and followers	God, family, fellow entrepreneurs, followers,
Trust	Needed from followers	Needed from followers	Needed from followers
Job or Lifestyle	Both	Both	Both
Once or Ongoing	Both	Both	Both
Purpose	Maturity: Lead, teach, and guide others to God; Create disciples that will continue to create future disciples	Maturity: Lead, teach, and guide others to God and leadership positions; Create leaders that will continue to create future leaders	Maturity: Lead, teach, and guide others to God and entrepreneurship; Create entrepreneurs that will continue to create future entrepreneurs

Note. The author's theoretical analysis and Table 1 illustrate that discipleship, leadership, and entrepreneurship have significant features. The significance, if any, of (good and negative) formative life experiences for CEs in supporting the church and community with discipleship and leadership will be examined regarding the theory and practice of leadership and its multiple components.

Theoretical Framework for Study

This section examines the GCDM concerning leadership. The guiding theory of this phenomenological, qualitative study is the Great Commission Discipleship Model, which is

driven by continuing discipleship. As stated previously in part on the theoretical basis, discipleship requires disciples, and disciples are to lead others to Christ. Leadership will be evaluated via the lenses of transformational and servant leadership, both of which lend themselves to the leadership style exhibited by Jesus.

Paul's gift of leadership will also be discussed in this section. While becoming a disciple and maturing as a disciple, CEs can benefit the church, the workplace, and the community. In addition, it will investigate the characteristics, practices, workplace spirituality, and formative (both positive and negative) experiences of CEs that enable them to function as disciple-makers and aid the church and community in discipleship.

The Great Commission Discipleship Model

The GCDM requires persons willing to lead others to Christ and help them become Christ-like via ministry (Oates, n. d.). Knight and Ray (1998) described ministry as "service performed in God's name. These services require an attitude of sacrificial service modeled after Christ (Matthew 20:26-28)" (p. 210). According to Oates (n.d.), "you may incorporate this paradigm into your ministry by financially sponsoring missionaries, praying for unreached people groups, going on a mission trip, or partnering with local mission organizations." "Be Creative!" (p. 3).

Implementing the GCDM as described above requires the leadership of specific persons. Sanders (2007) defined a leader as,

Natural leaders are "self-confident, knows men, makes own decisions, ambitious, creates methods, enjoys command, seeks personal reward, and independent," while spiritual leaders are "confident in God, knows God, seeks God's will, humble, follows God's example, delights in obedience to God, loves God and others, and depends on God." (p. 32)

Leaders must be in place to initiate and continue the completion of the Great Commission. Two leadership styles, transformational and servant, will be examined:

transformational and servant leadership. These two forms of leadership were chosen for this study because they most closely resemble the leadership of Jesus Christ, the founder of the GC.

Leadership

This subsection on leadership will emphasize transformational and servant leadership styles. These two leadership styles most closely mirror the leadership of Jesus and the leadership required to sustain discipleship among Christian leaders and entrepreneurs in the present and future. Northouse (2022) characterizes leadership as a “highly coveted and highly valued commodity” that has “attracted the attention of researchers around the world” (p. 1). He defined it as “the process through which an individual convinces a group of individuals to collaborate toward a common objective” (p. 6). The Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d.-a) defined a commodity as something useful and valued. Commodities are highly sought after. This is true for leaders in both the business and Christian communities.

Greenleaf (2002) defined leadership as “one who has a superior understanding of what must be done immediately and is willing to take the risk of declaring, ‘Let us do it now’” (p. 256). This notion indicates the existence of a leader-follower dynamic in which the leader establishes the goals and outlines the activities required to attain them while the followers go forward and exert the necessary effort to reach the goal. According to Greenleaf (2002), the definition of followership is as follows:

An equally responsible role because it means that the individual must take the risk to empower the leader and to say, in the matter at hand, ‘I will trust your insight.’ Followership implies another preparation in order that the trusting, empowering the leader will be a strength-giving element. (p. 256)

Sanders (2007) defined leadership as “influence and the quality that inspires sufficient trust in subordinates for them to accept his judgments and comply with his commands” (p. 29). According to DePree (2004), the first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The leader

must embrace the positions of both servant and debtor between these two extremes (p. 11).

Bredfeldt (2006) proceeds:

Finally, at the highest level, leaders teach their followers key concepts, concepts which will become the basis for confident action on the part of the follower. This results in followers who own those ideas and who develop the means of implementing them. Commitment, learning, and leadership development are fruits. (p. 26)

Leadership will be defined for this study and literature analysis as CEs who motivate persons to engage in continual discipleship to serve the church and community. Depending on the situation's dynamics and the organization's structure, leadership may take the form of one individual or a group of individuals. Leadership exists in businesses, organizations, families, and churches. Leadership exists in all aspects of life. God is the creator and lord of everything in the universe. Leaders include mothers, fathers, coaches, pastors, CEOs, military personnel, and educators. According to Bredfeldt (2006):

The nature of leadership shifts with the context, the followers, the task, and even the leader himself. What is clear is that leadership is dynamic and requires openness and flexibility on the part of those who must exercise leadership in their work, ministry, or family contexts. (p. 14)

The GC invests considerably in leadership. Bredfeldt (2006) stated, "the Great Commission asks us to assume the risk of leadership through empowering followers" (p. 26). Jesus, the greatest leader in history, taught during His tenure on earth, as do all leaders. Per Bredfeldt (2006),

There have been many great leaders throughout history. They have inspired, guided, challenged, protected, and provoked us to achievements and victories we would not have accomplished without their vision and drive. But the greatest of these leaders have been the ones who have led by teaching. They were not the greatest because they were the most prominent or the most powerful. They were the greatest because their efforts produced changed lives and served to shape the future. (p. 200)

According to Lingerfelt (2008), Jesus exercised leadership by "building trust within a relational community, defining a compelling vision for life, taking courageous steps ahead,

encouraging others to follow, and empowering those who did” (pp. 16-18). Jesus is the supreme leader and the perfect role model for all people. According to Roberts (2008), Jesus possessed “both humanity and divinity,” was “a man of strength, great compassion, action, and simplicity,” and “confronted life-limiting ideas and life-shortening diseases with life-saving power” (p. 89). Jesus’ leadership pattern encompasses two unique forms of leadership. They are, respectively, transformative leadership and servant leadership. Together, they form a fantastic tool for CEs by complementing one another.

Transformational Leadership

According to Northouse (2022), transformational leadership theory is “one of the most popular and contemporary leadership approaches” and is characterized as “a process that changes and transforms individuals ... it requires comprehending the motivations of followers, satisfying their needs, and respecting them as whole human beings” (p. 185).

Transformational leaders empower and nurture their followers along their journeys by training them to prioritize the greater good over their self-interests. Leaders like Jesus set an example for followers by exhibiting moral convictions, self-discipline, and an unyielding will to succeed (Northouse, 2020, p. 201). This is comparable to how Jesus set an example for humanity. According to Ogden (2018), “God’s truth must be pursued in the context of trustworthy, deep, and enduring relationships for all of its revolutionary power to be realized” (p. x).

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that focuses on positively changing the lives of individuals and communities via the instillation of vision, mission, and support in the surrounding environment. James MacGregor Burns, widely acknowledged as its developer and creator, is credited with developing the notion of transformative leadership. He coined the word

before conducting significant research on its meaning. According to Cherry (2020), leadership expert and Barack Obama biographer James MacGregor Burns created the term “transformational leadership” (p. 5). According to Burns, transformational leadership occurs when leaders and followers collaborate to increase the group’s overall morale and motivation (p. 1). Transformational leaders, according to Northouse (2022), are “individuals who have a clear vision for the future of their organizations” (p. 198). When CEs lead in this manner, they emphasize convincing people to undertake a challenging or impossible task while frequently employing their vision, wisdom, and resources to help others make crucial decisions. This is crucial for the church, particularly when resistance to change, poor morale, and despondency begins to infiltrate the hearts of the congregation and church leadership.

One of the hallmarks of transformational leadership is the capacity of CEs to engage individuals completely, encouraging them to perform at a higher level to influence others for the better (continuous discipleship). Nurturing the ‘ministry of encouragement, as stated by Bechtel (2005), “may not be easy, but it will be well worth the effort for the members and participants.” To empower others in your ministry, you must serve from an encouraging place (p. 28). As a result, followers enjoy a more customized experience and a sense of connection among community members. According to Hiebert (2008), “worldview transformation is driven by a need for congruence between the world as we see it and the world as we experience it” (p. 315). This helps the church to develop in strength as the needs of the church are met (and its members). While education is a crucial gift that an entrepreneur may provide to the church, it is not the only one required. In addition, a CE may offer their expertise to the church.

Christian leaders and entrepreneurs must know that transformational leadership emphasizes followers’ empowerment. While it is essential to empower followers, followers

(future disciples) must never lose sight of the fact that God is in charge, that things must be done His way, and that they are in their positions because of Him alone. Followers are disciples ordained by God and future disciple-makers. According to research on transformational and servant leadership philosophies, the sole difference between the two is transformational leadership's emphasis on empowerment.

As exemplified by Paul and Ester, transformational leadership is a style of leadership that has a good impact on humanity and the community via the infusion of value, encouragement, and support. Cherry asserts (2023):

Transformational leadership is a type of leadership that may inspire others to make beneficial changes. In general, transformational leaders are energizing, enthusiastic, and passionate. Not only are these leaders concerned and involved in the process, but they are also committed to the group's success as a whole. (para. 1).

James MacGregor Burns is attributed with coining the term *transformational leadership* (Cherry, 2023). According to Burns, transformational leadership occurs when “leaders and followers motivate one other to greater moral and motivational levels” (Cherry, p. 1). This leadership style inspires followers to accomplish impossible objectives while regularly delegating decision-making authority. In their study on the impact of cultural expectations surrounding ideal leadership and societal sustainability, Muralidharan and Saurav (2018) concluded that “the role of transformational leadership can be extrapolated to have a major impact on entrepreneurial action that promotes social change” (p. 15).

Transformational leadership frequently inspires an individual to strive for higher performance to influence others favorably. This results in a better-customized experience for the follower and a shared mission. According to van Dierendonck and Patterson (2010), “the quest for virtuous leadership has never been more essential, and followers want leaders who model activities that do not marginalize but embrace them as full people” (p. 3). Jesus met numerous

people in the Bible, including the woman at the well. She promised to go forth and tell the world about her encounter with Jesus after he convinced her to put God to the test. John invites, “Come see a man who has detailed everything I have ever done” Could this be the Messiah’s second coming? They left the town and traveled toward him (John 4:29-30). In addition, transformative leadership acknowledges and addresses current needs. This is sometimes overlooked by leaders who are solely focused on achieving their goals and have no regard for the condition or well-being of their followers. In addition, transformational leaders endeavor to ensure that their followers pursue goals of equal importance to their own. According to Hiebert (2008), “the human desire for consistency between the world as we perceive it and the world as we experience it” lies at the heart of worldview reform” (p. 315).

Nehemiah illustrates a man who approached the task of rebuilding the walls with the aid of a community of followers. Nehemiah recognized he could not accomplish this alone, so he prayed to God and devised a plan for deploying his followers. This was done to ensure that each family was stationed along the wall based on their strength and abilities, allowing them to repair the wall. As a result of this incentive, the wall was reconstructed at record speed. According to Nehemiah:

Thus, the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. When our adversaries learned of it and saw it, they lost confidence; because they knew that this task had been completed with the assistance of our God” (Nehemiah 6:15-16).

Furthermore, transformational leadership fosters enthusiasm and encourages learning and development. According to Patton (2017):

Of course, Nehemiah’s prayers did not end when he had his vision for Jerusalem’s repaired future. Rather than that, he continued to pray for God’s guidance and assistance throughout the journey. Nehemiah obtained his authority from God, the source of all authority and force. (p. 2)

In today's ever-changing environment, change is more essential than ever. Change is required for both personal and professional growth. This is essential for Christians, as they are required as Christ's disciples to engage daily with God's word to seek purpose. In addition, transformational leaders are exceptional change agents. They exert considerable effort to initiate and manage change. According to Gutierrez (2013), transformational leaders succeed because they view their followers as full-time influencers instead of as owners, managers, or employees (p. 96). Another positive characteristic of transformative leaders is their dedication to treating their followers as persons instead of just numbers. Entrepreneurs with a kingdom mindset are typically aware that this cannot be accomplished without constant communication with God. As our relationship with God strengthens, He equips us with a powerful weapon for launching this struggle for others: prayer, which will be explored in part linked to in the previous sentence. Transformational leadership is congruent with Jesus's example on earth and encompasses and imitates some servant leadership characteristics.

Servant Leadership

Robert K. Greenleaf "coined the term 'servant leadership and is the author of the subject's fundamental publications" (Northouse, 2022, p. 254). According to Northouse (2022),

Servant leadership is an approach focusing on leadership from the point of view of leaders and their behaviors. Servant leadership emphasizes that leaders be attentive to the concerns of their followers, empathize with them, and nurture them. Servant leaders put followers first, empower them, and help them develop their full personal capacities (p. 253)

Greenleaf (2002) clarified the distinction between a leader who desires to serve and a server who desires to lead, stating that the "difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant - first to ensure that other people's highest priority needs are met" and that although testing this is difficult, it can be analyzed and determined by answering the following questions:

Do those serve grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (p. 27)

According to Northouse,

Greenleaf states that a servant leader has a social responsibility to be concerned about those who are marginalized and those less privileged. If inequalities and social injustices exist, a servant leader tries to remove them. In becoming a servant leader, a leader uses less institutional power and control while shifting authority to those who are being led. Servant leadership values community because it provides a face-to-face opportunity for individuals to experience interdependence, respect, trust, and individual growth. (p. 255)

The following 10 servant leadership characteristics correspond with the previous assertions and definitions: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and community building (Northouse, 2022, pp. 255–256). Jesus exhibited each of these characteristics during His earthly career of teaching and self-sacrifice for humanity. This is the behavior He requires of His disciples, making servant leadership essential to discipleship and leadership theories. To fulfill the GC (Matthew 28:16-20), Christian leaders and businesspeople must exhibit these characteristics.

Combining transformational and servant leadership styles offers tremendous promise for assisting Christian leaders and organizations in carrying out the GC. Transformational leadership acts are characterized by idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized care. Behaviors associated with servant leadership include conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting followers first, aiding followers in growing and thriving, acting ethically, empowering followers, and contributing to the community. Transformational leadership typically produces results that exceed expectations. The outcomes of servant leadership include follower performance and development, corporate performance, and societal impact. According to Northouse (2022), “the Christian entrepreneur can assist the church and

community in discipleship by combining the behaviors and styles of both types of leadership” (p. 194).

Summary of Theoretical Framework

The preceding section of this literature study analyzed and explored the GCDM from a theoretical standpoint and the critical role that leadership plays in fulfilling the GC duty. It explored both transformative leadership and servant leadership. In addition, it examined the characteristics and deeds of the Apostle Paul as a leader in discipleship and the fulfillment of the GC. This section has demonstrated how leaders must fulfill the GC and the characteristics they must possess to employ their formative (positive and negative) life experiences to contribute to the discipleship of churches, communities, and workplaces.

The subsequent part, under “Related Literature,” will address the non-theological and non-theoretical literature pertinent to this qualitative, phenomenological investigation. It will examine how the GCDM pertains to the CE. This section will use the Apostle Paul as an example of Christian ethics. It will also consider how the CE’s formative life experiences can assist the church, communities, and workplaces in discipleship and fulfilling the GC.

Related Literature

CEs have tremendous potential to aid local churches, communities, and workplaces in discipleship through financial means (tithing and monetary offerings), prayer, worship, and testimony, in addition to business and administrative components. This portion of the linked literature will analyze the resources possessed by CEs and shaped by their features, behaviors, and (positive and negative) formative experiences. This section will conclude with an analysis of how the CE could potentially assist churches, communities, and workplaces in the

aforementioned discipleship domains. Each subtopic is conducive to discipleship and the fulfillment of the GC.

The Great Commission Discipleship Model

By theological and theoretical frameworks, the GCDM has been established to be implemented through the fulfillment of the GC and the application of discipleship. As previously said, this includes disciples, disciple-makers, leaders, evangelists, and missionaries. Where should the CE be placed? This study aims to establish whether CEs have any formative life experiences (both positive and negative) that can benefit churches, communities, and workplaces in the area of discipleship. Thus, determining whether this is a CE area of service.

The Christian Entrepreneur

The CE is far more than only a spiritual business owner. Christian Sanders (2007) stated that spiritual leadership combines natural and spiritual traits. God is the source of all good things; therefore, even natural features are supernatural gifts. As previously mentioned, the Apostle Paul is one of the least well-known businesspeople in the Bible while being best renowned for his teaching. He was successful in his ministry because he utilized God's business acumen gift. Utilizing his entrepreneurial skills and God given gifts, the Apostle Paul expanded the church strategically.

Jackson (2004) defined a Christian entrepreneur as "an entrepreneur who mixes aggressive commercial aims with God's heart for people" and "an inventive Christian leader who is ready to take big risks in ministry to achieve great things for Christ and His kingdom" (p. 18). Among these high-risk categories are those where the church may be stagnant or encumbered by stale procedures. CEs may assist the church, but they are generally unaware of their capabilities and role in supporting the church, let alone how to use them to preserve and strengthen it. If CEs

served with their time, commercial acumen, experience, and witness, the church would create a particular disposition for evangelism. These characteristics contribute to the church's members' and neighbors' growth, vitality, and ongoing discipleship.

What contribution can the CE make to the church's greater good? Sanders (2007) asserts, "If individuals in positions of authority fail to shepherd others up spiritual mountains, the way to the lowlands will be unmistakably defined for any type of divinely bestowed spiritual leadership" (p. 19). In this setting, Christian leaders, and businesspeople, in particular, are held accountable for their stewardship of God's people and resources. Leaders can become good stewards of the people, material, and financial resources entrusted to them if they adhere to James 1:5 and strive for excellence in whatever they do. Without this leadership, thanks to the link to all individuals, humanity may experience a lack of development and progress. According to Becker et al. (2011), Joseph Schumpeter, an economist, described and discussed the role of entrepreneurs in transformation as follows:

The individual who implements innovation, sweeping away existing ways of doing things, goods, and technology and replacing them with those that the marketplace perceives to be of more value. Entrepreneurs are change and growth agents. (p. 4)

A few features differentiate a CE from an ordinary entrepreneur. Like all Christians, a CE must put God first in whatever they do. According to the Bible, if you seek HIS kingdom and righteousness first, "all these things will be supplied for you as well" (New International Version, 2011, Matthew 6:33). Distinctively, CEs are also able to generate the vision and spiritual guidance required to lead people when they prioritize God. According to Lindsay (2007),

Interviews with evangelical entrepreneurs underscore heavenly inspiration as a motivator for career decisions. These business owners felt a strong calling to their career and found strength and guidance in their faith. Prayer was also useful in assisting people to handle uncertainty. (p. 171)

Entrepreneurs who are inspired by the Holy Spirit and are prepared to offer their time and/or financial resources to the church have the potential to achieve the following: expansion, sustainability, and continued discipleship. For example, Pettit (2008) stated that “God focuses on our hearts since, at its core, leadership is more a matter of the heart than of knowledge or skills” (p. 180). CEs can serve as leaders in their communities through insight, experience, and testimony while keeping their eyes on the prize of respecting and glorifying God. Characteristics and behaviors of CEs are essential to their activities and success in leveraging their experiences to assist the church and community in discipleship.

Characteristics and Behaviors of the Christian Entrepreneur

The capabilities of CEs vary greatly. The first and most important trait is their ability to be guided by Holy Spirit and to have faith in God’s promises, realizing that their creative calling serves a bigger purpose than their own. According to Runco (2004), “creativity provides undeniable social and personal benefits” (p. 657). The Holy Spirit has been defined in different ways, making it often difficult to fathom who the Holy Spirit is, especially when contemplating its involvement in entrepreneurial endeavors. The phrase ‘Author of Scripture’ is used because the Holy Spirit inspired the Scripture authors to record what he had placed in their hearts and minds at the time of writing (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16).

There is a parallel between a CE’s trials and those of the disciples. When the disciples felt betrayed by Jesus’ abandonment, they referred to him as their “Comforter, Counselor, and Advocate.” Then, God promised He would send the Holy Spirit to comfort those suffering. These three phrases are frequently referred to as *parakletos* (Isaiah 11:2; John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7). The term “*parakletos*” has been used to describe a soother, counselor, or advocate. According to Grayston (1981), “the history of *parakletos* may be followed throughout the whole

range of known Greek; it is derived from Greek legal jargon that means legal counsel, helper, or partner” (p. 82). The Holy Spirit is referred to and regarded as a “Convictor of Sin” due to the reinforcement supplied for God’s truth, forgiveness, and redemption (John 16:7-11). The term “intercessor” refers to the intercession of the Holy Spirit in the lack of spoken communication (Romans 8:26). The term “Spirit of Life” refers to the provision of spiritual sustenance necessary for spiritual growth and development (Romans 8:2). The term “witness” is employed because it is via the Holy Spirit that the identity of Jesus and the fact that he and his disciples performed miracles on behalf of God are established. In addition, we may be certain that the content of the Bible is divinely inspired due to the action of the Holy Spirit. Most significantly, the spirit reassures us that we are God’s children (Romans 8:16; Hebrews 2:4; 10:15). Springs (2006) states:

When He (the Spirit of truth) comes, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not talk of Himself (Jn. 16:13-14). He will glorify me, for He will receive what is mine and convey it to you. (p. 22)

Godly obedience and vision are essential qualities of CEs whom the Holy Spirit inspires. Vision is the undeniable appeal that sustains an organization’s attention over time, according to Hybels (2002). Big thinking for a Christian entrepreneur is having a vision when others lack it. When a local church seeks a God-honoring vision, it looks to its leaders (p. 31). Society has conditioned people to focus mainly on the facts of current events, to be individualistic in their attitude, and to highlight or expose their flaws. Lack of vision hinders the church’s ability to accomplish its goal. Moreover, without a clear vision, the church will be incapable of carrying out God’s purpose, typically related to their physical and mental health. Individual thought processes have primarily influenced modern mental health awareness. Magyar-Moe (2009), states:

Martin Selugman issued a call to applied psychologists in his 1998 presidential address to members of the American Psychological Association to return to their roots and focus on not only curing mental illness but also making people's lives more productive and fulfilling and identifying and nurturing talent. (p. 1)

Stanley (1999) explained, "from a Christian standpoint," that "pursuing a vision requires faith. Pursuing a grand vision requires a great deal of faith (p. 65). A Holy Spirit-led CE faith in God's capacity to accomplish anything and anticipate seeing Him carry out his promises allows them to detect prosperity despite their current circumstances. Consider the following fictitious scenario: A non-spiritual entrepreneur donates \$10,000 to the church, which may be interpreted as "they must hold on to this because they are already struggling." In contrast, if the Holy Spirit guides an entrepreneur, the same \$10,000 donation will be perceived as a seed being planted, and the resulting fruit will be exceptional. In addition, entrepreneurs guided by the Holy Spirit can recognize that their task transcends themselves. A CE demonstrates a vast array of traits and behaviors. Through the use of discernment and the Holy Spirit, these characteristics and behaviors tend to aid in determining where and how to invest.

CEs whom the Holy Spirit leads are often humble leaders. According to van Tongeren et al. (2019), "intrapersonal humility" is "the extent to which a person appears to have a correct self-image" (p. 463). According to Davis (2011), "humility is the degree to which one is oriented toward the interpersonal needs and well-being of others" (p. 225). This is essential for a Christian business, yet it is not typically a leadership trait. Flood-Stith (2018) stated,

Humility is not cited as frequently as other character attributes in leadership literature. Yet, many of us have either encountered or heard stories of egocentric, arrogant executives who have soured corporate culture and led valuable people to underperform or leave. This frequently leads to a lack of knowledge of humility in leadership. (p. 1)

When working in a church, one must be adaptive to one's environment and avoid feeling superior to others. According to Flood-Stith (2018), "modest leaders are regarded as more approachable, tolerant of mistakes, and appreciative of others' contributions, which may

encourage staff to share ideas and work harder” (p. 1). As a CE, walking in humility mirrors how Jesus walked and served during his earthly ministry. Even though he was God, he did not cling to his divinity, according to the Bible (Philippians 2:6). The value of modest CEs for the church, according to Flood-Stith (2018), is that they “instill a feeling of mission within the ministry” (p. 1). This is essential for the church’s mission and objectives. As a leader, it is also essential to be humble and willing to collaborate with others to identify and resolve any issues that may impede God’s ability to express His mission and vision to the church. Lingenfelter claims (2008):

I also have blind spots and weaknesses in my interpersonal working relationships. I have learned through the years that if I do not rely on other members of the body of Christ to assist me in those areas - if I disregard these limitations or attempt to rely on my strengths - there are fundamental flaws in my leadership. (p. 22)

In order to succeed in the calling God has placed on their lives, a CE must also exhibit spiritual discernment. According to Hermans (2021), “there is no distinction between the right decision and the desire to act in accordance with it in discernment.” Since the will is engaged in the deliberative process, the motivation to act appropriately is already evident (p. 393). One forms a relationship with God via prayer and fasting, allowing for the development and strengthening of spiritual discernment on both sides to reach the conclusion God teaches. Thus, instead of relying just on what can be seen or heard in the natural world, the Christian entrepreneur can invest his or her company’s faith in God’s spirit. (1 Kings 3:9).

A CE, just like all Christians, must be obedient and willing to surrender to God’s will. Through obedience, one can exhibit love for God and get guidance from Him on how to guide others. Since CEs are not self-centered, they may thoroughly comprehend God’s goals and preferences (John 14:21). According to Faraoanu (2018), obedience reflects a person’s love for the covenant God. “Obedience is possible through faith in God, who has a loving plan that leads to the total fulfillment of the human being” (p. 49). Nehemiah is an example of a Christian leader

who is prepared to put the needs of others ahead of their own. Nehemiah gained the people's confidence and trust. Weems (2019) wrote,

Nehemiah gained the trust of the people. This permitted him to build a team that could make the vision happen. People shared responsibility to accomplish the goal. No one person, not even Nehemiah, could accomplish this vision alone. Nehemiah began with a few, then expanded the team to include virtually everyone. The people committed themselves to the common good. (p. 201)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a word that numerous business owners and their companies are aware of and have implemented. Even if the term does not appear in the job description, entrepreneurs commonly have a CSR position within their organizations. CSR strikes a delicate balance between promoting business competition and enhancing society. CSR is comparable to a system of checks and balances for business owners. According to Kotler and Lee (2005), "Entrepreneurs who adopt CSR in their enterprises" exhibit a dedication to increasing community well-being through discretionary business practices and corporate resource contributions (p. 2). Entrepreneurial and Christian values are complementary since both are motivated to help those in need and contribute to the community's welfare. This enables people to share complementary values and contributes to the spread of the Gospel. CEs and entrepreneurs make similar charity judgments. Both types of entrepreneurs have typically previously overcome difficult situations or conditions.

One of the most striking differences is that CEs recognize that understanding the cause of suffering is not only essential for survival but also because Jesus taught that persecution brings God's blessings: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:11). According to Dodd (2003):

Those who lead through the power of God's Spirit recognize that struggles and suffering are often signs that they are on the right track, headed in the right direction, and kicking a dent in the spiritual realm of darkness. One of the keys to the effectiveness of Paul is the great price he paid in personal opposition, pain, and abuse. (p. 66)

People should rejoice when they are condemned, persecuted, and falsely accused of numerous wrongdoings because of God, according to the Bible. People should rejoice and be delighted that they persecuted and murdered the prophets who came before them, for they will receive a great recompense in paradise. Luke 5:10–12; Mark 5:10–12; Matthew 5:10–12).

Taking the time to contribute their knowledge will significantly influence the church more than their financial contributions. The church may benefit tremendously from an entrepreneur's viewpoint. Higgs (2019) asserts that “wisdom combines experience, cognitive capacity, and affect to enable individuals and groups to make smart decisions” (p. 3). CEs must aim for this, but they must first seek God's direction on how to serve individuals and the church most effectively through their endeavors. Entrepreneurs are accustomed to handling a variety of challenges and questions that come throughout everyday operations. This is an admirable trait because it exhibits their adaptability to change. However, if an entrepreneur depends solely on his or her judgment, the company may be in a precarious position. Regardless of the size or significance of the decision, it will affect not only the life of the entrepreneur but also the lives of everyone involved with his or her church. According to the Bible, if we pray for wisdom, God will grant it to us freely and unconditionally. Before they can offer counsel and aid to CEs, they must seek wisdom from God.

Moreover, communication is essential. Words are incredibly effective when it comes to communicating. Adubato (2005) states, “Excellent communication takes practice, determination, and patience.” In addition, it stems from a strong desire to connect with others on a deeper, more intimate level (p. 11). According to the Bible, the tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruits (Proverbs 18:21). Communication in the church can be challenging, especially when many individuals are involved. According to Sanders (2007),

“leadership is costly since it entails a great deal of responsibility” (p. 27). However, these costs present significant leadership challenges.

Due to the often-expressed opposition to proposed changes, communication is essential in the church setting. Kotter (1996) believes that “without broad credible communication, the team’s minds and emotions cannot be grasped” (p. 9). In order to communicate effectively with church leaders and members, CEs possess various communication skills, as well as an additional component relating to the recognition and management of spiritual dynamics. This dynamic becomes more problematic in situations requiring traditional corporate relationships, such as team dynamics, communication, and participation, which are frequently the target of spiritual assault. The opponent strives to steal, murder, and destroy those who do acts of service for others, mainly through assaulting the communication links between all parties (1 Peter 5:8). CEs would benefit the church by aiding church leaders and staff in strengthening their stances against these attacks via different communication channels.

Moreover, communication between the CE and church leadership is essential. A schism may develop if the organization’s leadership believes the CE is attempting to seize control of the organization. Effectively addressing this challenge requires the participation of ethical entrepreneurs. They must be disciplined leaders who embrace their personal experiences with integrity. As stated by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016):

Leadership should be given the freedom to develop their own codes of ethics based on their own personal experiences and key events. Their professional codes should be founded on their work experiences and expectations, but also considering their employers’ codes as well. (p. 22)

Competitors may consider entrepreneurs who breach a well-defined code of ethics as dishonest. Entrepreneurs are the ones with a hidden objective, not chief executives. Before entrepreneurs can be given a fair chance to grow, it is sometimes necessary to dispel numerous

incorrect beliefs about them, both within and without the church. Entrepreneurs may feel uprooted and seek a location where they may utilize their expertise to aid the church in times of need. In a 2015 *Inc* magazine interview, President Bill Clinton stated,,

I think that the entrepreneurs, and the would-be entrepreneurs, have got to be part of our finding a 21st-century sweet spot. That is, what we have to do, consistent with our character and aspirations, is find a way to be a place where it's good to be an entrepreneur. (Ledbetter, 2015, p. 172).

A CE may provide church members with both understanding and practical expertise. On the other hand, the CE contributes a distinct set of abilities to the church. In addition to serving as a personal testimony (to be explored), they can use their gifts to assist the church and community.

The Apostle Paul—A Christian Entrepreneur

According to Cohan et al (2013), the French word for “one who undertakes” is “entrepreneur”(p. 156). An entrepreneur recognizes a market need and fills it by developing a new product or service . A Christian entrepreneur is an entrepreneur who is an imaginative Christian leader who is a creative dreamer prepared to take tremendous risks in ministry in order to gain great things for Christ and the kingdom (Jackson, 2004, p. 18).

According to Martin and Osberg (2007), “entrepreneurship connotes a specific ability to identify and act on opportunity, combining out-of-the-box thinking with a unique kind of resolve to create or bring about something new in the world” (p. 30). This is precisely what Paul did when he merged the business of constructing tents with that of training disciples, making him not only an entrepreneur but a Christian entrepreneur. According to Manyaka-Boshielo (2018), “Paul planted several churches, which were enterprises he had undertaken; hence, he might be called to be entrepreneurial.” Paul’s tentmaking business was just one of many ventures that Paul undertook (p. 3).

Paul displays the characteristics of both descriptions because he created a market for tents by targeting customers with a specific need. This enabled him to travel, allowing him to preach the Gospel and carry out the Great Commission as a Christian entrepreneur. “Paul did not give up his business venture when he started serving Jesus,” wrote Shearer (n. d.). Instead, his tentmaking business was integral to his apostolic work (Shearer, n. d., p. 1). Shearer continued to describe how Paul was sensitive to the world around him, selflessly met the needs of others, preached self-control, cultivated vital alliances, and yielded to the Holy Spirit’s leading throughout his life (pp. 1-3). This made Paul’s creativity crucial to his disciple-making success.

