

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

**Implementing a Discipleship Strategy Plan for Lay Leaders at Redemption Baptist Church  
to Help Them Grow Spiritually**

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to  
the Faculty of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Ministry

by

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

**Thesis Project Approval Sheet**

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## THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Discipleship may not be a requirement for salvation. However, it is a requirement for spiritual development and a command that Jesus has given all His disciples to obey. Christians must understand that they are Jesus' followers with a calling to bring others to Christ. Jesus makes it clear when He calls His disciples to follow Him. He calls them to follow so that they can become disciple-makers (Matt 4: 19). However, some members, mainly lay leaders at the church, whose responsibility is to disciple others, were not trained to disciple others, which creates a burden for the pastoral ministry in the church. The DMIN action research project's purpose is to urgently implement a discipleship program to equip lay leaders, who are the backbones of the church, with the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance their involvement in the church's discipleship ministry. If Redemption Baptist Church implements this discipleship training for lay leaders, they will be equipped to disciple others for Christ and help the pastor carry the church's discipleship load. The intervention comprised an eight-week discipleship training consisting of a one-hour and 30-minute teaching session each week that was crucial in guiding and teaching the participants the necessary characteristics of a genuine disciple of Christ. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected before and after the intervention. The results revealed a significant increase in the participants' knowledge and commitment, demonstrating the potential of discipleship training to engage in the church's discipleship ministry actively.

Key words: disciple, discipleship, mission, lay leaders, discipleship training.

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## Abbreviations

CEF	<i>Child Evangelism Fellowship</i>
DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
ESV	<i>English Standard Version</i>
NAMB	<i>North American Mission Board</i>
USA	<i>United States of America</i>

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

No Christian needs to be a theologian to understand that Jesus, during His earthly ministry, demonstrated a great deal of interest in discipleship. During His ministry, Jesus called people to follow Him. Following Jesus is to devote oneself to Him and remove oneself from worldly pursuit to find new life in Him. In his gospel account of the life of Jesus, Luke revealed that Jesus had more than seventy disciples. Jesus sent them out two by two to minister ahead of Him into every town and place He was about to go (Luke 10:1).

Jesus called twelve apostles among those who were His disciples. These twelve apostles were always with Jesus as He went from city to city preaching and performing miracles. Jesus demonstrated the importance of being faithful disciples when he discussed the cost involved to follow Him. Being a disciple of Jesus comes with a cost of losing one's own life for Jesus' sake. David Platt wrote, "The call to follow Jesus is a not an invitation to pray a prayer, it is a summons to lose our lives."<sup>1</sup>

In Mathew 16: 24-25, Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." Gallaty went further to say that "following Jesus was a choice, a choice that required sacrifice, commitment and making Him the number one in our lives."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus also expects His disciples to bear fruits. In John 15:8, Jesus declares: "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." Jesus required His

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<sup>1</sup>David Platt, *Follow Me: A Call to Die. A Call to Live* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Elevate, 2013), 22.

<sup>2</sup> Robby Gallaty, *Growing Up: How to be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Books, 2022), 2i.

disciples to make other disciples. In that sense, a disciple of Jesus needs to reproduce. In Matthew 28:16-20, Jesus, through His command to His disciples, ordained them to go and practice making disciples for Him.

In the same way, Jesus' teaching transformed His disciples' lives; He commanded them to pass His teaching on to others who would become disciples and make disciples under their ministry. Gallaty understands that God has always been interested in reproduction as He commanded Adam and Eve to be "fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:18). What God commanded Adam and Eve to do physically is what Jesus has required Christians to do spiritually.<sup>3</sup> However, lay leaders at Redemption Baptist Church have not been trained to participate in the disciple-making process of the church, resulting in a burden for the pastoral ministry in the church.

One can agree with Gallaty saying that the Great Commission is designed to be a team effort and that the pastors cannot carry out the command alone. Church members are to be equipped to carry out the work.<sup>4</sup> Jesus intends His church to succeed by reaching unity in faith and knowledge. His will is for the church to become mature so that it can attain the full measure of the stature of Christ. This results in a church in which every part fulfills its function and grows spiritually so that its members can understand God's word, which is the truth, live it out, and share it with others in love (Eph. 4: 13-15). In that sense, at Redemption Baptist Church, lay leaders need to be equipped to become disciples that make disciples for Christ.

### **Ministry Context**

Quincy is located close to the center of Massachusetts. Quincy is a significant part of Metropolitan Boston, and it is Boston's immediate southern suburb. The city is part of Norfolk

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<sup>3</sup> Gallaty, *Growing Up*, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

County. Quincy shares borders with Boston to the north (separated by the Neponset River), Milton to the west, Randolph and Braintree to the south, and Weymouth (separated by the Fore River and Hull; the maritime border between Quincy Bay and Hingham Bay) to the east.<sup>5</sup>

The city's overall population in 2020 was 101,636, making it the eighth-largest city in the state.<sup>6</sup> The racial makeup of the city was 58.3% white, 6.1% African American, 0.1% Native American, 29.9% Asian, 0.01% Pacific Islander, and Hispanic or Latino of any race were 4.6% of the population.<sup>7</sup> There are 64.67% of the people in Quincy, Massachusetts that are religious, meaning they affiliate with a religion. Among them, 53.46% are Catholic; 0.8% are Baptist; 0.19% are The Church of Jesus-Christ of Latter-Day Saints; 1.34% are another Christian faith; 2.49% are Jewish; 0.25% are an Eastern faith; 0.69% affiliates with Islam.<sup>8</sup>

Redemption Baptist Church is the church selected for this research project. The history and philosophy of the church are relevant to its ministry context. In June 2015, the researcher, his wife, his two sons, and a small group of people gathered together and formed a prayer group called “The Messengers of the Great King.” This prayer group met regularly in different homes for one year and six months. Then, on the second Sunday of January 2017, the prayer group constituted the church selected for this study.

The first official meeting of the prayer group as a church was in the home of the researcher, who is currently the pastor of this church, named Redemption Baptist Church. The

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<sup>5</sup> United States Census Bureau, “Quick Facts: Quincy City, Massachusetts,” 2020, accessed May 18, 2023, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/dashboard/quincycitymassachusetts/PST045221#PST045221>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> “Quincy, MA, Religion,” Best Places, last modified 2024, <http://www.bestplaces.net/religion/city/massachusetts/quincy>. This is an organization that for over sixteen years has been analyzing data about people and places and rating them for major publications.

church met every Sunday from 5 PM to 7 PM in the researcher's home in Quincy, MA, for six months before it relocated in June 2017 to a new location nearby.

Although the church members preferred to move their worship service from evening to morning on Sundays, it was impossible to do so in the new location as another church was already meeting on Sunday mornings. Therefore, Redemption Baptist Church moved its Sunday worship service to 3 PM.

After five years of holding Sunday worship services in the afternoon, on the first Sunday of August 2022, the committee members of the other church agreed to let Redemption Baptist Church use their children's ministry building and hold its worship services every Sunday from 11 AM to 12:25 PM.

In 2018, the researcher was officially appointed as a church planter with the North American Mission Board. This allowed Redemption Baptist Church to be affiliated with the North American Mission Board (NAMB), the Baptist Convention of New England, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

The budget of the church is extremely small, so it is challenging to pay the monthly rent of the facility and the other expenses of its operation, including the cost of a fellowship meal every Sunday after the worship service. Everything that the church receives is explicitly used to pay its operating expenses. The primary source of funding comes from its members' tithes and offerings. The pastor of the church does not receive any salary, and it is necessary for him to be bi-vocational. However, he contributes to the church every Sunday as the other members do. Everyone in a leadership position in the church does so as a volunteer.

Redemption Baptist Church is biblically centered, with an outward and inward focus. The church is biblically centered because the church knows that all Scriptures are God-breathed (2

Tim 3:16). Therefore, the church puts the Word of God at the center of everything that its members are doing at Redemption Baptist Church. Mark Dever wrote, “The Word of God is the fountain of God’s truth that gives life to His people.”<sup>9</sup>

The church is outwardly focused because it is called to share the good news of Jesus with those who have not yet accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Chester and Timmis wrote, “Christians whose love for the Lord Jesus flows from new hearts kept soft by the Holy Spirit have an instinctive desire to commend their Savior to others.”<sup>10</sup> In John 3:16, God's Word points out God's mission to restore the lost souls by sending His only begotten Son to rescue humanity from death to life. Woodward has remarked on God's intent by writing, "When reading the Scriptures, some can learn that it is God's mission to set things right in a broken and messed-up world. God's mission is to redeem and restore the world to its intended purpose."<sup>11</sup> The church is also inwardly focused because the church needs to bring to spiritual maturity those who are already in Christ.

Community is one of the core values of Redemption Baptist Church. The church seeks to maximize the participation of all its members. The church, as a community, needs to be a place where its members can pursue profound and sincere relationships with one another. In Romans 12:10, God’s Word declares, “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” Serving as a community is one way the congregation exemplifies its dedication to serving others. Redemption Baptist Church supports evangelism outreach as part of its mission

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<sup>9</sup> Mark Dever, *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2012), 21.

<sup>10</sup> Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping Around Gospel and Community* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 53.

<sup>11</sup> J.R. Woodward, *Creating a Missional Culture: Equipping the Church for the Sake of the World* (Westmont, IL: IVP, 2013), 28.



to share the gospel with the lost. Furthermore, the congregation promotes love, which is shown by helping one another and giving others a sense of value and respect for who they are as persons and followers of Christ. Finally, since the members are responsible for discipling those who seek to grow in Christ's likeness, the community of believers at Redemption Baptist Church values Christian maturity or spiritual growth by encouraging discipleship.

The mission of the church is to serve the people in its community and connect them with Jesus. The church's overall strategy is to build personal relationships with the people in its community, share the gospel with them, teach them, disciple them, and fellowship with them by establishing and multiplying healthy small groups. During the Summer, the church organizes a weeklong Vacation Bible School for its children. Four years ago, before COVID-19, Redemption Baptist Church and another church in the community invited Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), a Bible-centered organization, to come and organize a 5-day program to teach the gospel to the young kids attending Vacation Bible School. Additionally, on the second Saturday of August, the church takes all its members, including the children, to a recreational facility where they spend time playing, eating, and building better relationships.

Some Redemption Baptist Church members were members of other churches before becoming members of Redemption Baptist Church. They had never been asked to participate actively in the ministries of those previous churches. They were accustomed to attending their previous churches as passive participants, like spectators. Other members of Redemption Baptist Church came from Catholic backgrounds before they were saved. They now need to become familiar with the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, which requires the active participation of every believer in the body of Christ. They did not learn about the spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to those who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior and they

now need to use their God-given gifts to build the church to attain the full measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph 4: 7-11).

In addition, some church members believe that once they are saved, they can continue in their earthly lives unchanged. However, they need to be disciplined so that they can become disciple makers. Most of the church members at Redemption Baptist Church think that the term “disciple” only applies to those in the Bible who followed Jesus. They do not see themselves as disciples of Jesus Christ who are called to make disciples for Christ. They only see themselves as Christians, people who are saved and who are members of Redemption Baptist Church. They consider the pastors as the only ones vested with spiritual ability and who are qualified to minister in the church of Jesus Christ.

These misconceptions of what the Bible teaches about disciples result in member’s passive participation in the church ministries. That is why at Redemption Baptist Church, the pastor always explains the term disciple during church meetings to encourage the church members to commit their lives as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Redemption Baptist Church is a church that has moved from the belief system of hierarchical priesthood to adopt the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers in the church. This church teaches that each person is saved by grace through faith in Jesus and is called to use their spiritual gifts in Christian ministry, as taught in the Word of God. The apostle Peter declares that Christians are special people who belong to God, who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light so that they can proclaim His greatness (1 Pet 2: 9).

The culture of Redemption Baptist Church can be best understood in how the church operates or functions. The church practices the typical traditions of a Baptist Church. The church observes water baptism by immersion, the Lord’s Supper, and regular worship services, which

includes the singing of hymns, prayer, and preaching. The church worship services praise God through traditional and contemporary songs. All the worship services at Redemption Baptist Church are conducted in Creole. However, when English-speaking visitors attend, the church may use the English language during worship to help those who do not understand Creole feel welcome to join in the worship of God. Every Christmas and every Easter the members of the church gather for special worship services to celebrate the birth and resurrection of Jesus. A great feast follows these special services.

Redemption Baptist Church has some of its own traditions. Its members include second-generation Haitians born in the United States of America (USA) as well as Haitians who have immigrated to the USA. Every New Year's Eve, the church gathers for its traditional New Year's worship service (December 31<sup>st</sup>) that starts at 9 PM and ends at 12 AM on January first, which is also the Independence Day of Haiti. The church uses this moment to serve the Haitian traditional soup, known as squash soup that Haitians eat to celebrate the independence of Haiti.

A look into the worship service at the church on a Sunday will help visitors understand quickly that Redemption Baptist Church is comprised of multiple generations, including adults, young adults, youth, and young children. Moreover, on any given Sunday, when the church gathers to worship God, the church is likely to have more women than men in attendance. Most of the time, the pastor of Redemption Baptist Church serves as the worship leader and carries out various other duties that other church members could complete. From time to time, various members have taken on responsibilities as they become engaged with the vision of the church. Although small, the church is committed to serving and helping its community.

In addition to its regular Sunday worship service, Redemption Baptist Church meets online every Monday night and Wednesday night for one hour. During those meetings, the church members pray for one another, read God's Word, and share their testimonies.

Redemption Baptist Church also promotes individual responsibility in serving in ministry. When a church encourages individual responsibility in its ministry context, it must promote it as God's Word encourages the priesthood of all believers. The apostle Paul understands the importance of individual responsibility in the church's health. That is why he says in Ephesians 4:16 that "From him (Jesus) the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." Paul ends this verse by saying that each member has his or her role. In that sense, Church leaders at Redemption Baptist Church need to emphasize the priesthood of all believers. Each church member must be empowered and well equipped to play his or her role in serving in the capacity for which God has called him or her to minister in the church. Anizor and Voss wrote, "Ordained leaderships need not carry with it the aura of superiority and believers need not to be individualistic. Both official leadership and the priesthood of all the believers are necessary for Christ's body to grow into maturity."<sup>12</sup>

### **Problem Presented**

Redemption Baptist Church's vision is to be a local body of believers in Christ that meets together to worship God, share their faith with non-believers, and disciple new believers as they practice the priesthood of all believers. God calls everyone He saves to grow and to help others grow spiritually and serve in Christ. In 1 Peter 4:10, God's Word makes it clear that every

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<sup>12</sup> Uche Anizor and Hank Voss, *Representing Christ: A Vision for the Priesthood of all Believers* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016), 11.

Christian, saved by faith through grace, has received a gift that he or she needs to use to serve others. Service becomes a means of faithful stewardship of God's grace in its various forms. Based on that biblical passage, Christians, as recipients of God's spiritual gifts, need to use them to serve one another.

That is why it is foundational that every member at Redemption Baptist Church is responsible for participating actively in the church's ministry as they use their God-given gifts for the proper functioning of the church so that the church can grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ. Each part has to do its work for the whole body that is joined and held together by every supporting ligament to grow and build itself up (Eph 4:16). Although discipleship is not necessary for salvation, it is a requirement for spiritual development. It is a command that Jesus has given to all His disciples to follow and obey. The problem at Redemption Baptist Church is that lay leaders have never been trained to disciple others, resulting in a burden for the pastoral ministry in the church.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this project was to implement a discipleship program to train lay leaders to increase their participation in the church's discipleship ministry. For the church of Jesus Christ to function as God intends it to function, church members need to become more active in participating in the life of the church. As God's Word makes it clear, it is the responsibility of the spiritual leaders of the church to equip church members to do work of ministry to build up the church (Eph 4:11-12).

Empowering those who do the work of ministry is crucial for the growth of each individual and the church. In an article titled "Leaders Who Empower," Emilio Domínguez-Escrig and others wrote, "Empowerment promotes personal development, proactive attitude and

self-confidence in followers, being its main characteristic the belief in the intrinsic value of each person.”<sup>13</sup> It is also essential to show trust to those in charge of doing the work by encouraging and reinforcing the value of their work.

In order to empower lay leaders at Redemption Baptist Church, the church's pastor needs to train them, disciple them, and deploy them to participate actively in the church's discipleship ministry.

The direction of a church can determine its destination. In that sense, developing and implementing a discipleship-training program for lay leaders is vital to increase their participation in the disciple-making process at Redemption Baptist Church. The philosophical shift that the pastor of the church needs to make in the ministry context at Redemption Baptist Church is to encourage and teach the lay leaders the necessity of using their God-given gifts for the proper functioning of the church so that the church can grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

### **Basic Assumptions**

The researcher for this project makes three important assumptions about this research. The first assumption is that the lay leaders at Redemption Baptist Church will agree to participate in the research study. This assumption is based on the fact that the lay leaders at Redemption Baptist Church understand that the pastor of the church has always cared for their spiritual development as individuals and the development of the church as a whole.

The second assumption is that most of the participants in this research will give honest responses to help the researcher address any questions and issues that they may encounter during the time of this research study.

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<sup>13</sup> Emilio Domínguez-Escrig et al., “Leaders Who Empower: A Gateway to Radical Innovation,” *Journal of Management & Organization* 27, no. 5 (2019): 931.

The third assumption is that through prayer and with the participation of the lay leaders, God will use this research as a means to significantly improve the spiritual development (growth) of the lay leaders and, through them, improve the spiritual growth of other members of Redemption Baptist Church.

### **Definitions**

In order to provide readers with an understanding of the terms and their respective contexts that will be used throughout this research study, a list of terms is defined in this section. This list includes the following terms: church, disciple, discipleship/discipling, lay leader, mission, pastor, spiritual growth, witnessing to non-believers/personal evangelism, and spiritual disciplines.

*Church.* According to Getz and Easley, the Greek term *ekklesia* appears throughout the New Testament to describe both the local church and the universal church.<sup>14</sup> When the term *ekklesia* is used to describe the universal church, it refers to “All believers of all time who are members of the body of Christ.”<sup>15</sup> Although biblical writers used the term *ekklesia* to refer to the universal church, most of the time, they use *ekklesia* to refer to believers who lived in specific geographical locations.<sup>16</sup> For this research study, the term church is defined in the context of the local church, as a group of regenerated members fulfilling the responsibilities given to them by Christ Himself in His word, regularly meeting together, and led by a body of godly elders.<sup>17</sup>

*Disciple.* A disciple refers to someone who follows the example and teaching of Jesus Christ. It is essential to notice that Jesus clearly gave His expectations of His disciples when He

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<sup>14</sup> Gene A. Getz and Michael J. Easley, *The Measure of a Healthy Church: How God Defines Greatness in a Church* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007), 20.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>17</sup> Dever, *The Church*, 34.

said, "If you abide in my Word, you are truly my disciples" (John 8:31, English Standard Version). A disciple makes God's Word the center of his life. It is crucial for those who have initially trusted Jesus as their Lord and Savior to maintain and strengthen their faith by consistently abiding in and growing in His Word.<sup>18</sup> A disciple also loves others as Christ loves them. Harrington and Robert wrote, "Jesus taught His disciples the kind of life required of a disciple, one marked by the supremacy of agape love."<sup>19</sup> Moreover, a disciple is a person who denies himself by putting aside his ambitions and his own will to do the will of Jesus. Denying oneself is forsaking all that one has for the sake of Jesus (Luke 14: 33). Finally, a disciple refers to someone who needs to make disciples (Matt 28:16-20).

*Discipling/Discipleship.* The terms "discipleship" and "discipling" convey the same meaning for this research. Discipleship is the noun, and discipling is the verb. They both refer to the process of helping someone faithfully commit to following Jesus. Mark Dever defines discipling as "initiating a relationship in which you teach, correct, model, and love."<sup>20</sup> Greg Ogden follows this idea by defining discipling as "a relationship where we intentionally walk alongside a growing disciple or disciples in order to encourage, correct, and challenge them in love to grow toward maturity in Christ."<sup>21</sup> Discipleship and discipling can also refer to the process of helping people obediently follow Christ's teaching in a personal relationship with Him. Malan Nel understands discipleship as "learning from the One who called us to join Him

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<sup>18</sup> Johannes Beutler, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2017), 183.

<sup>19</sup> Bobby Harrington and Josh Robert Patrick, *The Disciple Maker's Handbook: Seven Elements of a Discipleship Lifestyle* (Zondervan, 2017), 22.

<sup>20</sup> Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 36.

<sup>21</sup> Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 7.



on this journey; called us to learn, on this journey, how to live life in the kingdom and seek ‘His righteousness’ (Matt 6:33) as the priority in life.”<sup>22</sup> In that sense, Christians need to prioritize what God prioritizes by shifting their hearts from the world and focusing their hearts on the kingdom of God.

*Lay leader.* God calls believers and gives them spiritual gifts to serve in the church. Every Christian has been given a gift from God. This gift should be stewarded faithfully in ministry. The church understands that Christians, as recipients of God's spiritual gifts, need to use their gifts to serve others. One way Redemption Baptist Church promotes Christian’s service in the church is by recognizing a group of lay church leaders who lead different ministries. These leaders contribute voluntarily to preserving and advancing church life.<sup>23</sup> The lay leaders are responsible for encouraging and discipling other church members to grow in their faith and service. Bean and Martinez point out that lay leaders are unordained volunteers who play essential roles in their local congregations by leading small groups, teaching Sunday school, and participating in church government.<sup>24</sup>

*Mission.* As a church, Redemption Baptist Church members are responsible for representing God on earth. They are God's ambassadors on earth, particularly in Quincy, Massachusetts, where Redemption Baptist Church is located. According to Willis, the word mission comes from the Latin "mittere," meaning to send.<sup>25</sup> Willis defines mission as "the total

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<sup>22</sup> Malan Nel, "Discipleship: The Priority of the ‘Kingdom and His Righteousness,” *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 73, no. 4 (2017): 2.

<sup>23</sup> Ruth Powell, Mandy Robbins, and Leslie J. Francis, "The Psychological-Type Profile of Lay Church Leaders in Australia," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 15, no. 9 (2012): 909.

<sup>24</sup> Lydia Bean, and Brandon C. Martinez, "Sunday School Teacher, Culture Warrior: The Politics of Lay Leaders in Three Religious Traditions," *Social Science Quarterly* 96, no. 1 (2015): 134.

<sup>25</sup> Avery T. Willis Jr., *The Biblical Basis of Missions* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 3.

redemptive purpose of God to establish His kingdom.”<sup>26</sup> Further, John Mark Terry defines mission as "sharing the good news of God's redemptive work with all nations.”<sup>27</sup> In this research, mission refers to the calling of every person, saved by grace through faith, to incorporate the Great Commission's command found in Matthew 28:16-20 into their daily living. Timothy Van Aarde wrote, “Missional is a way of being present in the world, to be the incarnation presence of Christ to our neighborhoods.”<sup>28</sup> Sharing the gospel with unchurched people requires a missional approach. Richardson points out that “God is a missionary God who sends the church into the world. This sending is rooted in the sending by the Father of the Son and the sending by the Father and the Son of the Spirit.”<sup>29</sup>

*Pastor.* The term “Pastor” in this research is defined as a person that Jesus has called to minister in the church to equip God’s people for the work of ministry so that the body of Christ, which is the church, may be built up (Eph 4:11–13). Osborne wrote, “The pastors and teachers are responsible to train the members of the body so that they in turn can minister to one another and build up the church body.”<sup>30</sup> The term pastor also indicates the one who is trained and equipped to teach God’s Word to the members of the church. Stedman wrote, “The task of a pastor-teacher is to use God’s Word to cleanse and feed the flock.”<sup>31</sup> Shepherding the flock is central to the role of a pastor. In 1 Peter 5:2-3, God’s Word declares, “Shepherd the flock of God

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<sup>26</sup> Avery T. Willis Jr., *The Biblical Basis of Missions* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 3

<sup>27</sup> John Mark Terry, *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2015), 48.

<sup>28</sup> Timothy A. Van Aarde, "The Missional Church Structure and the Priesthood of all Believers (Ephesians 4:7–16) in the Light of the Inward and Outward Function of the Church," *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 38, no. 1 (2017): 2.