Apostle Paul’s entrepreneurial spirit demonstrates his capacity to expand the church strategically. Schneidervin (2019), states:

The books of Romans through 2 Thessalonians were written by Paul over a period of 14 years to seven churches scattered throughout Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome. These churches were in different stages of maturity, and all needed instruction from the great apostle. Though Paul did not find all of them, he was looked to for leadership as these churches moved through various seasons of growth and challenges. (p. 23)

As stated, Paul’s position as a tent builder and dealer allowed him to interact with many people. Bandy (2021) wrote, “Paul had an extensive network, and he traveled and collaborated with dozens of people” (p. 14). Paul could preach the gospel by teaching God’s word, establishing churches, and penning the majority of the New Testament through prayer and financial shrewdness. Paul’s attitude and approach to business were centered on God rather than material gain (McGee 1983b, pp. 42-43). Even as an entrepreneur, he desired to accomplish God’s will for his life. Bandy (2021) asserts that the Apostle Paul is one of early Christian history’s most powerful and fascinating individuals (p. 13). Swindoll (2002) states:

My well-worn dictionary defines grit as “firmness of mind or spirit... unyielding courage in the face of hardship or danger.” I love that! There is no better description of this man from Tarsus, whom God used to play such a major role in turning the world upside-down for Christ in his generation. Tough, tenacious, and fiercely relentless in his determination,

Paul pursued his divine mission with unflinching resolve. The man modeled grit like no other soul in the sacred Scriptures. (p. xii)

Paul was notable for his humility and the grace that distinguished his life (Swindoll, 2002, p. xii). This is seen in Paul's self-description as 'the least of all saints and 'the foremost of all sinners,' demonstrating that he "never got over his thankfulness as a beneficiary of it." (Swindoll, 2002, pp. xii-xiv). As Paul demonstrated, entrepreneurship extends teaching opportunities and gives the resources necessary to win others to Christ. Paul did not abandon his business when he resolved to devote his life to Jesus. In contrast, this tent-making business was a vital part of his apostolic work. According to Shearer (2020), Paul explained,

You are aware that these hands attended to my needs as well as the needs of the men who were with me. In everything I taught you, working hard in this manner requires you to help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, who stated, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' (See Acts 20:33-35.) Paul was explaining to the Corinthians in the preceding verse that working hard in his business enabled him to financially support not only himself and his missionary team but also the needy. (p. 2)

Paul demonstrated as an evangelist that business expands the chances for teaching and gives the means for serving, guiding, and encouraging people to fulfill God's will. Entrepreneurs can seek out and better the lives of the people they see daily, safe in the knowledge that their skills will benefit the community God has placed them in. Paul's strategy was to permeate cultures in order to teach, educate, and equip the church of Christ. He affected everyone, regardless of socioeconomic background. Harrison asserts (2013):

The cruciform outworking of Paul's message introduced a newness to the social ties and beneficence of the house churches that were springing up throughout the Roman empire. Although this was not Paul's only or even major goal in writing Romans, he did underline the social and ethical application of God's eschatological grandeur revealed in Christ for believers living under the Julio-Claudian emperor in the first century. (p. 8)

Paul was a Christian entrepreneur, disciple, and evangelist. He set a precedent for Christian businesses and leaders of the present and future. As Paul exemplified, being a Christian, leader, disciple, and business demands adhering to divine ideals. Paul accepted his

responsibilities and how God wanted him to carry them out and conduct himself. Paul responded to the demand to be holy, earn others' respect, and live in peace. Each of these needs leaders, who can take various forms, such as disciples and entrepreneurs. Paul responded to the call to holiness expressed in 1 Peter 1:16. McGee (1983b) wrote, "Is our holiness to be a characteristic comparable to God's holiness? No, Our God is entirely flawless, and we will never attain such a level" and "Our God is a magnificent, full person. Even if you and I are merely human, we can reach complete maturity; we can mature" (p. 684).

According to 1 Thessalonians 4:12, Paul won the respect of others, and as a result, many became disciples. According to McGee (1983b), "walking honestly is something that God's saints must do now." It will earn respect and trust of humanity. Our conduct should be truthful before God and men (p. 393). McGee (1983a) states, "Nothing is more detrimental to the cause of Christ than a dishonest Christian" (p. 733)

According to Romans 12:18, Paul modeled peace and taught others how to achieve it. McGee (1983a), states:

If it is possible, as much as lieth in, you live peaceable - I love this because there are people that you just cannot get along with; they won't let you get along with. A dear lady who lived alone, a very wonderful Christian, called me one day in deep concern because she had a neighbor whom she couldn't get along with, and she wondered if I would come and talk with the neighbor. As I was driving out there, I was thinking that since this lady had been living alone, although she was a Christian, she may be a little difficult herself. Well, the neighbor told me what she thought of me as well as this dear lady. I went back to this wonderful Christian and said, 'I don't think you need to worry anymore if you can't get along with her. Nobody can get along with that woman. The Bible says, 'as much as liveth in you; it doesn't say you have to get along with her. Just do the best you can. (p. 733)

Paul continued to live as a Christian, Apostle, disciple, disciple-maker, evangelist, and a missionary, as evidenced throughout the Bible. As with McGee's story, Christians must strive to be peaceful and, when someone is unreceptive, let their behavior demonstrate peace. Christians must do their best and leave the rest to God.

Paul's motivation for making connections was recognizing that doing so advances the gospel. Through his extensive professional ties, he spread the gospel. In order to reach as many people as possible and convince them of Jesus Christ, Paul said, "I have become all things to all men" (1 Cor. 9:22). To Paul, working is more important than receiving benefits. Paul interacted with both believers and unbelievers through his business activities. Paul understood that it had to be lived before the gospel could be preached to the world or taught to Christians. Like Jesus did when he had meals with his disciples (John 13:1-5), worked alongside them (Mark 16:20), and spent time conversing with them (Mark 4:34). Paul understood that the best way to spread the gospel was to show love to those around him and live as if he believed what he preached.

Formative (Positive and Negative) Life Experiences

All encounters provide educational possibilities for Christians, non-Christians, leaders, and corporations. Everyone experiences several formative situations during their lives. The responses of individuals to these events can have a substantial effect on their behavior and interactions. Negative and good experiences are common occurrences that contribute to particular life outcomes. Individuals' actions are affected by how they react to their personal experiences. Rutter (1986) states:

The effects of life experiences are much influenced by how individuals appraise their situation and respond to the challenges and adaptations involved. The very marked individual differences in reaction have their origin in constitutional variations in susceptibility, vulnerabilities, and resilience created by earlier experiences, in the presence of protective influences, in the social context of the negative experiences, and the particular characteristics of the person-environment interaction. Experiences can change the organism; it is equally clear that people create their environments. (p. 1085)

An old saying suggests that one should see the glass as half full rather than half empty. This implies that there is always a silver lining, regardless of the circumstance. According to the Bible, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). If God is working for the greater

good of His designs, then even the most awful situations have positive components. Consider the global coronavirus pandemic as an example. Roach (2020) said that “tens of thousands have clicked to pray for salvation since the outbreak” and “millions of frightened people who resorted to Google for answers to their COVID-19-related queries found up engaging with Christian evangelists, resulting in a spike in internet interactions” (p. 1). COVID-19 is a devastating disease that has inspired many individuals to seek God. Moreover, Roach (2020) reported:

In March, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) launched landing pages with coronavirus resources in six languages. The association also launched social media campaigns themed around fear. In the first four weeks, 173,000 people visited the websites, and more than 10,000 clicked a button indicating they made decisions for Christ. (p. 2)

It is not always straightforward to find the silver lining in a cloud. When people see the glass as half complete instead of half empty, they glimpse the future. (Philippians 4:11-13). CEs must be imaginative, disciplined leaders who ethically embrace their own experiences.

According to Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016):

Leaders should be permitted to build their codes of ethics based on personal experiences and significant situations. They should also develop their professional codes based on their work experiences and expectations, as well as taking their codes into account. (p. 22)

Entrepreneurship is a lifelong learning and development process for a CE who prospers and develops into a mature business owner. It is feasible for him or her to use his or her gained knowledge and formative life experiences (both positive and negative) to deliver vital information to the church, its leaders and staff, and the community’s residents, facilitating their future success. It is possible to gain information, technology, and techniques under positive and negative conditions. Entrepreneurs bring distinct abilities and expectations to operating a successful business. A CE can connect this expectation to the church’s requirements using their skill, knowledge, and insight. If the church recognizes the importance of information, it is

knowledgeable about it. Delbeke and Morel (2010) suggest that “churches from the early modern period were designed and utilized as comparable places” (p. 99). These similar rooms acted as learning centers for church members, allowing them to gain new skills and share their experiences. Even if the church is not a new recipient of the gift of knowledge, it continues to serve as a source of information and illumination for the communities in which it exists. When imparting knowledge to the church, a CE is adept at presenting a vision and strategic plan (what members must do), organizational and departmental goals (how to achieve it), and the individuals who will carry it out (employees and volunteers). An excellent leader blends vision with implementation to engineer the vision they perceive in combination with the church’s needs. According to Bossidy and Charan (2002):

An organization can execute only when the entrepreneurial leader’s heart and soul are engaged. Leading entails more than large thinking and influencing people, which are important aspects of the job. The leader must be fully and personally invested in the organization. Execution necessitates a thorough awareness of the company, its surroundings, and its people. The entrepreneurial leader must make things happen and get things done by directing three key processes: determining the strategic direction, selecting other leaders, and running operations. (p. 24)

In the context of any business, much alone the church, risk management experience comprises the ability to aid in the prevention and avoidance of unnecessary risks, as well as the detection of deceitful behavior, all of which are crucial to the administrative function of the church’s success today. Murray-Webster and Penny (2011) defined risk management as “linking all of the existing intuitive risk assessments in order to generate a company-wide consensus on how to proceed” (p. 9). Knowledge and implementation of processes are pointless if there are no safeguards against identified risks or hazards.

The Apostle Paul’s Use of His Formative Life Experiences

As with Paul, leaders (entrepreneurs) who aid the church in meeting the community’s needs and serving them allow the church to flourish by establishing the necessary partnerships;

when relationships are formed, trust is established, and community ties are strengthened inside and outside the church. There is, nevertheless, a vital link between the unchurched and the church. If you are dishonest and unethical, the church may be viewed as untrustworthy, making you an untrustworthy individual, further fueling the fire that Christians cannot be trusted (Sarwar, 2013, p. 37). Thus, entrepreneurs can give administrative expertise when viewed through a church-and-community-committed, trusted relationship. According to Davis (2013),

The important thing is to know is that there is an inner world where the deeper meaning and purpose we seek awaits us. Our mind can have all the questions and skepticism it wants. However, the moment our awareness opens in the expansiveness of our heart, seeking becomes finding, doubt begins to trust. (p. 4)

God placed a burden on Paul's heart to help others repent and return to Him, even though Paul was free of outward pressures and expectations. As evidenced in 2 Corinthians, God ensured that Paul was aware of this. Paul informed the congregation, "And everything is a gift from God." "He made peace with us via Christ." And God has entrusted us with the responsibility of reconciling humanity with himself" (2 Corinthians 5:18). McGee (1983b) explained that "the ministry of reconciliation is God's call to lost men everywhere to come to Him with all of their sins, all of their burdens, all of their problems, and all of their difficulties, and be reconciled to God" (p. 113) and goes on to distinguish reconciliation from salvation by stating, "The ministry of reconciliation is God's call to lost men everywhere to come to Him with all of their sins, all of their burdens, all of their problems:

First, let me state that reconciliation is not the same as salvation; reconciliation goes a step further, it is more than having our sins forgiven and divine justice being satisfied. Reconciliation involves a changed relationship – completely changed. It means changing something inside out, upside down, and right side up. (p. 112)

Paul was many things to many people, as demonstrated. He lived for Christ and did it by employing his formative life experiences.

Formative Life Experiences Aiding Christian Entrepreneurs in The Great Commission

Realizing that their unique gifts will benefit the community in which God sets them, CEs should, like Paul, collaborate and consistently work to improve the lives of everyone they meet.

According to Hartwig and Bird (2015),

When responsibilities are distributed and collaborated among different people, there will be less tension within the team. This also fosters greater creativity and innovation, as there is a sense of teamwork, rather than simply one person leading and the rest following. (p. 190)

In what ways could the CE utilize their skills and formative life experiences to assist churches, communities, and workplaces in discipleship? Similar to Paul, formative life experiences can lead to transformation. The following sections will examine several of these methods.

Financial Support

While communicating God's word and the good news of God's kingdom is essential, Christian businesses can also share other things. They can provide their skills and time to the church in various ways. While financial contributions are required, a CE could use their skills to help the church gather finances. According to Sargeant (2005), churches and religious organizations in the United States received donations totaling \$86.39 billion in 2003. (p. 133). It is beneficial to have a church administration whose exclusive focus is fund-raising.

Donations also help the church sustain itself and reach out to the community. The most prevalent ways for entrepreneurs to help the church are through tithing and cash contributions. According to Liddell et al. (2001), tithing "plays an important role in a variety of denominations and transcends all Judeo-Christian religions" (p. 102). Abraham gave a tenth of his property to the priest Melchizedek following his triumph in battle, as recorded in Genesis 14:17–20.

Abraham is revered as a patriarch in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic faiths. Abraham is venerated as a patriarch in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic faiths.

In addition, the act of giving away anything promotes wisdom. According to the Bible, there are several benefits to engaging in ministry, most of which derive from the amount of fruit produced by such an investment. 4:17; 4:17; 4:17 Philippians 4:17 It is considered a kind of worship since it involves expressing appreciation to the Lord through monetary contributions (Leviticus 1:9). Financial help to the church benefits the entire community in numerous ways.

Bradley (2019) asserts the following:

The current situation of church contributions is in a state of flux. However, according to a press release issued in 2015 by the Giving Institute, while charitable giving has increased in the United States in recent years, the amount of such giving going to churches has decreased from 53% in 1987 to 32% in 2015. This significant decline is being seen throughout the church world. (p. 5)

Theft of contributions from the church is another way in which the monetary contributions of congregants are stolen. When a company is concerned about money being stolen or mismanaged, do CEOs have the knowledge and experience to develop and implement preventative measures? Joseph is an excellent example of a person who uses his position to correct the reorganization of his family. He placed a silver cup in his younger brother's backpack to make it appear as though it had been stolen. Joseph employs this pretense to determine whether his brothers have altered their ways (particularly Judah) and to reunite his family with him, where their wants will be met (Genesis 44 and 45; McGee, 1981, pp. 176-181).

Solomon stood out from other Jewish kings because he was the only one who capitalized on his kingdom's strategic location. In addition to other minor routes, ancient Israel was situated on two major ancient trade routes: the King's Highway and the Way of the Sea (the Via Maris). Furthermore, he promoted commerce and was the only Jewish king with a commercial ship (1 Kings 9). Solomon was the only Jewish king to participate in trade activities and take advantage

of the opportunities presented by these routes (1 Kings 5, 9). According to the Bible, Solomon amassed a vast treasure. However, he had to make the most of it himself because it did not previously exist (I Kings 3, 4:26). By keeping the peace in his kingdom, Solomon could put his people and resources to work, creating prosperity rather than keeping it safe. Furthermore, he

On the other hand, Rehoboam, Solomon's son, had an opportunity to establish Israel further as a world power. Instead, he made bad choices with his advisors and subsequent decisions. Disagreements arose in the kingdom about taxation and indentured labor, leading to an (I Kings 12). A more astute and enterprising ruler could have eased these constraints and pushed the kingdom forward through channels like trade. According to Costa et al. (2022),

Trade was crucial to the success and expansion of several ancient empires, including the Ghana and Mali empires for example. In time, kingdoms became a major hub for the exchange of gold and salt. The spread of Islam from the Arabian Peninsula to the western coast of Africa facilitated not just a thriving commerce economy, but also a thriving exchange of ideas. However, because of population explosion, famine, and a decline in trade, the Ghana Empire was unable to sustain itself and eventually fell. (para. 2)

CEs like Joseph and Solomon can use their skills and formative experiences to guarantee that safeguards, protocols, and mechanisms are in place, such as trade, to check and balance the firm and its operations, thereby preventing the recurrence of similar events. This methodology and plan would be beneficial to not repeat the past of Rehoboam and his leadership and benefit both the church and society. However, many modern churches fail to build and manage the necessary procedures to deter and discourage this behavior.

Prayer

Prayer is a way of communication with God and an essential element of authentic Christian living and worship. The Bible clearly explains how to pray. It states:

And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites who like praying in synagogues and on street corners to be noticed. Indeed, I assure you, they have earned their full reward. However, when you pray, enter your chamber, close the door, and pray to your unseen Father. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. And when you pray,

avoid talking like pagans, who believe they will be heard due to their abundance of words. Avoid being like them, for your Father already knows what you require before you ask. Thus, you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Today, give us our daily bread. And pardon our debts, as we have pardoned our debtors. And do not lead us astray but deliver us from the evil one. Because if you forgive others who offend against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. However, if you refuse to forgive others’ sins, your Father will refuse to forgive yours. (New International Version, 2011, Matthew 6:5-15)

Ogden (2018) offered three aspects of prayer:

Prayer is transparent dialogue. It is how we have an intimate conversation with the Creator of the universe and the Redeemer of our lives, who is wild about spending time with us. Prayer represents the place of greatest safety where we can pour our hearts out in an unedited fashion, much like we would to a dear friend who accepts us as we are, warts and all.; Prayer is a come-as-you-are affair. It is God’s welcome into His heart.; and Prayer is a relationship with the One who has already declared us His beloved children and wants to be close to us. (p. 35)

The Old and New Testaments include many prayers and models of prayer. There are prayers of praise (Exodus 32:9–14), prayers of deliverance (2 Kings 19), prayers of intercession (Job 42:7–10), prayers of distress (Psalm 41), prayers of confession (Daniel 9), prayers of faith (Habakkuk 3 and Matthew 21:18–22), and prayers of repentance (Jonah 3), as well as a multitude of other prayers for any circumstance that a person may face in life.

Prayer provides a road map for kingdom-minded CEs and leaders, outlining the steps necessary to develop and strengthen God’s kingdom. Nehemiah In royal courts, a cupbearer was a high-ranking officer appointed to serve refreshments at the royal table. Due to the continual threat posed by plans and intrigues, the individual occupying the post must be completely reliable. While serving the king, Nehemiah learned from others that the walls of Jerusalem had been breached and the gates torched. Consequently, Nehemiah’s initial action was to commune with God. Nehemiah sobbed and pleaded for Jerusalem’s walls out of despair and shame. “Upon hearing these words, I sat and cried for days while fasting and praying to the God of heaven” (Nehemiah 1:4).

Nehemiah is an example of a leader who recognized a crisis and prayed to God for help. God provided Nehemiah with everything he needed to rebuild the wall in response to his cry for provision. Not only finances but also the brains necessary to organize and manage a workforce efficiently and successfully reconstruct the walls of Jerusalem. Then, like Paul, Nehemiah went to the people and inserted himself to address the community's concerns. Similarly, modern-day entrepreneurs must be keenly conscious of their need for God to participate in and enjoy the high moments while strategically increasing their faith through prayer and divine guidance. Nehemiah had a relationship with God and an understanding of God, which enabled him to seek direction via prayer, humble himself, establish a plan for reconstruction, devise a strategy for protection, and execute that plan in 52 days (Nehemiah 6:15).

God wants His children to come to know and adore Him. When entrepreneurs pray, they bridge the gap between themselves and their employees, congregation, and community. The entire human race was explicitly designed to build and maintain intimate contact with their father (Jeremiah 26:13). The stronger an entrepreneur's relationship with God through prayer, the livelier their community.

Entrepreneurs with a social conscience are essential to the development of society and are required to fill the gaps. God is relational, and our objective is to establish a genuine understanding and connection with him. Entrepreneurs focusing on the kingdom must be able to feel God's presence. Prayer brings value to this domain in several ways. The entrepreneur must spend intimate time with God to attain wisdom, understanding, discernment, and clarity. In addition, prayer is a space where hope is developed to bring about change and improvement in the community. According to Beata and Dariusz (2021), prayer has been considered the "life and substance of religion" as one of the indicators of religious faith. In addition, several researchers

have investigated the positive impacts of prayer on the mental health of individuals and communities” (p. 1).

Prayer is required. Observing an entrepreneur, Christian or otherwise delivers a powerful message. Even though an entrepreneur’s first goal is often business and financial provision, this proves that God comes first. Moreover, the example of an entrepreneur who loves God is incredibly powerful.

Worship

Youngblood et al. (2005) defined worship as “reverent devotion and fealty rendered to God” (p. 269). Knight and Ray (1998) described worship as “the public and private devotion and praise of God” (p. 344). According to Ogden (2018), “worshiping God is the primary purpose of the church because it is our eternal mission” (p. 40). Ogden (2018) explained the concept of worship,

The vitality and depth of our worship are directly related to our view of God. If we truly know Him as He is, three things will characterize our worship: awe before the Wholly Other, shame before the Pure, and joyful gratitude before the Merciful One. When we know that He alone is perfect, we fall before Him in shame. But when we know that He, the Holy One, so desires our fellowship that He gave His only Son to make it possible, we fall before Him in gratitude and praise and sing the wonder of His holiness and the glory of His amazing grace. (p. 47)

Numerous biblical passages, such as Revelation chapters 4, 5, and 7, depict various types of devotion and adoration for God. In Revelation 4:8-11, a glimpse of the worship of God in Heaven is revealed. The 24 heavenly elders bow to humanity’s worship of God, according to verse 9. Before God, worship on our earth is a reenactment. After knowing this, shouldn’t everyone desire to appreciate and glorify God daily? Prayer and worship are vital for all individuals and Christians, whether they are disciples in being disciplined or the average person who has yet to learn about God.

The CE can worship God in obedience and as a model for others in their local churches and communities, aiding and fostering discipleship via their acts of worship. In addition to worship, the CE possess this potential through their testimony.

Testimony

What is a testimony? Luke instructs, “Return to your home and proclaim how much God has done for you.” And he went back to the city, proclaiming what Jesus had done for him (Luke 8:39). In Greek, the word for “testimony” is “martyria.” According to Jacobsen (2018), “the root is a martyr” (p. 2). God raises businesspeople who can bless the church with their business acumen and testimonies. This information can aid the church in developing a firm foundation and avoiding the same pitfalls and mistakes as the entrepreneur. This is akin to how Paul found and preached to his disciples wherever they were. CEs can communicate via witness sharing.

CEs who offer their time to share their expertise and experience with others to strengthen their ability to be compelling witnesses in their church and community while supporting and benefiting all parties are seen as vital resources. CEs must share their testimonies because they are a valuable tool and resource for congregations. According to the Bible, Nehemiah was informed of the demolition of Jerusalem’s walls and gates by his brother and other Judahite men (Nehemiah 1:1-3). Nehemiah prays and laments prior to approaching the king for assistance. He then carefully selects and puts folks on the wall. Nehemiah was also responsible for protecting those rebuilding the walls during this time. As a result, it took 52 days to repair the wall. (For more information, please refer to Nehemiah 6:15.) Nehemiah’s position as the king’s cupbearer was intriguing and likable. Nehemiah was a secular worker who was not a business owner. According to Patton (2017),

A cup-bearer was a high-ranking officer in royal courts charged with serving refreshments at the royal meal (p. 4). ... What made Nehemiah an effective leader?

Nehemiah, whose role shifted from royal cupbearer to governor of Judah, used various leadership methods to complete his objective of repairing Jerusalem's walls. His mission was done by an active prayer life, offering a vision to his disciples, receiving assistance from King Artaxerxes, role modeling, adaptability, and foresight. (p. 9)

When a CE, such as Paul, or a leader, such as Nehemiah, delivers his or her testimony to the audience, relatability fosters the growth of trust. CEs, like Nehemiah, can discuss their hardships, disappointments, and victories. This can help dismantle any barriers, obstacles, or previously held stereotypes that may present. Sharing testimonies encourages hope and educates and stimulates church leadership and workers to seek God on church-related matters long after they have left the church. The church is stronger when it is unified, and testimonies help to fortify, encourage, and direct believers in overcoming life's hurdles to accomplish God's will.

Entrepreneurs contemplate where God has led them while interacting with their followers. Transparency during testimony sharing may be difficult, but it can strengthen relationships between all involved. The leader can rise above previous obstacles by relating their tale of overcoming difficulty. God's teachings praise the effectiveness of testifying in vanquishing the enemy. "The old has passed away; all things are now new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). When leaders share their own experiences, they establish unity among their followers but also instill optimism in the lives of others.

Certain people may find it challenging to muster the confidence to testify at this level, particularly if they wish to maintain their modesty and candor. In Exodus 3:11, Moses asked, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and free the Israelites from Egypt?" Moses did not provide an immediate affirmative response. He asked this question because he was reluctant to go due to the urgent incident that prompted him to flee in the past. Individuals struggling with terrible circumstances alone may have trouble speaking up about their experiences to others. However, some share and have observed incredible deeds performed due to the testimony.

In the Bible, numerous individuals testified. The Gerasene demoniac who encountered Jesus on a boat is a case in point. As Jesus neared the boat, the man tormented by demons implored him to join him. Jesus declined and ordered Gerasene to return to his people and tell them how much the Lord had done for him and how merciful he had been. Consequently, the man left and began telling everyone in the Decapolis what Jesus had done for him. Furthermore, everyone was stunned (Mark 5:18-20). When the Samaritan woman saw Jesus at the well as she left her water jar, she returned to town and encouraged everyone to “come and see a guy who told me everything I had ever done. Could this be the Messiah?” They left the city and made their way toward him. Due to the woman’s testimony, many Samaritans in the town believed in him, “He told me everything I ever did” (John 4:28-30, 39). Peter and John recounted their experiences as witnesses for Jesus. They called them once more and ordered them to stop speaking or teaching in Jesus’ name. “According to God, is it better to listen to you or him?” Peter and John responded. You are the jury and the judge! Paul, on the other hand, testified numerous times. Paul addressed the throng with gestures, and when they were still, he spoke in Aramaic. This is the language of the Jews. As soon as they heard Paul speak to them in their native dialect, everyone fell silent. Then, Paul described his meeting with Jesus and his route to Damascus. (Acts 9:1-22; 22:3-16; 26:9-18).

The power of testimony cannot be overstated. It stimulates, encourages, fortifies, defends, and prevents improper church activities. People frequently believe they are alone in personal, professional, and spiritual difficulties. This is not always the case, however. Through their testimonies, individuals can share and overcome their loss, hardship, and strongholds that affect both themselves and the church. CEs have the opportunity and access to bless the church, its members, and the surrounding community through their testimonies. This aids in bridging the

gap between the two. Next, a CE's economic and administrative capacity to aid and support local churches and communities in discipleship will be evaluated.

Business and Administration Aspects of the Church

CEs who volunteer their time to share their expertise and experience with others increase their potential to provide a significant testimony to their church and community while benefiting all parties. According to Dooley (n.d.), "One of the most significant aspects of a healthy entrepreneur launching a strong business is the fact that a full-time employee will spend close to 2,000 hours per year under the leadership of these entrepreneurs" ("When Your Church Invests in Entrepreneurs, Your Mission has Exponential Impact," para. 4). Persons are frequently molded by their occupations; our workplaces significantly impact the types of people we become when we leave them. When most of our city's workplaces are toxic and hazardous, it is impossible to sustain a healthy community. Dooley (n.d.) states, "It's not hard to imagine, however, the inverse. What if more Kingdom-oriented workplace cultures were launched and led by entrepreneurs who were on a mission to positively impact on their employees and communities?" ("When Your Church Invests in Entrepreneurs, Your Mission has Exponential Impact," para. 5).

The CE, whose time is donated to the church as a resource, will help the church obtain insight, expertise, and discernment regarding church business and the community. Frequently, churches serve as leaders not only in their communities but also in local marketplaces. According to Weber (1992), both the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism contributed to the foundation of modern capitalism (p. 199). Some churches exist in the shadows of contemporary capitalism, lacking the wherewithal to educate their people and hence being unable to act as social role models as they formerly did. Modern churches are afflicted by a

debilitating impact, which often manifests as a lack of resources and growth, preventing them from operating at full capacity and achieving their objectives. According to Barna Group (2017), 38% of Americans are active churchgoers, 43% are unchurched, and 34% are de-churched (p. 132). While the church's inability to properly serve the community is mainly attributable to a loss of financial support (Bradley, 2019) and a reduction in attendance (Bryson et al., 2020; Evener, 2020), it is also attributable to the resources and skills of its members. Certain spiritual gifts are associated with the capacity to lead the church and minister to the unchurched and de-churched.

As evidenced by the Apostle Paul in the Bible, the entrepreneur is a leader in commercial businesses and possesses knowledge in business and administration that is useful for assisting and sustaining local churches and communities. As indicated in the church section of this review, CEs' perspectives on the design and implementation of measures to deter church money abuse are beneficial in resolving cases of improper or criminal church money abuse (p. 11-12). CEs can also help churches train their leadership, employees, and volunteers to use church resources to safeguard their financial assets. Training examples include financial transaction audits, rotating volunteers and staff who collect, count, and deposit monetary gifts (so that no one person primarily administers the money), the two-person rule, background checks, and recognizing danger signals. The church may benefit tremendously from an entrepreneur's viewpoint. According to Higgs (2019), "wisdom integrates experience, cognitive ability, and emotion such that individuals and groups may make smart decisions" (p. 3).

CEs are aware that all businesses have risks. However, it is their job to take that risk, as represented via and in line with the established processes and procedures, which will determine the business's success or failure. All churches should establish a policy to ensure that they

protect the church with reasonable care, just as companies do. While system control is frequently required inside a church, it is typically implemented just after a problem has occurred, when it should be used to prevent future issues. Throop (2001) states that “controls are typically implemented in response to a control cue - a problem that has materialized and requires action” (p. 27).

According to Ekhomu (2015), church leaders must employ proper accounting and internal controls to prevent resource theft or misuse (p. 52). According to Peters (2015), “as a result of these trusting relationships, members frequently feel that churches are immune to fraudulent behavior, even though religious organizations can be fooled like other enterprises” (p. 15). Woodbine (1997) recommends “proposing suggestions that may assist religious groups in the running with good and efficient financial administration, such as the installation of a counting committee, individual offertory donation envelopes, frequent cash banking, and job segregation” (p. 23). In this context, control mechanisms are intended to deter and reduce improper expenditure and manipulation of church funds.

When it comes to safeguarding the church’s assets and resources, a CE can help alleviate a lot of undesirable scenarios. As stated previously, one of these unpleasant experience areas is embezzlement. CEs may also help the church transform from a reactive to a proactive organization by assisting through risk management. The process of designing rules and procedures may start with determining how monies will be managed, transferred, and accessed by the church. In addition to safeguards, regular audits will be required as a crucial initial step for alerting church officials of any financial theft. Another strategy to secure the church’s finances is accountability. Accountability is formed when two or more individuals place funds in a safe and sign for them. When there is a suspicion that church money is being embezzled, the

experience of an entrepreneur may help spot warning indications and take the proper measures. Because the church operates more reactively than proactively, church employees are typically unprepared in this area. The church may be vulnerable if no one is ready for such times. The church's discipleship efforts are usually hampered by exposure to this destructive activity.

Consider Throop's (2001) thieving experience, as detailed below,

A nearby church's pastor just sent an incomprehensible letter to his congregants. I am sorry to inform you, but it is my sad duty to inform you that, as a consequence of a recent emergency audit, church funds were robbed to the tune of roughly \$30,000. Before being captured, a former treasurer of my own denomination, the Episcopal Church, misappropriated \$2.2 million from multiple church accounts. This has happened in parachurch organizations and church schools, such as in a Lutheran school in my community, where a finance officer stole more than \$12,000 from a student trip fund. A substantial number of band sweets and fruit boxes and a substantial breach of trust. (p. 27)

Rationalization is when an otherwise honest person comes up with excuses to commit fraud. Frequently, the thief would attempt to justify their acts by claiming they were for a justifiable reason. This is something you should avoid if you are disciplining a church member. Numerous individuals believe that the money owed to them is theirs, and they intend to claim it. There are additional instances where a person may seek to borrow money from the church without embarrassment. When someone can commit fraud and get away with it, they tend to become more confident in their ability to continue doing so. People unaware of the repercussions of stealing from the church are more inclined to engage in this sinful behavior, which might hinder their discipleship process.