<sup>29</sup> Rick Richardson, "Emerging Missional Movements: An Overview and Assessment of some Implications for Mission(s)," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 37, no. 3 (2013): 131.

<sup>30</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians: Verse by Verse* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 88.

<sup>31</sup> Ray C. Stedman, *Body Life: The Book That Inspired a Return to the Church’s Real Meaning and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House Publishers, 1995), 117.

that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you, not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.” In that sense, the pastor is called to feed the church members with God’s Word, lead them by example, and protect them against false prophets (Matt 7:15).

*Spiritual growth.* According to the New Testament, maturity is a spiritual state that God’s Word calls Christians to attain. The Bible often uses the word maturity in opposition to the term child. In 1 Corinthians 14:20 God’s Word says, “Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking, be mature.” In Ephesians 4:14-15, God’s Word also says, “So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ.” Paul, in this context, is urging the Ephesians to have the attitudes and behaviors of a mature person able to attain the “measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13, ESV). Thomas Bergler says, “Mature believers display a Christ-centered spirituality that accepts both suffering and consolation as they seek to know Christ more deeply (Phil 3:2-16) and serve the Gospel” (2 Cor 4:7-15).”<sup>32</sup>

*Witnessing to non-believers/personal evangelism.* Witnessing to non-believers is sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with them. Sharing the gospel with non-believers is the responsibility of every single Christian. It is the calling of every Christian to obey and proclaim the gospel of Jesus to others. 1 Peter 2:9 declares, “God chooses us to proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Sharing the gospel with the lost is a way to

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<sup>32</sup> Thomas E. Bergler, "Generation Z and Spiritual Maturity," *Christian Education Journal* 17, no. 1 (2020): 78.

show compassion to them and help them avoid the eternal judgment of God. The Bible also declares in 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9, “God will punish those who do not know Him and do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His might.” Michael D. Miller wrote, “The most important thing to God is for lost people to have an eternity-changing experience through a personal relationship with Jesus-Christ. When a kingdom-focused leader shares the gospel with the lost, he participates in heaven’s highest priority.”<sup>33</sup> Christians need to have a passion for the lost because those are the people who need to be saved and brought to the church of Jesus Christ. Chris Oyakhilome says it well, “Through you, God wants to birth churches, mission and outreaches in your city, State, country and in all the nations of the world, but you must start now from where you are! Together with God, we can win the whole world to the Lord, as you win people in your world and I win them in mine.”<sup>34</sup>

*Spiritual disciplines.* God uses spiritual disciplines to help Christians reach their goal, which is godliness. For that purpose, it is essential to consider the means that God provides Christians with as spiritual disciplines. These can be defined as spiritual activities, such as personal Bible reading, memorization, meditation of scripture and prayer, and activities that they practice on a corporate level or at church with other fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to live a godly life. These spiritual activities in themselves are not what are needed for salvation because God declares in Ephesians 2: 8 -9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” Whitney wrote, “It is crucial to understand that it is not our pursuit of holiness that qualifies us to

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<sup>33</sup> Michael D. Miller, *The Kingdom Focused Leader: Seeing God at Work in You, Through You & Around You* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004), 97.

<sup>34</sup> Chris Oyakhilome, *Join This Chariot* (Allen, TX: Love World Publishing, 2007), 6.

see the Lord. Rather, we are qualified to see the Lord by the Lord, not by our good deeds. We cannot produce enough righteousness to impress God and gain admittance into heaven.”<sup>35</sup>

However, spiritual disciplines help Christians grow in maturity into the likeness of Jesus.

Christians are not only responsible for disciplining their lives on a personal level, but also for practicing spiritual discipline on a corporate level when they gather together during their church services. When Christians practice spiritual disciplines corporately, they build one another up in Christ, and thus building the church of Jesus Christ.

*Meditation.* Meditation is one of the most important spiritual disciplines Christians must adopt daily because of its benefits. Psalm 1:1-3 and Joshua 1:8 speak clearly about the benefits of meditating on God's Word. Meditation is one of the most important spiritual disciplines Christians must adopt daily because of the benefits of blessing and prosperity. Whitney defines meditation as “deep thinking on the truths and spiritual realities, revealed in Scripture, or upon life from a scriptural perspective, for understanding, application, and prayer.”<sup>36</sup> Meditation on God's Word should delight every Christian. Christians need to live their lives in contrast to those who do not have a relationship with God. Those who delight themselves in God's Word are like a tree planted by streams of water, and they will flourish and bear fruit. Once they nourish themselves with God's Word, they will bear the fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5: 22-23. Meditation helps Christians direct their hearts to God. When they meditate on God's Word, they not only read God's Word but also focus on God's Word so they can understand it. Understanding God's Word makes it easier for them to apply it daily since it is essential to their spiritual growth. James 1:25 declares, "But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives

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<sup>35</sup>Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for The Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014), 3.

<sup>36</sup> Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 46-47.

freedom, and continues in it not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do."

*Prayer.* Prayer is essential to the Christian's life because it provides a direct channel for Christians to communicate with God. Towns and McFarland define prayer as "talking to God based on a relationship with God."<sup>37</sup> In that sense, they understand prayer as a family relationship. It is like talking to one's father, as Jesus described it in Mathew 6:6 by saying, "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen." That is a way to communicate with God intimately. Christians can glorify God's name through prayer and ask God for forgiveness. God, through His Word invites His people to make all kinds of prayers. In Philippians 4:6, Paul declares, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, present your requests to God with thanksgiving." God's Word not only invites Christians to make all kinds of prayer, but God's Word also requires them to pray at all times in the Spirit (Eph 6:18). In that sense, Christians need to tie their prayer lives to "the Holy Spirit," as Haykin wrote, "Who gives them the boldness to come into the presence of the awesome and almighty Maker of heaven and earth and call Him 'Dear Father.'"<sup>38</sup>

### **Limitations**

The researcher has anticipated that there will be some limitations for the research. These will likely negatively affect the outcomes of the research. The first limitation is that some of the participants might be unable or unwilling to continue with the research, which will affect the sample size and possibly affect the quality of the research. Another limitation lies in the fact that

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<sup>37</sup> Elmer L. Towns and Alex McFarland, *10 Questions about Prayer Every Christian Must Answer: Thoughtful Responses about our Communication with God*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 3.

<sup>38</sup> Michael Haykin, *The God Who Draws Near: An Introduction to Biblical Spirituality* (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2007), xix.

some of the participants might be biased in their answers because of their relationship with the pastor of the church. Their desire to please the pastor may influence their responses.

Furthermore, the time commitment required as well as work and family responsibilities of the participants may constitute another limitation for this research study. However, the researcher will work on the availability of the participants to facilitate their participation in the research study.

### **Delimitations**

There are some boundaries that the researcher set to impose for this research study. The location for the research study will be Redemption Baptist Church. However, the researcher may authorize the participants to fill out forms or participate in interviews in the comfort of their homes if necessary. The sample size of the participants will come only from the members of Redemption Baptist Church. All the participants are people who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Although the project is to benefit the whole church, the researcher will only include the twelve lay leaders of the church. They are all over 18 years old and regular attenders of the church, including both men and women. The researcher will require a commitment from all the participants to participate in the research study from start to finish unless there are unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances. All the participants must be baptized members who have attended Redemption Baptist Church regularly for at least six months.

### **Thesis Statement**

Christians need to understand that they are Jesus' followers or His disciples with a calling or responsibility to bring others to Christ. Jesus makes it clear that He calls His disciples to follow Him so that they can then become disciple-makers (Matt 4:19). Francis Chan and Mark Beuving wrote, "From the start, God's design has been for every single disciple of Jesus to make

disciples who make disciples who make disciples until the gospel spreads to all peoples.”<sup>39</sup> If a church is to exist, it needs to follow the mandates outlined in Scripture; this also is evident in the way a church is required to practice its discipleship mandate. Once people are saved and called to follow Jesus, they must become disciple-makers. Jesus Christ is building His church and wants to do it through His people. A lack of participation of lay leaders at Redemption Baptist Church negatively affects the spiritual and numerical growth of the church. If Redemption Baptist Church implements its discipleship training for lay leaders, then they will help the pastor carry the load of discipleship in the church.

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<sup>39</sup> Francis Chan, and Mark Beuving, *Multiply: Disciples Making Disciples* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2012), 9.



## CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A literature review is crucial to a research project for various factors. As the researcher engages with academics who have previously contributed to the field, the researcher uses the literature review to get a deeper grasp of his chosen subject. Examining the literature also aids in the researcher's understanding of the state of the field and what remains to be learned. Additionally, it aids the researcher in recognizing or comprehending how his work fits into the context of earlier research in the area in which he decides to conduct his study. Moreover, a thorough analysis of the prior research body also helps frame the study's proper research technique, approach objectives, and research question. Finally, it offers essential clues or leads about the theoretical and theological frameworks of the research topic.

### Literature Review

Culture is the way leaders and church members operate in the ministries of the church. It is about developing a way to help the church reach its purpose. The discipleship culture of a church can be seen in all its beliefs, values, and behavior that it espouses to assist in its development. How the church conveys a message and the language they use is essential to the church discipleship culture. J.R. Woodward wrote, “With our tongues we can build a missional culture, and with our words, we can destroy it. Language is central to any culture. It is through language that we have a narrative to inhabit.”<sup>40</sup>

Creating a discipleship culture among lay leaders at Redemption Baptist Church is complex. However, being a disciple that makes disciples is an imperative from Jesus as the head of His church. During His earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated significant interest in discipleship

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<sup>40</sup> Woodward, *Creating a Missional Culture*, 36.

by calling people to follow Him. In Matthew 4:19, Jesus made His intentions clear by saying “Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people.” During Jesus' ministry, He taught His disciples how to be disciple-makers. In Matthew 28:16-20, one can see that Jesus, through His command to His disciples, has ordained them to go and practice making disciples on their own. In the same way, Jesus' teaching transformed His disciples' lives; He commands them to pass His teaching to others who will become disciples under their ministries. Ryle reminds Christians, as Christ's followers, that they also must do all in their power, both in person and via prayer, to introduce others to Jesus.<sup>41</sup> It is crucial for Christians to understand that they are Jesus' followers with a calling and responsibility to disciple others. This literature review covers the ideas and thoughts on the misconception of discipleship, the correct view of discipleship, discipleship through community, unity, relationship, mentoring, discipleship through shared vision, and mission.

### Misconception Of Discipleship

A misconception of discipleship among Christians can harm the church, leading to the passivity of church members in the discipleship process. Hudson, who understood the negative effect of passivity in the church, wrote, “Passivity can become an enemy of God’s grace.”<sup>42</sup> Passivity among church members is one of the main issues the church faces. It is crucial to help church members move from passive to active participants in the ministry of the church. In that sense the church needs to encourage the priesthood of all believers instead of adhering itself to

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<sup>41</sup> C. Ryle, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol. 1, Expository Thoughts (Balneário Rincão: Grupo Oxigênio Ltda-ME, 2015), 275.

<sup>42</sup> Trevor Hudson, "Relationships: Discipleship that Promotes Another Kind of Life," *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 1 (2019): 118.

the hierarchical priesthood, which can be seen as a form of governing where only a select few consider themselves as unique and special in God's eyes.

The active participation of every believer in the body of Christ is necessary. There are steps to take while breaking up some habits to help Christians or church members move from being passive to active in the church. To serve one another, Christians need to get rid of specific thoughts and attitudes that can undermine their ability to minister to one another. God's Word warns His people against comparing themselves to others (Gal 6:4). Christians who compare themselves to others can see themselves as inferior to others, which, in turn, can compel them to remove themselves from being active in ministry because they can see themselves as insignificant to the church of Jesus Christ.<sup>43</sup>

Not only does comparing oneself to others result in considering oneself inferior to others, but it can also result in seeing oneself as superior to others. Ogden wrote, "Attitudes of superiority can work against the sense of belonging and mutual service that is integral to the church as the body of Christ."<sup>44</sup>

All Christians need one another to grow as Christ intended His body to grow. Ogden, who understands this reality well, wrote, "The church lives as an organism when persons sense their value and equally value and need the other parts to make them whole. We do not have it all, but together we have it all."<sup>45</sup> It is crucial for Christians, who are recipients of God's spiritual gifts, to use those gifts to serve one another. Each part must do its work for the whole body that is joined and held together by every supporting ligament to grow and build itself up. If each part

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<sup>43</sup> Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2003), 53.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

does not do its work, the whole body may not be able to function as it should. In that sense, every Christian, pastor, and lay church member must do their part by ministering to one another for the wellbeing of the body of Christ. Christians are to pray to God for one another and seek God's guidance and blessing. In that sense, Christians should try to become increasingly receptive to one another, caring for one another in God's name and offering each other valuable and practical constructive help for Christ's sake.<sup>46</sup>

Hudson further argues that it is crucial to understand that while God is always the one who transforms someone's life; the inner transformation does not happen mechanically. Experiencing a transformed life in one's relationship with God requires cooperation with the Holy Spirit.<sup>47</sup> In that sense, for a Christian to harvest the intended spiritual result, they need to participate actively in the discipleship process. Christians' maturity deepens as they take the necessary steps to open their lives to God and participate as required in the process of their spiritual growth. Moreover, Hudson argues that personal change required one's unwavering, willful, and planned participation.<sup>48</sup>

This section examines some factors contributing to the misconception of discipleship among Christians in the church. Schoeman and Nel point out some elements they recognize as contributing to the misconception of discipleship by claiming that some Christians choose to lessen their Christian life only to their salvation in Christ instead of living as followers of Jesus.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 18.

<sup>47</sup> Hudson, *Relationships*, 119.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Malan Nel and W. J. Schoeman, "Rediscovering Disciplemaking and the Role of Faith-Sharing," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 75, no. 4 (2019): 2.

Niemandt, who seems in agreement with Schoeman and Nel, argues that people do not put their faith in Jesus as their Savior only to receive life but also to share life with others.<sup>50</sup>

Schoeman and Nel also point out another misconception among Christians that arises due to the fact they attribute discipleship to a particular class of Christians instead of the whole church.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, they see Christians ‘misunderstanding of the church as a discipleship community as another factor contributing to misconception of discipleship among Christians.<sup>52</sup> Christians understand their adherence to the church as a “me-and-Jesus solo relationship.”<sup>53</sup> Nel and Schoeman highlight some additional misunderstandings Christians have regarding discipleship in the church setting. First, they assert that people have made discipleship for super Christians rather than for regular Christians. Those super Christians are those who consider themselves as the only ones invested with spiritual ability and who are automatically qualified to minister in the church of Jesus Christ. Ogden labels them as an exceptional class of priests that has taken the place of Jesus by standing before God to other Christians and representing God to them.<sup>54</sup> Secondly, Nel and Schoeman understand that pastors have been distracted from their primary duty of preparing the saints for ministry; thirdly, leaders have been reluctant to call people to discipleship; and fourthly, people have attempted to make disciples through programs as opposed to the scriptural context, developing relationships.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> C. J. P. Niemandt, “Rediscovering Joy in Costly and Radical Discipleship in Mission,” *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72, no. 4 (2016): 5.

<sup>51</sup> Nel and Schoman, *Rediscovering*, 2.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 17.

<sup>55</sup> Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 40-50; see also Malan Nel and W. J. Schoeman, “Rediscovering Disciplemaking and the Role of Faith-Sharing,” *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 75, no. 4 (2019): 2.

Henry and Swart point out some other factors that contribute to the misconception of discipleship in the church. They see discipleship as misconstrued when it disregards the relational aspect of people and focuses more on programs and knowledge, which results in having ill-equipped Christians who are unable to disciple others.<sup>56</sup> Church leaders that only focus on bringing more people into the church and not discipling them so they can grow in their spiritual growth contribute to the misconception. A superficial method of disciple making results in only growing the church numerically instead of focusing on the spiritual maturity of its members.<sup>57</sup> Although not all the sources cover the same factors contributing to the misconception of discipleship, they all understand that any wrong approach to discipleship creates a misconception of discipleship among Christians in the church.

#### Correct View of Discipleship

To avoid the misconception about discipleship, an understanding of the correct view of discipleship needs to come to light. One of the primary metaphors used by Christianity to describe the requirements and difficulties of the spiritual life is discipleship.<sup>58</sup> Haynes and Cherry define discipleship as "being formed into the likeness of the teacher, passing on the tradition, modeling your practice and lifestyle on theirs."<sup>59</sup> God wants Christians to use their spiritual ability or gift to inspire people to follow Jesus Christ and become spiritually mature Christ-followers. In that sense, Jesus Christ's followers need to take a proactive role in discipling

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<sup>56</sup> Desmond Henry and Max F. Swart, "Beyond Post-Christendom Discipleship of the Evangelical Church in the United Kingdom: A Study of the Gospel of Matthew in the Transformational and Holistic Perspective," *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 42, no. 1 (2021): e9.

<sup>57</sup> J. T. English, *Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2020), x.

<sup>58</sup> Andrew Hayes and Stephen Cherry, *The Meanings of Discipleship: Being Disciples Then and Now* (La Vergne, TN: Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd, 2021), 12.

<sup>59</sup> Hayes and Cherry, *Meanings*, 13.

or training people who will, in turn, disciple others. During His earthly ministry, Jesus spent most of His life discipling His disciples, who in turn spent most of their lives discipling others to become disciple-makers. Church leaders or pastors must train, equip, and empower church members to participate actively in the church's discipleship ministry. Jesus desires all His followers to get involved in building and edifying His church. Believers need to do their part. All Christians, pastors and lay people alike are called to participate actively in the spiritual growth and development of the body of Christ. As Paul mentions in his letter to the Ephesians, pastors must equip the saints, who, in turn, need to do ministry work to build up the body of Christ to maturity and to become like Christ (Eph 4:11-13).

Don Hawkins understands biblical discipleship as the process by which someone inspires another to become a fully mature follower of Jesus Christ.<sup>60</sup> In that sense, he claims that the discipleship's content needs to be explicitly biblical with a Christ-centered focus aiming at a Christlike maturity.<sup>61</sup> Shaw Cook, in his thesis project, understands discipleship as a lifelong process in which the believer dedicates his life to learn the Word of God, to serve God and be intentionally involved as he chooses to be obedient to God, and grow spiritually in their faith.<sup>62</sup> J. T. English goes against the idea of linking discipleship to the church program. While he understands the importance of the church program, English points out that true discipleship is rooted in God. In that sense, true discipleship is to grow in love and understanding of God.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Don Hawkins, *Master Discipleship Today: Jesus's Prayer and Plan for Every Believer* (Chicago, IL: Kregel Publications, 2019), 36.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Shawn M. Cook, "Implementing a Discipleship Curriculum Among Men at Breakthrough Church of God by Faith (COGBF) in Memphis, TN," (PhD diss., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021), 21, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

<sup>63</sup> English, *Deep Discipleship*, 16.

Niemandt, on his end, contributes to the subject by writing that discipleship is to celebrate the tremendous gift of God while taking part in the triune God's loving control of all of life.<sup>64</sup>

### Discipleship Through Community

The church started as a community of faith and functions as a community, as related in the book of Acts (Acts 2-4). The writer of the book *The Acts of the Apostles* helps his readers see the church not as a building but as a significant community of disciples. The spirit of community was so embedded in the early church that its members were committed to everything that required them to improve their unity. The writer claims they dedicated themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, and the sharing of meals and prayers (Acts 2:42). They even sold what belonged to them and shared the proceeds with those in need (Acts 2:45) to continue in the spirit of community in the church. Tony Merida wrote, "Extraordinary sharing and mercy ministry, especially within the household of God, marked the early church community."<sup>65</sup>

The principle of community for the church is found throughout the New Testament. For example, in Hebrews 10:24-25, God's Word declares, "And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our assembling, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near." For church members, it is crucial to maintain a connection with one another and focus on building and maintaining a community of love and actions.

J. T. English, in his book on discipleship, describes the church community as the primary place where God calls His followers to grow into their emotional, social, and spiritual well-being as disciples.<sup>66</sup> English continues by stating that the significance of community in the Christian

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<sup>64</sup> Niemandt, *Rediscovering*, 1.

<sup>65</sup> Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Acts* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2017), 20.

<sup>66</sup> English, *Deep Discipleship*, xlix.



life can hardly be overstated. The church must bear witness to the value of community for the Christian life in an age where so much of our culture is subject to the emphasis on autonomous ego and self-determinism.<sup>67</sup> Tyrone Queen, in his thesis project, follows this thinking in saying that the church carries out discipleship training by sharing spiritual disciplines within its community.<sup>68</sup>

Christians are not only responsible for disciplining their own lives but are also responsible for practicing spiritual discipline on a corporate level when they gather with other believers. In community, God works most effectively. Nobody thrives by standing alone. Nobody conquers an addiction or breaks the power of sin by themselves. Nobody who stands alone can have a closer relationship with God. Furthermore, no one can become a disciple in isolation from the community of faith.<sup>69</sup> In his letter to the church at Ephesus, the apostle Paul also wrote about gifts given by God to prepare the saints (believers) for the work of ministry, build up the body of Christ (a metaphor for the church) until they all attain the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:12-13). In that sense, believers are to grow up in every way into Christ, the head from whom the whole body grows when each part works correctly by building itself up in love (Eph 4:16).

Christian disciples are called to build up one another in the church community. By building up one another, they are building up the church of Jesus Christ. In his letter to the church in Colossae, Paul encourages them to use their gifts to edify the church of Jesus Christ by

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<sup>67</sup> English, *Deep Discipleship*, ii.

<sup>68</sup> Tyrone Queen, "The Development of a Discipleship Plan for Mount Sinai Baptist Church," (PhD Diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022), 57. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

<sup>69</sup> Harrington and Patrick, *Disciple Maker's*, 76.

responsibly carrying out their various duties during their gatherings. Paul urges them to admonish one another in all wisdom (Col 3:16).

Paul began the twelfth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians by referring to spiritual gifts; then, in verses four through seven, he mentions the “varieties of gifts” as well as “varieties of service” and “varieties of activities” held by believers in the church, all of which are manifestations of God’s Spirit “for the common good” (1 Cor 12).

It is essential to notice that interpersonal spiritual discipline is crucial because of the diversity of gifts that Jesus has imparted to His church. No one possesses all the spiritual gifts. One may have the gift of teaching; another may have the gift of service. One may have the gift of prayer, and another may have the gift of exhortation. God's Word says it better in Romans 12:4-5, where the apostle Paul declares, "For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ, we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."

God makes interpersonal spiritual discipline possible by bestowing different gifts upon each Christian to strengthen one another for their spiritual growth. Yau Man Siew states that even though being a disciple is about following Jesus, there was a strong emphasis on the need for community.<sup>70</sup> God created humankind to live in community. After creating Adam, God declared that it was not good for Adam to be alone and then made for him a woman fit for him. John Walker wrote,

God created human beings to live together in community, so thoroughly and unconditionally interdependent that they operate as if they are parts of a Body moving together for one purpose. If they are cut-off from the Body, it is no different than a leg or

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<sup>70</sup> Yau Man Siew, "A Case Study in Adult Discipleship: Stories of Apprenticeship to Jesus at an Urban Anglican (Episcopal) Church," *Christian Education Journal* 18, no. 2 (2021): 195.

foot being severed from their own bodies. One amputated limb must be reconnected as quickly as possible, or it will not survive.<sup>71</sup>

Community is so vital that it closely relates to the essential nature of God. In Genesis 1:26 and Genesis 3:22, the writer of Genesis presents God as a being in community. As God proceeds to create humankind, He declares in Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." In Genesis 3:22, God also says, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever." These two biblical passages depict God as existing in community.