According to Proverbs 3:9, everyone should carefully worship God with their money and the first fruits of their harvests. Since an entrepreneur earns money directly from their firm, they can donate a portion of their profits to the church. When CEs can give back to the church what they have accomplished via their company, they exhibit humility. This may account for up to 10% of specific individuals' annual income. Compared to the tithe that some hourly and salaried

employees may be able to contribute, this is a significant increase for many businesses. Although support from CEs is not more important than support from individuals who work for a firm and tithe, when all of this support is combined, it makes a substantial impact in terms of allocating cash to ministries and other sectors of the church that require financial resources to function. The Bible explains, “Just as the body is one but has many members, so all the members of that one body, while numerous, are one body” (1 Corinthians 12:12). The body has both one and several members. Numerous businesses guided by the Holy Spirit have honored God by making significant gifts to the church, the gospel, and the community. Bailey (n.d.) asserted,

Dolly Parton is a fervent Christian. Parton used her voice to spread the message of God’s love. Ms. Parton has participated in Make-a-Wish and donated products to charity. Parton is particularly proud of the Imagination Library, which sends newborns a free book every month until they start school. She founded the Dollywood Foundation in 1988 to assist her native country’s dropout rate. It now includes My People Fund. Tyler Perry works hard to make the world a better place. Perry, a devoted Christian, has influenced many. He had a bad childhood, but his faith kept him calm. The Tyler Perry Foundation supports important causes for today’s youth, like education. New Commandment, Fort Street United Methodist, and St. Elizabeth Catholic Churches. (pp. 1-3)

CEs who dedicate their labor to honoring God and giving back to their communities date back to the dawn of humanity. The following are Cloud’s (2019) assertions,

A philanthropist, entrepreneur, and inventor, Robert G. LeTourneau (1888-1969) amassed about 300 patents during his lifetime. LeTourneau was a fervent Christian who adhered to the teachings of the Scriptures. When it came to tithing, LeTourneau regarded it not as an obligation but rather as a source of personal love for God, and he eventually gave the Lord 90 percent of his earnings to the Lord. The author claims in his autobiography that he has spent the past 25 years or more traveling over the United States and a few foreign nations, striving to teach and preach by word of mouth and example that a Christian businessman owes just as much to God as a preacher. (p. 2)

The church has numerous needs, not all of which are monetary. Church administration is an additional crucial area and resource. According to Scripture, “And God assigned them to the church in this order: apostles first, prophets second, teachers third, and then gifts of healing, help, administration (direction), and a diversity of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:28). The administration

of God's plan involves the formation of a vision for the church that is congruent with its mission and devoid of ambiguity. According to Welch (2011), "good organization and administrative processes can greatly reduce the level of confusion and doubt that arises in the absence of explicit guidance for the running of a church" (p. 55). Understanding the vision is essential because it gives the church the necessary feeling of purpose and direction for its existence. Holy Spirit-led entrepreneurs can assist the church in various ways, including by aligning operations with the church's vision, mission, and purpose. Additionally, CEs can assist and relieve other members juggling multiple responsibilities and attempting to perform unfamiliar duties.

In certain situations, administrative difficulties can substantially affect the church. Welch (2001) stated,

Some senior pastors feel a tremendous uneasiness with their responsibilities as administrators. Some have left the church due to the overwhelming exhaustion of leading the church in pastoral matter and administrative. Others have been fired because of administrative ineptitude for other administrative problems. (p. 55)

Data collection and analysis are essential aspects of church resource management, just as they are for any other business. According to Alhajj et al. (2020),

In recent years, the digital world has seen a considerable growth in the amount of data being collected in a variety of areas as a result of technological advancements. As a result, big data management has arisen as a method for storing, managing, and extracting meaningful knowledge from vast amounts of data. It is a technology that is gaining popularity. As data quantities have increased, it has become critical to build tools for the accurate and timely integration of intrinsically heterogeneous data. (p. 1)

Before the technological age, it would seem unlikely that resource management in the church had much significance. In contrast, contemporary churches increasingly rely on digital media to reach out to individuals and draw them to Christ. In order to avoid the further spread of the Covid-19 virus, churches have been compelled to close due to the current pandemic. For many people, the only way to reach a large audience is through media platforms such as social media and streaming services. According to Bryson et al. (2020), "live streaming and recording

church services were not widespread prior to the COVID-19 lockdown” (p. 360). Demand for data management services has surged as a consequence of the virus (as well as other remote capabilities). In addition, data management benefits include assessing the volunteer-to-participant ratio and evaluating the impact of a new ministry’s launch, which can be used in conjunction with other elements of a successful ministry to reproduce what works for future new ministries. This type of resource management assists the church’s attempts to provide guidance and progress.

Regarding the church and decision-making, the Bible instructs, “Place your trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your knowledge.” Recognize Him in all your acts, and He will lead you in the correct path (Proverbs 3:5-6). Kouzes and Posner (1995) state that “trust is the foundation of supportive collaboration” (p. 161). The Holy Spirit must therefore guide the judgments of CEs. Churches will be strained when decisions that do not conform to God’s desire are made. Frequently, churches develop bylaws to secure administration and congregational leadership. Bylaws are the internal regulations that regulate the operation of a church. The church’s constitution is a written document that gives administrative guidance and operational direction. According to McCarty (2012), “if members choose to continue the earlier practice, their rules or bylaws can be modified to reflect the custom” (p. 27). In other words, while bylaws create a baseline, they can be altered to accommodate the church’s particular needs. The horrifying reality is that persons whom the Holy Spirit does not guide tend to twist rules to serve their selfish purposes.

Strategic planning is another instrument that helps safeguard the church during decision-making. The church’s strategic plan is established based on its mission and vision statements, which serve as the organization’s road map. A strategic plan, according to Lotick (2015),

“articulates the objective and vision and offers a roadmap for attaining it” (p. 9). In order to protect and defend the church, it is vital to define the decision-making procedures that must be followed. Strategy plan decisions are established before the actual requirement for the decision. Because the church is better prepared to respond to whatever is flung at it, it can more successfully fulfill its protective duty. Even if the scenario changes, the first strategy plan can be updated to meet the specific requirements of the new situation and problem. Providing the church with an official process and procedure manual at all times, safeguarding not only the church but also the spiritual journeys of its members.

Business and Administrative Aspects of the Community

Collaborative-minded churches and CEs may serve as a model for other groups and, most importantly, the greater community. According to Hartwig and Bird (2015), effective churches are led by effective pastors. There are multiple leaders, not just one. When measured by a group and a team, there is a substantial difference between the two” (p. 27). Matthew 18:19 exhorts those who gather in the name of God to seek revelation to do so in unity, adding that they will be rewarded for their efforts (Matthew 18:19). Despite one’s background or conflicts with others, coming together as a group is a powerful thing; everyone works for the group’s common good (community). Mark 16:15-16 challenges Christians to proclaim the gospel across the entire universe. Those who believe and are baptized will be saved, while those who do not will be condemned (Mark 16:15-16). Paul states in 1 Corinthians 9:22 that he has become weak in the eyes of the weak to vanquish the weak. Only if I become everything to everyone will I be able to rescue even one life (1 Corinthians 9:22). According to Luke 12:9, “Whoever disowns me before others will be disowned before the angels of God” is a true rejection of the GC supplied directly by Jesus. We have no excuse if we do not share the gospel.

Business and Administrative Aspects of the Workplace

This author firmly believes that Godly principles and regulations, besides CEs' can affect the work environment, stress levels, and habits. Spirituality in the workplace supports ethical job conduct. Faith, acceptance of Jesus as savior, love of God, and love of neighbor are the core concepts and rules of the Christian religion. These principles are strengthened by studying the Bible to gain an understanding of biblical wisdom and knowledge, praying, having hope for the future, and living by the spirit to create spiritual fruits. This is precisely what employers, owners, and managers desire from their employees and staff: individuals who adhere to godly ideals and standards and live accordingly. These attributes will only boost business success and optimism while reducing employee and staff stress and negative behaviors.

Guillen et al. (2014) state that "people have moral, ethical and spiritual dimensions in their lives, and these realities may affect the work of individuals and their flourishing in the workplace" (p. 803) and that "It seems plausible to believe that moral and spiritual drivers in the workplace, including the motivations of giving, will improve human flourishing in the organization, foster better relationships, and lead to a more ethical and spiritual culture" (p. 814).

Following research on ethical egoism, deontology, utilitarianism, relativism, virtue ethics, and care ethics, Rodgers and Gago (2006) found that "biblical texts provide a dependable source for steering businesses across a sea of tumultuous waves that numb their moral sensibilities" (p. 134). They discussed how Romans 13:8-10 illustrates acting in accordance with God's love, while Daniel 6:1-4 illustrates the common stakeholder's perspective. They suggest that a return to Christian values will facilitate the decision-making process within businesses (p. 135). This will also positively impact everyone who interacts with the firm from any perspective.

As seen, creation illustrates how God operates, the authority given to men, and how they are to return to God, so developing discipleship, a form of leadership. Conway (2012) provides clarification by stating,

The pattern of God's work is presented not as drudgery but as self-giving life, which gives form and purpose to creation. God's approach to work is also presented as leisurely. God is presented as calm, confident, content, and measured, freely giving of self from the depths of his goodness (p. 277).

Additionally, Conway argued that only productive and fulfilling labor brings self-satisfaction and allows for genuine rest. This person should reflect God in their work by being "creative, life-giving, serene, and confident, producing order and form out of chaos and void" (p. 278). Conway also stated, "In Christ, even the most menial and pointless activity can become a representation of our redeemed state, as we can exhibit our faith, hope, and love through it" (p. 280). It is evident from this data that allowing God into the workplace would result in a thriving environment.

Organizations exist and encounter hurdles and problems daily. When looking at God's first leaders, Adam and Eve, met a difficulty and broke organizational policies and procedures, resulting in communication failures and the need to reestablish the organization's founding intents and broad aims. God, the supreme owner, kept control throughout the situation and implemented a new plan. (John 3:16). All must fit with the company's initial end-result objectives, which continue to exist despite God's new business purpose.

Both the world's past and present reflect disarray. Everyone, including those in the workplace, has a need for God. West (2019) asserts, "This universe is immersed in a continual conflict between the spiritual powers of good and evil, with Satan and his demons representing the forces of evil." Our adversary's objective is to deface the heavenly image in our souls. Consequently, we must be willing to "stand firm" against them (p. 1). God must trump all other

concerns in life, including employment. Yes, churches and religious groups may be found in every corner of the globe. CEs may and must play a vital role in this work. God must be present in all endeavors, not just religious ones. The importance of the CE's innovation extends to the church, the community, and the workplace. The CE's formative experiences and spiritual gifts can be used to promote discipleship and answer the Great Commission's call. According to Hartwig and Bird (2015),

When responsibilities are distributed and collaborated among different people, there will be less tension within the team. This also fosters greater creativity and innovation, as there is a sense of teamwork, rather than simply one person leading and the rest following. (p. 190)

In the church, a CE who uses their formative experiences and talents may be active in administration and procedures that maintain the church's functioning and that assist the church, its members, and the community. The CE can guide church members to continue discipleship through providing opportunities for church members to aid community members and lead them to the church. Continuing discipleship is similar in nature to the concept of multiplying. When the community recognizes and takes advantage of these opportunities, they will continue into the workplace. CEs can use their formative experiences and spiritual abilities to produce activities for community members, such as missions, empowerment events, and more. Retreats for employees that emphasize their spiritual state and the information they need to be more successful are a means of integrating into the workplace. CEs can develop their spiritual abilities by helping others engage in ministry activities and by promoting discipleship.

Every CE has a responsibility to use their ingenuity. Bezaleel is illustrative of this. The spiritual gifts of Bezaleel were aiding and teaching. He could assist others by making furniture and instructing them in its construction. Bezaleel crafted the furnishings for God's Tabernacle (Exodus 35: 30-35). According to McGee (1981), "Bezaleel is the man whom God entrusted

with the task of crafting the essential furnishings for the Tabernacle.” God granted Bezaleel the capacity to share his skills with others (p. 310). Any gift of the Spirit a person possesses must be used for the good of the kingdom and the accomplishment of the Great Commission assignment.

Summary of Related Literature

The section on related literature described the GCDM from the perspective of the numerous ways CEs can assist and support local churches, communities, and workplaces worldwide by employing their formative experiences and knowledge to aid and encourage discipleship. This is in addition to providing financial support for the initiative. It was discovered that CEs have the potential to provide assistance and support to community organizations and local churches in a substantially more effective manner than is currently the case. The following section will discuss the rationale for the study and the literature gap that necessitates this qualitative, phenomenological study.

Rationale for Study and Gap in the Literature

Rationale for Study

The efforts of CEs driven by the Holy Spirit and willing to devote their time, resources, and formative experiences to the churches they serve can be enormously beneficial. Entrepreneurs and other leaders guided by the Holy Spirit have a specific responsibility to be good stewards of God’s people and resources in times like these. In order to be good stewards of the people, property, and money given to them, leaders must follow the advice of (James 1:5) and aim for excellence in all that they do. It’s possible that humanity would suffer from a lack of progress and development if this kind of leadership wasn’t available because of the inherent link to every individual. The economist Joseph Schumpeter is said to have described and addressed the role of entrepreneurs in transformation as follows, as cited by Becker et al. (2011),

The individual who implements innovation, sweeping away existing ways of doing things, goods, and technology and replacing them with those that the marketplace perceives to be of more value.” Entrepreneurs are change and growth agents. (p. 4)

CEs can lend a hand in protecting and strengthening the church and lending a hand to the local community, the activities that take place there, and the greater community. As previously mentioned, Hybels (2002) stated,

There is plenty that religious leaders can learn from business. The Church is lacking when it comes to the characteristics of effective organizational leadership, including the ability to adapt to new circumstances, generate novel ideas, build effective teams, and implement effective strategies. The church has the potential to pioneer innovative programs, undertake daring initiatives, and aid the needy. In contrast to generations of the past quarter century, today’s young people have more opportunities available to them than ever before. There is a growing demand for us to assume greater accountability. (p. 37)

There are characteristics that, if present, would make CEs noticeable, but being noticeable alone is not enough. CEs must be aware that their contributions of more than money are required. Helping and supporting local churches and communities worldwide in discipleship requires time, knowledge, spiritual formation, testimony, and examples. Due to a lack of knowledge and understanding regarding how CEs can effectively support local churches and communities in ways other than tithing and monetary gifting, there is a fracture in the two-way communication between churches and business owners in general as CE’s. This is a problem for CEs specifically. A gap is created when a need is not being filled. In this case, churches need to assist. CEs can aid and assist the church in fulfilling this need. However, CEs lack the necessary knowledge to support the church’s development, sustainability, and ongoing discipleship. The gap creates a divide between the disciples and those needing discipleship. This gap directly affects the church’s potential to disciple individuals in the community efficiently and effectively. Efficiency means that the church can produce the desired end goal of discipleship, whereas effectiveness means that the church will produce the desired end goal.

For a CE to be effective, they need to identify their skills and strengths (outlined in the section of this study that discusses the related literature) and how those strengths can be utilized to assist and support local churches and communities in their attempts to disciple people. To be effective, the CE must put this information to use by putting their formative life experiences to work in local churches and communities worldwide. These experiences can be either positive or negative.

This qualitative and phenomenological study analyzed the formative life experiences—both positive and negative—of CEs and their thoughts on their abilities to assist and support discipleship efforts in local churches and communities. As a result of CEs completing this study, a better understanding of the value of their formative life experiences was investigated, as well as answering the question of whether those experiences can be used to bridge the discipleship divide between local churches, communities, and workplaces in order to carry out the Great Commission. The study was carried out in the United States.

Gap in the Literature

Numerous research and publications investigating entrepreneurs' functions, habits, traits, and demands and their impact on society have been written and carried out. (Baron et al., 2016; Belenzon et al., 2017; Bullough et al., 2014; Caliendo et al., 2009; Eddleston & Powell, 2022; Feng et al., 2022; Holland & Shepherd, 2013; Mueller et al., 2012; Murnieks et al., 2014; Patterson & Marvin, 2009; Ucbasaran et al., 2013). This author was able to locate five publications that dealt with religion and the entrepreneur during their research on continuing education units (CEs) and discipleship. None of them, however, centered their attention on the question of whether the wisdom and formative life experiences (both positive and negative) of the CE may help and support the discipleship efforts of local churches, workplaces, and

communities. One looked at how religion affects business owners rather than how business owners affect religion (Zelekha et al., 2014). Two more centered on consumer electronics' influence on underdeveloped and emerging markets (Wood & Heslam, 2014). The other two centered their attention on developing and emerging Christian faith in the business market rather than becoming disciples of God (Beckwith, 2016) and building churches (Baumgartner & Flores, 2017). Only one of the five articles found was somewhat related to the subject of this investigation. It centered on whether the Christian faith is relevant to the operations of an entrepreneur (Parboteeah et al., 2015).

Profile of the Current Study

The phenomenon that is focus of investigation in this qualitative pneumological study is to investigate the formative life experiences (both good and negative) of CEs that have prepared them to serve the church as disciple-makers efficiently. The purpose of the phenomenological study, which will have an exploratory nature, is for the researcher to understand the notion that CEs are untapped resources that the church may leverage to achieve the objective of discipleship. This study used instruments such as surveys, interviews, and assessments to gather information from the vantage point of CEs and then disseminate that knowledge to other CEs and ministry leaders. This research employs interviews and survey assessments to acquire information from a CE's perspective and share that insight with other CEs and ministry leaders. It also demonstrates what the CE understands about their strengths, how to employ them, and their formative (both positive and negative) life experiences to aid and support local churches, workplace, and communities in discipleship. The following chapter will discuss the research methodology in further detail.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Many CEs have already developed trust and relationships with people outside the church. As a result, they can aid the church in its mission to fulfill the Great Commission by promoting discipleship to others beyond the church. For Kouzes and Posner (1995), “the core and soul of fostering teamwork is trust” (p. 161). This teamwork occurs when CEs allow the Holy Spirit to direct their decisions while pursuing success. On the other hand, the church has numerous untapped resources in the form of CEs, who are not always used to assist pastors and aid the church in effective discipleship. The ability to positively impact people’s lives is a hallmark of a successful Christian business. This organization’s mission should be to better the lives of the people it serves while also sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ (Munatswa, 2017, p. 2). Churches and CEs do not always collaborate and frequently lack the essential skills to form such a connection to extend God’s kingdom. There is a greater need than ever to exercise due diligence in carrying out the church’s mission in the community and sustaining the church. Exploring the formative experiences of CEs who assist the local church and how (as a result) they can make an effect by extending and strengthening the church as disciple-makers is an essential component of this study. The phenomenological research design was chosen for this qualitative investigation. According to Creswell (2018), “Researchers can use the respondent’s experiences as a foundation for understanding how those experiences have an impact on their lives when employing the qualitative-phenomenological design” (p. 184). To better understand how the phenomena affect people’s lives, researchers often conduct interviews using open-ended questions as part of their research. This study utilized data composed of questionnaires and interviews to address the research questions.

Research Design Synopsis

The researchers' objective in conducting this qualitative phenomenological study was to determine whether any common elements among the findings contribute to the role of CEs in supporting the church, workplace, and community in discipleship. This research aimed to demonstrate and assist CEs in defining, improving, and expanding their efforts to support the local church, workplace, and community, as well as to mentor and encourage other CEs to do the same.

The following sections will outline the research process by explaining the research design synopsis (problem, purpose statement, research questions, and research design and methodology), setting, participants, the role of the researcher, ethical consideration, data collection methods and instruments (collection methods, instruments and protocols, and procedures), data analysis (analysis methods and trustworthiness) and a chapter summary.

The Problem

In the United States, congregations are widely acknowledged as a significant source of social capital (Putnam & Campbell, 2010, p. 38). Faith communities and networks can mobilize people to act, such as voting or volunteering. There is virtually little information available from previous studies on congregations regarding the importance placed on work and business. When it comes to widely accepted organizational leadership techniques that negatively impact the efficient use of resources like CEs to aid in the implementation of discipleship within the community, a lack of this information is a significant hindrance to discipleship in many churches, organizations, and communities today. The lack of leadership training between the church and entrepreneurs about what is and is not acceptable currently lacks productive and helpful outcomes in creating discipleship strategies for de-churched or unchurched.

Some thriving churches operate on several of the same principles as businesses in the marketplace. As a result, it is not unusual for the church to provide the same services that people pay for in the marketplace. According to Strategic Direction (2006), “America is fostering a sector of faith-based consulting resulting in the majority of successful churches also being technologically advanced. The hymns’ words are projected onto massive screens by computers, and the temperature is precisely controlled” (p. 59). America’s churches, in their goal of “whole service excellence,” do not limit themselves to preaching on Sundays and conducting the conventional Sunday service. According to Strategic Direction (2005), “Today’s churches operate 7 days a week, from dawn to sunset, and offer various services. Banks, pharmacies, and schools are located within several mega-church complexes. Counseling and guidance groups are frequent occurrences” (p. 59). As a result, more and more Christians are interested in creating business-oriented missions to praise God. This research is designed to educate CEs on the value of their formative life experiences and whether their experiences can be used to bridge the discipleship divide between the local churches, communities, and workplaces to fulfill the Great Commission.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the formative life experiences (positive and negative) that shape Christian entrepreneurs’ ability to promote discipleship in the church, workplace, and community. Discipleship, according to Ogden (2018), “is an intentional relationship between CEs and the church in which they serve those in need while challenging each other to grow more Christ-like. (p. 3). The theory guiding this study was the Great Commission Discipleship Model. According to Oates (n.d.), “The Great Commission model focuses on discipleship with fulfilling the Great Commission. This model believes that the

fulfillment of the Great Commission is a ministry. Therefore, the people within ministry will grow and become more Christ-like” (p. 1).

Research Questions

RQ1. What defining formative life experiences, whether positive or negative, do Christian entrepreneurs possess that they perceive will help them to be more effective disciple-makers?

RQ2. What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the local church as disciple-makers?

RQ3. What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the community as disciple-makers?

RQ4. What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the workplace as disciple-makers?

Research Design and Methodology

The researcher chose a qualitative research design and a phenomenological approach for the investigation. Qualitative research examines phenomena in their natural habitat through in-depth interviews, observation, and focus groups. This technique is appropriate for comprehending persons’ experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and relationships. When studying people’s descriptions and interpretations of what they saw, heard, and felt, “Phenomenology” is the term used by Creswell (2007). The researcher determined that this design and methodology was appropriate for interviewing CEs to ascertain the positive or negative formative life experiences that have influenced their abilities to disciple others.

Discipleship can help the CE serve the church in spiritual formation and community. The phenomena explored in this qualitative study was whether CEs’ positive or negative formative life experiences enabled them to successfully help the church as disciple-makers. The phenomenological study is exploratory since the researcher sought ways to better provide insight into the idea that CEs are underutilized resources that the church can use for disciple-making.

This study used screening questionnaires and interviews that were not structured. The screening questionnaires acted as both the introduction and the beginning of the investigation. At that point in the process, the researcher interviewed participants to collect preliminary information for the study. Participants in the study were required to self-identify as CEs, be at least 18 years old, have at least 1 year of experience in a leadership role, and demonstrate a willingness to disciple others in the context of the local church, the community, and the workplace. After determining whether they were eligible to participate, every participant who did qualify was contacted and allowed to schedule a recorded interview via Zoom. The unstructured interview questions were beneficial in exploring each participant as they articulated their experiences as great disciple-makers and their perceived impact on their local church, workplace, and community. According to Sidman (2013), “By engaging in open talks with the participants, I was able to acquire information about how people construct meaning of their lived experiences” (p. 3). According to the researcher, unstructured interviews are the most effective method since they let the researcher observe and analyze how participants make sense of their own experiences while serving as disciple-makers.

Setting

The proposed setting was conducted in an area where Christian entrepreneurs are most prevalent and actively involved. This includes their place of worship, their place of employment, and their local community. The three settings provided a diverse setting and aided in the following ways: increased validity, discovering a complete picture of the research problem, and interrogating multiple ways of perceiving a research challenge. About 40 to 50 hours a week, CEs spend time with their coworkers. During this time, they interact with others for commercial goals and present stories, milestones, highs, and lows of life. CEs can also be found in the

community. For example, CEs may create a company model that provides something back to the community, sponsor local non-profits, or even contribute to the economy in their neighborhood. Lastly, CEs impact on the local church investing in CEs is immeasurable. For example, A full-time employee is likely to spend a significant amount of time under the supervision of a CE. This is an opportunity to help others grow spiritually outside of the church. People's relationships with coworkers, spouses, parents, coaches, and clergy can all be shaped by their jobs.

Participants

This phenomenological study involved eight participants. According to Creswell (2018), “sample size depends on the qualitative design being used” phenomenology involves a range of 3–10 participants” (p. 185). The sample size of eight allowed for saturation of data. The researcher aimed to foster inclusivity among people of all backgrounds in order for them to work together to benefit the church. To avoid eliminating any CE based on ethnic origin or gender, the researcher chose the following demographics. Participant demographics included CEs over the age of 18 years of age, CEs who had at least 51% of the decision-making power in the organization, CEs also had a minimum of 1 year of leadership experience, attended Christian churches in the United States at least twice a month, had at least one staff member or staff volunteer, and expressed some degree of desire to disciple others in the church, community, and workplace. Some participants also expressed some degree of desire to disciple others in the church, community, and workplace. Participants can be of any nationality; however, they were required to have their primary place of business in the United States.

It is common practice in qualitative research to conduct purposeful sampling to get more information about the topic under investigation. According to Berg (2004), “When developing a purposive sample, researchers use their special knowledge or expertise about some group to

select subjects who represent the population” (p. 36). The researcher used snowball nonprobability sampling based on the idea that the researcher distributed the research instrument to known members of the population set with the intention that they, in turn, distribute the instrument to additional possible sample members within the population. Snowball sampling describes a method of sampling that occurs when a researcher asks one participant to propose another for participation (Creswell, 2012). As a result, the researcher asked the question in an informal dialogue during the interview.

Before beginning the investigation, the researcher set up two guidelines to be considered and agreed upon. For eligibility purposes, these guidelines also served as eligibility guidelines.

1. Participants were asked via telephone to verbally confirm that their answers would be truthful, forthright, and straightforward before completing the questionnaire.
2. Each participant was asked via telephone to verbally confirm that they agree to and can share openly during their interview their relative (positive and negative) experiences as a leader within their workplace, the church, and the community that has aided them in disciple-making.

Role of the Researcher

In the qualitative study design, the researcher takes a more active role. Beginning with the study’s inception, the researcher develops the RQs and gathers the necessary resources. While collecting data, the researcher must explain the importance of the participant’s contribution to the study. While conducting research, the researcher must also detect patterns and trends in the data they collect. To avoid bias, researchers should limit their involvement in the study, especially regarding data collecting and processing.

This type of study strongly emphasizes the researcher, who is viewed as a vital qualitative instrument. Interviewing or observing a party immerses the researcher in the circumstance and makes him or her a part of it. According to Lichtman (2013), “the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis” (p. 22). The qualitative researcher uses their eyes, ears, and filters to collect, analyze, and interpret the data. The first tool in this research was the researcher.

The researcher organized, reflected, and drew conclusions based on the obtained data. The researcher was the sole investigator who performed a range of responsibilities during the study, including decision-making, interview facilitation, and research. According to DeWalt & DeWalt B, “The researcher will perform many different roles within the fieldwork situation and participate in the actions being studied such as: Being the key decision-maker to streamline the learning design processes and serving as the project manager” (p. 22).

The researcher held some bias toward CEs based on her history of working for her parents’ enterprises, earning a business degree, being a coach, and launching her business. However, the researcher used reflexivity and bracketing to ensure that her views would be set aside during the research process, which aided in setting aside any seen or unforeseen biases. This was accomplished by collaborating with other researchers and keeping a journal of the bracketing process, which is included in the final bracketing journal report (see Appendix H). After completing this study, achieving a more significant impact on society is the primary goal of the researcher’s investigation and analysis. This might include additional workshops, updated coaching sessions, the creation of course content for institutions, and the development of content media for Christian enterprises, such as books and podcasts. The researcher agreed with Yin’s (2003) declaration,

As a researcher for this study, I was committed to the highest ethical standards. These standards include honesty, responsibility, competence, and credibility. I was also committed to respect and empathy toward the participants with whom I worked. With these aims in mind, I also acknowledge that qualitative research is fundamentally a human endeavor, and as such, I was subject to bias. (p. 23)

Ethical Considerations

According to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process, the researcher's goal was to reduce the potential for harm to a minimum and ensure that no participants were put in unnecessary danger. The researcher utilized modern practices and procedures for data collection and applied them to individuals. Subjects faced minimal risk in comparison to anticipated benefits. Participants were selected based on their level of merit. Consent to participate in the study after receiving adequate information was obtained before its start.

The principle of respect for individuals served as the foundation for obtaining informed consent and implied consent (which included disclosure, comprehension, and voluntariness). That is to say, prospective participants were given a chance to choose whether certain things would happen to them. Additional safeguards for vulnerable participants were also provided with respect for persons. Both individual researchers and the broader society are exemplified by the words "do no harm" and "maximize feasible benefits and minimize possible drawbacks," which apply to both individual research initiatives and the whole research enterprise. For the selection of participants to be just, both personally (by making the study available to anybody who might benefit from it) and socially, it must adhere to fair practices (based on the ability of members of that class to bear burdens and on the appropriateness of placing further burdens on already burdened persons). The IRB's decisions are guided by an extra principle of scientific integrity not clearly articulated in the Belmont Report. Research must be conducted in a way that allows for an accurate assessment of the potential influence on human participants and proper conduct by researchers to ensure ethical behavior.

For this study, the Liberty University (LU) IRB-approved informed consent form is attached and found in Appendix A. All screening questionnaires and interviews were optional, with any necessary disclaimers provided to participants in writing. Each participant could withdraw from the study at any time during the process. To ensure confidentiality, the researcher used pseudonyms rather than identifying individuals, organizations, or leaders. The researcher will not disclose any identifying information about the participants, including their names or any other information that could be used to identify them, such as the names of their companies. After finishing this study, entrepreneurs who participated in it can potentially act as mentors to other businesspeople, teaching them what they have discovered. If the identities of the participants were made public, it might put at risk the trust they have built up with the people they have mentored in the past and with those they will mentor in the future.

The researcher utilized the alternative approach to safeguard the volunteers while conducting the study. When participants know how their data will be employed, who will receive the study results, and how they will be released, they are considered to have a higher level of knowledge. The researcher took actionable efforts to encourage users to communicate about the use of their data. If the purpose for which the data is meant to be used is adequately stated, it will be simple to establish assurances of secrecy. During the first phone call, the researcher went over the specifics of the study, how the subject would be participating, and how they might withdraw from the study if necessary. As part of their presentation, the purpose of the researcher was to define the most effective use of their data and the audience to which the study will be presented. The participants were then given their informed consent forms and allowed to ask any questions they might have if clarification was required.

The researcher scanned all the data and uploaded it to a computer that required a password. Each interview was recorded both visually and audibly. After 3 years have passed after the conclusion of the study, all of the data will be deleted. On the researcher's private computer, which is maintained in a secure location, an encrypted file protected by a password is retained, which would preserve the audio data and interviews. For storing all of the hard copy information, a file protected by a password has been created on the researcher's computer. Following the completion of the data analysis, the interview film was disposed of. After 3 years have passed since the defense of the dissertation, or after 5 years have passed since the defense was successful, all of the notes will be removed. It has been decided that all consent forms will be stored in a safe place for the next 5 years. All of the procedures and materials were meticulously documented to ensure that another individual can reproduce the study by following the specific guidelines that are provided.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The goal of this research was to investigate the formative life events (both positive and negative) that enable CEs to assist in the discipleship efforts of the church, the workplace, and the community. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), "A phenomenological study attempts to comprehend people's views, opinions, and understandings of a specific setting" (p. 51). The purpose of this study was to assist in the discovery of methods that may help equip and educate CEs, pastors, ministry students, and business students. This was accomplished by gaining a better understanding of negative and positive life experiences and CE's wisdom in business. This study included the administration of a screening questionnaire and an interview to acquire a perspective from the point of view of a CE in order to share it with other CEs and ministry

leaders. Participants gave informed consent and indicated they would participate in a phone screening questionnaire and interview.