Another critical observation relating to God as existing in community is that the Bible declares that God is love (1 John 4:7-8). The term love is relational and refers to both a subject and an object.<sup>72</sup> Stanley J. Grenz claims that God as the subject of love would require the world as the object of His love in order to be the loving God if He were a solitary acting subject.<sup>73</sup> Grenz wrote that since the essence of God lies in His triune nature as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, His divine reality already comprehends both love's subject and object.<sup>74</sup> Grenz further wrote, "Community is not merely an aspect of human life, for it lies within the divine essence."<sup>75</sup> John Walker states that God did not create human beings to feel alone. Moreover, when people feel alone, it is not a weakness. It is God sending them a message because it was not God's intention for human beings to live alone. He also claims that people take many different actions to end their loneliness by frequently pursuing inadequate relationships. However, God will not

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<sup>71</sup> John Walker, *In Visible Fellowship: A Contemporary View on Bonhoeffer's Classic Work Life Together* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 2011), 16.

<sup>72</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 90.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 90

<sup>75</sup> Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 95.

let them settle for anything less than a life spent with other believers, living, in Bonhoeffer's words, "in visible" community with each other.<sup>76</sup> He mentions that God designed people to need the help of other believers to mature into the fullness of Christ.<sup>77</sup> He wrote, "There is no such thing as independent study in the curriculum of Christ. We are connected to Jesus and connected to each other the moment we agree to follow Jesus."<sup>78</sup>

Dietrich Bonhoeffer saw community as a gift from God that can be temporary because that gift of grace can be taken away at any moment from those who have the privilege to enjoy it. In that sense, Bonhoeffer urged those who have the privilege to live in community with one another as Christians to be grateful to God and acclaim God for such grace, which is to live in community with other Christians.<sup>79</sup>

Mark Dever contributes to this topic by claiming that the local church is the central place for discipling. He sees the local church as the natural environment for helping others to follow Jesus. He even goes further to write that the church is the entity that Jesus has given the authority to decide on who is a disciple or not.<sup>80</sup>

Biblical discipleship does not center on the self. Andrew Hayes and Stephen Cherry argue that becoming a disciple is not the final goal. The disciples are being trained and brought together around Jesus for a larger goal to participate as agents in establishing God's kingdom. As Hayes and Cherry claim, "They are a community within a community, a gathered and intentional sub-group that exists for the sake of the wider community to which they also belong."<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Walker, *In Visible Fellowship*, 16.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: Readers Edition* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2015), 4.

<sup>80</sup> Dever, *Discipling*, 60.

<sup>81</sup> Hayes and Cherry, *Meanings*, 17

## Unity

Unity among Christians and in the local church is essential. It was one of Jesus' requests during His highly priestly prayer to His Father for His disciples before His death. Jesus prayed to His Father to make His disciples one. In addition to praying for the unity of His disciples, Jesus asked His Father to unite those who believed in him through the teaching of His original disciples (John 17:20-23). What is essential to notice is that Jesus points out that when those who believe in Him live in unity, the world will know that God, the Father, has sent Him and has loved them even as God, the Father, loves His Son Jesus Christ. In that sense, one can say that unity among Christians is a testimony that they belong to God.

Considering these two biblical passages, Galatians 3:26-29 and Titus 2:1-10, God shows that He desires unity among Christians. Once someone accepts Jesus as their Lord and Savior through faith, they all become children of God. For God, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither enslaved person nor free, nor is there male and female, for we are all one in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:26-29). Not only does God unify Christians in terms of their race and social ethnicity, but he also unifies them in terms of their gender and generations. Titus 2:1-10 is a good illustration of the unifying body of the church of Jesus Christ. God was able to regroup and unify in a local church all kinds of people from different genders, different generations, and different socio-ethnicities under the leadership of the young Titus to grow in the Lord. Brian Croft wrote, "For a church to possess true spiritual life, there must be a unifying of the generations. Not just the unifying of generations, but also gender, race, and socio-ethnic diversities should exist in every local church to some degree (Titus 2:1-10)."<sup>82</sup> Peter says in Acts 10:34-35, "I now realize how

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<sup>82</sup> Brian Croft, *Biblical Church Revitalization: Solutions for Dying & Divided Churches* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2016), 84.

true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.” Throughout the Bible, God calls Christians to live in unity with one another without discrimination. In Romans 12:16, God’s Word declares, “Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low positions. Do not be conceited.” Croft further wrote, “The biblical paradigm for church health is not about numbers and money even though many make it out to be. Rather, it is about a group of people who love Jesus, love each other, and are very different from the other.”<sup>83</sup>

### Relationship

This section examines the importance of discipling others through relationships. The relationship is vital for effective discipleship. Tyrone Queen claims that biblical disciple-making is so intensely relational that it requires the trainees and the disciple-maker to establish a tight bond.<sup>84</sup> Ryan S. Poe, in his thesis, points out that relationships are crucial for discipleship as he declares that success of discourse, the central component of transformative learning, is determined by the nature of co-learner interactions.<sup>85</sup> Poe also claims that the church has a crucial role in developing, fostering, and maintaining the kinds of solid and reliable bonds necessary for transformation to occur.<sup>86</sup> Harrington and Patrick point out a church's need to create relational environments for discipleship. They understand that church members will seek other ways to grow in relationships outside the church if they do not find a relational

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<sup>83</sup> Brian Croft, *Biblical Church Revitalization: Solutions for Dying & Divided Churches* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2016), 84.

<sup>84</sup> Queen, "Development", 55.

<sup>85</sup> Ryan S Poe, "Nurturing a Discipleship Culture: The Role that Transformative Learning and the Learning Context Play in Forming Disciples at Northview Church," (PhD Diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Intercultural Studies, 2020), 47. Dissertations & Theses Global.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

environment inside the church.<sup>87</sup> Anderson and Skinner also argue for the importance of relationships in discipleship. They contend that God calls Christians to unite and support one another in their faith and weaknesses.<sup>88</sup> When Christians understand their emotional life and genuinely engage with others, it provides an opportunity to disciple others into healthier relationships.<sup>89</sup> While Poe, Anderson, and Skinner only point out the positive side of the relationship, Winston, on his end, points out both the positive and the opposing sides by recognizing that relationships can be fragile and challenging at the same time. He acknowledges that significant conflicts and difficulties will arise in a community that accepts people at varying stages of maturity and discipleship and promotes solid and sincere relationships with people of all backgrounds. However, Winston also recognizes that these relationships, when developed gradually over time, also give hints of God's grace and patience at work.<sup>90</sup> God's Word makes it clear that to be disciples of Jesus, it is vital to know how to relate to one another. Andrew Hayes and Stephen Cherry contend that even a cursory reading of the New Testament demonstrates that Jesus' disciples must respond to instructions regarding how to regard and relate to others, whether they are familiar people, strangers, or even enemies.<sup>91</sup> A genuine community is something that both followers of Jesus and non-followers of Jesus seek out, and relationships provide the best environment for long-lasting life transformation. In relationships, individuals heal from the consequences of sin and find the assistance they require during difficult times.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Harrington and Patrick, *Disciple Maker's*, 71.

<sup>88</sup> Tamara L. Anderson and Shelly A. Skinner, "Feelings: Discipleship that Understands the Affective Processes of a Disciple of Christ," *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 1 (2019): 77.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Bruce E. Winston, *The Mind of a Leader: A Christian Perspective of the Thoughts, Mental Models, and Perceptions that Shape Leadership Behavior* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 78.

<sup>91</sup> Hayes and Cherry, *Meanings*, 125.

<sup>92</sup> Harrington and Patrick, *Disciple Maker's*, 76.

Relationships are profitable in the disciple-making process for both the disciple-maker and the one being disciplined. It is essential to encourage discipleship relationships within the church. In the New Testament, God's Word presents Jesus and Paul as great examples. Although Jesus and Paul were very busy in their ministry, they found time to go through personal and interactive discipleship relationships. Jesus shows that discipleship is fundamentally a relational process. Harrington and Josh Patrick claim that Jesus, during his earthly ministry, put a priority on relationships. They argue that Jesus was not just hanging out with people but invested time with them, ate with them, and talked with them, as He has to know the people He was discipling by entering into their world and inviting them into His world.<sup>93</sup>

Ogden contends that Jesus had to give priority to a select few if disciples were to be made and that Jesus had to expose His disciples to His life continuously to speak to the genuine issues in His disciples' life through the open and honest interchange.<sup>94</sup>

The Bible is full of discipling relationships where one person teaches another. Christians are to help one another to grow, develop and serve Jesus and His church. Mark Dever claims that people need to orient themselves toward others to help them grow spiritually in Christ. Christians need to show love to one another, as it is central to discipleship.<sup>95</sup> Mark Dever goes further to exemplify his ideas by referring to God's Word commanding the Israelites to not only keep in their hearts the commands that He gives them but also to pass it on constantly to their children

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<sup>93</sup> Harrington and Patrick, *Disciple Maker's*, 66.

<sup>94</sup> Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 68.

<sup>95</sup> Dever, *Discipling*, 27.



(Deut 6:6-7).<sup>96</sup> Mark Dever continues to show examples of discipleship including Moses discipling Joshua, Jesus discipling his apostles, and Paul discipling Timothy.<sup>97</sup>

### Mentoring

A good relationship forms the basis for a solid mentoring partnership. With a strong partnership, the mentor and the mentee feel secure to work at building and strengthening their relationship and holding each other accountable for results. Mentoring is a powerful tool in the disciple-making process. Jesus Christ poured His time and energy into the life of His disciples to help them look beyond the present to visualize a better future. Jesus has used mentoring as one of His most essential and powerful disciples-making tools.

Mentoring is a mutual agreement between two or more individuals who cooperate to attend predetermined professional or personal goals. The one who imparts knowledge, wisdom, and experience to the less experienced one is the mentor, while the less experienced person acquiring the knowledge is the mentee. God, through the Bible teaches His people how to transmit their faith to subsequent generations.

Becoming a disciple requires learning and training. Along the course, a disciple is taught how to become a disciple-maker. The formula for making disciples is to accompany the mentees on their journey, teach them and guide them through the discipleship process and train them to become disciple-makers themselves.<sup>98</sup> People often long for a divine purpose for their lives but do not know how to embrace it. Henson understands that people look for interpersonal relationships in highly structured settings like churches and workplaces. However, when people

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<sup>96</sup> Dever, *Discipling*, 28.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Steven Kozak, *Beyond the Edge of the Water: Reclaiming Biblical Discipleship for a Rising Generation* (Ashland: BMH Books, 2020), 15.

do not find those interpersonal relationships for which they long and that are left to rely on themselves, they might feel devalued and reduced to just a mere number. Those interpersonal connections are necessary for people to feel appreciated. A mentoring relationship is needed for encouragement to challenge and to engage new believers purposefully.<sup>99</sup>

### Discipleship Through Shared Vision

In a physical sense, human vision is related to the ability to focus one's eyes on a certain point. People need to see where they are and where they are going. People also need to know their destinations and how to get there. In Proverbs 29:18 God's word declares, "Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained." Kotter and Mancini see an organization's vision as the picture of an organization's or a church's future. Kotter wrote, "Vision refers to a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future."<sup>100</sup> Mancini argues specifically about a church's vision that is connected or embedded into the minds of the church members. Mancini declares, "People connect to the vision only to the degree that they are emotionally connected to the prior problem your vision solves."<sup>101</sup> A vision must also move the heart of the people. In that sense, the vision must present the dream of a better world in which the congregation wants to live.<sup>102</sup> Lastly, the moving vision (i.e., the vision that moves people to action that motivates them) must be a God-size vision. The moving vision needs to build up the faith of the church members. To better help the vision to move the church forward, some action steps must be taken. In many cases, behavior is the most effective

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<sup>99</sup> Joshua D Henson, *Modern Metaphors of Christian Leadership: Exploring Christian Leadership in a Contemporary Organizational Context* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 261.

<sup>100</sup> John P. Kotter, *Leading Change, with a New Preface by the Author* (Boston: Perseus Book LLC Ingram, 2012), 71.

<sup>101</sup> Will Mancini and Warren Bird, *God Dreams: 12 Vision Templates for Finding and Focusing Your Church's Future* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2016), 164.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

means of communicating a change in direction.<sup>103</sup> There is a need to embrace the vision by being passionate about it and living it out. When someone communicates a vision out of love and excitement rather than being paid to do so, the vision spread far more effectively.<sup>104</sup>

Moreover, the church's vision needs to be a part of everyday conversations and every activity or ministry in the church and on the prayer list of every church member.

Church leaders need to continually share God's vision for their discipleship ministry with others. According to Matthew 28:20, they must teach others to obey what Jesus has commanded them to teach. They do not have to teach others their ideas or doctrines; instead, they need to teach others to obey the teachings and exhortations of Jesus. They need to connect people to Jesus (upward), they need to connect people to people (inward), and they need to connect people to the mission of the church (outward). Making those connections requires leaders to have a vision and to effectively share and communicate God's vision for their ministry to the people. Malphurs wrote, "Without a vision, one's leadership would be seriously impaired. Without vision, the re-envisioning pastor is shortsighted. Rather than 20–20 vision, it will be off the charts in a negative direction. A pastor without vision will not be able to paint a picture of where he is going, much less, where the church is going."<sup>105</sup>

While Jesus has called His disciples to make other disciples for Him, they first need to be dedicated followers of Jesus. When God has imparted to the church leaders a vision to share with others, they are responsible for being personally committed to living out God's vision in their own lives. Malphurs strongly advises a leader to live out the vision that God has given him for

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<sup>103</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 97.

<sup>104</sup> Mancini and Bird, *God Dreams*, 191.

<sup>105</sup> Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon E. Penfold, *Re: Vision The Key to Transforming Your Church* (Baker Publishing Group, 2014), 149.

his ministry. Malphurs claims, "The vision should motivate him so much that he finds himself constantly dreaming, thinking, and talking about it."<sup>106</sup> In his book *Making Vision Stick*, Andy Stanley explains why a leader must live out God's vision for his ministry. He wrote, "If you say, you believe in something, live it out. Moreover, live it in a way that the people around you can see it. That is not arrogant. That is liberating. It frees others to join without reservation and without suspicion."<sup>107</sup>

It is crucial for leaders to understand their responsibility, which is to influence others to follow Jesus through their example in all aspects of their lives. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul appeals to fellow Christians to follow his examples as he follows the example of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). The church leader needs to embrace the church's vision personally. In that sense, the responsible leaders must personally live out the vision. Stanley claims, "Living out the vision establishes credibility and makes you a leader worth following. When people are convinced that the vision has stuck with the leader, it is easier for them to make an effort to stick with the vision."<sup>108</sup>

### Mission

When people do not understand the mission of the church, they tend to remain in the same old habit of "doing church". The church, traditionally, has been trapped in institutionalism.<sup>109</sup> The entrapment of the church occurs because of congregations serving as the admiring audience for the pastor as he performs alone in the church. For the pastor to carry out

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<sup>106</sup> Malphurs and Penfold, *Re: Vision*, 161.

<sup>107</sup> Andy Stanley, *Making Vision Stick, Leadership Library* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 49.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>109</sup> Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 28.

his ministry, laypeople passively warm pews and put money in the offering plate.<sup>110</sup> In the past, the laity has far too frequently carried out the duties of the church without being allowed to use their spiritual abilities to strengthen the body of Christ.<sup>111</sup> However, understanding the mission makes it easier for people to accept change and adapt to the mission. There is a threefold mission of the church. The first is its "Missio ad gentes (Mission to the nations)." The church needs to plant the seed of faith among people, groups, and socio-cultural contexts where Christ and His gospel are unknown or where there are no mature Christian communities that can live out the faith in their communities and spread it to other groups. The second is its "Missio ad intra (Mission within the church)." In that sense, there is a need for the church to focus on the faithful's strategic pastoral care for a lasting Christian life in locations with a solid ecclesial organization. The third is "Missio ad extra (Mission outside of the church)," which is new evangelization or re-evangelization of baptized Catholics who have lost their faith or are suffering tepidness. In that sense, Obiorah sees the objective of the church as to restore their faith.<sup>112</sup> The active participation of the laity is essential to all three of the church's missions because, without their work inside the church communities, the pastors' apostolate will not be able to have the full impact it deserves.<sup>113</sup>

To create a missional culture, Christians need to understand the church's role as a missional entity. They need to see the church as the light of the world. God's Word says that Christians are the world's light and that their light needs to shine before others so that they may see their good deeds and glorify God in heaven (Matt 5:14-16). Woodward wrote, "The church is

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<sup>110</sup> Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 28.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 32

<sup>112</sup> Mary J. Obiorah, "The Challenges of Full Participation of Laity in the Mission of the Church," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 76, no. 4 (2020): 3.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

to be a sign of God's coming kingdom, pointing people to a reality that is right around the corner."<sup>114</sup> Moreover, in the church of Christ, Christians must reflect God's kingdom in their way to the world. A Christian's way of life will help the world determine who they are and have a taste of the kingdom of God. In John 13:35, Jesus told his disciples there is a way for the world to recognize that they are His disciples. He told them that they needed to love one another. As the church, they have a responsibility to represent God on earth. They are His ambassadors. In addition, the church needs to be a tool Jesus uses to reach the lost for God. The church needs to be on a mission. According to Woodward, "a church which is not on mission is either not yet or no longer the church, or only a dead church—itsself in need of renewal."<sup>115</sup>

The church needs to have a missional culture because when it does not, Christians live their lives contrary to God's will. Woodward understands when the missional culture is absent in the church, Christians are not the kind of people that God wants them to be and they are not the kind of people that they themselves hope to be.<sup>116</sup> As Christians, members of the church of Jesus Christ, they need to live out their calling. They need to be people on a mission. God's Word says that the Lord has made them to be a light for the Gentiles, that they may bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Acts 13: 47). Woodward wrote,

Creating a missional culture helps the church live out her calling to be a sign of the kingdom, pointing people to the reality beyond what we can see, a foretaste of the kingdom where we grow to love one another as Christ loves us, and an instrument in the hands of God to bring more of heaven to earth in concrete ways. For the church is to be a credible sign, foretaste and instrument, it needs to be community rich with the fruit of the spirit.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Woodward, *Creating*, 28.

<sup>115</sup> Woodward, *Creating*, 28.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

Joshua Henson addresses the challenge that Western evangelical Christianity encounters in formulating a missionary strategy. He contends that, for many in Western evangelical Christianity, a missionary is someone who relocates to another nation primarily for the goal of evangelization. This way of thinking limits the fulfillment of the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19-20 to a select few called to be missionaries, which results in the perception of the majority of Christ-followers as seen in a lesser role.<sup>118</sup> Henson claims that anyone who embodies the Great Commission of Jesus in all that they do, even inside their own organization, is a missionary.<sup>119</sup>

Disciples are called to live the mission. Niemandt claims that the call to discipleship is an invitation to follow Jesus Christ. Jesus invites individuals to give their lives to Him. God's call to mission is also a call to discipleship, which is to follow God's presence, purpose, and promise by adopting the way of life and practicing the disciplines required for this life of submission and adoration.<sup>120</sup> Every Christian needs to know that Jesus calls them to be on the mission, which is to make disciples.

God's Word is clear on Christians' responsibility to be disciples and disciple-makers. Jesus' mandate to His followers after His resurrection, as recorded in all four of the gospels (Matt 28:19-28; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:45-49; and John 20:19-23), plainly implies that discipleship is integrally related to mission.<sup>121</sup> In that sense, one can agree that all four-gospel writers reveal that the resurrected Jesus commissioned His disciples to go into the world to proclaim the gospel, to declare to the people that Jesus is Lord, and to make disciples of all nations.

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<sup>118</sup> Henson, *Modern*, 222.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> Niemandt, *Rediscovering*, 3.

<sup>121</sup> Hayes and Cherry, *Meanings*, 104.

God calls His people to live on a mission. Kozak argues that God has used His people to live on a mission to reconcile humanity with Himself ever since sin entered the earth. A vast story of God using His people to save the world includes the Exodus, Mount Sinai, the Law, the Promised Land, the return from exile, Jesus, and the church today.<sup>122</sup> Further, Kozak points out that God's people are obligated to participate in the mission, practice compassion, and help the broken get back on track. God's people's way of life should reflect who God made them to be. They are obligated to carry out the kingdom of God's mission on earth with Jesus as their Lord.<sup>123</sup>

It is the sole responsibility of every disciple to make other disciples for Christ. J.T. English understands that a disciple of Christ must make other disciples for Christ. He writes that a Christ-follower who does not make other Christ-followers is not a genuine Christ-follower. Based on that, he argues that the local church must commission and equip individuals, train, and deploy them. The local church needs to train all those it sends and send all those it trains.<sup>124</sup>

The literature the researcher uses in this project provides essential information concerning the misconception of discipleship, the correct view of discipleship, the integration of discipleship as part of the shared vision and mission of the church, and the importance of relationship, unity, community and mentoring in discipleship. Understanding these concepts provide the researcher with a foundation to implement discipleship among lay leaders at Redemption Baptist Church.

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<sup>122</sup> Kozak, *Beyond*, 52.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 54

<sup>124</sup> English, *Deep Discipleship*, 3r.



## **Theological Foundations**

Every person Jesus has saved has received the wonderful invitation and biblical duty to participate in God's mission of making disciples. It is a privilege to be part of God's harvest and to participate in God's plan for redemption. All Christians who are born again should see themselves as disciple-makers and act accordingly.

In the Bible, Jesus clearly commanded His followers to make discipleship an integral part of their lives. Jesus made this calling extremely clear to His disciples by telling them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt 4:19, ESV). During Jesus' ministry, He taught His disciples how to be disciple-makers. The theological foundations for discipleship will explore the biblical mandate for discipleship and some characteristics needed in relation to the disciple-making process in the church.

### **Discipleship Mandate**

There are five biblical texts that mandate (command) Christians to make disciples. It is important to notice that all the five biblical texts provide insight into the Great Commission the Lord gave to His followers. Christ gave this commission after His resurrection as the One who had conquered death. The post-resurrection biblical texts are outlined in Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-17, Luke 24:47-48, John 20:21, and Acts 1:8.

Hull summarized four of these post resurrection biblical texts about the final commission Jesus gave to His disciples in these terms: "Go and preach the gospel all over the world to every person. Go in the power of the Spirit, with accompanying signs and wonders of God's power. Tell them what you have witnessed. Start at home, and work your way to the remaining world

from there (Mark 16:15-17; Luke 24:47-48; John 20:21; and Acts 1:6).”<sup>125</sup> Bill Hull also wrote, “Disciple making should be installed at the heart of the church, and the commanded product of the church is a fruit-bearing believer called a disciple.”<sup>126</sup> Although all these passages provide a great deal of insight on the subject of discipling, Matthew 28:18-20 is generally considered as the Great Commission.<sup>127</sup>

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus tells His disciples, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” This very clear passage constitutes the biblical mandate for discipleship that every Christian needs to obey. As they go about their lives, they need to make disciples. Tozer wrote, “The truth is that salvation apart from obedience is unknown in the sacred Scriptures.”<sup>128</sup>

The Great Commission found in Matthew 28 is not an option. It is a command that Christians these days must follow because they are disciples of Jesus as well. Timothy Keller wrote, “Discipleship is not an option. Jesus says that if anyone would come after me, he must follow me.”<sup>129</sup> According to Tozer, one cannot be a Christian without being a disciple.<sup>130</sup> In that sense, a person cannot have faith in Jesus, and at the same time, refuses to obey His commands

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<sup>125</sup> Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor: Leading Others on the Journey of Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 44.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 43

<sup>127</sup> Hawkins, *Master Discipleship*, 12.

<sup>128</sup> Tozer, *Discipleship*, 62.

<sup>129</sup> Timothy Keller, "The Call to Discipleship," *Knowing & Doing C.S Lewis Institute* (2011): 4.

<sup>130</sup> Tozer, *Discipleship*, 75.

to be His disciple and make disciples. Bill Hull wrote, “Jesus taught that faith means to follow. That was His first test of a person’s faith.”<sup>131</sup>

During His earthly ministry Jesus never called anyone to be a Christian in the modern sense of someone who says that they put their faith in Jesus and thinks that is all that is required. Jesus calls people to be His followers and to obey His commands. When someone truly puts his faith in Jesus, he decides to follow Jesus or become His disciple. A person does not become Christian at first, and then become a disciple. When a person accepts Christ as his Savior and makes the decision to follow Him, his path should be uninterrupted from that point on. An individual does not go through a "second step" after becoming a Christian. Instead, he sets out on a continuous upward path, passing through spiritual childhood, adolescence, and adulthood to maturity.<sup>132</sup>

Discipleship is intrinsic to the Christian life; an integral part of being a Christian. A. W. Tozer wrote, “In the New Testament salvation and discipleship are so closely related as to be indivisible. They are not identical, but as with Siamese twins they are joined by a tie which can be severed only at the price of death.”<sup>133</sup>

Bonhoeffer wrote, “Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship, and Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.”<sup>134</sup> This idea is strictly about one’s obedience to Jesus. Bonhoeffer also claims, when

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<sup>131</sup> Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014), 24.