Collection Methods

According to Creswell (2007), the essence of a phenomenological study is the search for “the central underlying meaning of the experience and emphasize the intentionality of consciousness where experiences contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on the memory, image, and meaning” (p. 52). The researcher believes that this mixture was appropriate for the study, but at the same time, it was realistic not to overwhelm the subjects or the researcher. The researcher gathered data using the following instruments: reflexivity, questionnaires, and unstructured interviews to obtain better knowledge regarding the essential value of CEs experiences in disciple-making.

According to Check and Schutt (2012), “Survey research is defined as “the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions” (p. 160). According to Singleton and Straits (2009), “Survey research can use qualitative research strategies (e.g., using open-ended questions)” (p. 23). When open-ended questions are utilized in a study on discipleship, which adds considerable value to the research since it enables respondents to use their frames of reference. The researcher employed a questionnaire to assist in screening potential volunteers and determining which individuals would not be suitable for the research project. The researcher also conducted unstructured interviews to provide a baseline and address the lived experiences of CEs who mentor others. Because of this, leaders of Christian ministries and educational institutions will have a better idea of a different topic to discuss with students who might not know how the church could benefit from their chosen field of study.

Additionally, it will assist ministry leaders in recognizing any personal passion CEs may have for ministry as a predictor of possible interests in that field more quickly and efficiently.

Instruments and Protocols

The researcher was validated and developed through reflexivity. According to Lincoln et al. (2017), “While there are numerous definitions of reflexivity, it can be simply characterized as a critical examination of oneself as a researcher” (p. 213). Reflexivity is a deliberate process that compels the researcher to come to terms with the research problem and the people with whom the conduct research on. All RQs were affected by this instrument as the researcher administered conducting all phone screening surveys and interviews. All data were scanned and uploaded to a password protected computer by the researcher.

Survey

The researcher employed screening surveys in order to determine a baseline and validate individuals who qualified for the study. The survey was carried out, and the results were emailed out to those who took part. In addition, the poll inquired about the qualifications, demographics, and years of experience of CEs. This instrument was helpful in checking the credentials of the study participants prior to their involvement in the study.

Interview

One of the most effective methods for gathering information and correcting misinterpretations is through the use of unstructured interviews. According to Vagle (2014), “Unstructured interviews are the most popular interview method in phenomenological research” (p. 3). Unstructured interviews are differentiated from structured interviews in that they utilize conversation and open-ended questions. According to Vagle (2014), “Unstructured interviewing is at the heart of a qualitative method, in contrast to the quantitative design, which places a

greater emphasis on separation and control” (p. 3). The major objective of conducting in-depth interviews is to obtain a better understanding of the lives of the individuals being interviewed. Unstructured interviews were the most appropriate means to achieve the goal of understanding the lived experiences of CEs in their roles as disciple makers. According to Sidman (2013), unstructured interviews allows the researcher to investigate the meaning lived experiences hold for the participants. An unstructured interview provided an appropriate method for analyzing how people interpret their own experiences with discipleship in a candid and transparent way. Additionally, the researcher chose unstructured interviews over semistructured interviews to elicit as much information about the topic as possible. According to Corbin and Morse (2013),

During the unstructured interview, the participant has the control over the pacing of the interview, what will be disclosed (the amount of detail, scope of the interview, etc.), and the emotional intensity. During the semi structured interview, the participant may withhold important information because the relevant question was not asked, may answer in a perfunctory manner, or not fully cooperate. (p. 340)

Unstructured interviews provided the most effective technique for learning as much as possible about CEs’ lived experiences as disciple makers. The researcher compiled a wide variety of unstructured interview questions into various categories (see Appendix G). The questions were developed with the intention of achieving three different goals. The purpose of each question was to glean as much information as possible about the entrepreneur’s life experiences in relation to discipleship in the church, the workplace, and the community from the responses that they provided. Afterwards, questions were posed to ascertain whether or if the CEs considered themselves obligatory and if they want additional education or insight into their role as disciple-makers. The questions sought to clarify who, what, when, why, and how CEs effect discipleship within the context of the local church, the workplace, and the community. Each and every interview was carried out through the use of Zoom, a web-based video conferencing service.

The researcher thoughtfully devised a validation procedure for the data gathered in this study. The interview was conducted in the style of a conversation, and the individuals who took part were in charge of directing the topic of conversation. It was a collaborative effort between the participants and the researcher to elicit information on the positive and negative life experiences that influenced the participants' decision to become disciple makers. The researcher also kept a record of the participants' impact as disciple-makers in the church, their workplaces, and the community as a whole at the same time. Each interview was a maximum of 90 minutes to ensure the participants had enough time to react to each question, but also so they did not feel as though the interview process was excessive. Three concluding questions were asked at the end of each interview. The unstructured interview format allowed for pertinent responses to come forth in answer to the four research questions. The interview guide contained 20 questions; there were two to three questions for each RQ and three closing questions.

The researcher contacted CEs who were also actively participating in church ministry in order to evaluate the appropriateness and dependability of the study's questions. After receiving approval from the IRB, this knowledgeable group went through the researcher's previously drafted questions to look for any potential areas for improvement. In addition, there was a pastor on the panel of experts who had great skill in the area of discipleship. The researcher was responsible for selecting the panel of experts. It was decided that all queries should be emailed in with a Word document attachment, which would allow for immediate responses (see Appendix I).

Procedures

The purpose of the investigation carried out by the researcher was to make contact with CEs who have either had a favorable relative life influence or an unfavorable relative life

influence that has influenced their choice to become disciple-makers. The researcher accomplished this goal by utilizing snowballing strategies, local communities, and social media platforms to locate CEs for the study. These strategies helped spread the word about the study and determine whether any additional CEs were interested in participating in the study and reaping the benefits of the research. From that point forward, the researcher likewise utilized the snowballing approach. In order to broaden the scope of the study, the researcher asked participants for their suggestions in this area. The researcher gained a greater understanding of the underlying significance of CEs experiences in the field of disciple-making through the utilization of questionnaires and interviewing techniques.

Before beginning any research involving human subjects, the researcher first got approval from the IRB and included a copy of that approval in Appendix A. The researcher then attempted to contact the participant through a social media participant request (see Appendix D). This call for participation in the study was made publicly available on the internet. Following expressions of interest, the researcher sent out participant recruitment letters through email. These letters included a formal invitation to participate in the study, an introduction to the researcher, and more information about the study (see Appendix C). The next step was to attach a participant consent form and a letter of consent that explained the study, including what the study was about, what would happen during the study, how it could benefit others, any risks involved, how personal information would be protected, confidentiality, compensation, costs, conflict of interests, study voluntary participation, how to withdraw, contact information for study concerns and rights, and a request for an electronic signature using DocuSign (see Appendix B). As soon as the researcher received the consent form with the electronic signature, a scheduled meeting to carry out a phone screening questionnaire was made (see Appendix F). After completing the

telephone questionnaire, an appointment for an audiovisual interview using Zoom was scheduled to finish up the unstructured interview part of the research (see Appendix G). In conclusion, a reproduction of the researcher's bracketing report was included in the paper (see Appendix H).

Qualitative research employs the bracketing method to reduce the negative impact of preconceived notions on the research process. According to Vagle (2014), "Identifying, isolating, and suspending assumptions about a phenomenon is required for bracketing" (p. 32). The researcher's parents were entrepreneurs as well as the researcher. Therefore, it is necessary to address the tendency to rely on preconceptions to resist any possible negative behaviors in the study. The researcher decided to adopt bracketing because it required the researcher to detect, isolate, and suspend any thoughts that may interrupt or negatively impact the research. The researcher scanned and submitted all informed consent forms to a password-protected PC for the IRB approval process. A copy of the bracketing report is attached (see Appendix H).

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis began, as stated in Rudestam and Newton's (2001) words, "with describing the phenomenon under research" (p. 43). Through the process of transcribing audio files, an interview transcript was prepared. The content is stored on two flash drives, which can be accessed and removed, as necessary. The transcripts used for this research were analyzed to determine the accuracy with which they portrayed the discipleship experience of the CE. Eliminating redundant remarks allowed the researcher to focus on the principal issues. The utilization of primary themes allowed for the construction of frameworks that were in line with the content of the experiences. Rudestam and Newton (2001) described the process that takes place through this method,

Data are systematically coded into as many themes and meaning categories as possible. As the categories emerge and are refined, the researcher begins to consider how they

relate to one another and the theoretical implications. Gradually the theoretical properties of the meaning categories crystallize and form a pattern. (p. 43)

Analysis Methods

According to Chesnay (2014), “The Colaizzi method is commonly used in phenomenological research analysis and involves several steps” (p. 45). The purpose of analysis of the interviews with the participants was to gain a sense of what they were experiencing and to draw some broad conclusions about their experience and how it led them to discipleship. The primary focus of the analysis was the participants’ reports of negative and positive relative life situations. The researcher also collected relevant statements about discipleship, using in vivo coding to split the data into smaller samples. The researcher then moved on to the next step, organizing the data using a hierarchical coding frame. This method was used to frame RQ questions 1, 2, 3 & 4.

Figure 3

Modified Colaizzi Method of Data Analysis

1. carefully read through interview records
2. extract important and meaningful statements
3. encode recurring and meaningful content
4. collect encoded views
5. write down detailed and exhaustive descriptions
6. distinguish similar views and sublimate theme concepts
7. return findings to the participants for verification of ambiguous information

After going through the Colaizzi method and using in vivo coding, the researcher created interpretations for specific statements regarding the results of disciple-making events to shed light on the significance of those outcomes. Afterward, the researcher clustered the meanings into themes and verified that the emerging findings and the participants’ testimonies were

cohesive. This was done to prevent the temptation of ignoring material that does not fit, which was the previous step in the process. The researcher put the findings together to create a comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon (CEs and discipleship). This required categorizing the text, contrasting topics to identify recurrent themes, and establishing a connection between them and their respective conceptual meanings. The researcher ensured the reliability of the data by contacting the people who took part in the questionnaire and asking them whether the universal description of discipleship corresponded with their own experiences. In the end, the researcher took into account any changes suggested by the participants in the study and incorporated them into the final description of the event. In order to both analyze and evaluate the data for this study, the qualitative analysis software ATLAS.ti was utilized. For an illustration of how the researcher structured the data and the interview, refer to Table 2.

Table 2

Respondent Overview

Interviewee	Interviewer	Length in mins	ATLAS.ti project
LJ	Charis R	63	Included/coded
MG	Charis R	50	Included/coded
TN	Charis R	46	Included/coded
SQ	Charis R	57	Not Included

Trustworthiness

According to Houghton et al. (2013), “Trustworthiness is built on reliable research metrics, triangulation of many sources, confirmable evidence, and rich details with which to judge the transferability of conclusions” (p. 12). Because the data cannot be objectively assessed, qualitative research must rely on the participants’ words, thoughts, and experiences. The researcher took great care to ensure that there were no personal biases incorporated into the study. By doing so, the researcher could discover and gather data in line with the research

framework. This process ensured that the researcher did not add any other personal biases to the data collection process by adhering to the objective requirements of the approved study.

The researcher evaluated the questionnaire and interview questions with the help of a panel composed of subject matter experts. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015), “Participants should be selected according to their relationship with the phenomena,” (p. 98). The participants in this study are CEs and a pastor fluent in discipleship ministry who have committed themselves to pursuing a life of discipleship as a primary goal. The data were analyzed by considering the number of participants who made references and the topics discussed in those references. After conducting a comprehensive investigation and examining the data, the researcher presented all the findings to the expert panel for verification.

Credibility

Credibility is the degree of discovering the truth of the findings. Truth in phenomenological research refers to a precise model or description of the universal structure of participants’ lived experiences that are true and complete, according to Creswell (2014). Multiple data-gathering procedures are used in research investigations to minimize bias and gain a deeper understanding of phenomena. (p. 32). One of which is the process of triangulating. According to Creswell (2014),

Triangulating is the process of analyzing data sources by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes? If themes are established based on converging several sources of data or participants’ perspectives, this process can be claimed as adding to the study’s validity. (p. 199)

The reliability of data derived from a single source or investigator can be questionable; therefore, the researcher employed data triangulation. When a researcher only uses one method,

the findings must be taken at face value; however, when a researcher employs two or three methods to address a single question, two of the methods may yield the same results, or all three methods may yield results that conflict; the researcher would then either reframe the research question or reconsider the methods or do both. In this way, the researcher was able to gain a more complete and holistic understanding of the subject matter at hand.

The researcher used the data triangulation method by using the questionnaire to determine whether CEs' desires to be a disciple maker were parallel to the understanding of discipleship discussed in the interviews.. In addition, the researcher employed categorized interview questions, which were divided according to the following settings: their place of worship, their place of employment, and their community. The researcher used the Colaizzi method of data analysis to analyze the interview transcripts and audio-visual recordings.

Dependability

The term reliability refers to the quality of one's research. Using various strategies to collect data increases the reliability of the results since the data can be checked for consistency across different procedures. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015), "Triangulation of data requires that the researcher employ a wide variety of queries" (p. 65). According to the methodology and instrumentation described in Chapter 3, the researcher employed an inadequate selection process. To carry out this study, the researcher opted for methodological approaches that include clearly defined and well-organized research methods. A dependable audit of the study's research techniques was performed by an impartial committee of one pastor and two CEs. This is where the researcher's efforts and planned methodologies were reviewed to make sure they were consistent with the actual study.

Confirmability

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015), “Other researchers should be able to duplicate this study in similar conditions and obtain comparable results by following the explanations in the participants, settings, and techniques sections. (p. 66). As a qualitative researcher, it is the researcher’s job to ensure the participants are the primary informants of the findings. According to Lincoln et al. (2017), “While there are many different definitions of reflexivity, it can be simply defined as a critical analysis of self as a researcher” (p. 213). The researcher decided to employ reflexivity as a deliberate method. Because of this technique, the researcher was compelled to confront the issue that the research was examining and the participants taking part in the study.

In this research project, triangulation was utilized to investigate the RQs in the workplace, the local community, and the church. This study employed the triangulation method by analyzing the RQs in three distinct environments: the community, the workplace, and the church. This was done to ensure that the findings of the study are not influenced by the biases of the researcher but rather, by the biases of the participants themselves, as expressed in their own words, narratives, and surroundings. The researcher made the findings and transcripts of this study available to anyone who asked for them to ensure that the study was not biased. Additionally, the researcher utilized an audit trail in the process. The researcher provided a comprehensive account of the steps taken to gather, analyze, and interpret the data. The researcher’s findings included an explanation of the themes and the singular and fascinating topics that surfaced throughout the data collection process.

Transferability

Researchers can establish whether the findings of a study are transferable by determining whether the findings may be utilized in various contexts. Quantitative researchers typically refer to this idea as generalizability when describing it. Nevertheless, phenomenological research's end goal is to characterize a phenomenon's universal structure totally and precisely.

Phenomenology does not attempt to make objective claims regarding theories or patterns since it is less concerned with issues like these. According to De Chesnay (2014), "if the phenomenological researcher has been successful, any individual who shares that lived experience should be able to recognize the model or description" (p. 208).

There have been many different classifications and discussions of discipleship within various religious contexts. Conversely, CEs have been forced to grapple with this narrative in the marketplace, but they can now alter it. When entering a church for the first time, many people experience feelings of unease. Therefore, having a guide and a facilitator from the community can help ease some of the stress associated with going to a local church and making connections with people there. Other good impacts have been seen in the church and community due to discipleship among CEs. A comprehensive investigation into the perspectives, characteristics, and life experiences of CEs that have been helpful to them in their role as disciple-makers was carried out as part of this research. The conclusions of this research can be applied to Christian educational institutions and Christian universities with business programs, and in churches and communities. Because not all business owners have the same aspirations of becoming Christian leaders or adhering to Christian values, the findings may not be appropriate in all circumstances.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a summary of the procedures and components involved in a qualitative research project. A phenomenological study, outlined in this chapter, was carried out with the participation of eight CEs dedicated to the quest for discipleship. In order to complete a research project, one must follow several steps and methods. This chapter comprehensively summarized the study's aims, methodologies, concerns, and overall rationale. This section covered the selection of participants, procedures, and the issues involved in each research project stage.

Additionally, sociological and psychological ethical concerns were discussed in this part of the article. In the context of the church, the workplace, and the community, this research project aimed to investigate CEs' perceptions of the value they bring to the role of a disciple-maker. The goal of this research was to educate Christian educators, churches, and the community about the significance of CEs' formative life experiences and the question of whether these experiences can be utilized to bridge the discipleship gap that exists between the various local churches, communities, and workplaces in order to fulfill the Great Commission.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter Four examines the phenomenological study's qualitative data analysis and findings considering the research questions. This chapter is structured to give the reader an overview of the research's methodology, including its protocol, procedures, and measures, as well as its participants' demographics, research design, and results. Eight Christian business owners were interviewed, all 18 or older, had the authority to make more than half of the crucial choices in their respective companies, had been in a leadership role for at least 1 year, and were eager to disciple others. Each potential participant completed a brief telephone questionnaire. Upon qualification and verification, each participant was interviewed through Zoom, a cloud-based AV conferencing platform. A pseudonym was given to each person who participated in the study for use in the final report. After all the data were compared and analyzed, conclusions were drawn. This study yielded several themes, including discipleship through leading and modeling, called by God, the utilization of business acumen within the church, transformative life experiences, insufficient CE-focused discipleship educational support, entrepreneurial skills, and social conscience, identifying community issues to address, giving back to the community, work-related skills that promote discipleship, compassion for discipling others in the workplace, and workplace discipleship strategies.

Compilation Protocol and Measures

This qualitative research project involved in-depth interviews with eight business owners operating in eight distinct industries in the United States. An additional participant completed the consent form, but their busy schedule prevented them from joining the Zoom interview. Another participant inquired and was sent the consent form but did not reply. The researcher attempted to

reach out, and the participant informed stated they would not be able to move forward with participation. Email, social media, and the snowballing method were used to find qualifying entrepreneurs for the study. The data were looked at and compared, and then conclusions were made. Data were compiled from triangulated data in questionnaires, interview transcripts, audio-visual recordings, and interview notes. The researcher used the Colaizzi method of data analysis to analyze interview transcripts and audio-visual recordings. The use of Colaizzi's method of data analysis enabled new knowledge to be revealed and provided insights into the formative life experiences of CEs. Analyzing data using Colaizzi's (1978) method assures that the results are credible and reliable because it is a rigorous and robust qualitative approach. By doing so, researchers can unearth hidden patterns and connections between concepts. According to Wirihana et al. (2018), "researchers using a descriptive phenomenological approach should consider using this method as a clear and logical way through which the fundamental structure of an experience can be explored" (p. 34).

During this study, Colaizzi's data processing method began with a detailed review of all acquired interview and research transcripts, observation notes, and questionnaire findings to guarantee accuracy and allow for future study replication. After that, the researcher evaluated the data to determine the most meaningful things the participant said.

The researcher read the data provided by the participants multiple times to become familiar with their responses before analyzing them for codes. Each question and each person who answered it was given a unique code. The researcher used in vivo coding in order to emphasize the actual spoken words of the participants. According to Manning (2017),

"This form of coding can be especially helpful when researchers interact with participants from a particular culture or microculture to help highlight how those participants use specific words or phrases in their interactions that might not otherwise be understood when using other forms of coding" (p. 1).

Otter.ai allowed the researcher to break down the data into smaller samples after listening to and rewatching the audio and video multiple times to have a deeper grasp of the collected vital remarks. The researcher then analyzed the data with ATLAS. AI via color codes. Consistency between the evolving findings and the participants' accounts was checked once the color codes were sorted into themes.

The next step was to compose lengthy and specific accounts of the process. The information was compiled in Word documents and sorted and filed according to their respective categories and themes. Lastly, the researcher compared and contrasted related issues to identify recurring patterns and connected these themes to their underlying core concepts. The researcher ensured the reliability of the results by checking the respondents' responses to their definition of discipleship to see if it aligned with their own experiences. The result reflects the incorporation of all responses from study participants and any necessary refinements.

Demographic and Sample Data

At first, a call for research participants was launched via social media (see Appendix D). Several of the criteria, including but not limited to being an entrepreneur, living in the United States, and being at least 18 years old, were listed in the post. After receiving no responses, the researcher reached out to the organizer of entrepreneur groups, asking if she might place a post in the group, as it had the people for whom the researcher was looking to conduct the study. This yielded the most response.

Candidates were contacted via email with research information if interest was shown (see Appendix C). In some cases, candidates requested a phone call in which the same information was delivered over the phone (see Appendix E). If a candidate expressed interest, the researcher had them sign a DocuSign consent form (see Appendix B). Ten business owners expressed an

interest in participating in the survey. Two, however, were unable to participate due to unexpected urgent commitments. The researcher desired to have eight participants for this study. A total of eight Christian entrepreneurs consented to take part. Each participant submitted a completed consent form, questionnaire, and audio/visual interview through Zoom. Appendices F, G, H, and I provided the research instruments used in this research. Eleven qualifying research participant questions were asked of potential candidates over the phone for the aim of determining whether they were eligible to take part in the study:

1. Are you 18 years of age or older
2. Are you an entrepreneur that has established your own business?
3. What industry does your company operate in, and can you tell me a little about it?
4. Do you consider yourself to be a Christian entrepreneur?
5. Do you have at least 1 year of leadership experience?
6. Do you feel that any aspects of your business operation conflict with your Christian values?
7. Do you attend a Christian church located in the United States?
8. Do you attend church at least twice a month?
9. Do you make the majority (at least 51%) of the business decisions daily?
10. Do you have any negative or positive formative life experiences that have aided your desire to be a disciple-maker?
11. Do you have the desire to disciple others within the church, community, and workplace?

In preparation for the unstructured interview, the questionnaire (see Appendix F) included 11 open-ended prequalifying questions for the study. The researcher intended to learn as much as possible about the experiences of CEs in their jobs as disciple-makers. There are fewer restrictions placed on the interviewee in an unstructured interview. These interviews, also called open-ended interviews, are more conducive to a free-flowing conversation between the researcher and the respondent (Marvasti, 2010). The prequalifying questions in this study focused on age, ownership, industry, experience, location, formative life experiences, and discipleship. Following the phone-based questionnaires, 20 in-depth, unstructured interview questions were asked via Zoom. On the scheduled interview day, the researcher instructed the subjects to imagine conversing with a trusted friend over coffee. After being informed by the

researcher that the interview was not formal and that participants were encouraged to be comfortable, it appeared from their body language that they were more at ease. Before beginning each interview, the researcher would ask if she could pray. Following approval, the researcher prayed for the study's participants and the research itself. After the prayer, the researcher informed the interviewees that they would be recorded and that a transcription service (Otter ai) would transcribe the conversation. Initially, the researcher briefed each participant about the study's goals, guaranteed their privacy, and assured them that they would be informed of the following steps once the interview was finished. Each participant was then asked 20 interview questions. Only one interview session took place per participant. The researcher informed the participants that the interview transcripts would be available at the link provided in the Zoom conference within an hour of the interview's conclusion. The participants did not make any changes. The researcher removed any personal information, such as names, from the notes.

The study included six women and two men. All of the participants were Christian entrepreneurs, and they made over half of their daily decisions without consulting a franchisor. Table 3 displays pseudonyms chosen for the eight participants and assigned for research purposes. Each participant's business industry and interview times are also listed.

Table 3*Participant Profile and Demographics*

Name	Gender	Industry	Interview Length in mins
Anna	Female	Counseling	69mins
Caleb	Male	Mental Health	148mins
Mia	Female	Wellness	72mins
Ruth	Female	Ecommerce	76mins
Asher	Male	Higher Education	74mins
Leah	Female	Finance	70mins
Naomi	Female	Real Estate	68mins
Sarah	Female	Jewelry	85mins

Data Analysis Findings

After conducting a content analysis on the questionnaire, 12 overarching themes emerged. For each RQ, the topics were shown alongside the percentage of respondents who had identified with that theme. In total, there were 160 primary codes found while analyzing the data from this qualitative study.

Research Question 1

What defining formative life experiences, whether positive or negative, do Christian entrepreneurs possess that they perceive will help them become more effective disciple-makers?

CEs' responses helped explain whether the respondents believe a person's formative life experiences (both positive and negative) contribute to their ability to make disciples; this question was meant to serve as a starting point for that exploration. The code and themes for the first research question are listed in Table 4.

Table 4*RQ 1: Research Codes and Themes*

RQ1 Codes	RQ1 Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting with others by sharing knowledge • Building relationships via communicating, listening, and inspiring others. 	Discipleship through leading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving others real-life examples of how to live • Being vulnerable in the presence of others • Increasing trustworthiness by setting a good example 	Discipleship through modeling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing one's faith • Evidence from one's own life that suggests God has specifically chosen one to serve others • The conviction that God can and will utilize imperfect people 	Being called by God

Theme 1: Discipleship Through Leading

All eight participants indicated that negative, positive, or both formative life experiences have helped them be more effective disciple-makers. There were two codes: (a) connecting with others by sharing knowledge. (b) building relationships via communicating, listening, and inspiring others. The theme of discipleship through leading emerged from the codes. Table 5 shows the alignment of participants' responses to the theme of leadership when discipling others.

Table 5*RQ1, Theme 1*

Participants	Anna	Caleb	Mia	Ruth	Asher	Leah	Naomi	Sarah
Theme 1: Discipleship through leading	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑

Anna. Anna was exceptionally forthcoming and engaging when discussing leadership as a means of discipleship. The point communicated by Anna was that a follower of Jesus must grow and develop their leadership skills. This is done by imparting knowledge to others and sharing their personal experiences. As a women's leader at her local church, Anna shared that

she enjoys receiving and passing on knowledge to others. In order to lead through discipling others, Anna believes a person in a leadership position must “first be a follower of Jesus.”

Caleb. Caleb was very outspoken and enthusiastic about describing discipleship as leading in a way that, “regardless of how you do it,” draws people to Christ. Caleb also mentioned that others will have their “own perceptions” and that people “will judge critically.” As a result, Caleb stated that it was “essential for leaders to surround themselves with other leaders” who share their perspectives to improve their ability to disciple others.

Mia. When speaking on leading and discipleship, Mia exhibited a high level of composure and relaxation. According to Mia, a leader may disciple others to lead them through difficult moments while encouraging them to have a relationship with Jesus. Mia elaborated by giving a specific instance in which she had done so. Mia has spent the past 12 years leading a support group at her church. The goal as a group is to facilitate participant encounters with Jesus.

Ruth. In order to make sure that everything was clear, Ruth showed a lot of patience by taking her time to answer questions and asking for questions to be repeated if necessary. Ruth explained that leading people does not require simply “preaching” on discipleship but rather leading through actions such as “becoming a lay speaker in a class.” Ruth used her own experience of being drawn into discipleship through a lay speaker class as an example for others. She gained the courage and experience in this course to share her faith in Jesus Christ with others.

Asher. The depth of knowledge in Asher’s comments was substantial, and he did a great job expanding his arguments. For example, leadership, in Asher’s view, requires an awareness of the requirements of others. Asher stated that in his 10 years of experience as a paramedic, his conversations with others were essential in his development of heightened self-awareness. In this

“non-conventional Christian setting,” Asher felt God heightened his sensitivity and taught him how to better connect with others. As a result, leaders can effectively interact with followers and disciple them. In order to reach people who may not usually be receptive to discipleship, leadership also requires occasionally adopting a “relational” and “unconventional” approach.

Leah. Leah had a relaxed approach to disciplining via leadership in their group. “Being able to watch other people make decisions that I have made or going through a similar situation that I have while trying to direct them and give some advice, being a gap filler” was how Leah defined leading in order to disciple other people. Leah added that she had learned much from her divorce, including that it was easy to place blame on others but that she had to take responsibility for her actions if God was going to use her situation as an illustration of Romans 8:28. That is what ultimately led to her happy marriage. She wants to fill in the blanks for other people so they may see that God can make something good come out of any tragedy.

Naomi. During the conversation about leadership through discipleship, Naomi asserted that the love of people radiating from a leader is how Jesus is experienced and that this love makes it possible for the leader to disciple others. Naomi said that an essential part of spreading love was having meaningful conversations with others about anything from specific interests to life’s big questions. In addition, Naomi stressed the importance of communication skills like being comfortable enough to ask, “How are you today?” Using the phrase “seizing the moment,” Naomi described when someone says, “I am not having a good day,” Naomi recommended taking advantage of the moment by saying, “I am sorry, you are having a bad day, you know, and I am going to pray for you.” Naomi continued by saying she frequently asked, “What is your name again? Or “What is your mother’s name? I want to pray especially by name for her if you

tell me she is ill.” Naomi explained that being detailed is an indirect way of demonstrating genuine concern for individuals.

Sarah. Sarah’s response emphasized that effectively discipling others involves taking the initiative to mentor and constructively guide people. Sarah used an example of when she had financial issues. Sarah mentioned that she would share her testimony and be transparent about her struggles financially to help others.

Theme 2: Discipleship through Modeling

Five participants indicated that modeling is essential in disciplining others. Three codes emerged: giving others real-life examples of how to live, being vulnerable in the presence of others, and increasing trustworthiness by setting a good example. One theme emerged from the codes: One theme emerged from code discipleship through modeling. Table 6 shows the alignment of participants’ responses to the theme of modeling when discipling others.

Table 6

RQ1: Theme 2

Participants	Anna	Caleb	Mia	Ruth	Asher	Leah	Naomi	Sarah
Theme 2: Discipleship through modeling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Anna. Following Jesus closely and desiring that your life be utilized to assist others to do the same are the two most important characteristics of a “modeling I disciple,” as described by Anna. “This may involve modeling, teaching, and sharing life together.” Anna continued by saying that she first serves as a role model to her children at home. She takes care of their spiritual demands as well as their material ones. She can do this by encouraging and helping her kids as they explore their faith in Jesus. She draws on her experience as a counselor, from which

she professes to have been “called by God” to counsel in the areas of parenting, leading her women’s ministry, and being helpful to her clients professionally.

Caleb. Discipleship, according to Caleb, is not so much about how other people’s impressions of you are or “how they judge you critically,” but rather about how your actions are modeled for others to witness. Caleb hopes that everybody who encounters him will comment positively on his character. As Caleb put it, “the method of looking at discipleship is via our actions.” Caleb stated he has a large number of mentees and that he often uses scriptural teachings to guide their development as people and as leaders. He described his current predicament, in which he is taking care of his nephew, whom his parents (sister and brother) have sent to him so that he can help him stay out of trouble. He adapted the principles to his circumstances. He urged his nephew to take stock of his faith and let it direct him correctly. Working with those at risk or in a vulnerable situation,” Caleb said, “is my calling in mentoring.” Then he continued, “I also work with a youth building program through my church that serves those experiencing homelessness, mental illness, and substance misuse.”

Mia. According to Mia, one of the primary ways to model Christian discipleship is through “living your life out loud for Jesus.” Mia continued,

I make an effort to approach it by just living my life to the fullest and providing others with the opportunity to witness him at work in me, and then nurturing that by doing things like simply loving on them and expressing his affection with them.

This was what was done for her, so she, in turn, strives to do the same for others. Mia continued by saying that she had been raised a Jehovah’s Witness but had abandoned the faith in her early adolescence. She was shunned by her family and had no one to talk to or look up to for advice on her newfound faith in Jesus. Mia said she eventually located a church and was mentored by a congregation member. Mia had her “aha!” moment of realizing she was a “teaching pastor” in this setting. Mia’s mentor saw this potential and allowed her to speak publicly for the faith.

Ruth. Ruth did not discuss modeling in relation to discipleship; however, Ruth addressed sharing the love of Jesus Christ with others to make disciples out of them by introducing them to Jesus and allowing them to become disciples as a result of this process. Ruth also mentioned that she was raised in the church by a single mom who strengthened her faith by keeping her in church weekly.

Asher. Asher discussed how he now connects with his employees and others concerning modeling as a form of discipleship. Asher acknowledges that not all of their staff are Christians. However, they believe it is their responsibility as a leader to “model Christian ideals” to everyone they encounter. Asher continued by saying, “we have those values that may not necessarily be initially seen as it may as Christian values from the surface level because we do not necessarily state that explicitly, but it is whenever you look the at the principles that we follow” inside of their organization. Asher gives an example of how his organization does not “do stuff on Sundays” in order to “carve out time” for our people. This is done by modeling their activities in the church, encouraging others, and “if someone needs time off or needs to be able to go to an event or something like that, we allow that to happen.”