<sup>132</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book*, 33.

<sup>133</sup> Tozer, *Discipleship*, 9.

<sup>134</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 2018), 50.

correctly understood, discipleship inherently entails trust in the Son of God as the Mediator since it is bound to Christ as the God-Man who can call men to follow Him.<sup>135</sup>

### Abiding In God's Word

Discipleship as a mandate for Christians to follow requires obedience and sharing one's time with others in God's Word. In that sense, discipleship requires abiding in God's Word. One of the characteristics of a disciple is his abiding in his master's teaching. It is essential to notice that Jesus points out clearly what He needs in His disciples by saying, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples (John 8:31, ESV). When someone says that he believes in Jesus, it is not enough; that person needs to continue faithfully in Jesus' Word.

Abiding in God's Word is to remain in the Word of God. When someone abides in God's Word, he makes God's Word the center of his life. In that sense, abiding in Jesus' Word indicates a permanent relation with Him.<sup>136</sup> As a disciple, it is imperative to know the will of his master. The best way for a master to reveal his will is through his words or teaching. For a disciple to do the will of his master, he needs to know his master's words or teaching and live according to his master's will as stated in his teachings. No Christian can obey and do the will of God without knowing God's will, which He reveals through His Word. Gorman wrote, "The "obedience of faith" can be achieved only when one knows the will of the one to be obeyed, namely, God."<sup>137</sup> Knowing God's Word is intrinsic to His words found in Scripture, which is "breathed out by God" (2 Tim 3: 6). Other biblical passages, such as 2 Peter 1:20-21 and 1 Corinthians 2:13, make it more apparent that the Scripture or the Bible is God's Word.

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<sup>135</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 2018), 50.

<sup>136</sup> Urban C. Von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John: Volume 2: Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2010), 377.

<sup>137</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 134.

Peter wrote to his readers to assure them that no prophecy ever had its origin from the will of man and that all prophesies originated from God, who spoke to the prophets through the Holy Spirit. Peter wrote, "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet 1:20-21). The Holy Spirit is the agent through which God imparted his Word to the prophets. Paul made it clear to the Christians of Corinth that the words that he spoke to them came from the Holy Spirit. Paul says, "This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words" (1 Cor 2:13).

Abiding in God's Word helps the disciples grow in Christ. Disciples are called to long for God's Word as the essential spiritually nutritious food they need for their soul to grow into Christ's likeness. In 1 Peter 2:2-3, God's Word declares, "Like newborn babies, crave for pure milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." Based on that biblical passage, one can agree with Whitney, who says that,

No spiritual discipline is more important than the intake of God's Word. Nothing can substitute for it. There is no healthy Christian life apart from a diet of the milk and meat of Scripture. The reasons for this are apparent. In the Bible, God tells us about Himself, especially about Jesus Christ, the incarnation of God. None of this eternally essential information can be found anywhere else but in God's Word. Therefore, if a disciple would know God and be godly, he must know the Word of God—intimately.<sup>138</sup>

When His disciples seek out Christ's Word or teachings, they are following Him. Genuine disciples of Jesus need to learn from Him (Matt. 11:29). Jesus says that His genuine disciples are the ones who abide in His teachings so that they know the truth that will set them free from sin.

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<sup>138</sup> Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 22-23.

Beutler wrote, "All genuine disciples have to keep their faith in Jesus by remaining in the Word of Jesus and deepening in it."<sup>139</sup>

### Denying Self

There is no way to love a friend and give one's self for his friend if there is no humility, which is the necessary attitude needed if a disciple considers taking up his cross to follow Jesus. J. T. English clarifies this idea when he writes, "According to Jesus, discipleship is not about self-actualization or self-preservation; it is about self-denial. You will know yourself the most when you are carrying your cross."<sup>140</sup> A disciple needs to have this characteristic. Jesus says in Luke 9: 23, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

God's Word teaches that a Christians' attitude needs to be the same as that of Jesus Christ (Phil 2:5). Jesus, in His own words, calls His disciples to follow Him and learn from Him. In Matthew 11:29-30, Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Murray understood this well when he wrote,

Christ is the humility of God embodied in human nature; the Eternal Love humbling itself, clothing itself in the garb of meekness and gentleness, to win and serve and save us. As the love and condescension of God make Him the benefactor, helper, and servant of all, so Jesus of necessity was the Incarnate Humility. And so He is still in the midst of the throne, the meek and lowly Lamb of God.<sup>141</sup>

Humility constitutes an essential element in Jesus' life. Jesus' humility is the foundation and essence of who He is as the Redeemer.<sup>142</sup> In his book, *Humility: The Beauty of*

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<sup>139</sup> Beutler, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 183.

<sup>140</sup> English, *Deep Discipleship*, xx.

<sup>141</sup> Andrew Murray, *Humility: The Beauty of Holiness* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell, 1800), 21.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

*Holiness*, Murray uses the incarnation of Jesus, His life on this earth, and His death on the cross to point out the humility of Jesus. Murray even goes further to say that Jesus is still humble while reigning in heaven.<sup>143</sup> When humility, which is the core of Christ, is absent, the Christian life is weak and unable to produce fruit. In order to be spiritually productive, Christians must deny themselves and go after the humility of Jesus. Murray also declares,

Until a humility which will rest in nothing less than the end and death of self; which gives up all the honor of men as Jesus did, to seek the honor that comes from God alone; which absolutely makes and counts itself nothing, that God may be all, that the Lord alone may be exalted, —until such a humility be what we seek in Christ above our chief joy, and welcome at any price, there is very little hope of a religion that will conquer the world.<sup>144</sup>

Denying oneself is putting aside one's ambitions and will to do the will of the master.

Denying oneself is forsaking all that one has (Luke 14:33). Taking up one's cross will lead to self-denial, suffering, and even death. This shows one's willingness to die for the sake of Jesus. Luke 9: 24 says, "For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it." Jesus did not ask his disciples to do something that He was unwilling to do. He asked His disciples to deny themselves by showing humility and taking up their cross. Jesus denied Himself, took up His cross, and died on that cross (Phil 2:5-8). Satan is doing his best to prevent Christians from being humble and having the same mindset as the head of the church. In his book on discipleship, Bonhoeffer wrote that one of the ways for Satan to enter the church is by pulling the church away from the cross of Christ. Jesus made it clear to his disciples that the requirement for suffering is also applicable to them.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Murray, *Humility*, 20.

<sup>144</sup> Murray, *Humility*, 22.

<sup>145</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship: Readers Edition* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 50.

## Love

When a disciple remains faithfully in his master's teaching, he will follow his master's command. Love is one of the essential characteristics of a disciple. In John 13:34, Jesus makes of love a command, an order that any disciple needs to follow. Following the command of a master shows obedience and respect to that master.

When a disciple loves, he brings testimony to his adherence to his master. Jesus says practicing love is a way to show the world that one is His disciple (John 13:35). Love forgives all and looks for what is good in others (1Cor 13: 5). It is essential to notice that Jesus told them to love one another just after announcing that He would leave them. Since Jesus would leave them, their love for one another will serve them as a means for the world to know that they are His disciples.

The way they need to love one another is the same way Jesus loves them, which implies that they need to be ready to die for one another. Michael J. Gorman wrote, “God must be a God of self-sacrificing and self-giving love whose power and wisdom are found in the weakness and folly of the cross.”<sup>146</sup> John 3:16 makes it extremely clear that God is self-giving love. Nobody forces God to love. He chooses to love. His love for humankind has been manifest since eternity past. David, in Psalm 25:6, reminds his readers of that by saying, “Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old.” No one deserves God’s love, and no one can do anything to earn God’s love. God does not love humankind because they love him. However, God shows his love for men despite their sinful nature by sending His only begotten Son to die on the cross for them. Gorman considers crucifixion as “the most miserable [or pitiable] of

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<sup>146</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 15-16.



deaths,' 'the worst extreme of the tortures inflicted upon slaves,' an 'accursed thing' or 'plague.'<sup>147</sup>

God's Word in 1 John 4: 9-11 declares, "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." Bruner wrote, "It is important to notice that the power for disciples' love for one another does not come from the disciples themselves; it comes from the preceding love of Christ for them, a love they already know and experience."<sup>148</sup> In John 15:13, Jesus says, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." Such a declaration from Jesus has motivated Harrington and Robert to write that, "Jesus taught his disciples the kind of life required of a disciple, one marked by the supremacy of agape love."<sup>149</sup>

Finally, Christ's followers must ask God to provide them with the ability to remain faithful to His Word, which is essential for their spiritual maturity (2 Tim 3:16-17). They also need the grace of God to help them love one another, which is one of the best ways to show the world that they are Jesus' disciples (John 13:35). As Christ's followers love one another, they will realize through humility their need to consider others more important than themselves (Phil 2:3). It took real love and obedience for God through the person of his Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for sinners. That is an exceptional example that Jesus Christ set for His followers. Such

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<sup>147</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 5.

<sup>148</sup> Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 772.

<sup>149</sup> Harrington and Patrick, *Disciple Maker's*, 22.

humility will equip them to take their cross to follow Jesus and make their effort to go and make disciples of all nations. Gorman summarized this idea when he wrote,

It is well known that the idea of a crucified messiah, savior, or deity was ludicrous to Jews and non-Jews alike in antiquity. Paradoxically, however, the early Christians found in the crucified Jesus, now raised and exalted, both the “power of God and the wisdom of God,” as Paul put it (1 Cor 1:24), and a model of humility, self-sacrifice, and suffering worthy of imitation.<sup>150</sup>

### **Theoretical Foundations**

Almost all Christians can agree that discipleship in the church is essential to helping church members grow in their spiritual lives in Christ. The church needs to have faithful members who have been taught God’s Word and are willing and able to teach and coach others. In his instructions to the young Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul wrote, “What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” To respond to Jesus’ injunction about discipling others, some Christians have chosen different models of discipleship that provide them with helpful techniques and strategies for teaching and coaching others effectively.

Among these techniques are John Wesley’s system of interlocking groups, the biblical model of Paul and Timothy mentorship, and the Triads/Quads discipleship model. While these models tend to have the same objective, their methods show considerable differences in how they choose to disciple people. In this section the researcher will analyze these discipleship methods, find out the pros and cons, and potentially outline and explicate the concepts that will strengthen the topic.

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<sup>150</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 2.

## Paul And Timothy

The mentor relationship approach has received considerable attention in the churches. There are benefits that accrue from both parties involved in a mentoring relationship. Paul and Timothy's model of discipleship is biblical in its form. Stanley and Clinton favor this model when they write, "Discipling is a process in which a more experienced follower of Christ shares with a newer believer the commitment, understanding, and basic skills necessary to know and obey Jesus Christ as Lord."<sup>151</sup> The apostle Paul understood the need to mold Timothy into a more effective gospel preacher. Paul carefully chose Timothy to join him in the ministry. Paul then gave him the tools he needed for the job. Paul gave him the confidence to succeed, put him to work in a demanding setting, and ensured Timothy understood their relationship's importance. The personal bond between Paul and Timothy was vital in Paul's mentoring relationship with Timothy. Paul frequently describes Timothy as his spiritual son (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:18; and 2 Tim 1:2). Under Paul's direction and supervision, Timothy grew in his ability to serve as a minister, giving him more freedom to share the gospel. Timothy's devotion to the gospel's call and the ministry's mission-focused objectives was reinforced by Paul.

## Triads/Quads Model

The small group discipleship model (triads/quads) is a better alternative to Paul and Timothy or the one-on-one models because it contributes to maximizing the transformative dynamics in a discipleship relationship.<sup>152</sup> The climactic condition of a small group model brings to life three essential ingredients: transparent trust, truth in community, and life-changing accountability with other believers. These conditions create a foundation for growing in

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<sup>151</sup> Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress, 1992), p. 48; see also Ogden, *Transforming*, 140.