Leah. When asked what modeling through discipleship means, Leah confidently responds, “to model Christ in the earth is not only for me to model Christ in the earth, it is also to aid others in their path.” Because “we are expected to act in a mentoring capacity.”

Naomi. Although Naomi did not expressly mention modeling in relation to discipleship, Naomi did emphasize the need for loving individuals no matter where they are in their spiritual journey. Naomi shared, “I think it probably a good to attempt to be the hands and feet of Jesus to them because what that looks like, to me, may look like something different to them,” and then goes on to say that they believe it to be a good idea to make this attempt. However, in the end,

Naomi states, “I believe that love is the only thing that can truly be said to be universal. So, if you attempted to love them and pour into them wherever they are, even if it is in a different area than where I am, it would be the best thing you could do for them.” It is a language everyone speaks, and it converges in the middle.

Sarah. Sarah did not include modeling as a component of discipleship; however, Sarah did suggest that a person in a position of leadership should “want to guide people positively.”

Theme 3: Called by God

There were three codes: (a) developing one’s faith, (b) evidence from one’s life suggests God has specifically chosen one to serve others and (c) conviction that God can and will utilize imperfect people. One theme emerged from the codes: Being called by God. All eight participants indicated that they had a sense of being called by God as a CE. Table 7 shows the alignment of participants’ responses to the theme of being called by God.

Table 7

RQ1: Theme 3

Participants	Anna	Caleb	Mia	Ruth	Asher	Leah	Naomi	Sarah
Theme 3: Being called by God	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Anna. Anna strongly believes that God has called her to be a disciple-maker in counseling (where they do business), the church, and parenting.

Caleb. Caleb asserts that the way individuals become disciples and feel compelled by God to teach others is by sharing their testimonies. They can turn everything they have been through into a form of mentoring for those in need, using testimony to assist those in need. Caleb continued his story by saying he was a good student and football player yet spent much time in the streets. After getting into conflict with a rival drug dealer, he was stabbed dangerously close

to his heart. While hospitalized, he had a sudden epiphany that his current situation and activities had to be changed. He also shared that he did not think there was a God who would let him go through “the suffering he went through,” so he threw the Bible in the sink and lit it on fire. When he finally discovered the woman he would spend the rest of his life with, he also found his “faith.” He began reading the Bible and eventually joined a church where he regularly attended. The pastor mentored him during his time at the church. His testimony of overcoming homelessness, mental illness, and substance abuse inspires those in similar situations.

Mia. Mia asserts that they sense that God is calling them to a life of discipleship so they can share the amazing things God has done in their life. Mia continued by revealing that they were born into a Jehovah’s Witness family and have been raised in the faith since birth. At 19, they were responsible for losing their relationship with their entire family because they rejected their religious upbringing. They came to an understanding of a personal relationship with God when they were 27 years old. Mia now has the opportunity to share their testimony with people about how their life transformed when they encountered God since God had already done so much in their life up to that point that it allowed them to share their testimony.

Ruth. In the lay speaker class that Ruth decided to take, Ruth explained that they have a sense of being called by God in the area of discipleship. Ruth was convinced they needed to “start learning how to speak my faith instead of other things.” It was revealed when Ruth remarked confidently, “I took these classes and have been doing it since then.” Sharing God became a very, very essential aspect of Ruth’s life, and it was not only verbally but visually shown when Ruth mentioned sharing God with others.

Asher. Asher asserts that God called them to engage in discipleship before establishing their business. They worked as a paramedic for 10 years, during which time the workplace was

not Christian-friendly. During this time, Asher discovered that they were attempting to “be different” by setting an example for others. Asher said that first responders are forced to deal with challenges regularly “for which no one is ever truly prepared.” Therefore, Asher encouraged having critical talks with other coworkers and individuals. Asher said they believe God uses them “unconventionally” to disciple other people. Asher considers this to be where they were first called to disciple others.

Leah. According to Leah, the experience of “being able to watch other people making choices that I have made or going through similar situations that I have been in and to help them kind of direct them or even help them” is what makes Leah believe that God has called them to a life of discipleship. Leah also states that God has called them to “kind of cushion the blow for others and offer them some wisdom so that they will not have to, you know, experience the consequences that I have endured.”

Naomi. Naomi was overcome with strong feelings when asked this question and needed a moment to collect their thoughts before continuing. After that, Naomi continued by saying, “God is revealing my brokenness. Furthermore, things of the past that were, you know, guilt, and even though he would forgive me, I would realize that he is helping to show me the brokenness I suffered before that I can take that healing and try to pour into somebody else. That is because I can say, “I have experienced something right,” instead of feeling ashamed, hiding, or locking it up in that closet. He has given me the courage to communicate with people. I got you through that, even if you battled with other similar situations. I saved you. I will empower and help you love that person through that.”

Sarah. Sarah stated that God called her to discipleship by having them “share their experiences and being transparent about what she has gone through, even if those experiences

may not have been good moments,” however, she is open to sharing those moments with others lets, “they know, somebody else may have been through something similar.” Sarah continued by saying that her mother has significantly affected the bonds she has formed with other women. As she was growing up, she saw her mother putting the needs of her family ahead of her hopes and goals. Sarah shared that although that was considered “admirable” in her day, it inspired her to teach women a different lesson as she grew up. Sarah now works as a speaker encouraging women to remember their ambitions if they ever want to be realized. Sarah shares with women worldwide that they “can be a mother and a wife, but you must never lose sight of whom you were made to be.”

Summary of Research Question 1

After conducting interviews, questionnaires, and other methods to gather information, the researcher concluded that all participants shared the view that effective leadership and the responsibility to disciple others was developed based on their view of discipleship through leading, modeling, sharing testimony, and their calling. It is interesting to note that five of the eight participants believed modeling is essential to discipleship. The other three participants utilized the terminology of love in relation to loving others, which might be viewed as a type of modeling in discipleship. The concept of testimonies is another fascinating term that has surfaced. When God calls a CE, such calling includes the responsibility of sharing their testimony with others. After reflecting on their formative experiences (positive and negative), all participants agreed that solid leadership and a divine calling are necessary for discipling others. While the majority of people agreed, there were a few who had different views. For instance, all eight participants agreed that having leadership was crucial when discipling others, but they all understood the term differently. Some examples were leading with an agenda, leading others to

Christ, encouraging others, being patient, being aware of others, filling in the gaps, loving people, and mentoring others. Everyone recognizes the need for leadership, but their unique perspectives on what that means have been shaped by their unique experiences. In addition, everyone who took part in the study believed that hearing God's call was essential but that each person's divine invitation was uniquely tied to a set of circumstances that, in many cases, had some bearing on the participants' chosen professions or enterprises.

Research Question 2

What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the local church as disciple-makers?

The CE's responses demonstrated whether they believe they are equipped to have any impact on the local church. The codes and themes for the second research question are listed in Table 8.

Table 8

RQ2: Research Codes and Themes

RQ2 Codes	RQ2 Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills that benefit the church • Acceptance and allowance of using their skills when serving the church • Negative experience of transformation • Positive experience of transformation • Scarcity of entrepreneur-focused discipleship training within the church. • Lack, need, and value in discipleship programs that focuses on the impact of entrepreneurship within the church 	<p>Utilizing business acumen within the church</p> <p>Transformative experiences</p> <p>Insufficient CE-focused discipleship educational support</p>

Theme 1: The Utilization of Business Acumen Within the Church

All eight participants indicated they have the business knowledge and skills that they perceived are valuable to the church. There were two codes: (a) skills that benefit the church. (b)

acceptance and allowance of using their skills when serving the church. One theme emerged from the codes: the utilization of business acumen within the church. Table 9 shows the alignment of participants' responses related to their perceived skills that can impact the church.

Table 9

RQ2: Theme 1

Participants	Anna	Caleb	Mia	Ruth	Asher	Leah	Naomi	Sarah
Theme 1: Utilizing Business Acumen Within the Church	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Anna Anna believes her strength in problem-solving skills is the foundation of her business knowledge which can aid the church. Anna states that her 25 years of experience as a counselor have helped her acquire these abilities, and she uses an example from a session with a client to illustrate how they are helpful. Anna stated,

Frame it in my mind, like, there is a problem. I have to define it. There is a solution; I have to find that solution, right? Thus, I think having to develop problem-solving skills or analytical thinking has undoubtedly helped in the arena of ministry.

So, obviously, just like church ministry, “there are a series of problems that need to be dealt with at specific times, such as this person having an issue with that person. This is a significant part of what I consider to be communication.” Anna then altered her posture by sitting up straighter while exhaling. She went on to say that she has done a lot of observing over the years of what helps and harms people. At church, she makes an effort to avoid repeating those behaviors. She added, “I am trying to bring some knowledge to bear on the difficulties at church” by using what she has “learned from experience how to frame things, how to manage my own life and the feelings I have about a specific topic.” Anna also mentioned that during her time as a counselor, she “spent much time reading Scripture and attempting to help others understand aspects of the scripture that certainly also seem translatable.” Anna added that the church

strengthened her skills by allowing her to “serve in youth ministry, counseling in women’s ministry, and individual discipleship and teaching Bible Studies.”

Caleb. Caleb asserts that his strongest set of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge that can impact the church is his capacity to write grants for persons in need of social services. Caleb shared, “I could help them build those programs or even provide service to people within their congregations and teach them how to navigate the IEP programs and Title I processes, whether it be educational services or mentoring for programs for people with disabilities.” You are on your own if you cannot figure out the system.” The church has been a pillar of strength for Caleb, helping him achieve “stability” in his life. He shared,

Church helped me get to the next level because each layer of developing something comes with learning something else. ... There were many options available to me that would not have benefited society or been of any use to others. However, I intentionally made this decision with the church’s support because I believe this to be God’s doing. That means I am always assisting people in some way.

Caleb stated he has a history of doing things when he was younger that were not legal, leading to him getting into trouble with some people who stabbed him.

Mia. Mia claimed leadership, vision, risk-taking, and out-of-the-box thinking are the most developed skills to aid the church. When allowed to take the reins, she realized the unique role she played in the overall picture of the church. Mia continued by saying that the mentors in her church helped her realize what “she contributed to the table.”

Ruth. Ruth stated that her strengths as a business owner, which can benefit the church, lie in sales and innovation. She went on to say that being able to make a living selling Christian jewelry that she had designed is an “excellent conversation starter” and is a means by which she could “communicate my faith with everybody.” Her faith in God provided the stability she needed to build her Sunday school lessons and journal. In the same way that her persuasiveness helped her spread the gospel, her inventiveness enabled her to create and develop a journal,

giving her access to the teaching that builds the faith of others. In addition, Ruth stated that she found “the base that I needed to be able to convey my beliefs” in the church. Ruth has recently shared that she and her pastor have been discussing the possibility of instituting a weekly faith journal class “simply to see if we can get folks into the habit of journaling about their faith.”

Asher. Before answering, Asher paused to consider the question. He continued by saying, in his opinion, “Often, we fail in the realm of church administration, especially regarding marketing, professionalism, and similar issues. Moreover, I believe that as business owners, we acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively interact with other companies, serve the needs of our customers, and develop new markets. Also, as business owners, we can sometimes bring that spirit of innovation into the church.” Later, Asher revealed that he still worships in the church where he was raised. “At my church, I have seen very professional services. I spent nearly 8 years as a member of their production staff. It was here that I gained a wealth of knowledge from my time there, including how to conduct myself professionally, how to execute transitions and lighting design, and why it was crucial not to misjudge the significance of these factors in getting the job done successfully and keeping the audience’s attention where it belonged.”

Leah. Leah explained that she sees a connection between her business acumen and the role of “Gap Filler” in the church, which entails responding to the needs of others by allocating the available resources. Further, Leah explained that she has succeeded in making connections through “being a giver, sharing my wisdom, performing outreach, and teaching.” For Leah, “the pinnacle of giving is like being an undercover boss,” thus she felt the need to elaborate on why being a giver is essential. In response to hearing someone’s story, one can ask, “How can my generosity or what God has done through me impact somebody’s life?” This could involve

giving monetary aid or other assistance that the person may need.” Leah noted that the pastors in her congregation had hired her for her financial expertise. “They value financial literacy,” which is the industry that her business works in, and they are “willing to support her company.” She gave examples of how they support her business, which connects Leah to other ministries and gives her a chance to serve their organization and others in need. So, for Leah, the church has served as a source of experience, help, support, and connection to others. Continuing, Leah said, “my history as a musician is the thing that’s refreshing for me. Considering that my current church was unaware of my musical abilities, I believe that the ability to fellowship is crucial. A congregation member already knew I was a musician, so I was not under undue pressure to take the reins in that capacity, yet I was allowed to serve when I was ready.” According to Leah, “That was liberating because it meant that others noticed me for me and not just my skills or gifts alone.” I believe that had a positive effect on my sense of self and my identity.

Naomi. Naomi’s confident response to this “simple question for me to answer” was refreshing. Naomi said that her evaluation skills, engagement abilities, creative thinking, and ability to make a good first impression would benefit the church. “So, the leadership abilities that I have, given by Him (God) that I represent, is kind of being able to engage people,” said Naomi. First impressions are essential, and I enjoy playing that role, believing I have what it takes to make a good one.” Naomi mentioned that the pastor of a church she had visited was the first person to greet her and say, “I do not know that we had seen you here before, right, and shook our hands.” This has guided Naomi as she seeks to establish trusting relationships in her leadership role with others. Naomi continued by saying that the people at her church were very supportive when she proposed forming a Bible study group. Then, Naomi said, “We go around our small group of eight to 10 individuals to kind of get people thinking about God’s message.

As a result, I learned that a detailed Bible study plan, like the kind Beth Moore creates, is not the only way to have community and educate one another. According to Naomi, “This is what I have learned from my church, and it only requires picking out a few verses and reading them aloud to the group, and from there, we discover and learn with one another.”

Sarah. Sarah said, “wow,” with a bit of surprise at the question regarding her abilities and ability to contribute to the church. Sarah said her abilities in “speaking, writing, and inspiring people” would be helpful to the church. “I suppose it goes back to my belief that God designed each of us to do something special,” she continued. “Maybe that is related to my point of improving the world by using our strengths to the fullest.” According to Sarah, her current pastor approached her about starting a weekly Master Mind class for local entrepreneurs. Sara and her pastor envisioned “a place to come and bounce ideas off of one another and offer solutions to various difficulties we might have or aid with other techniques.” After discussing with her pastor, she agreed to take the group’s leadership and has been doing so for the past year.

Theme 2: Transformative Life Experiences

All eight participants indicated they had some transforming experience that influenced them to desire to disciple others. There were two codes: (a) negative experience of transformation and (b) positive experience of transformation. One theme emerged from the codes: transformative life experiences Table 10 shows the alignment of participants’ responses related to their perceived transformative life experiences.

Table 10*RQ2: Theme 2*

Participants	Anna	Caleb	Mia	Ruth	Asher	Leah	Naomi	Sarah
Theme 2: Transformative life experiences	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Anna. Anna said that she wished to help others by telling them that “the church is a family that essentially adopts people and offers the understanding of being loved and not alone” because she did not have a “church life or healthy family that gave vision when growing up.” Anna elaborates on how this was a negative experience that “pushed me onward to believe in the value of the church in the life of every human being.” Anna adds, “I think all the great relationships and positive life experiences should be a whole lot of fun with many people in the body of Christ.” It is crucial to have somebody to share the ups and downs of life with. “Also experience the beauty of what it feels like to be linked to people in a way that’s very meaningful.”

Caleb. Caleb explained that his desire to be a disciple-maker stems from a combination of positive and negative experiences. Caleb began by discussing his difficult upbringing, detailing his time spent in the care of both his parents, his time with a single parent, and the traumatic experience of poverty he endured. To continue, he said, “I want to be better. I was determined to improve but could not see a path forward for myself.” He needed a perspective switch, something that would allow him to say, “If I do what I am meant to do, based on this scripture. As a Christian, I will be all right, rather than constantly worrying about the future and feeling like I was failing. Caleb elaborated, “So my childhood, background, and all the stuff I had to endure shaped my desire to disciple others.” After that, Caleb commented about how pastors significantly impacted his life by teaching him valuable lessons.

Mia. Mia explained that her childhood experience in a cult led her to believe that there must be more to life than what she had at the time, which is why she eventually decided to leave the group. Mia stated,

I chose to quit the religion when I was just 19 years old, and I did it with my eyes wide open because I knew how my family would respond. ... Because of that, I was separated from my entire family and abandoned.

Mia continued by saying that after she “wrapped my brain around what Jesus offered us” and fully grasped the meaning of grace, she no longer wanted anybody else to experience the pain she had. That is why she wants to make sure no other person goes through what she went through alone.

Ruth. Ruth shared that she only had positive experiences that led her to desire to disciple others. She mentioned that she attended classes that sparked a desire. These classes, she explained, “started as like teaching you how to preach,” and then from there were “discussions on the history of the church and the history of the Bible.” Ruth also said, “We had like five other classes that we had to take and pass.”

Asher. Asher revealed that his life had been filled with good influences that made him want to disciple others. “I had a lot of people invest in me growing up,” Asher said. “Therefore, I am actively contributing to the community by investing in the lives of others. I feel like that is something that I could never repay.” Asher stated that a small group leader from his middle school years,

was influential in making sure that I came to church, making sure that I understood stuff, having a resource in having someone to talk to you. ... That was a major step forward since it meant I finally had someone to talk to outside the house about anything and everything. In light of this, I made an effort to incorporate it when helping others.

This is what influenced Asher to have the desire to help others.

Leah. Leah revealed that her desire to become a disciple-maker originated from a mix of positive and negative experiences. Being a musician has brought her much happiness in her life. However, her entire career hinged on her performance; Leah attributed it to her profession as a musician. “Only a handful of leaders were genuinely invested in me as a person, and I can count on them on the one hand.” The senior pastors of only one church showered Leah with love and support as she prepared for marriage. Unfortunately, at either church, if the choir did not help bring in “a good offering” where Leah played, it would be an issue because the congregation did not care about her as a person as much as they did about her music performance for the church. During this time, Leah did not feel secure in who she was back then, so she only saw her value in raising money for the church.

Furthermore, she mentioned that things had deteriorated after a member of the choir staff had left and donations had dropped. She took the blame, making her feel responsible for what had happened. Leah paused and then shifted to a more upbeat tone in her voice. Her upbeat demeanor was reflected in the fact that she attributed it to “Romans 8:28.” This is because she realized she was not alone in her struggles as a musician and observed that others faced similar issues. She felt compelled to find methods to contribute to their welfare. Through writing her book she discovered that path. Leah claimed that,

there was no development for music ministry in her local community except for the Church of God in Christ or with Judy Christian McAllister’s content.” Because of my position as an outspoken author and facilitator of musically-themed workshops, I was able to provide a safe space for frustrated musicians to release their frustrations when they had no other outlet.

Leah continued by explaining how a worship leader could be terminated if they had to miss services because they were needed at home. For Leah, it was “very much like a temp job.” Leah also addressed the difficulty of living without focusing only on music performance and production. Leah said,

In all honesty, I felt like the book did just that by opening up the chance for others to experience what she did not experience (outside of two pastors at one church) to be pastored by somebody who understood what they were going through.”

Naomi. While breaking down in tears, Naomi described a painful experience: her father’s death. “I never got to have the conversation with him to find out if he was saved and to know where he was going when he died,” Naomi said of her late father. This was a defining moment for her because she vowed that she would never again let herself to the position where she had never had that talk with someone else she loved. She said her father showed evidence of spiritual fruits and would drop her off at church, but she did not ask anything regarding his salvation. Naomi shared that she was baptized around age 26, and her father passed in her early 30s. She reminded herself after that, “I cannot allow that to happen again; that was a significant negative point and changing aspect in my life.” Naomi also mentioned that her present church, where she was a part of a team that built another church in the community, was the positive, motivating factor that pushed her to desire to disciple others. A church planter spent a year on staff, she stated, learning the ropes of church administration and the ins and outs of discipleship. She said the congregation’s slogan is “being open-handed in developing disciples and going out and spreading God’s truth.” In this case, the parent church provided financial support and presented the new church plant to a neighboring city. It was encouraging to hear Naomi talk about how “literally just this past Sunday, they performed our send-off to where everybody clapped and prayed for us” at church. After feeding us, they helped us pack up and leave the building.” The same church had done this the year before, and Naomi found it “amazing from a spiritual sense since that is what we are expected to do, make disciples.” She continued by reading the previous pastor’s prayer while sending people to the new church. Naomi hopes that by the time he retires, “in 20 years or whatever,” the church will have sent everyone off to create disciples and form

hundreds of other churches and that the building will be shut down. Because of this, Naomi is determined to become a disciple-maker in her community.

Sarah. Sarah claimed that rather than having a positive experience, it was a negative experience that inspired her to seek out and disciple others. When asked what inspired her, Sarah said, “I think it is probably looking at how women often feel they have to be subservient. Also, being in the service of others without regard for one’s needs.” Sarah went on to explain how her mother had put her ambitions on hold, which some viewed as noble but was, in Sarah’s opinion, not what she wanted her mother to go through. Seeing her mother do nothing for herself and lose sight of who she was and what she was created for drove Sarah to be an inspiration to other women who were exactly like her mother. Sarah stated, “You may be a mother and the wife and all that stuff, but you still have to be you and whom you were created.” To Sarah, seeing her mother is a powerful reminder of the need to encourage other women to prioritize themselves. She reaches out to women uniquely through her jewelry business by reminding them of their worth and including encouraging messages with each order.

Theme 3: Insufficient CE-Focused Discipleship Educational Support

Seven out of eight participants indicated they have never known of or been allowed to view discipleship-specific educational materials designed for CEs. One participant believed his childhood friend wrote on the topic but was unsure. There were two codes: (a) scarcity of entrepreneur-focused discipleship training within the church, (b) lack, need, and value of discipleship programs that focuses on the impact of entrepreneurship within the church. One theme emerged from the codes: insufficient CE-focused discipleship educational support from the church Table 11 shows the alignment of participants’ responses related to their experience with discipleship educational support from the church.

Table 11*RQ2: Theme 3*

Participants	Anna	Caleb	Mia	Ruth	Asher	Leah	Naomi	Sarah
Theme 3: Insufficient CE-focused discipleship educational support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Anna. Anna mentioned that although her church does not have CE discipleship courses, she would find them helpful in connecting “helping people to integrate their work life with their faith life.” She added, “It is not something that every person in the business world would necessarily connect that their relational development at work is something that they could impact through their faith.” She also hopes to use training like this to integrate into her counseling center, making her services more accessible to low-income community members. She is currently training her church members in lay counseling to meet the need of the community and would like to see it advertised to the community. Anna shared, “I would like to see that kind of broadcast for the community that the church is a place where you can go to get mental health, health, or addiction help. Moreover, I would like to be able to be a part of a discipleship process to walk alongside some of the other counselors, lay counselors, and professional counselors to assist the community and get access to good biblical help while also educating my staff to ensure that she is both practical and readily available.”

Caleb. Caleb revealed that while his church does not provide discipleship classes or continuing education for CEs, he does know someone from his old neighborhood whom he feels has written numerous books on the subject. Caleb mentioned he would appreciate more “discipleship-oriented” classes. He wants to combine his business skills with his faith and become a minister of social action in his church. He is currently developing a strategy for the future of his company. “If I had it my way,” Caleb stated, “I would collaborate with somebody

who could handle and run the business and develop them to run their own business eventually. As he put it, “they do not pour over into the city council, and they do not spill over into the corporate CEO positions as they should,” even though we have many highly educated Christian leaders who are well-versed in discipleship.

Mia. To Mia’s knowledge, no discipleship-oriented classes are available through her church. Having mandatory continuing education CE classes in discipleship is something Mia “thinks would be excellent.” She is interested in spreading knowledge about uncommon topics in the community; thus, she thinks courses like this are great. Mia said, “My business offers a lot of community education since, for example, people do not know what salt therapy is.” So, education is not only about spreading awareness but also about motivating support for one another. She also wants to host Bible studies at her business. “I have got a great nice spot with seats that people could come and sit and chat and grow like it is my favorite space to bring my Bible and sit, and I would love other people to come and do that, like, bring their Bible and sit,” Mia shared.

Ruth. Ruth noted that no educational classes at her church focus on discipleship. Then, with a broad grin, Ruth paused, smiled, and shared, “Oh, I think it would be amazing. Oh, I think it would be wonderful.” Ruth continued by saying that a division had developed within her church. Ruth shared that “the United Methodist Church is currently experiencing tensions that could lead to a division in the church.” That being said, Ruth shared, “I am unsure of the future of our church’s connection with us. My daughter and I have discussed the possibility of her launching a virtual church to serve the needs of the internet’s remote community.” Ruth explained that, at the moment, they are teaching online groups, and their participants are going out and teaching others.

Asher. Asher revealed that his church does not provide any training for CEs in the area of discipleship. Asher agreed that these kinds of classes would be beneficial to have. Asher states, “I think it is needed, especially even to have others, Christian business owners that are participating in a conversation.” That way, we may all benefit from each other’s experiences and insights. Asher groaned and admitted that displaying the “Christian spirit” is not always easy, especially for Christians. “It would be good to have a course or group that can help explain how to navigate some of the more tough areas of business and discipleship that most Christians may feel apprehensive about,” Asher added. Asher also wants to participate in small groups at his church to revive his Biblical knowledge. Asher said, “I want to get more active in small groups and things like that, especially for business owners or folks that have businesses and stuff like that.” In addition, he plans to establish a more formal mentorship program so that teachers and staff can build relationships with one another and give back to the community.

Leah. Leah revealed that her pastor teaches a course titled ,“Strategies for Success” at her church. It is not designed for CEs or discipleship, but the pastor is a teacher, so he did give an extra lesson on emotional intelligence. Leah said, “The skills he taught may be transferable into the workplace.” According to Leah, a discipleship course for CEs would “allow individuals to see God outside of the church” in terms of discipleship programs. The bookkeeping and hospitality industries are two areas where people can report witnessing God’s hand at work. In my opinion, it will be nothing short of transformative. Leah also said she agrees and thinks it will show people how their skills can be utilized in different situations. For instance, a greeter in the church may also have the gift of hospitality, which they apply in their secular work. Leah continued by saying she desires the Holy Spirit to direct her steps as she walks in obedience and

submission to God. She wants to make a more significant difference in the world by growing her business and reaching more people.

Naomi. Unfortunately, Naomi revealed that her church does not provide any discipleship program for CEs. Naomi did say that she thought it was “extremely important” to provide continuing education for this type of education. She recently joined to lead small groups to further her discipleship plans, to “push herself out there a little bit,” she shared. Naomi added that she wants her staff to feel comfortable talking about their faith with her and know that their work gives others life.

Sarah. Sarah revealed that the CEs at her church are not provided with formal discipleship training. She thinks that these types of classes will be beneficial. In addition, Sarah expressed a desire to build her wealth to the point where she could monetarily contribute to numerous charitable causes. She also plans to teach the mastermind course for another year. Because she values helping her team members become their best “versions of themselves,” she would benefit from using the insights gained from a discipleship program for CEs. Sarah continued by saying she was interested in learning more about how her staff members could use their unique God-given gifts to impact the world. Therefore, she could better assess employees that do not need to remain as her employee indefinitely if doing so would interfere with their ability to pursue their true calling. Sarah continued by saying she has no problem encouraging staff members to develop into the people God created them to be.

Summary of Research Question 2

After collecting data through interviews, questionnaires, and other means, the researcher found that all participants were confident in their capacity to apply their business savvy to benefit their local church. Even though everyone was asked the same questions and grouped as

having the same level of business expertise being the are CEs, the answers varied widely since each person brings different abilities and experiences. The abilities on display were both intellectual and technical. Some participants claimed expertise in foresight and problem-solving, while others highlighted their aptitude for risk-taking and grant-writing. Everyone participating believed their own positive and negative experiences in life play a role in why they want to make disciples and mentor others. Again, since everyone had their own unique set of experiences, the common thread was having some kind of life-altering (transformative) encounter. It is also interesting to note that CEs believe they can and should aid the church and that they desire to, but that the church does not give them much guidance to help them achieve their aim of being disciple-makers. After discussing the scarcity of educational opportunities, the CEs discussed the potential benefits of a discipleship course tailored to business owners and how it might aid them in fulfilling their own goals of making a difference in the church, the community, and the workplace.

Research Question 3

What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the community as disciple-makers?

CEs' responses were compiled to show whether they can make a difference while serving others in the community. The codes and themes for the third research question are listed in Tabled 12.

Table 12*RQ3: Research Codes and Themes*

RQ# 3 Codes	RQ#3 Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of community resources • Concern, desire, and ability to help others in need • Concern for problems in the community • Lack of addressing community needs • Responsibility for helping to resolve problems in the community • Community engagement • Servitude 	<p>Entrepreneurial skills and social conscience</p> <p>Identifying community issues to address</p> <p>Giving back to the community</p>

Theme 1: Entrepreneurial skills and social conscience

All eight participants indicated they had some entrepreneurial skills that have aided them when recognizing and serving their community needs. There were two codes: (a) lack of community resources and (b) concern, desire, and ability to help others in need. One theme emerged from the codes: entrepreneurial skills and social conscience. Table 13 shows the alignment of participants' responses related to their entrepreneurial skills and social conscience.

Table 13*RQ3: Theme 1*

Participants	Anna	Caleb	Mia	Ruth	Asher	Leah	Naomi	Sarah
Theme 3: Entrepreneurial skills and social conscience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Anna. Anna revealed that she possesses abilities that she believes can benefit the community. Anna altered her body language to assume a more comfortable position in her chair, and she explained that these abilities include communication, education, and crisis response. As a leader of a women's group at her church, she has identified and developed these qualities. This includes communication. She continued,

I have utilized some of my community's entrepreneurial skills by giving presentations to local women's groups, for example. I also educated others about depression, which would probably be one main area in response to tragedy and crisis. Therefore, my counseling and people abilities would undoubtedly be helpful in the field if a community, a flood, or any other emergency requires a first responder, such as the Red Cross. I have not yet completed that procedure with the Red Cross, but I recently took a class and began to think more about disaster mental health reactions and related topics.

Caleb. Caleb described how his teaching profession has made him aware of his community's prevalent social and economic difficulties. As a result, he has decided to utilize the administrative expertise he has acquired over the years to assist others. Caleb shared,

I am happy to have written letters for parents and families that assist them in navigating the politics of social services and the courts. When it comes to the health and well-being of people, I am a vigilante when the system fails them, right? Consequently, I utilize every connection, and I am blessed to have approximately 10 close pals as my fraternity brothers. I also have the assistance of my sisters, one of whom is a physician and the other a lawyer, so I can start with them as industry experts and then reach out to others.

Mia. Mia shared that she is a "networker by nature." Mia paused and looked as if she was trying to recall something by looking up into the air for a moment. She then mentioned, "I think that is even how I met you, through networking." Mia shared that she considers herself to be connected, and she loves connecting with people. In her community, there is a lack of connection when it comes to the needs of others. Mia shared,

Say your business has something that you need that I know someone else can offer or vice versa that someone else has something they need that your business can offer. This is why I love to connect with people through my connections. Furthermore, I think the community needs more people like that because it helps everyone grow when we support each other.

Ruth. According to Ruth, her areas of greatest service to the community involve project management, administration, and organizing. Ruth has helped organize community activities such as craft fairs and festivals. Ruth appreciated the chance to spread kindness in her neighborhood and meet new people at a community gathering. Ruth is also a member of the local community choir.

Asher. According to Asher, his ability to provide resources has dramatically impacted his community. Because he is in the area of education, he seeks partnerships to connect “community stakeholders to understand new trends understand things that are different in the business and things that they might not understand, such as the processes of why something is or is not done.” Asher shared that in the education industry, he can translate the skills he has learned to bring a unique perspective to his community.

Leah. Leah mentioned that she can inspire those around her and utilize available resources. She has interacted with the students’ parents, some of whom are business owners, through a previous position at a preparatory school. Her employment brings her into contact with these individuals. She explained that “simply being able to have the ability to grow them and also to get them exposed to opportunities” is the most important thing. Leah shared that at one time, they had an administrative assistant who owned a cleaning company. Leah was essential in encouraging and providing resources that finally gave the administrative assistant a contract to be the evening cleaning supervisor. In addition, Leah provided an additional stimulus while leading and encouraging her. Leah shared,

My people cannot grow if I do not allow them to goof; they will not grow until they goof, and I let them know upfront that they need to goof to grow, and I let them know that. “Hey, you can goof up; it is okay.” And we are going to grow from the goof. We had to figure out what caused the mistake. ... You need to have grace and empathy.

Naomi. Naomi revealed that she can arrange tasks and delegate them to others. It does not take much effort for her to get involved in the “ground zero” of any issue and assume leadership. She also later included perseverance to drive things forward and engage the people she was trying to serve.

Sarah. Sarah asserted that her ability to serve others stems from “being an example of someone that has been given an idea and that has also married that idea with, like, skills and put

it forth to offer a service that on the surface looks like it is one thing but is something that has potential to minister to the community.” Moreover, she believes that she has a skill for spotting the potential in others and providing them with avenues for expansion.

Theme 2: Identifying community issues to address

All eight participants indicated the ability to identify lack and need within their community. There were three codes: (a) concern for problems in the community, (b) lack of addressing community needs, and (c) responsibility for problems in the community. One theme emerged from the codes: identifying community issues to address. Table 14 shows the alignment of participants’ responses related to their ability to identify community issues that should be addressed.

Table 14

RQ3: Theme 2

Participants	Anna	Caleb	Mia	Ruth	Asher	Leah	Naomi	Sarah
Theme 3: Identifying community issues to address	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑

Anna. Anna explained that her experience with lack in her past had motivated her to assist with current community challenges. Prior to joining the church, she experienced isolation and detachment from God. In her neighborhood, few individuals share her “vision” of God. Due to this, she felt alone, and she does not want others to experience the same. She discovered this severe problem in her town and felt empowered to affect change.

Caleb. Caleb mentioned that during his 12 years as a teacher in his community, he had observed an intriguing area of lack in his community. He wants to help youth, just as he struggled when his mother became a single mom. Moreover, their finances were severely impacted. He has observed that teenagers in more affluent areas of his neighborhood are often

spoiled and act as if they do not need his assistance. Caleb commented, “It is difficult to assist wealthy individuals; they believe they do not need assistance and have been spoiled by their parents.” Unfortunately, I have observed that they do not pay attention. The students he has taught in the impoverished sector of his neighborhood are more responsive to his lessons. Whenever they have sought his assistance, he has gone “above and beyond” to assist them. Many impoverished youths seeking help significantly outnumber the number of mentors in his community.

Mia. Mia saw that there was a void in her neighborhood for the provision of support to women who were engaged in business. Through networking with other people in her neighborhood, she learned about the deficit and taught women about their importance in business.

Ruth. Ruth explained that she had firsthand experience with community concerns when a man would frequently visit and offer to help carry people’s belongings at her events. He never once made a payment request, but he was always there to help out when there was a community gathering and people needed food or water. After the day was over, he would assist the sellers in breaking down their booths. Ruth claimed, “He would sometimes share when he truly liked something, and many of the vendors would give it to him as a thank you for helping others when he had nothing for himself.” Later, Ruth shared how the vendors were inspired by her generosity and went on to bless others due to her compassion.

Asher. Asher revealed that his community does not have the resources available to connect individuals. When it comes to gaining a grasp of recent developments within the community that may be difficult to comprehend, there is a lack of education as well as

communication with the leaders of the community. These ties are essential because they may one day result in the resolution of problems that have been plaguing the community.

Leah. Leah shared that during this day and age, finances are a significant issue for those in the community. She was able to recognize this via her background in finance. Leah shared that money is already a “sensitive” subject. Which finances people in Leah’s community must trust you to share their issues. She also shared that this correlated with the horror stories she heard in her field involving “accountants and bookkeepers not being trustworthy.” She must show the community that she is a relationship builder who will not only “teach you but have your back.”

Naomi. Naomi affirmed that God has shown her a lack where women who have been involved in the professions of sex trafficking, prostitution, and adult entertainment tend to go when they have been rendered homeless and have nowhere else to go. Most of the time, they have no prior experience with job training or with going to different locations. They are so accustomed to bartering their bodies in exchange for a place to sleep that they cannot imagine a way out of the predicament other than to keep doing what they are now doing. As a result, they cannot see a way out of the dilemma. Her community lacks the resources and manpower needed to help these women see different options.

Sarah. Sarah shared that she generally is alerted by someone in her community that there is anyone that has a need. She claimed that she is generally told about individuals going through many difficulties. She also added lack in the community when it comes to “women are not living up to their maximum potential, because they are so busy trying to serve other people and they just forget about like what they have to offer.”

Theme 3: Giving Back to the Community

All eight participants indicated the desire to aid their community. There were two codes: (a) community engagement and (b) servitude. One theme emerged from the codes: Giving back to the community. Table 15 shows the alignment of participants' responses related to showing their desire to give back to the community

Table 15

RQ3: Theme 3

Participants	Anna	Caleb	Mia	Ruth	Asher	Leah	Naomi	Sarah
Theme 3: Giving back to the community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Anna. Anna explained that for her, giving back includes “the evangelism piece.” She described how she gives back to her community by being willing to share the gospel in any setting, creating relationships by asking excellent questions, and being involved in people’s lives while also caring about what others have to say to her. She provided the example of walking to the boardwalk on the beach, which is close to her home, and striking up discussions with strangers. She said it is common for her family to spend the night “evangelizing on the boardwalk,” typically by asking, “Would you go to heaven or hell if you died?” This is where she realizes that the inquiry is a terrific approach to starting a conversation and an ideal method to introduce a discussion about the person’s beliefs. She also stated that she provides meals and drinks to the homeless on hot days and delivers meals to the sick in her community. She revealed that she inquires about others’ needs with the thought, “Hey, here is the issue. Okay, I believe I can contribute to the resolution of that issue.

Caleb. Caleb disclosed that he frequently participates in food drives and makes charitable contributions. Caleb further disclosed that he contributes both personal and company funds to

Goodwill. Additionally, he feeds people at a Christian center. Caleb stated, “During Thanksgiving and Christmas, I typically assist at Christian outreach facilities, where we feed approximately 200 to 300 individuals.” Moreover, he mentioned that he enjoys cooking and preparing all the meals for the group. In addition, he established a scholarship foundation for young people. Additionally, his wife helps him mentor a young girl. They also invite guest speakers to the neighborhood to speak to the youth about job possibilities and school prerequisites.

Mia. Mia revealed that her realization of a need among businesswomen led her to start a group for Christian businesswomen, which she now leads. The group’s mission is charitable, with the specific aim of helping local entrepreneurs succeed. Mia claimed, “I lead a chapter of Women Empowering Business, and we are a Christian-based group; we pray before we dine there, you know, and gather once a month. In addition, we use that group to give to a local charity.”

Ruth. Ruth once more emphasized giving back to her community by participating in craft events. As Ruth put it, participating in community activities “helps generate awareness and gather monetary for causes that touch the community.”

Asher. Asher revealed that, in addition to bringing people together, he is currently participating in a venture known as Project Life Pulse. According to Asher, “Project Life pulse is our commitment to training as many individuals as possible in performing CPR for out-of-hospital cardiac arrest.” This educational community-based project is “close and dear” to his heart because of his experience as an emergency medical technician. He explained that as part of the program, he provides free CPR instruction to community members. He attends events like

homeschool conferences, car shows, organization festivals, and many more events throughout the country.

Leah. Leah mentioned that she gives back to her community by teaching seminars she makes available through various social media platforms. The objective of these seminars is not only to educate the community but also to share humor to make the atmosphere more pleasant and to develop trustworthy relationships between participants. Her classes are not transactional, but she will instill in her students the knowledge that they can rely on her and that she will “always have their back.”

Naomi. Naomi stated that she is involved in an organization for women. Naomi helps female victims of sex trafficking, prostitution, and the adult entertainment business. The Christian community founded the organization to aid women in crisis. These women receive a place to live, assistance in finding employment, and a Christian community in which to grow and experience God’s love. Naomi also provides for the material necessities of the ladies in this program by donating to the nonprofit organization. Not content to merely give monetarily, Natalie is now looking for ways to lend a hand through the gift of her time.

Sarah. As a way to give back to the community, Sarah examines how individuals might use their skills to create profitable enterprises. In a sense, she acts as a coach and mentor to emerging businesspeople. She said, “If you are successful in business, you should be able to help more people in need and donate more to worthy charities.” She also mentioned that she mails “a few things” from her jewelry company when she learns someone is going through something in life that may be challenging. She said, “Just a couple of pieces, with a letter of encouragement,” suggesting that it was insignificant. With this, she hopes to convey her appreciation and make the recipient feel like they are on someone’s mind.

Summary of Research Question 3

Through the interview and survey data collected, the researcher learned that all participants believed they possessed the skills and the social conscience necessary to assist their communities. It is worth noting that, although being grouped here, each category discussed in this section springs from distinct individual experiences. As a result of their own social and economic hardships, several CEs felt compelled to give back to a specific community. In contrast, some CEs are interested in community service because they see a need in their neighborhood and want to help meet it. All participants are dedicated to philanthropic causes and participate in volunteer work in various capacities. Finally, a few participants said they are enthusiastic about exploring new possibilities for volunteer work in the near future.

Research Question 4

What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the workplace as disciple-makers?

CEs responses indicated whether they feel they have the necessary skills to make an impact in the area of discipleship at work. The codes and themes for the fourth research question are listed in Table 16.

Table 16

RQ4: Research Codes and Themes

RQ4 Codes	RQ4 Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of a need to disciple others in the workplace • Implementing a solution to disciple others in the workplace 	Work-related skills that promote discipleship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative experiences in the workplace • Positive experiences in the workplace • Supporting staff and customers 	Compassion for discipling others in the workplace
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current opportunities to help others grow spiritually in the workplace 	Workplace discipleship strategies

- Future opportunities to help others grow spiritually in the workplace

Theme 1: Work-Related Skills That Promote Discipleship

Seven participants want to use their skills to aid workplace discipleship. There were two codes: (a) recognition of a need to disciple others in the workplace and (b) implementing a solution to disciple others in the workplace. One theme emerged from the codes: work-related skills that promote discipleship. Table 17 shows the alignment of participants' responses, indicating their desire to give back to the community.

Table 17

RQ4: Theme 1

Participants	Anna	Caleb	Mia	Ruth	Asher	Leah	Naomi	Sarah
Theme 1: Work-related skills that promote discipleship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Anna. Anna revealed that she had nine workers on staff at the moment. While at work, she uses her discipleship skills to mentor newer employees. She thinks her knowledge will help her employees. She sees her experience in the field of counseling as an opportunity to “carry along her wisdom to others.” She also mentioned that one of the things that help with discipleship at work is living as an example of trusting and obeying God, which correlates to her discussion of modeling earlier in her interview. The ability to have a “listening ear” was another skill she highlighted. “I want people to feel at ease and tell me what they are struggling with,” Anna stated. “Therefore, I believe that the skill there is simply listening and attempting to communicate well with people, which aids in making them feel heard and highly supported.” Anna continued by saying that though she does not have weekly in-person meetings with her staff (they all work remotely), she does her best to be a powerful “listening ear” for them.

Finally, she noted that she enjoys providing resources, such as books and training that she has attended, when they are struggling.

Caleb. Management, organization, teaching, counseling, and supervision are all skills Caleb mentioned. Caleb also mentioned that he has been able to apply his knowledge of technology to the development of specific automation systems aimed at the expansion, consolidation, and long-term viability of businesses. Caleb continued by saying that his job as a Pizza Hut manager helped him pay for school. Friends may have teased him, but he got his start there and learned the basics. He recalled taking a course where he learned about company policies and procedures.

Mia. Mia gave a summary of her leadership qualities, including her vision and her willingness to take chances. Mia elaborated about how her work-related skills contribute to her capacity to mentor others by stating, “Being able to think outside the box and not being scared to take a chance” are examples of how her skills have assisted her in disciplining others.

Ruth. Ruth mentioned that she is skilled in management, leading others, and instructing others. Ruth stated that she had seen a need in business to assist budding entrepreneurs. She revealed that she facilitates virtual classes utilizing a Trello-based tutorial. She coteaches a course with her mentor and is active in several business-focused subgroups. Her most recent group gets together once a week to chat and share ideas as she hosts the call.

Asher. Asher said he learned his skill through years of patience with others. He shared that patience is also essential in business and spiritual fruit. According to Asher, what it takes to succeed in business is to “you know, be 100% devoted and invested,” he also added, “this calls for us to be patient in the lives of customers, shareholders, and employees”.

Leah. Leah explained that her capacity to disciple others in the workplace is not what she would consider a skill. Continuing, Leah said that she could accept failure. In a way, this is how she discovers the origins of things, such as her ability to analyze the causes of events and her ability to detach herself emotionally from the results. Afterward, Leah looked to gather her thoughts by staring at the ceiling for a while before continuing, “If you had to name a skill, I do not know the skill to get out of just being analytical, and I do not know what the phrase is to describe that.”

Naomi. As part of her ability to mentor others on the job, Naomi mentioned that she is relational and not transactional. According to Naomi, “It is about that relationship, and not necessarily about just the transactional element of it about the numbers if that makes sense.” She continued by saying that all her agents focus on the quality of life above the quantity of business. According to Naomi, financial success is a byproduct of prioritizing relationships and treating people as wholes rather than merely a means to an end.

Sarah. Sarah remarked that “being good at communication” and “getting the facts out” are two of her skills at work that assist her in discipling others. Specifically, she is “good at communication” through her writing.

Theme 2: Compassion for Discipling Others in the Workplace

All eight participants indicated a desire to show compassion in the workplace. There were three codes: (a) negative experiences in the workplace, (b) positive experiences in the workplace, and (c) supporting staff and customers. One theme emerged from the codes: compassion for discipling others in the workplace. Table 18 shows the alignment of participants’ responses, indicating their compassion for discipling others in the workplace.

Table 18*RQ4: Theme 2*

Participants	Anna	Caleb	Mia	Ruth	Asher	Leah	Naomi	Sarah
Theme 4: Compassion for discipling others in the workplace	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Anna. Anna revealed that her varied work experiences, both positive and negative, have taught her to be more understanding and forgiving in the workplace. Anna commented about working under a boss that lacked interpersonal skills. As the conversation progressed, she decided not to expound on the specific ways in which he was untrustworthy. However, Anna admitted that she also had bosses who were genuine servants and a beneficial influence on her career. They worked “harder than most” at times, which inspired her and many others. She had seen firsthand the lack of influence in one boss and the wealth in another, and this contrast had inspired her to establish a more pleasant and influential atmosphere for her employees and clients. To express compassion at work, she concentrates on developing a good sense of empathy and listening skills. Anna used the hypothetical scenario of an employee experiencing difficulty as an illustration. Unlike many other workplaces, she emphasized the importance of employees prioritizing their personal life and taking time off to be with their families. As Anna put it, “I think empathy and listening go together with having a vision that the people are more important than what they are producing or consuming.”

Caleb. Caleb explained that positive and negative experiences have made him more concerned about helping others in the workplace. He used the example of how he had been held back and overlooked for promotions at work. Since then, he has made it a priority to “attempt to promote in such a way that we give somebody an opportunity who may not have the appropriate credentials or the right history.” If you find the right person, Caleb said, they will put in the

effort regardless of their background. In contrast, Caleb said that many individuals came into his life and assisted him, which was a very positive experience. A good illustration of this is that his employer was 10 years his senior. One day the employer remarked that Caleb was intelligent, but his attitude was terrible. Because of this transparency, Caleb learned from his boss, who became his mentor and showed him how to become successful in his attitude and house-flipping business. He also noted that the first residences he bought in his 20s with the help of his boss are still in his possession and are being used as group homes.

Mia. Mia disclosed that the two organizations for which she had worked had both a negative and a positive impact on her, to the extent that she is now aware that she is more sensitive to similar situations and handles them with greater care. It is unfortunate, but at the first job, the company's president was a "narcissist," making it a tremendously challenging environment. Her future goal after experiencing this was to provide a healthy working environment for her staff. At her second place of employment, she worked for a boss whom she described as being "very much a disciple." She related that he was encouraging in contrast to her former supervisor. He constantly reminded his employees of their capabilities and how they should be used to "advance the kingdom."

Ruth. Ruth stated that she did not encounter any negative experiences in the workplace. One of her life's highlights was getting to work for a Christian family for 15 years. This is why she did not have a negative work experience. It was here that she learned to speak freely about her beliefs with others. She explained how the increased workload at work had stressed her. Because of this, 4 years ago, she decided to start her own business while staying home to raise her daughters.

Asher. Asher admitted that he has worked in organizations that he now considers “against anything nice,” including some Christian ones. This left him not only wanting a different experience but creating a different experience for others. On the positive side, Asher worked under a Christian leader who was also an outstanding manager. Asher was interested in learning how his boss encouraged his employees. He spoke to his followers as a mentor and set a good example. Asher said, “I know that that was an impactful moment, for me, simply seeing a CEO pour into their workers like he did,” so much so that it inspired him to want to emulate his boss’s behavior. He said this was a profoundly spiritual experience, not just an intellectual one.

Leah. Leah revealed that she experienced a mixture of positive and negative experiences that influenced her decision to disciple others. She recalled a time in college when another musician “snapped at and embarrassed her” while she was performing a song. Unfortunately, she let her fear of confrontation prevent her from speaking up and being an advocate. She explained that to be a good disciple, “you have to be willing to share and talk to people even if you think you could get into an argument with them if you think they are going down the wrong path.” In contrast, in both her undergraduate and graduate studies, Leah benefited from having a mentor and reliable role models who delivered the good and the bad and pushed her to expand her mind. More importantly, they nudged her toward therapy, which helped her overcome the personal challenges that keep her from effectively discipling others. Based on her own struggles, she feels compelled to help others via the discipline of discipleship.

Naomi. Naomi explained that she entered the real estate market because she wanted to make a difference in people’s lives. However, she quickly realized that the industry was not suited to meeting their needs because it was so transactional. She continued, “I desired to be that friend to them that can help whenever I am needed,” adding that as the broker of a growing team,

she recognizes the importance of discipling her agents, particularly in relationships. She explained how the people God places in her way have helped her grow and learn so that she can use that to disciple others at work. She elaborated by saying, “When COVID first showed up in March of 2020, when everything was closing down, I thought this is it, this is going to be the, our worst year, and we would probably have to close it up for the year.” However, God is reliable, and He kept sending folks my way and ringing my phone with those interested in purchasing a property. Furthermore, 2020 ended up being the best year of my life. Accordingly, she believes that, retroactively, God said, “I am going to take care of you.” As a result, she is eager to keep hearing testimonies of God’s kindness in the lives of others and to continue serving as a witness to others.

Sarah. Sarah revealed that her previous encounter with corporate work had been negative, caused by management members who dumped all the unpleasant tasks they did not want to handle on their employees. She continued by saying that she has made an effort to treat her employees with more dignity since that time. Sarah said, “I have kept this in mind regarding how I treat my volunteer’s. Task’s that are difficult or unsightly are not the only tasks volunteers do. Some things must be done immediately. However, my volunteers and staff know I am not scared to do the work with them.” Sarah argued that this helps cultivate a culture where people are valued for their contributions and treated with dignity. For this reason, she plans to treat them with “compassion,” as she believes it is impossible to know their struggles, even though they have work to complete. In Sarah’s opinion, everyone should “simply try to treat people the way you would want to be treated yourself.” Sarah said she hoped for kindness and consideration from others.

Theme 3: Workplace Discipleship Strategies

Only three of the eight participants stated their current strategy for discipleship in the workplace. Four participants did not have a specific strategy but were interested in future discipleship strategies. One person in the interview claimed to be content with all existing business strategies and did not have a plan for any future strategies. There were two codes: (a) current opportunities to help others grow spiritually in the workplace and (b) future opportunities to help others grow spiritually in the workplace. One theme emerged from the codes: workplace discipleship strategies. Table 19 shows the alignment of participants' responses, indicating their possession of workplace discipleship strategies.

Table 19

RQ4: Theme 3

Participants	Anna	Caleb	Mia	Ruth	Asher	Leah	Naomi	Sarah
Theme 4: Workplace discipleship strategies			☑	☑	☑			

Anna. Anna admitted that she does not currently have a written plan or strategy for discipleship in the workplace. She does, however, have an unwritten plan that she is confident in for the future. With this plan, she will launch her following site in a new city, where she will have one of her counselors serve as the primary point of contact. One of this worker's responsibilities will be to build relationships with local ministers to raise awareness about her company's services. She has talked about this with that employee. She said she was talking with this employee about networking with other pastors and establishing partnerships with other churches. She is preparing her staff member by having them collect business cards, brainstorm, and inquire about "what churches currently need help with." In the future, however, Anna shared that she does not know what "needs to be done that is different from now." She shared that she

aspires to “create some training for my staff to answer questions about things that they are having difficulty with; I guess that would kind of fit in the discipleship realm because I would be kind of teaching and training them in an area that would involve their faith.”

Caleb. Caleb stated he avoids discipleship strategy plans for a couple of reasons. Some of his employees, he said, include “Muslims, Seventh-Day Adventists, Christians, Judeo-Christians, and Baptists.” As an added justification for not instituting a workplace discipleship plan, he mentioned that a Muslim woman worked for him and had threatened to sue him for religious discrimination.

Mia. Mia revealed that her goal or objective from the very beginning was to establish a location in which individuals would have an experience with God, regardless of whether they were aware of it. She explained the environment by waving hand gestures, saying it is a “relaxing room with chairs that people may come and sit and talk” and is in a secure location. She stated she would also like to disclose that she would like to offer “book clubs or Bible studies” in her commercial space.

Ruth. Ruth revealed that her original business strategy incorporated publishing her faith-based journals. According to Ruth, “the necessity of being in the Word” is emphasized in the journals, as is “the fact that you cannot share the word if you are not in the Word” and “the fact that you cannot share the Word if you do not comprehend it” and “how it has to be a part of your everyday life.” After that, Ruth shared some more details regarding her journals. “When doing these faith journals, I go live every day sharing a devotional in my Facebook group.” She added that she gives her followers daily devotional suggestions based on scripture. Then she shared, “As I go live, everyone writes about their own experiences in their faith journals, which furthers the message and encourages the deeper study of the Bible.”

Asher. According to Asher, “breeding accountability” means spending time with everyone in the company. Since “we want to be about others,” that is the perspective he adopts. When asked for an example, Asher shared this means that “we instill that into our staff, our faculty, and we work to ensure we get a chance to talk to everyone and that everyone gets to engage,” as he put it. Asher stated he talks to everyone who is a part of his organization and that he makes sure they all know that this is the core of what they do.

Leah. Leah revealed that she has an overarching business strategy that dates back to when she had her first consultation. However, this is not a discipleship strategy. She is teaching her “positionettes” (her staff) how to conduct consultations. She teaches her employees to have a “Dr. Phil Moment” with their clients during consultations. In order to transcribe and paraphrase the answers for each client, “you must first let them speak and then invoke the Holy Spirit.” She continued, “Like I said, if we are going to make a difference, we want to see the transformation, and we just cannot be transactional in our approach.” It is not as simple as choosing between two options. If that is the case, then obviously, nothing will change. You must be prepared to put in the extra effort required to ask the right questions and ensure that everyone is wearing just the right shoes. Leah shared that she aspires to do whatever the Holy Spirit leads her to do when it comes to discipling others.

Naomi. Naomi admitted that she does not have much of a discipleship approach other than talking to her agents and serving as a sort of “spiritual compass” for them because of their varied religious backgrounds. In addition, Naomi stated she has no plans to alter her approach because she is okay with spiritually having “her agents and clients back.”

Sarah. Sarah admitted she does not have a specific plan for making disciples. However, she would like to restart the mastermind class she mentioned before and make it available to the community and workplace in addition to the church.

Summary of Research Question 4

Based on participant responses to surveys, interviews, and other data collection methods, it was determined that all participants could recognize when there is a need to disciple in the workplace. Everyone who took part expressed genuine concern and a desire to address the issue. Every participant, except for one, understood what they brought to the table and how they could use it to mentor others in the workplace. It may have been a bad experience, a good one, or perhaps a combination of the two. However, all participants experienced at least one life experience that made them want to devote their lives to making disciples. In each case, unique events catalyzed a common desire to aid others through discipleship. Only three participants had a formal strategy for implementing discipline inside their organizations. Only one participant in the study did not have any long-term strategy in place, nor did they want one, while four others did not have one but were interested in creating one.

Additional Research Findings

While conducting interviews with participants, some intriguing findings emerged that were not initially planned for the research but grew so pervasive that they warranted special attention. The first was that all the members felt a lack of, need for, and an appreciation for discipleship programs that highlight the importance of entrepreneurship within the frameworks of the church, the workplace, and the community. Consider Anna's statement that "it would be helpful and beneficial to combine faith walk with work." Leah elaborated on how it would

“enable people to see God outside the church, in the marketplace, and teach people how to use their gifts outside of the church,” Ruth said, “that would be amazing.”

Regardless of the attempts the researcher made to elicit information about discipleship programs in the community, not one CE could name a single church or other organization in their area that provided such a program. All participants agreed it would be a good idea to take some sort of training session in workplace discipleship. Three participants joked with the researcher, asking when the researcher would start offering seminars on the subject. Their comments raised an intriguing question about why there is no common ground in how different CEs describe discipleship. If there were a fundamental comprehension via discipleship programs for CEs, then perhaps all CEs would not feel like they were missing something or needed anything more, especially when they are trying to figure out how discipleship relates to their journey in life.

Several optimistic projections for the church, the workplace, and the community were discussed as a final point. Except for two, all participants indicated that the church had not provided much help or counsel. They did not know where to begin, were afraid to offend others, and were unaware of the resources available at their local church. Some participants even said they stayed silent because they did not want to “rock the boat,” “offend anyone,” or “come across as attempting to take things over” and make the pastor and leadership team uncomfortable.

Evaluation of the Research Design

The researcher was able to get insight into the CEs’ actual experiences by employing a phenomenological investigation. The researcher used a phenomenological approach and a qualitative methodology for this investigation. Phenomenology is a great way to learn about

people's histories, points of view, values, and relationships with others. For Creswell (2007), phenomenology studies how people articulate and make meaning of their sensory experiences. The researcher settled on this research strategy and technique after reviewing numerous alternatives in order to conduct in-depth interviews with CEs to uncover the formative life experiences, both positive and negative, that have impacted their ability to disciple others. Triangulated data bolstered the reliability of the study overall. Questions were asked, and interviews were unstructured, with interviewers taking notes and Otter ai transcribing. The participants were candid about their lives in the questionnaires and the in-person interviews. All responses were given in good faith, and the participants took their time to ensure clear communication. Many participants hesitated for quite some time before answering questions that closely pertained to their personal experiences. Most participants frequently said things like "I think" and "Is that what you are looking for?" The researcher responded with, "just your lived experience is the answer that I am seeking," and "there is no right or wrong answer." The researcher would sometimes add, "that's awesome," and "thank you for sharing your life with me." The discussions became more free-flowing. People revealed details they had previously kept to themselves.

To the researcher's knowledge, no questions were specifically addressed about why there are not more CE discipleship resources available for CEs. The researcher does believe that more questions geared toward the reasons for the lack of discipleship resources for CEs could have been asked, such as, "What have you done to seek resource support from the church in the area of discipleship for CEs?" This would have helped assess whether any effort has been made to address the complexity of the lack of discipleship resources they are encountering. Both the prescreening questions and the unstructured interviews were conducted through the audiovisual

platform Zoom. Each participant was in a different city in a different state, except for two who were in the same state but in different cities, so the results would show if there were consistent responses from the church. The researcher deemed the audio-visual interview helpful since it allowed for observation of the interviewee's body language in addition to the interviewee's vocal responses.

The lack of organization in the interviews is a flaw in the research design. Many people took longer than the authorized 45–60 minutes to voice their opinions, despite being informed of the timeframe for the interview. Two of them stayed there for over 2 hours. The researcher spent considerable time reviewing the videos and reading the transcripts via Otter Ai to capture significant material and reviewing the notes taken during the interview because the interviews took much longer than expected. The amount of content analysis here was significant. There was enough coding, theming, and categorization done by Atlas ai for this study to be considered valid.

The use of fictitious names, omitting the CE's company name, and concealing the participants' actual location of residence all contributed to the confidentiality and openness of the comments. Using an AV device increased the trustworthiness of data and reduced the need for copious notetaking (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The results of the phenomenological study of CEs' positive and negative life experiences were consistent with what was predicted. The number of participants in the sample was large enough to satisfy the criteria. One hour after each interview, an automated link via Otter Ai. was given to each participant's email with the transcribed interview for inspection and modification if required. There were no edits to the transcription because all interviewees gave final approval to the transcripts as they were presented.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Overview

The goal of Chapter Five is to provide the findings from the study's data and analysis. The chapter provides information about the study's motivations, questions, findings, and potential applications. The chapter summarizes the study, its shortcomings, and recommendations for future investigation.

Research Purpose

This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to examine CEs' formative life experiences and determine whether these experiences can bridge the discipleship gap between local churches, communities, and workplaces to fulfill the Great Commission.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this qualitative phenomenological study. The questions were:

RQ1. What defining formative life experiences, whether positive or negative, do Christian entrepreneurs possess that they perceive will help them to be more effective disciple-makers?

RQ2. What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the local church as disciple-makers?

RQ3. What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the community as disciple-makers?

RQ4. What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the workplace as disciple-makers?

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

The following discussions will center on the results that emerged from the investigation questions. A discussion of the study's theoretical and theological implications, research

limitations, and recommendations for further research are included, along with a summary of the study's findings and recommendations for additional research.

Research Conclusions

The research findings indicated that based on CEs' formative life experiences, they have a deep, ingrained desire to serve their churches, workplaces, and communities; however, few resources exist to teach them how to work together with their churches to advance the gospel and educate their communities. The detailed responses to the research questions provided by the participants offered a clear understanding of the thoughts and feelings the participants shared and approached to explore assisting CEs more efficiently and effectively in the area of discipleship. The next part includes a synopsis and conclusion of each study question. The themes for each study question are identified in italics.

Conclusions for Research Questions

Conclusion to RQ1

RQ1 asked, "What defining formative life experiences, whether positive or negative, do Christian entrepreneurs possess that they perceive will help them to be more effective disciplers?" The subject of this question was the CE's view on whether a person's formative life experiences (both positive and negative) contribute to their ability to make disciples. The results showed that CEs who described their understanding of *discipleship through leading* as focusing on relationship building through communication, listening, motivating others, and connecting through sharing their knowledge received overwhelming support. According to Cherry (2023), transformational leadership is leadership that motivates followers to make positive changes. Transformational leaders, in general, are inspiring in their zeal and enthusiasm. Each leader cares deeply about the outcome and works hard to ensure it (p. 1). All eight participants accepted the

need for leadership in discipling others and shared their definitions with diverse passion and enthusiasm. Leaders with an agenda to influence and bring others to Christ through transformation (Caleb), patience (Ruth), a consciousness of the needs of others (Anna), love and mentor others (Naomi and Sarah), and those who fill in the gaps (Leah) within these groups all while inspiring and building trust are just a few examples mentioned. This relates to the idea of leadership as defined by Sanders (2007), “influence and the characteristic that inspires sufficient trust in subordinates to accept his judgments and comply with his directives” (p. 29). A common thread about leadership from participant interviews was the idea that a leader needs to be credible because of their ability to see things as they are. In accord with DePree (2004), “the first duty of a leader is to establish what counts as fact” (p. 11).

Participants agreed that the duty of discipleship requires a calling from God to help others on their spiritual journey. According to the literature on the topic of *being called by God*, evangelical business owners have a profound sense of calling to their chosen field, which is also where they receive spiritual guidance and strength (Lindsay, 2007). Many participants emphasized the need to believe that God can and will use imperfect individuals to answer God’s call on their lives. Communication is crucial. Adubato (2005) stated, “Excellent communication involves experience, perseverance, and patience” (p. 11). It also arises from a profound yearning to connect with others personally (Adubato, 2005). This deeper level of connecting with God is where the participants found their desire to disciple others. Participants valued the flaws as proof that God had handpicked them to serve the world rather than relying on their abilities. This response further supports Pettit’s (2008) assertion that “God focuses on our hearts since, at its core, it is more a matter of the heart than of knowledge or skills;” (p. 180) this response emphasizes the importance of putting faith in God rather than in one’s abilities.

An intriguing new concept is that of testimony. Those God has called to make disciples have a double obligation to be open and honest about their own experiences in order to inspire others to follow Christ. As mentioned above, the Bible contains accounts of several witnesses who testified to the truthfulness of God's Word. The Samaritan woman was moved to share testimony when she returned to town after seeing Jesus at the well as she left her water jar behind. Many Samaritans in the town came to believe in Jesus because of the woman's testimony: "He told me everything I ever done" (John 4:28-30, 39). Peter and John related their experiences as testimonies of Jesus. They were called and commanded to cease speaking or teaching in Jesus' name. Paul addressed the crowd with gestures, and when they were still, he spoke in Aramaic. This is the language of the Jews. As soon as they heard Paul speak to them in their native dialect, everyone fell silent. Paul then testified about his encounter with Jesus and his journey to Damascus (Acts 9:1-22; 22:3-16; 26:9-18). As the group discussed the positive and negative influences on their development, they agreed on the importance of strong leadership and a divine calling in discipling others.

Every participant agreed that answering God's call was crucial. However, they also acknowledged that the specifics of that call varied from person to person and, in many cases, influenced the careers or businesses they ultimately pursued. For example, in the Old Testament, Bezaleel shared information and helped people by teaching individuals to make and sell furniture. Bezaleel made the tabernacle's furnishings (Exodus 35:30-35). "Bezaleel is the man whom God entrusted with constructing the basic furnishings for the tabernacle," wrote McGee (1981; p. 310). God granted Bezaleel the capacity to teach others how to use their skills, further showing how growth requires believers to use their spiritual gifts and integrate them into their vocations through the Great Commission and God's call.

Several attendees emphasized how important it is to be role models for others in the process of *discipleship through modeling* to create an excellent example for others to follow. Accomplishing this goal requires opening up and demonstrating a degree of vulnerability when in the presence of other people, which ultimately increases credibility. Evidence suggests that role models significantly impact those around them (Patton, 2017). The narrative of Nehemiah is an excellent illustration of the kind of role modeling found in the Bible. Patton (2017) claimed that “Nehemiah acquired a significant deal of his influence, role modeling, flexibility, and foresight from the king he served” (p. 8). Some of the ways this is done was shared by the participants. Some participants stated that modeling was through teaching and sharing life with others (Anna). Other participants shared that modeling was the act of living out loud for Jesus (Mia), and some participants shared that modeling is best seen through guiding people positively (Sarah). Lastly, most participants explained that love was the component that aids in modeling (Naomi and Ruth). Thirty percent of the participants used language describing love in the context of their relationships with others; this could be interpreted as a form of modeling in discipleship. The data showed that no matter how positive or negative their personal experiences were, the CEs agreed on three main themes as the source of effective discipleship: leading, modeling, and God’s calling.

Conclusion to RQ2

RQ2 asked, “What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the local church as disciple-makers?” The responses to RQ2 provided insight into participants’ perceived level of assurance that they can make a difference in the church while serving in their role. The results showed that CEs believe their skills benefit them and that there is an overall sense of allowance for *utilizing business acumen within the church*. While all CEs were asked

the same question and assumed to have the same level of business expertise, their responses varied widely since they each brought a unique set of skills and experiences to the table. All participants collectively agreed that negative and positive moments in their life led to a *transformative experience* that aided them on their journey to disciple others. Although everyone had their own one-of-a-kind experiences, having a profoundly formative encounter was a common denominator.

Seven participants shared there was *insufficient CE-focused discipleship educational support* to aid them. This insufficiency was linked to the scarcity of entrepreneur-focused discipleship training available at the research participants church. Three participants seemed disappointed when talking about the existing access but enthusiastic about the prospect of a program that targets the most important aspects of discipleship for business owners in the church, the community, and the workplace. After noting the lack, need, and value of suitable training options, seven of the eight participants advocated a discipleship program designed specifically for business owners and how it may help them achieve their personal goals of making a difference in the church, the community, and the workplace.

Conclusion to RQ3

RQ3 asked, “What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the community as disciple-makers?” This question was intended to evaluate if CEs feel they can make a difference while serving others in the community. This information helped determine whether CEs who want to disciple others may do so successfully in settings other than churches. Participants appreciated the importance of entrepreneurship and social responsibility when discussing the role of a disciple in the local community. Each person shared their worries, motivations, and plans for giving back to the community through their skills and interests.

According to Conway (2012), one must give entirely to others to feel productive and content with life. Eighty percent were motivated to help out their neighborhood because they saw a need that was not being met. In comparison, 20% had personal experiences that made them empathize with those in similar situations. Worries about community issues, unmet needs, and who should shoulder blame were also voiced.

All participants were genuinely concerned about the issues they faced in their neighborhoods. Along with these issues, they also noticed a deficiency or a need that needed to be addressed, as well as chances to contribute to the solution of these issues. All participants, in addition to *identifying community issues to address*, felt a duty to do something to remedy the situation. As was previously noted, CEs can grow into good stewards of the people, resources, and money entrusted to them if they practice what they preach (James 1:5) and aim for perfection in all that they do, thus inspiring in them a sense of obligation to assist others in meeting their problems and requirements. There are several characteristics that set apart a CE led by the Spirit from other sorts of entrepreneurs, but one stands out as crucial. A CE who is guided by the Holy Spirit will always put God first. Scripture says that if you seek first *His* kingdom and righteousness, “all these things will be supplied for you as well.” (New International Version, 2011, Matthew 6:33). When businesses put God first, they gain the foresight and divine direction they need to guide their employees and customers. Evident in this study is a concern, a lack of resources in the communities, and a sense of individual responsibility, but the routes that led each participant to these realizations diverged significantly. While the participants may have different motivations for helping others and working in different situations, they were united in their desire to put God’s will ahead of their own.

Finally, all participants reported feeling a strong sense of servitude and participation in giving back to the community. Some respondents said that they *give back to the community* in the form of monetary gifts. In contrast, others mentioned giving their time to educational resources or administrative work like grant writing to support the community beyond their resources. Each participant voiced their desire to help others by volunteering their time, skills, and resources in various settings.

Conclusion to RQ4

RQ4 asked, “What perceived impact, if any, do Christian entrepreneurs believe they have in the workplace as disciple-makers?” The CE’s confidence in their ability to make a difference in a third setting, outside the church and the community, the workplace, was gauged in part by their answers to the interview questions aligned with RQ4. Ninety percent of interviewees said they had had the desire to “disciple” coworkers. They pointed out the issue and suggested ways to address it by using their *work-related abilities that promote discipleship*. Moreover, 90% of those who took part in the study were able to identify their own personal strengths and how those skills may be applied in the context of becoming a disciple-maker at work. Because of the wide variety of faiths represented in their workforce, 10% of participants found it challenging to implement a discipleship program. They attempt to disciple others at work by “leading by modeling the Christ-like behavior.” Literature supports that God uses disciples to model life in Christ for others who desire maturity and that “modeling will be where the true training occurs” (Ogden, 2018). All survey participants reported having some work-related experience, whether positive or negative, that shaped their *compassion for discipleship in the workplace*.

Additionally, everyone involved emphasized that their assistance would extend to the customers

and employees. In each case, individual experiences served as catalysts for a common desire to aid others through discipleship

Thirty percent of those interviewed regarding discipleship tactics in the workplace reported active changes to foster spiritual development at their employment. Additionally, 30% of those interviewed reported having a clear strategy for instituting discipleship in their workplaces. One study participant did not have a long-term plan, and that participant did not want one. However, four others were in the same situation but were interested in creating workplace discipleship strategies. Even though there is minimal research that focuses on the lived experience of CE' and discipleship in the workplace there are a few studies centered on the role of the believer and the workplace. For example, one study underlined how religious views can drastically alter how employees execute their jobs. Religious identity is connected to an array of crucial job outcomes. It can inform and enrich an individual's professional decisions and contributions when there is a clear connection between occupational and religious values and practices (Héliot et al., 2020). Another study focused primarily on the function of a believer and the need for CEs to incorporate of Christian ideals into the workplace. This study incorporated evaluating work outcomes of employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational spirituality with independent variables from the fruit of the Spirit, including love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Dean, 2017).

Study Implications

Cullen et al. (2013) investigated what it means for Christians to take on the role of entrepreneur and how they can understand their calling to create and lead businesses that seek to advance Christian values in the larger world. From a worldwide vantage point, Cullen et al.

examined what it means to be a Christian entrepreneur while studying the characteristics of CEs. According to Cullen et al.'s findings, "entrepreneurship affords Christians the chance to put their gifts to work for God and establish businesses in keeping with their beliefs, values, and principles" (p. 28). This research extends previous research to focus on CEs who have focused their attention on one aspect (discipleship) of Christianity based on the Great Commandment. This research also restricted its scope to the United States to determine whether doing so would affect the study's primary findings. This research shows that CEs can have an effect and are interested in and want educational support. This research contributes by demonstrating the need, understanding, and desire for CEs to work together with educators and church leadership to better prepare, activate, and send CEs to put into practice discipleship strategies in the local church, the community, and the workplace. CEs have the ability to enable others around them to flourish. Maintaining the fellowship of Christians calls for boldness, vision, and the courage to take risks that most people would rather avoid.

Willard (1998) addressed what this fellowship and call for boldness looks like, disabling all expectations when God emptied himself and took the form of a child born in the humblest circumstances—a child who became a great rabbi, the greatest ever, and whose kingdom has nothing to do with the ambitions of emperors or presidents. This is the "divine conspiracy" (p. 22). Willard explained how Jesus slipped into our world through the backroads and outlying districts of one of the least important places on earth and allowed his program for human history to unfold ever so slowly through the centuries. Willard also stressed the totality of the kingdom: God's aim for us is that we should live in him. The path to God is one he sends among us. The very example of Jesus slipping into our world reveals the true character of God and, indeed, of the world itself. This is essential in understanding who God will use to aid the church.

One of Willard's (1998) most powerful points was revealed while discussing the attainment of true discipleship based on a pure change of heart. Once that happens, simple discipleship flows out of our new identity. Willard drove his point home with a piercing analogy. Was it difficult for Christ to forgive from the cross? No. "What would have been hard for him," Willard suggested, "would have been to curse his enemies and spew forth vileness and evil upon everyone" (p. 38). That was not in his nature. Willard underscored the point by charging readers actually to become "as [Christ] was, permeated with love" (Willard, pp. 1-7).

There are numerous applications for this research in the church. The first step is to recognize early on that people's formative experiences and skills are an asset of CEs who aspire to make disciples. As was previously noted, the process of relationship building calls for invested time and energy from those who are attempting to make disciples. Relationship building entails exposing oneself to the people one is discipling, as well as spending time with them (Henderson, n.d., p. 2). Showing them your genuine feelings in this way (Henderson, n.d., p. 3). Disciple-makers and CEs can then learn about their participants on a more personal level by responding to their questions and addressing their issues. With this knowledge, programs like small groups can be created to better equip the CE for discipling others and investing in the CE's growth. In order to accomplish this, it is possible to provide support groups that focus on positive and negative experiences.

Mia is a perfect illustration of this idea. She was reared as a Jehovah's Witness but left the faith in her early teenage years. Her family disowned her, and she had no role models or mentors in her newfound Christian beliefs. Mia claimed that she founded a church and was helped by a congregation member. In this context, Mia realized she was a "teaching pastor." This is where Mia can be poured into by the church, not just one member, to develop her desire and

ability to disciple others, incorporate her skills, as well as where she can get training in the field of discipleship. These subsequent stages would do more than encourage them; they would also offer her support in knowing she has skills to contribute and life experiences to share that can influence others.

Having the church's backing means the community can benefit from this study. In addition to that which has already been stated, all of God's creation is intended to be a part of His beautiful plan for a unified body of believers. The Bible teaches that everyone is equal within a community (Romans 2:11). The world is full of little towns called hamlets (villages). There is no nationality or ethnicity that cannot be represented in the body of Christ when God's people unite (Galatians 6:9-10). Conferences and seminars are one area where this impact could be felt. These events could be held at a hotel or conference center in multiple major cities. This is where hamlets (village of all racial backgrounds and gender) can come together for a greater purpose. The CE can meet with other CEs and form a network beyond the local church's walls at events such as these. These groups would have leadership made up of both CEs and religious figures partnering together, not just one or the other. Together, they would ensure that CEs are being trained in biblically sound discipleship practices and procedures while also brainstorming fresh and innovative approaches to bridging the gap between the church and the community through discipleship. Remote small groups across the country are another method by which the church may have an influence. One CE and one member of the church's leadership team would be in charge of one of these groups. These groups could be classified as life groups. CEs in the area would have somewhere safe to be humble, open, and transparent about their successes and failures as CEs. Those who do not regularly visit a church but want to become CEs to seek God's will could be exposed to opportunities for guidance and to hone their craft in this setting.

As mentioned, despite the difficulties associated with workplace discipleship in the modern era, God can and will utilize the workplace to accomplish His purposes if He so chooses. This is why, as Bredin (1981) put it, “we must be steered out of self-imposed prison, pushed toward the new and the not-yet, and prodded into the unlimited incomprehensibility of mystery” (p. 427). CEs, however, can use the research in the workplace to brainstorm novel approaches to discipling employees. CEs might also benefit from a podcast or YouTube channel hosted by a local CE and church leaders in which guests discuss how they have discipled others in the workplace. The purpose of this podcast would be to share the stories of CEs and their experiences in discipling others. CEs may also request prayer by calling a prayer line that might be established. Praying for CEs and church leaders can help inspire, motivate, and serve as a gentle reminder to turn to God first in any problems they may face.

Research Limitations

There was a restriction placed on the scope of this research to a single region inside the United States. An increased scope might have provided more data on how CEs are trained to serve the church internationally. It should be noted that although anyone might have responded to the request for CEs, the majority of those who did so were women. Thus, the research was skewed toward the feminine rather than the masculine perspective. Due to the potential for differences in perspective based on gender identification, studies should include both male and female participants. Researchers can learn if gender is a factor in their topic by interviewing men and women. Unfortunately, without a gender-diverse sample, the researcher cannot determine whether gender plays a role. Studies examining the reasons that motivate men and women to participate in research reveal essential insights into the importance of balance. A recent study by Mohajier (2019) noted male participants display their strength by focusing on more technical

issues. In comparison, the female contributors were motivated by concerns for fellowship and support (Coates, 2015). By contrast, the men who participated in this survey demonstrated they value technical processes over companionship. It may be more helpful to select an equal number of male and female CEs to balance technical processes and relationships in future studies.

Another area to look at is narrowing down the specific industries in which CEs work. Possibly more insight into how CEs apply their skills to the discipleship of others in the business world could have been gained by narrowing the focus to a select range of occupations. Additional questions like, “Do you believe your industry has access to resources that can benefit you in discipling others?” and “What support do you believe is available to you for discipling individuals in the industry?” would significantly enhance the research. Consider the participant Naomi in this study. Naomi is a broker in the real estate sector, and her job requires her to interact with clients, agents, attorneys, developers, and other brokers. When it comes to opportunities to make disciples, Naomi has more diverse options than Anna, whose Christian-based counseling service may not have as varied clientele.

In comparison, Anna may not have as much opportunity to interact with many diverse people every day as Naomi does because her line of work is naturally more aligned with local churches, in which she may have more access to tools to help her in her discipleship efforts. When asked what, if any, action she had taken to incorporate discipleship into her business, Anna said, “networking with area pastors” to join forces with them in assisting the local community. In contrast, when asked the same question, Naomi said she would focus on talking to people, asking if they are “a believer” and whether they “attend church,” and inviting them while being careful not to “force faith onto them.” This is an area that the researcher feels could have been probed deeper to get a better understanding from the occupational point of view and

access. To some, Naomi may favor a more relational, contextual approach to evangelism. As noted, evangelists were also called to equip others to develop their spiritual abilities (Eph. 4:11,12). CEs such as Naomi, with the gift of evangelism, can use their formative experiences with people to promote God's kingdom while equipping others to develop their spiritual gifts and helping others as God allows. Anna is more inclined to follow the teachings of the church's leadership on how best to reach out to the community. A higher standard of accountability is placed on teachers, as James 3:1 suggests. This highlights the significance of the responsibility of teaching. According to McGee (1983), a teacher has a greater duty because of "the enormous danger of imparting the wrong thing" (p. ??). The profession of education is not for everyone. Others, like Anna, who have a special calling to instruct others, could use this to effectively disciple others. Cotrando (2020) stated "both are crucial disciples who persist in doctrine and personal fellowship will create new disciples, expanding their influence worldwide" (Cotrando, 2020, p.338). In the future, researchers may also analyze this idea further to determine whether certain CEs favor relational evangelism in their discipling efforts as opposed to following the directives of the church's leadership. The effectiveness of the various CEs' discipleship strategies in the church, the community, and the workplace might be examined in a further study. Lastly, future researchers may want to prequalify participants who have more than one employee or volunteer. Instead possibly require three to five employees minimum. This will give a better picture of how a CE must be flexible in stewarding a group rather than one individual. It is more common that an owner of a business have or will expand at some point to more than one employee or volunteer.

Further Research

The views of CEs on discipling others in the contexts of the church, the community, and the workplace were the subject of this research. Perceptions were formed from either positive or negative real-life events, and participants were all residents of the United States. Furthering the research and capturing more evidence that suggests which type of lived experience (negative or positive) results in a more cause-and-effect scenario is a more significant influence on the CE would require limiting the scope of the study to include qualitative case studies that focus on only one (negative or positive) lived experience and look to determine which has the more significant effect or impact and how this can be used strategically in discipling others. Following are some recommendations for expanding this study to better serve CEs and Christian church leaders.

The lack of the church's viewpoint on CEs and discipleship is a limitation of this study. Incorporating the perspectives of numerous church leaders on CEs and discipleship through a qualitative focus group study may have improved the quality of the study's findings. Exploratory research by Cullen et al. (2013) found that Christian leaders "recognize that God does not only call ministers and other spiritual workers to unique positions in His kingdom but calls everyone to distinctive responsibilities in His kingdom" (p. 26) Another reason why the church should include CEs in its efforts to disciple the community is that, according to Cullen et al.'s findings, Christian leaders believe that Christians provide a unique perspective on entrepreneurship because their faith compels them to act with integrity and ethics out of a recognition that God created them to be stewards of His creation. Quantitative descriptive research might go further into issues like the church's current leadership's efforts to educate and equip CEs to communicate the faith and disciple others, in addition to the church's desire to aid CEs in

discipleship. Using this method, the researcher could assess the current state of Christian leaders' involvement with CEs and the resulting community impact. By considering the church's position, the researcher can see the situation from more than one person's perspective. This would provide material for further research in which Christian church leaders' and CEs' perspectives on the need to educate CEs to grow the church may be compared and contrasted. As a result of studies on how Christian leaders in churches can help Christian entrepreneurs, a more in-depth quantitative correlation research is needed to examine the results of these partnerships and offer advice on how to expand them, all while creating new opportunities for Christian leaders to disciple others in the church, the community, and the workplace. According to Lau (2017), "correlational studies determine whether a population's traits vary as a function of whether its members have been exposed to an event of interest in the environment" (p. 1). Studying the ways in which church leaders may support CEs and demonstrating the results that can be achieved through collaboration would be the focus of a valuable quantitative correlation research study. As Hybels (2002) stated,

Religious leaders can gain much wisdom from the commercial world. The Church lacks the qualities of good organizational leadership, such as the capacity to respond to change, create new ideas, form cohesive teams, and implement sound strategies. The church has an opportunity to lead the way in pioneering new ideas, taking risks, and helping those in need. (p. 37)

The evaluation of these outcomes provides not only a comprehensive picture, but also a blueprint of actionable next actions and attainable end goals for those who follow.

Additional findings from the study can be researched by using a mixed-methods convergent parallel design. According to Tomasi et al., 2018, a convergent parallel mixed-methods study design collects, analyzes and interprets quantitative and qualitative data. This method of study would show some additional intriguing pathways for future study. Through qualitative interviews, researchers interested in CEs might ask members of the CE community

whether the available discipleship courses are helpful by gauging the level of satisfaction they report after completing them. Researchers could have participants go through a discipleship program with an accompanying support group as part of a quantitative survey study, as most CEs are likely unaware of such courses' existence. Once both are finished, the researcher will be able to compare the results to see if the present discipleship programs and support help assist Christian entrepreneurs in discipling others. Seminaries and discipleship have both been the subject of research into how they contribute to the development of future leaders in the area of discipleship (Spencer, 2020). In addition to a thorough review, these studies also provide novel strategies for growing the church through discipleship. These research efforts matter because they encourage the church to think creatively as it seeks out new methods of making disciples. This research demonstrates how the church is starting to accept new ideas. It is possible that these methods will help achieve the aim of enabling, equipping, and assisting CEs in their mission of discipling others.

Summary

To protect and strengthen the faith of the congregation and the community, CEs are needed in churches, communities, and workplaces now more than ever. Threats to the long-term health of society, business, and the church arise when churches cannot help those in need through discipleship assistance and when CEs can aid and assist but lack the knowledge necessary to support the church's development. The findings of this research show that CEs have personal experiences that strengthen their faith and motivation to disciple others inside and outside the church. This study demonstrates that CEs want to help the church disciple others but lack resources and support. Research questions were answered to give an in-depth analysis of participants' perceived experiences.

Further investigation is needed to understand the findings' ramifications thoroughly. It is an issue when less than half of a church's typical attendees show up for a service, leaving the pastor to work tirelessly for hours despite feeling exhausted (Nelson, 2000). This deficiency compounds the issue of ineffective discipleship, and in the worst case, can lead churches to permanently close their doors, which in turn has a negative impact on the areas in which they are located. Issues within the church make it all the more important to employ a relational approach to sharing the gospel with those outside the church. Researchers require additional research on this topic so that CEs can be mobilized to help the local church expand. Communities and the workplace might make more significant resources available to help those suffering emotionally, financially, and spiritually.

The study found that CEs credit their formative life experiences with helping them become effective disciple-makers. Furthermore, they believe their skills and experience as CEs can positively affect the church. Participants in this study have faith that the church can provide them with the knowledge and resources they need to discipline others in their communities and workplaces. The participants who took part in this research also feel they have the potential to serve as a unifying force between the local community and the church. However, they cannot go out and disciple others without the help of the church's leadership in educating and encouraging them. When CEs take their business knowledge, understanding of the community, and witness for Christ out into the world, they plant seeds for a creative and fruitful evangelistic pathway (Beckwith, 2016). The church can grow, spread the gospel, and develop disciples within its ranks and the surrounding community if its members work together. The final point is that the researcher's awareness of the current absence of discipleship in the church, community, and workplace heightened after hearing each CE's personal story of desire and difficulty. Current

resources could bridge the gap and improve the lives of Christians and others seeking hope and faith in difficult times.

REFERENCES

- Aduvato, S. (2005). *Make the connection: Improve your communication at work and at home*. Rutgers University Press.
- Alhajj, R., Moshirpour, M., & Far, B. (Eds.). (2020). *Data management and analysis: Case studies in education, healthcare, and beyond*. Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
- Altoun, R. (2021). *How the Covid-19 pandemic closed 2000-year-old doors: A case study about the Christian churches Covid-19 pandemic crisis management and what affect it had on the parish members* [Doctoral dissertation, Uppsala University]. Digitala Vetenskapliga Arkivet. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1610153&dswid=8783>
- Anthony, M. J., & Estep, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Management essentials for Christian ministries*. Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- Bailey, M. (n.d.). *6 Christian millionaires that are changing the world*. Beliefnet. <https://www.beliefnet.com/inspiration/christian-millionaires-changing-the-world.aspx>
- Bandy, A. S. (2021). *An illustrated guide to the Apostle Paul: His life, ministry, and missionary journeys*. Baker Books
- Banks, M. M. W. (2001). *A study of church leaders, volunteers, and members on the use of volunteers in the church*. Pepperdine University Publishing.
- Barna Group. (2015, December 1). *New research on the state of discipleship*. <https://www.barna.com/research/new-research-on-the-state-of-discipleship/>
- Barna Group. (2017). *Barna Trends 2018. What's new and what's next at the intersection of faith and culture?* Baker Books.
- Baron, R. A., Franklin, R. J., & Hmieleski, K. M. (2016). Why entrepreneurs often experience low, not high, levels of stress: The joint effects of selection and psychological capital. *Journal of Management*, 42(3), 742–768. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206313495411>
- Baumbusch, J. (2010). Semi-structured interviewing in practice-close research. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, 15, 255–258. [doi:10.1111/j.1744-6155.2010.00243.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6155.2010.00243.x)
- Baumgartner, E., & Flores, A. (2017). Creating a spiritual learning space: The changing leadership roles in the life cycle of a church plant. *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, 11(2), 52–63.
- BBC. (2011, June 21). *Religions: Paul*. https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/history/paul_1.shtml

- Beata, Z., & Dariusz, K. (2021). Disclosure to God as a mediator between private prayer and psychological well-being in a Christian sample. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 60(2), 1083–1095. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-020-01107-3>
- Bechtel, M. (2005, June 13). Ministry of encouragement should be nurtured. *Canadian Mennonite*, 9(12), 35. <https://canadianmennonite.org/sites/default/files/past-issues/9-12small.pdf>
- Becker, C., Knudsen, T., & Swedberg, R. (Eds.). (2011). *The entrepreneur: Classic texts by Joseph A Schumpeter*. Stanford University Press.
- Beckwith, L. (2016). The evolution of marketplace ministry: An exploratory study of strategies used in business evangelism. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 8(1), 6–22.
- Belenzon, S., Chatterji, A. K., & Daley, B. (2017). Eponymous entrepreneurs. *The American Economic Review*, 107(6), 1638–1655. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20141524>
- Bell, B. (1990). *The ministry of helps handbook*. Harrison House Publishing.
- Berg, D. L. (2004). *Qualitative research methods for social sciences* (5th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
- Borthwick, P. (2015). *Great commission, great compassion: Following Jesus and loving the world*. InterVarsity Press.
- Bossidy, L., & Charan, R. (2002). *Execution: The discipline of getting things done*. Crown Publishing Group.
- Bradley, J. D. (2018, July 18). *Church giving statistics, 2019 edition*. Push Pay. <https://pushpay.com/blog/church-giving-statistics/>
- Bredfeldt, G. (2006). *Great leader great teacher: Recovering the biblical vision for leadership*. Moody Publishers.
- Bredin, E. (1981). Discipleship. *The Furrows*, 32(7), 415–427.
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2014). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Bryson, J. R., Andres, L., & Davies, A. (2020). COVID-19, virtual church services and a new temporary geography of home. *Journal of Economic and Human Geography*, 111(3), 360–372. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12436>
- Bullough, A., Renko, M., & Myatt, T. (2022). Danger zone entrepreneurs: The importance of resilience and self-efficacy for entrepreneurial intentions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 38(3), 473–499. <https://doi.org/10.1111/etap.12006>

- Caliendo, M., Fossen, F. M., & Kritikos, A. S. (2009). Risk attitudes of nascent entrepreneurs—new evidence from an experimentally validated survey. *Small Business Economics*, 32(2), 153–167. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-007-9078-6>
- Cao, N. (2007). Christian entrepreneurs and the post-mao state: An ethnographic account of church-state relations in China's economic transition. *Sociology of Religion*, 68(1), 45–66. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/68.1.45>
- Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview research: The interview protocol refinement framework. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(5), 811–831. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2016.2337>
- Check, J., & Schutt, R. K. (2012). Survey research. In *Research methods in education* (pp. 159–186). Sage.
- Cherry, K. (2023, February 24). *What is transformational leadership?* Very Well Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-transformational-leadership-2795313>
- Cloud, D. (2019, February 20). *Christian inventor R.G. LeTourneau*. Way of Life Literature. https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/christian_inventor_rg_letourneau.html
- Coates, J. (2015). *Women, men, and language: A sociolinguistic account of gender differences in language* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Cohan, P., Kakabadse, A., Kossof, L., Tulgan, B., Trompenaars, F., Crainer, S., & Dearlove, D. (Eds.). (2013). *The capstone encyclopedia of business: The most up-to-date and accessible guide to business ever*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Conway, E. (2012). God in the workplace. *The Furrow*, 63(5), 274–281.
- Corbin, J., & Morse, J. M. (2003). The unstructured interactive interview: Issues of reciprocity and risks when dealing with sensitive topics. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(3) 335–354. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800403009003001>
- Costa, H., Sprout, E., Teng, S., McDaniel, M., Hunt, J., Boudreau, D., Ramroop, T., Rutledge, K., & Hall, H. (2022). *Kingdom*. National Geographic. <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/kingdom>
- Cotrado, Y. J. H. (2020). Principles of discipleship and church growth from Acts 2:46–47. *International Review of Mission*. 109(2), 328–339. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rom.12337>
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. (2nd ed.). Sage Publishing.
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. (5th ed.). Sage.

- Cullen, M., Calitz, A., & Boshoff, L. (2013). Characteristics of the Christian entrepreneur: An exploratory study. *Journal of Development and Leadership*, 2(1), 29–44.
<https://jdl.mandela.ac.za/jdl-download.aspx?vn=Volume%202,%20Number%201>
- Cutcliffe, J. (2003). Reconsidering reflexivity: Introducing the case for intellectual entrepreneurship. *Qualitative Health Research* 13(1), 136–148.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732302239416>
- Davis, B. (2013, April 15). *Silent retreat: Seeking deeper meaning and purpose*. Huffington Post. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/silent-retreat_b_3064790
- Davis, D. E., Hook, J. N., Worthington, E. L., Jr., Van Tongeren, D. R., Gartner, A. L., Jennings, D. J., II, & Emmons, R. A. (2011). Relational humility: Conceptualizing and measuring humility as a personality judgment. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 93(3), 225–234.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00223891.2011.558871>
- Dean, D. (2017). *Religion and spirituality in the workplace: A quantitative evaluation of job satisfaction and organizational commitment* (Publication No. 10260968) [Doctoral dissertation, Regent University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- De Chesnay, M. (2014). *Nursing research using participatory action research: Qualitative designs and methods in nursing*. Springer.
- Deffinbaugh, R. L. (2004, June 22). *The training of the twelve (Luke 9:1-27)*. Bible.org.
<https://bible.org/seriespage/29-training-twelve-luke-91-27>
- Delbeke, M., & Morel, A.-F. (2010). Metaphors in action: Early modern church buildings as spaces of knowledge. *Architectural History*, 53, 99–122.
- DePree, M. (2004). *Leadership is an art*. Crown Business.
- DeWalt, K., & DeWalt, B. (2004). *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers*. Altamira Press.
- Dodd, B. J. (2003). *Empowered church leadership*. InterVarsity Press.
- Dooley, L. (n.d.). *When your church invests in entrepreneurs*. Faith driven entrepreneur.
<https://www.faithdrivenentrepreneur.org/blog/when-your-church-invests-in-entrepreneurs>
- Eddleston, K. A., & Powell, G. N. (2022). Nurturing entrepreneurs' work-family balance: A gendered perspective. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 36(3), 513–541.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2012.00506.x>
- Ekhomu, G. O. (2015). *The impact of financial literacy competencies in faith-based organizations: A multiple case study of independent churches in Mid-Western USA* (Publication No. 3741495) [Doctoral dissertation, Capella University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

- Etheredge, C. (n.d.). *From decisions to disciples*. Discipleship.org.
<https://discipleship.org/blog/moving-from-decisions-to-disciples/>
- Evener, V. (2020). Spirit and truth: Reckoning with the crises of Covid-19 for the church. *Dialog*, 59(3), 233–241. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dial.12594>
- Faraoanu, I. (2018). Abraham's faith in and obedience to God. *Romanian Journal of Artistic Creativity*, 6(1), 49–58.
- Feng, J., Allen, D. G., & Seibert, S. E. (2022). Once an entrepreneur, always an entrepreneur? Entrepreneurial identity, job characteristics, and voluntary turnover of former entrepreneurs in paid employment. *Personnel Psychology*, 75, 179–213.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12455>
- Finlayson, C., Fu, M. R., Squires, A., Applebaum, A., Van Cleave, J., O'Cearbhaill, R., & DeRosa, A. P. (2019). The experience of being aware of disease status in women with recurrent ovarian cancer: A phenomenological study. *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, 22(4), 377–384. <https://doi.org/10.1089/jpm.2018.0127>
- Flood-Stith, C. (2018). It's not hard to be humble: The role of humility in leadership. *Family Practice Management*, 25(3), 25–27.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2011). Case study. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 301–316). Sage Publishing.
- Gall, M., Gall, J., & Borg, W. (2003). *Educational research*. Pearson.
- Giordano, D. (2015). *Bucks county community college teacher claims he was fired for mentioning God in a letter to students*. Philadelphia CBS Local.
<https://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2015/09/01/bucks-county-teacher-fired-god/>
- Glaser, B. G. (1998). *Doing grounded theory: Issues and discussions*. Sociology Press.
- Grayston, K. (1981). The meaning of parkletos. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 4(13), 67–82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X8100401305>
- Greenleaf, R. K. (2002). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power & greatness—Essays by Robert K. Greenleaf*. (Anniversary ed.). Paulist Press.
- Guillén, M., Ferrero, I., & Hoffman, W. (2015). The neglected ethical and spiritual motivations in the workplace. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 128(4), 803–816. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1985-7>
- Gutierrez, G., Jr. (2016). [Review of the book, *Influencer: The science of leading change*, by J. Grenny, K. Patterson, D. Maxfield, R. McCmillan, & A. Switzler]. *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, 10(2), 96–98.
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol10/iss2/12>

- Hardy, L., & Ballis, H. (2005). Does one size fit all? The sacred and secular divide revisited with insights from Niebuhr's typology of social action. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 18(2), 238–254. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513570510588742>
- Harrison, J. R. (2013). Augustan Rome and the body of Christ: A comparison of the social vision of the Res Gestae and Paul's letter to the Romans. *Harvard Theological Review*, 106(1), 1–36. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816012000296>
- Hartwig, R., & Bird, W. (2015). *Teams that thrive: Five disciplines of collaborative church leadership*. InterVarsity Press.
- Héliot, Y., Gleibs, I. H., Coyle, A., Rousseau, D. M., & Rojon, C. (2020). Religious identity in the workplace: A systematic review, research agenda, and practical implications. *Human Resource Management*, 59(2), 153–173. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21983>
- Henderson, T. (n.d.). *Components of discipleship*. Great Commission Ministry Ethiopia. <https://www.gcmethiopia.org/en/help-others-grow/the-right-components-of-discipleship.html>
- Hermans, C. (2021). Discernment as predictor for transformational leadership: A study of school leaders in Catholic schools in India. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 42(3), 393–408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2020.1852815>
- Hiebert, P. G. (2008). *Transforming worldviews: An anthropological understanding of how people change*. Baker Academic.
- Higgs, J. (Ed.). (2019). *Practice wisdom: Values and interpretations*. Brill.
- Holland, D. V., & Shepherd, D. A. (2022). Deciding to persist: Adversity, values, and entrepreneurs' decision policies. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 37(2), 331–358. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2011.00468.x>
- Houghton, C., Casey, D., Shaw, D., & Murphy, K. (2013). Rigor in qualitative case-study research. *Nurse Researcher*, 20(4), 12–17. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2013.03.20.4.12.e326>
- Hughes, R., Beatty, K., & Dinwoodie, D. (2014). *Becoming a strategic leader: Your role in your organization's enduring success*. Jossey-Bass.
- Hybels, B. (2002). *Courageous leadership: Leadership summit simulcast*. Zondervan.
- Jackson, J., & Maxwell, J. (2004). *Pastorpreneur: Pastors and entrepreneurs answer the call*. Baxter Press.
- Jacobsen, D. (2018). The testimony of martyr: A word history of martyr in Anglo-Saxon England. *Studies in Philology*, 115(3), 417–432. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sip.2018.0015>

- Jones, S. (2017). Liturgy, pastoral ministry, and the bivocational pastor. *Liturgy*, 32(4), 32–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0458063X.2017.1343049>
- Jordan, M. (1985, March 13). *Ex-minister gets one year for stealing from church*. The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1985/03/13/ex-minister-gets-one-year-for-stealing-from-church/9ef431ce-c8a6-40df-a1d8-c10230ff7ce9/>
- Knight, G. W., & Ray, R. W. (Eds.). (1988). *Bible dictionary*. Barbour Publishing Inc.
- Kotler, P. & Lee, N. (2005). *Corporate social responsibility: Doing the most good for your company and cause*. John Wiley and Sons.
- Kotter, J. (1996). *Leading change*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2017). *The leadership challenge: How to make ordinary things happen in organizations* (6th ed.). John Wiley and Sons.
- Kurtus, R. (2022, November 21). *Applying TQM in a church*. School for Champions. https://www.school-for-champions.com/tqm/church_quality.htm#.Y_1n9HbMKM8
- Largen, K. J. (2013). Freedom *from* and freedom *for*: Luther's concept of freedom for the twenty-first century. *Dialog*, 52(3), 232–243. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dial.12048>
- Lau, F. (2017). Methods for correlational studies. In F. Lau & C. Kuziemsky (Eds.), *Handbook of eHealth evaluation: An evidence-based approach*. University of Victoria.
- Ledbetter, J. (2015). “We shouldn’t have preconceptions about who entrepreneurs are.” An Inc. interview with Bill Clinton. *Inc*, 37(7), 166–172. <https://www.inc.com/>
- Lee, M. V. (2006). *Paul, the stoics, and the body of Christ* (Vol. 137). Cambridge University Press.
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2001). *Practical research: Planning and design*. (7th ed.). Merrill Prentice-Hall.
- Liddell, G. J., Liddell, P., Jr., & Lacewell, S. K. (2001). Charitable contributions in bankruptcy: An empirical analysis. *American Business Law Journal*, 39(1), 99–138. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-1714.2001.tb00412.x>
- Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A., & Guba, E. G. (2017). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences revisited. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 213–263). Sage Publishing.
- Lindsay, D. M. (2007). *Faith in the halls of power: How evangelicals joined the American elite*. Oxford University.

- Lingenfelter, S. (2008). *Leading cross-culturally: Covenant relationships for effective Christian leadership*. Baker Academic.
- Magyar-Moe, J. L. (2009). *Therapist's guide to positive psychological interventions*. Elsevier Inc.
- Manning, J. (2017). In vivo coding. In C. S. Davis & R. F. Potter (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*. Sage.
- Manyaka-Boshielo, S. J. (2018). The role of a missional social entrepreneurial church in a township community. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 74(1), Article a4932. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4932>
- Martin, R. L., & Osberg, S. (2007, Spring). Social entrepreneurship: The case for definition. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.
https://ssir.org/articles/entry/social_entrepreneurship_the_case_for_definition
- Marvasti, A. (2010). Interviews and interviewing. In *International Encyclopedia of Education* (3rd ed., pp. 424–429). Elsevier.
- Maxwell, J. C. (2007). *The 21 irrefutable laws of leadership: Follow them, and people will follow you* (Revised and updated 10th anniversary ed.). Thomas Nelson.
- McCarty, C. B. (2012). *A parliamentary guide for church leaders*. B&H Publishing Group.
- McGee, J. V. (1981). *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee: Vol. I Genesis—Deuteronomy*. Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- McGee, J. V. (1982a). *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee: Vol. II Joshua—Psalms*. Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- McGee, J. V. (1982b). *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee: Vol. III Proverbs—Malachi*. Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- McGee, J. V. (1983a). *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee: Vol. IV Matthew—Romans*. Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- McGee, J. V. (1983b). *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee: Vol. V Corinthians—Revelation*. Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- McMillan, D. W., & Chavis, D. M. (1986). Sense of community: A definition and theory. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 14(1), 6–23. [https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6629\(198601\)14:1<6:AID-JCOP2290140103>3.0.CO;2-I](https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6629(198601)14:1<6:AID-JCOP2290140103>3.0.CO;2-I)
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.-a). Commodity. *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved February 27, 2023 from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/commodity>

- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.-b). Skills. *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. 2023 from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/skills>
- Mohajer, L., & Jan, J. B. M. (2019). Gender differences: Factors influencing men and women's participation in gender research. In P. A. J. Wahid, P. I. D. A. Aziz Abdul Samad, & A. P. D. P. Pujinda (Eds.), *Carving the future built environment: Environmental, economic and social resilience* (Vol. 2, pp. 786–796). European Proceedings of Multidisciplinary Sciences. Future Academy. <https://doi.org/10.15405/epms.2019.12.80>
- Moritz, G. (2005, July 4). *Jesus sells*. Arkansas Business. <https://www.arkansasbusiness.com/article/50783/jesus-sells-gwen-moritz-editors-note>
- Mostert, J. (2012). Community psychology as socio-missional-entrepreneurship. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 3(1), 66–67.
- Mueller, S., Von Siemens, B., & Volery, T. (2012). What do entrepreneurs actually do? An observational study of entrepreneurs' everyday behavior in the start-up and growth stages. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 36(5), 995–1017. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2012.00538.x>
- Munatswa, M. (2017, March 30). Christian entrepreneurs: Entrepreneurship and the church-unleashing greatness in ourselves. *Nust Journal-ZW*. <https://newmediaunchained.wordpress.com/2017/03/30/entrepreneurship-and-the-church-unleashing-greatness-in-ourselves/>
- Muralidharan, E., & Saurav, P. (2018). Sustainability, transformational leadership, and social entrepreneurship. *Sustainability*, 10(2), Article 567. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10020567>
- Murnieks, C. Y., Mosakowski, E., & Cardon, M. S. (2014). Pathways of passion: Identity centrality, passion, and behavior among entrepreneurs. *Journal of Management*, 40(6), 1583–1606. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206311433855>
- Murray-Webster, R., & Penny, P. (2011). *A short guide to facilitating risk management: Engaging people to identify, own and manage risk*. Taylor & Francis Group.
- Nelson, A., & Appel, G. (2000). *How to change your church without killing it*. Word Publishing.
- New International Version. (2011). BibleGateway.com. <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-Interational-Version-NIV-Bible/#booklist>
- Northouse, P. (2022). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (9th ed.). Sage Publishing.
- Oates, J. (n.d.). 3 Discipleship models to drive your ministry forward. Just Disciple. <https://justdisciple.com/discipleship-models-2/>
- Ogden, G. (2018). *Discipleship essentials (revised and expanded): A guide to building your life in Christ*. InterVarsity Press.

- Paauw, G. (2018, October 10). *The Great Commission, discipleship, and the Bible*. Institute for Bible Reading. <https://instituteforbiblereading.org/great-commission-discipleship-and-the-bible/>
- Padilla, K. L., & Akers, J. S. (2020). Content validity evidence for the Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 51, 4054–4066. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04864-y>
- Pathak, V., Jena, B., & Kalra, S. (2013). Qualitative research. *Perspectives in Clinical Research*, 4(3), 192. <https://doi.org/10.4103/2229-3485.115389>
- Patterson, N., & Mavin, S. (2009). Women entrepreneurs: Jumping the corporate ship and gaining new wings. *International Small Business Journal*, 27(2), 173–192. <https://doi.org/10.1777/0266242608100489>
- Patton, C. (2017). What made Nehemiah an effective leader? *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, 11(1), 8–14. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1354&context=jacsl>
- Peters, C. S. (2015). *More than just good deeds: Fraud within religious organizations* (Publication No. 1599154) [Capstone project, Utica College]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Pettit, P. (Ed.). (2008). *Foundations of spiritual formation: A community approach to becoming like Christ*. Kregel Publications.
- Plüss, J. (2008). Testimony. In W. A. Dyrness, V.-M. Kärkkäinen, J. F. Martinez, & S. Chan (Eds.), *Global dictionary of theology*. InterVarsity Press.
- Pretorius, E. (1998). Role models for a model church: Typifying Paul's letter to the Philippians. *Neotestamentica*, 32(2), 547–571.
- Putnam, R., & Campbell, D. (2010). *American grace: How religion divides and unites us*. Simon and Schuster.
- Putnam, T. (n.d.). *Six things Jesus did to equip His disciples for ministry*. Discipleship.org. <https://discipleship.org/blog/six-things-jesus-did-to-equip-his-disciples-for-ministry/>
- Regoli, N. (2020, March 30). *25 lessons from the Bible*. Connect Us. <https://connectusfund.org/25-life-lessons-from-the-bible>
- Rieke, D. (2020, July 28). *How did Jesus make disciples?* Hope Church Houston. <http://www.hopechurchhouston.org/blog/2014/9/26/how-did-jesus-make-disciples-discipleship-part-2-of-5>
- Ritchie, R. R. (n.d.). *The gifts of the Holy Spirit*. Ron R. Ritchie—"Just Show Up!" <https://ronritchie.com/2017/10/15/the-gifts-of-the-holy-spirit>

- Roach, D. (2020, April 7). *Coronavirus searches lead millions to hear about Jesus*. Christian Today: News and Reporting.
<https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2020/april/coronavirus-searches-online-converts-pray-cru-bgea-wmo.html>
- Roberts, O. (2008). *The ultimate voice: God's still, small voice: The clearest and loudest voice you'll ever hear*. Pengold, Garnett, & Associates.
- Rodgers, W., & Gago, S. (2006). Biblical scriptures underlying six ethical models influencing organizational practices. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 84, 125–136.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-005-0657-7>
- Ross, K., Keum, K., Avtzi, K., and Hewitt, R., (2016). *Ecumenical missiology: Changing landscapes and new conceptions of mission*. 1517 Media, Fortress Press.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1ddcnmh>
- Rudestam, K. E., & Newton, R. R. (2001). *Surviving your dissertation*. Sage Publishing.
- Runco, M. A. (2004). Creativity. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 657–687.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.55.090902.141502>
- Rutter, M. (1986). Meyerian psychobiology, personality development, and the role of life experiences. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 143(9), 1077–1087.
<https://doi.org/10.1176/ajp.143.9.1077>
- Ryman, H. M., & Alcorn, J. M. (2009). Establishment clause (Separation of church and state). In *The First Amendment Encyclopedia*. CQ Press.
- Sampley, J. (2016). Believers' progress: From babies to adults. In J. P. Sampley (Ed.), *Walking in love: Moral progress and spiritual growth with the Apostle Paul* (pp. 93–132). Fortress Press.
- Sanders, O. (2007). *Spiritual leadership: Principles of excellence for every believer*. Moody Publishers.
- Sargeant, A. (2005). Church and parachurch fundraising in the United States: What can we learn? *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 10(3), 133–136. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.22>
- Sarwar, C. I. (2013). Future of ethically effective leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 113(1), 81–89. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1283-9>
- Schneidervin, J. C. (2019). *The Apostle Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ: A biological commentary on his life and letters* (Volume 1). Schneidervin.
- Schuller, M., & Crilly, J. (2016). *4 ways Jesus built disciples*. Outreach Magazine.
<https://outreachmagazine.com/resources/16981-4-ways-jesus-built-disciples.html>

- Selman, M. J. (2002). Evangelism. In M. J. Selman, M. H., Manser, & S. Travis (Eds.), *Macmillan dictionary of the Bible*. Macmillan Publishers.
- Shapiro, J. P., & Stefkovich, J. A. (2016). *Ethical leadership and decision making in education: Applying theoretical perspectives to complex dilemmas* (4th ed.). Routledge Publishing.
- Shaver, K. G., & Scott, L. R. (1991). Person, process, choice. The psychology of new venture creation. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 16(2) 23–24.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/104225879201600204>
- Shearer, D. (2020). *Why did the Apostle Paul choose to remain an entrepreneur?* Theology of Business Institute. <https://www.theologyofbusiness.com/apostle-paul-choose-remain-entrepreneur-5-purposes-business/>
- Singleton, R. A., & Straits, B. C. (2009). *Approaches to social research*. Oxford University Press.
- Spencer, S. (2020). Seminaries and discipleship: Exploring future directions. *Journal of Anglican Studies*, 18(1), 98–112. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S174035532000008X>
- Stanley, A. (1999). *Visioneering: God's blueprint for developing and maintaining vision*. Multnomah Publications.
- Starnes, T. (2015). *Atlanta fire chief: I was fired because of my Christian faith*. Fox News. <https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/atlanta-fire-chief-i-was-fired-because-of-my-christian-faith>
- Starnes, T. (2018). *School district tells coach if you talk to God, you're fired*. Todd Starnes. <https://www.toddstarnes.com/faith/school-district-tells-coach-if-you-talk-to-god-youre-fired/>
- Straeter, K. (2019). *Nurse fired for talking to patient about Jesus, court claims she was 'rightly sacked for religious fervor.'* Faithit. <https://faithit.com/nhs-nurse-fired-talking-patient-jesus-sacked-religious-fervour/>
- Strategic Direction (2006). Jesus CEO (Churches as businesses). *The Economist*, 377(8458). <https://doi.org/10.1108/sd.2006.05622ead.005>
- Swindoll, C. R. (2002). *Great lives: Paul: a man of grace and grit* (Great lives series). Thomas Nelson.
- Throop, J. R. (2001). When a church faces embezzlement. *The Clergy Journal*, 77(8), 27–32.
- Thumma, S. (1996). *Exploring the megachurch phenomena: Their characteristics and cultural context*. Hartford Institute for Religion Research. http://hrr.hartsem.edu/bookshelf/thumma_article2.html

- Tomasi, J., Warren, C., Kolodzey, L., Pinkney, S., Guerguerian, A. M., Kirsch, R., Hubbert, J., Sperling, C., Sutton, P., Laussen, P., & Trbovich, P. (2018). Convergent parallel mixed-methods study to understand information exchange in pediatric critical care and inform the development of safety-enhancing interventions: a protocol study. *BMJ Open*, 8(8), Article e023691. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2018-023691>
- Tomlinson, J. C. (n.d.). *The Great Commission: Discipleship and followership*. Inner Resources for Leaders, School of Global Leadership & Entrepreneurship, Regent University. https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/innerresources/vol2iss1/tomlinson_discipline.pdf
- Tozer, A. W., & Snyder, J. L. (2006). *Tozer on worship and entertainment: Selected excerpts*. Wing Spread Publisher.
- Ucbasaran, D., Shepherd, D. A., Lockett, A., & Lyon, S. J. (2013). Life after business failure: The process and consequences of business failure for entrepreneurs. *Journal of Management*, 39(1), 163–202. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206312457823>
- Vagle, M. D. (2014). *Crafting phenomenological research*. Left Coast Press.
- Van Dierendonck, D., & Patterson, K. (Eds.). (2010). *Servant leadership: Developments in theory and research*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Van Tongeren, D. R., Davis, D. E., Hook, J. N., & Witvliet, C. (2019). Humility. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 28(5), 463–468. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721419850153>
- Weber, M. (1992). *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. Merchant Books.
- Weems, L. H., Jr. (2019). *Ten leadership lessons from Nehemiah*. Lewis Center for Church Leadership <https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/ten-leadership-lessons-from-nehemiah/>
- Welch, R. H. (2011). *Church administration: Creating efficiency for effective ministry*. B & H Publishing Group.
- West, M. (2019, May 29). *Christian, you're engulfed in an all-out spiritual battle. Are you prepared for it?* Christian Research Network. <https://christianresearchnetwork.org/2019/05/29/christian-youre-engulfed-in-an-all-out-spiritual-battle-are-you-prepared-for-it/>
- Westhues, K. (1971). The Roman Catholic church and the field of social welfare. *Social Work*, 16(3), 60–65.
- Willard, D. (1998). *The divine conspiracy: Rediscovering our hidden life in God*. Harper San Francisco.

- Wirihana, L., Welch, A., Williamson, M., Christensen, M., Bakon, S., & Craft, J. (2018). Using Colaizzi's method of data analysis to explore the experiences of nurse academics teaching on satellite campuses. *Nurse Researcher*, 24(4), 30–34. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.2018.e1516>
- Wood, E. A. S., & Heslam, P. S. (2014). Faith and business practice amongst Christian entrepreneurs in developing and emerging markets. *Koers*, 79(2), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.4102/koers.v79i2.2131>
- Woodbine, G. (1997). Cash controls within Christian churches: An exploration of the determinants. *Asian Review of Accounting*, 5(2), 21–37. <https://doi.org/10.11108/eb060688>
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Sage Publishing.
- Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., & Harrison, R. K. (2005). *Nelson's student dictionary: A complete guide to understanding the world of the Bible*. Thomas Nelson Inc.
- Zavada, J. (2020, August 14). *Meet Matthew the apostle, ex-tax collector*. Learn Religions. <https://www.learnreligions.com/matthew-tax-collector-and-apostle-701067>
- Zelekha, Y., Avnimelech, G., & Sharabi, E. (2014). Religious institutions and entrepreneurship. *Small Business Economics*, 42(4), 747–767. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-013-9496-6>

APPENDIX A:

IRB Approval Letter

Date: 6-20-2022

IRB #: IRB-FY21-22-1066

Title: The Christian Entrepreneur: A Phenomenological Study on The Impact and Role of Christian Entrepreneurs as Disciple-Makers

Creation Date: 5-5-2022

End Date:

Status: Approved

Principal Investigator: Charis Rooks

Review Board: Research Ethics Office

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Limited	Decision	Exempt - Limited IRB
------------------------	---------	--------------------	---------	-----------------	---

Key Study Contacts

Member	Joseph Butler	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	
Member	Charis Rooks	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	
Member	Charis Rooks	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	

APPENDIX B:

Informed Consent

Title of the Project: The Christian Entrepreneur: A Phenomenological Study on The Impact and Role of Christian Entrepreneurs as Disciple-Makers

Principal Investigator: Charis Rooks, Ph.D. Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, an entrepreneur who formed your own business, make at least 51% of the business decisions for the business, be A Christian, have at least one year of leadership experience, and attend a Christian church at least twice a month within the United States, and have the desire to disciple others. You must be 18 years of age or older, an entrepreneur who formed your own business, make at least 51% of the business decisions for that business, a Christian, have at least one year of leadership experience, attend a Christian church within the United States, and have the desire to disciple others.

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.

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

The desired outcome of this study is to educate Christian entrepreneurs, churches, and the community on the value of Christian entrepreneur's formative life experiences and whether or not they can be used to bridge the discipleship divide between the local churches, communities, and workplaces in order to fulfill the Great Commission.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. Complete an interview via Zoom. This interview will take a maximum of 90 minutes. The interview will be recorded (audio and video).
2. Participants will have the opportunity to review their interview transcripts for accuracy

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from participating in this study.

Benefits to society include increased knowledge between the church and Christian entrepreneurs.

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.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- 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.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. Participants will receive a complimentary one-hour business strategy session. This session will address how discipleship methods and techniques can be customized and integrated into the participant's personal businesses. Session times will be set starting January 1st, 2023. Sessions are not required; however, they are provided as a thank-you for taking part in the research.

Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

The researcher serves as CEO at Selah Logistics LLC. This researcher is not in a position of authority over any of the participants; therefore, this researcher does not have a conflict.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. 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 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 Charis M. Rooks. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at XXX-XXX-XXXX or email XXXXXXXX@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Joseph Butler, at XXXXXXXX@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.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensures that human subjects research will be conducted ethically as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

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.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

APPENDIX C:

Participant Recruitment Letter

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Christian Leadership and Ministry Leadership degree. My research aims to investigate how negative or positive formative life experiences affect the potential of Christian entrepreneurs to be disciple-makers in the church, workplace, and community. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, an entrepreneur who formed their own business, make at least 51% of the business decisions for that business, a Christian, have at least one year of leadership experience, attend a Christian church within the United States, and have the desire to disciple others.

Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete an audio and video-recorded interview via Zoom, and all participants will have the opportunity to review their transcripts for accuracy. It should take approximately 90 minutes to complete the interview. Names and other identifying information will be requested for this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX / XXXXXXXX@liberty.edu for more information, to confirm your eligibility, and to schedule an interview.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to DocuSign the consent document and return it to me prior to the interview

A complimentary one-hour business strategy session is available to all participants. This session will address how discipleship methods and techniques can be customized and integrated into the participants' businesses. Sessions are not required; however, they are provided as a thank-you for taking part in the research. Session times will be set starting January 1st, 2023.

Sincerely,

Charis M. Rooks
Doctoral Candidate
XXX-XXX-XXXX/ XXXXXXXX@liberty.edu

APPENDIX D:

Participant Recruitment Social Media

ATTENTION CHRISTIAN ENTREPRENEURS: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Christian Leadership and Ministry Leadership at Liberty University. The purpose of my research is to investigate how negative or positive formative life experiences affect the potential of Christian entrepreneurs to be disciple-makers in the church, workplace, and community. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, an entrepreneur who formed your own business, make at least 51% of the business decisions for that business, a Christian, have at least one year of leadership experience, attend a Christian church at least twice a month within the United States, and have the desire to disciple others.

Participants will be asked to complete an audio- and video-recorded interview via Zoom. It should take approximately 90 minutes to complete the interview. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX / XXXXXXXX@liberty.edu for more information, to confirm your eligibility, and to schedule your interview. A consent document will be provided via email. If you would like to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me prior to the interview.

A complimentary one-hour business strategy session is available to all participants. This session will address how discipleship methods and techniques can be customized and integrated into the participant's businesses. Session times will be set starting January 1st, 2023. Sessions are not required; however, they are provided as a thank-you for taking part in the research.

APPENDIX E:

Participant Recruitment Phone

Hello [Potential Participant],

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Christian Leadership and Ministry Leadership degree. The purpose of my research is to investigate how negative or positive formative life experiences affect the potential of Christian entrepreneurs to be disciple-makers in the church, workplace, and community. If you meet my participant criteria and are interested, I would like to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, an entrepreneur who formed their own business, at least 51% of the business decisions for that business, a Christian, have at least one year of leadership experience, attend a Christian church within the United States, and have the desire to disciple others.

Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete an audio and video-recorded interview via Zoom, and all participants will have the opportunity to review their transcripts for accuracy. It should take approximately 90 minutes to complete the interview. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

Would you like to participate? [Yes] Great, can I screen you while you are on the phone? [If they meet the study criteria] Could we go ahead and set up a time for an interview, and could I get your email address so I can send you the link to the consent form? The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to DocuSign the consent document and return it to me before your interview. [No] Thank you for your time.

A complimentary one-hour business strategy session is available to all participants. This session will address how discipleship methods and techniques can be customized and integrated into the participants' businesses. Sessions are not required; however, they are provided as a thank-you for taking part in the research. Session times will be set starting January 1st, 2023.

Do you have any questions?

APPENDIX F:**Phone Screening Questionnaire**

Each participant will be the following qualifying questionnaire verbally via phone screening.

1. Are you 18 years of age or older
2. Are you an entrepreneur that has established your own business?
3. What industry does your company operate in, and can you tell me a little about it?
4. Do you consider yourself to be a Christian entrepreneur?
5. Do you have at least one year of leadership experience?
6. Do you feel that any aspects of your business operation conflict with your Christian values?
7. Do you attend a Christian church located in the United States?
8. Do you attend church at least twice a month?
9. Do you make the majority (at least 51%) of the business decisions daily?
10. Do you have any negative or positive formative life experiences that have aided your desire to be a disciple-maker?
11. Do you have the desire to disciple others within the church, community, and workplace?

APPENDIX G:

Interview Guide Template

Having an unprepared interviewer and conducting interviews on the fly can negatively impact participants' perceptions of the study. When conducting interviews, it is critical to be consistent in order to get accurate input from participants that can be assessed within the framework. The following information will be provided in a preinterview guide, which the researcher will use to keep themselves organized before and during the interview.

- A list of things to do prior to the interview.
- How the interview is conducted in a nutshell.
- An examination of potential red and yellow flags raised by participant responses.

Interview Questions

RQ1

1. Please describe in your own words the meaning of being a disciple-maker.
2. What is your current strategy for helping others grow spiritually?
3. In what ways do you believe God has called you to disciple others?
4. In what ways do you think your early life experiences — both good and bad — have an impact on your future choices? What is the reason, if any, for your answer?

RQ2

5. What entrepreneurial skills and experience do you have that you believe may be used to assist the church in some way?
6. How has the church enabled you to serve while also utilizing your entrepreneurial skills and resources to disciple others?
7. What negative formative life experience do you believe has influenced your capacity and desire to be a disciple-maker in the local church?
8. What positive formative life experience do you believe has influenced your capacity and desire to be a disciple-maker in the local church?

RQ3

9. How do you go about engaging the community not only for economic purposes but also to show the community the compassion and love of Jesus Christ?
10. What positive formative life experience do you believe has influenced your capacity and desire to be a disciple-maker in the community?
11. What negative formative life experience do you believe has influenced your capacity and desire to be a disciple-maker in the community?

RQ4

12. In what ways has the church helped you in your efforts to disciple others at work?
13. What negative formative life experience do you believe has influenced your capacity and desire to be a disciple-maker in the workplace?
14. What positive formative life experience do you believe has influenced your capacity and desire to be a disciple-maker in the workplace?
15. How do you demonstrate Christ's compassion for your staff, volunteers, or clients?

RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ4

16. What steps have you taken to incorporate discipleship into your business strategy?
17. Is there anything that Jesus taught about faith that you can share with people in your local church, community, or workplace?

Closing Questions

18. To what extent do you believe that offering a discipleship course designed for Christian entrepreneurs on how to make an impact in their local church, community, and workplace would be beneficial?
19. How will your future involvement in discipleship and your local church be different from how it is now? If so, what are your future plans?
20. Do you have anything else you would want to add?

APPENDIX H:

Bracketing Journal Guide

Writing memos while collecting and analyzing data is one way to examine and reflect on the researcher's relationship to the data (Cutcliffe, 2003). It is possible to use memoranda to record theoretical observations about the researcher's thoughts and feelings about their research endeavors, methodological observations about the research process, and observational comments about the research process itself. According to Glaser (1998), Memorization is a process of flexibility rather than limitation, which might lead to crucial discoveries for the researcher.

This researcher plans to utilize a bracket journal before and after the study. The journal asks multiple questions, which are located below.

Prior to Engaging Participants

- What do I think I “know” from this/these participants?
- How do I think I “know” it?
- Will this knowledge change the course of the research in terms of objectives, methods, and line of inquiry, and if so, how?

After Engaging Participants

- **Assumptions**
 - What assumptions did I make about the participant(s)?
 - What assumptions did I make about comments/responses to my questions?
 - How did these assumptions affect or shape: the questions I asked, the interjections I made, my listening skills, and/or my behavior?

- **Values, beliefs, life story, social/economic status**
 - How did my values, beliefs, life story, and/or social/economic status affect or shape:
the questions I asked, the interjections I made, my listening skills, and/or my behavior?
- **Emotional connection with the participant(s)**
 - To what degree did my emotions or feelings for the participant(s) affect or shape: the
questions I asked, the interjections I made, my listening skills, and/or my behavior?
 - How will my emotions or feelings for the participant(s) affect the analytical process and
my ability to draw valid interpretations from the data?
- **Physical environment & logistics**
 - How did the physical setting/location of the research event alter how I related to the
participant(s) and how the participant(s) related to me?
 - How did the physical setting/location impact data collection?
 - What were the logistical issues (e.g., in gaining access) that contributed to the
“success” or weakness of the outcomes?

APPENDIX I:

Research Reliability Panel Email

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Christian Leadership and Ministry Leadership degree. The goal of my research is to investigate how negative or positive formative life experiences affect the potential of Christian entrepreneurs to be disciple-makers in the church, workplace, and community. I am writing to invite select participants to join my study as Research Reliability Panel Members.

The term “reliability” refers to the quality of one’s research. To carry out this study, I opted for methodological approaches that include clearly defined and well-organized research methods. A dependable audit of the study’s research techniques will be performed by an impartial committee of one lead pastor and two Christian entrepreneurs. This is where my efforts and planned methodologies will be reviewed to make sure they are consistent with the actual study.

If you agree to be a Research Reliability Panel Member for this study, the following qualifications are required:

1. Lead Pastoral Review Panel Member- Must be a current or retired pastor who is knowledgeable in the area of discipleship, has at least five years of leadership experience, has or previously had one church employee or volunteer as part of your ministry, and has the desire to disciple others.
2. Christian Entrepreneur Panel Member - Must be a current or retired Christian Entrepreneur who has over three years of leadership experience, has or had at least one employee or volunteer, has taken a course in discipleship at some point in time, and has the desire to disciple others.

If you agree to be a committee member for this study, you will be asked to agree to the following commitment:

1. PreStudy- Review and audit all interview questions and give feedback within five days of receipt via email to XXXXXXXX@liberty.edu
2. PostStudy- Review and audit all analyzed data and transcripts for any inconsistencies and give feedback within five days of receipt via email to XXXXXXXX@liberty.edu if you have any interest, questions, or concerns.

The researcher conducting this study is Charis M. Rooks. You may ask any questions; **you are encouraged** to contact her at XXX-XXX-XXXX or email XXXXXXXX@liberty.edu.

Respectfully,