<sup>152</sup> Stanley and Clinton, *Connecting*, 145.

discipleship.<sup>153</sup> Despite that the discipleship mentorship model of Paul and Timothy proves successful, Greg Ogden provides some of the limitations to the one-to-one discipleship process. He claims that, like a mother bird who hunts for worms to give its young, the one-on-one model makes the mentor accountable for the mentee's spiritual well-being.<sup>154</sup> He also understands that the one-on-one connection establishes a hierarchy that frequently leads to dependency.<sup>155</sup>

In the small group model, there is a change from abnormal pressure to natural disciples' engagement. In that sense, when a third or fourth person is included, the focus changes from the individual disciples to a group process. In this context, the disciples appear as fellow participants, facilitating the shift from hierarchical thinking to a relational one. Moreover, this model also helps direct the focus on Christ rather than the disciples.

#### The Teacher/Caregiver (Dependency) And The Equipping Leader Model

In his book *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God*, Ogden offers two important pastoral models to consider. Those two models are “the teacher/caregiver (dependency), and the equipping leader model.”<sup>156</sup> According to Ogden, three pastoral models rise from the dependency framework as the models in which everything is a pastor-centered ministry. The three pastoral models are as follows: the caretaker model, in which the pastor, as the expert, takes care of those who lack the qualifications to care for themselves. The medical model is the model in which the pastors are the only qualified Christians to pinpoint the spiritual problems of the congregation members and provide them with the necessary medicine to fix their spiritual problems. The unhealthy family system is a model in which church members depend on

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<sup>153</sup> Stanley and Clinton, *Connecting*, 154.

<sup>154</sup> Ogden, *Transforming*, 141.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 12.

the care of the pastors for their whole lives.<sup>157</sup> In opposition to a dependency model, Ogden argues in favor of the equipping model as he considers it superior or better to the teacher-caregiver model. To demonstrate the weakness of the dependency model, Ogden refers to the story of Moses and his father-in-law, Jethro, found in Exodus 18.

Ogden points out that Moses was functioning in a dependency model in which the whole nation of Israel depended on him to find justice whenever they had a dispute. Moses saw himself as the only person with the ability to judge the nation of Israel. Ogden understands Moses's attitude by saying, "Moses' self-expectation was that he was the only one qualified to act as judge over the people."<sup>158</sup> Such attitude and behavior would have ruined Moses physically and mentally. Moses was blessed to have an open-minded advisor or mentor as his father-in-law, Jethro, on his side to advise him on how to deal with the people of Israel. Jethro's advice to Moses is lucrative not only to Moses but also to the people of Israel. Jethro's advice to Moses was to alleviate Moses' burden and, at the same time, help him equip and empower others to get the job done. J. Oswald Sanders writes, "To succeed in getting things done through others is the highest type of leadership."<sup>159</sup>

Jethro's advice to Moses is one that any thoughtful leader or pastor needs to apply in their ministry. It will help prevent burnout and fatigue and help the leaders or pastors apply the principle of the priesthood of all believers in their ministry by equipping the saints to do the work of ministry as God calls them to do. Church leaders must be ready to delegate responsibility to others and encourage them to use their God-given gifts to help the ministry

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<sup>157</sup> Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 115.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>159</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2008), 137.

succeed. Sanders wrote, "The degree to which a leader can delegate work is a measure of his success."<sup>160</sup> Ogden understands the equipping leader model of the pastor as the most appropriate and dignifying role for pastors that empowers the people of God for ministry. Ogden wrote, "Whereas the teacher/caregiver inadvertently tended to foster dependency of the congregation on the pastor, the equipping leader model assists the people of God to grow into full adulthood as disciples and ministers of Jesus Christ."<sup>161</sup>

### John Wesley's System Of Interlocking Groups

John Wesley's system of the discipleship process is a model of discipleship that can be broken into three parts: society, the class, and the band. John Wesley has contributed a lot in the field of discipleship. Bill Hull considers Wesley the most influential disciple-maker in post-Reformation history.<sup>162</sup> In Wesley's discipleship model, the society was composed of the community of Methodists in a particular region, similar to a church gathering in these days. Wesley's society can be defined as a group of men gathering for prayer, hearing the word of encouragement, and keeping watch over one another in love so that they may assist one another in working out their salvation. The primary purpose of the society was cognitive teaching, and the Methodist chapel served as the setting for both the large-group presentation style and the group hymn singing. Wesley's flagship contribution to small group and discipleship ministry within the church is his class meeting model, acknowledged as the most significant part of Wesley's discipleship method in the history of the Methodist church. The class meeting offered a venue where everyone could participate in a welcoming setting.

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<sup>160</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 138.

<sup>161</sup> Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 12.

<sup>162</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book*, 102.

Typically, just six to twelve students in each class attended these meetings. The leader shared his spiritual state before the brief hymn that opened the class meeting. After thanking God for their accomplishments, they openly discussed their previous week's experiences, including failures, temptations, or internal struggles. The class meeting's topic was personal experience. The class meeting was intended to promote personal holiness. The class was open to new converts who would similarly pursue this objective of personal holiness.<sup>163</sup>

The third part of Wesley's discipleship method is the band. This was based on open and honest dialogue intended for progress. The band was created by age, sex, and marital status. The band would most closely resemble the small group most churches practice today. While the class meeting fostered behavior modification, the band aimed to promote emotive redirection.<sup>164</sup>

These three discipleship models will help the church formulate a proper system for training lay leaders to disciple church members. The current ministry model for this research is the traditional church. The church wants to use a combination or mixed model of a one-on-one discipleship and the small group discipleship model (triads/quads). The one-on-one setting is necessary for a more seasoned Christian to impart to a less experienced follower the dedication, comprehension, and fundamental skills required to know and submit oneself to Jesus Christ as Lord. However, the small group discipleship model (triads/quads) will allow church members to build relationships and learn from one another. The small group discipleship model (triads/quads) will serve as a natural venue for Christians to build closer bonds with one another and promote more accountability and spiritual responsibility among them.

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<sup>163</sup> D. Michael Henderson, *A Model for Making Disciples: John Wesley's Class Meeting* (Nappanee, IN: Francis Asbury Press of Evangel Pub. House, 1997), 98.

<sup>164</sup> Henderson, *A Model*, 110.

## Conclusion

When it comes to discipleship and growth within the local church, understanding the theological and theoretical foundations of the disciple-making process is crucial to construct a plan to disciple church members and help them grow in their relationship with Christ. The problem at Redemption Baptist Church is that lay leaders have never been discipled, resulting in a burden for the pastoral ministry in the church.

The researcher's purpose in this project is to address the root causes of lay leaders' lack of participation and train them to increase their participation in church ministries. Since the lack of participation of lay leaders at the church negatively affects the spiritual and numerical growth of the church, the researcher understands that if the church implements its discipleship training for lay leaders to participate actively in church ministries, they will alleviate the pastoral ministry's burden in the church. For the researcher to accomplish his goal, he has conducted a literature review by engaging with various academics who have previously contributed to his field of research to gain a deeper grasp of his chosen topic.

Through the literature review, the researcher understands that any wrong approach to discipleship can create a misconception of discipleship among Christians in the church. To avoid a misconception about discipleship, an understanding of the correct view of discipleship needs to come to light. Some scholars emphasize the importance of discipleship through the community. In a time when the independent ego and self-determinism influence society, the church must demonstrate the need for community in the Christian life. Another essential aspect of discipleship that the researcher learned during the literature review is that relationship is a vital element for effective discipleship. A good relationship forms the basis for a solid mentoring



partnership. With a strong partnership, the mentor and the mentee feel secure to work at building and strengthening their relationship and holding each other accountable for results.

Discipleship relates to God's mission because disciples are called to live out the Great Commission. Jesus invites individuals to give their lives to Him and merge with Him. God's call to mission is also a call to discipleship, which is to follow God's presence, purpose, and promise by adopting the way of life and practicing the disciplines required for this life of submission and adoration. Every Christian must understand that Jesus has called them to carry out the purpose of making disciples. As a result, all Christians are required by the Bible to be disciples who make disciples. There is no substitute for the Great Commission given in Matthew 28. Christians, who also follow Jesus, must abide by this instruction.

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

The research aims to implement a discipleship training to equip lay leaders in the church to increase their involvement in the church discipleship ministry. In this research, the researcher will engage those willing to be trained and engage in the church's disciple-making process. The participants in this research project need to be baptized members of Redemption Baptist Church located in Quincy, Massachusetts, where the researcher will conduct the study. All the participants in this research study must be 18 or older and regular church attendees. They must also show interest in the research study and be willing to sign the consent and confidentiality agreement forms. They must also commit to participating in the eight-week research study, including an eight-week class training on discipleship.

#### **Intervention Design**

Upon approval from IRB (see Appendix H), the researcher, as the pastor of Redemption Baptist Church, will inform committee members of the church of his research to get their permission to invite and recruit church members to participate in the research study. The formal approval of the committee members of the church will help the researcher's project to be recognized and embraced by the whole church so that the research study can go forward as needed. A copy of the letter the researcher will give the committee members is in Appendix A.

Once the committee members grant permission to the researcher to conduct his research study in the church and recruit the members of the church for the study, the researcher will start recruiting the participants for his research study by announcing and informing the church members of the purpose and structure of the research, and the benefits that both the participants and the whole church will gain from this study. The researcher will use the church's communication channels to invite church members to participate in the study. The researcher

will invite church members to participate in the research study during the regular church service on Sunday and during the online weekly prayer meetings on Monday and Wednesday.

Furthermore, the researcher will send them invitations about the research study via the social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram since most church members use one of these social media platforms to communicate.

Upon approval from IRB and the church committee members, the first step in involving and enrolling participants in the research will be through a one-on-one conversation with each participant separately. The researcher will explain the project to the participants verbally and then present them with a consent letter they must read and understand before signing. By signing the consent form, they agree to participate in the research project. The consent form provides the potential participants with a brief explanation of the research procedure, the voluntary nature of the research, and the potential benefit they will gain from participating in the research study. The consent form also informs the participants of the confidentiality of the research and how they can withdraw from the study should they choose to do so. A copy of the consent letter the researcher will provide to the participants is in Appendix B.

The researcher's goal is to enroll a maximum of 12 people for the research study, which will amount to one group. The researcher will choose these 12 participants through convenient or purposive sampling. The researcher will destroy any data from those participants who will withdraw or drop out of the research study and will not include their contribution in the research study.

#### Collection Of Consent from The Participants

Two weeks before the start of the project, the researcher will contact all potential participants and require their verbal permission to meet with them in a group meeting in the

church building on a Sunday after the regular worship service of the church. The purpose of the meeting will be to go over all the requirements and responsibilities of the participants and respond to any questions and concerns that they may have about their participation in the research study and to collect their signed consent forms.

The researcher will start this meeting with a prayer to thank God for those who decide to participate in the research study. After the prayer, the researcher will review the purpose of the research study. The researcher will remind the participants that they will need to complete a pre-intervention interview and a spiritual assessment questionnaire as soon as the research study starts, and they will also have to complete a post-intervention interview and a spiritual assessment at the end of the study. Each interview will take 20-30 minutes to complete. Finally, the researcher will remind them of their commitment to remain in the study for eight weeks, including a discipleship class of an hour and a half each week for eight weeks.

Furthermore, the researcher will review all the information in the consent form with the potential participants. At the close of the meeting, the researcher will ask the participants if they have any questions and concerns. Should the potential participants have any question or concern, the researcher will address their concerns and respond to their questions as best as he can and collect all the signed consent forms from the participants.

#### Data Collection

One week before the eight-week training class, the participants will take a pre-intervention assessment test, which will include an interview and spiritual assessment. The pre-intervention assessment questionnaire will include statements that will test the participants' knowledge level concerning some of the marks of a disciple. In the questionnaire, the researcher will ask the participants to check or circle the number that best expresses their level of agreement

with each statement on the marks of a disciple. A one-on-one interview with the participants will follow the collection of the pre-intervention questionnaire assessments. The interview with the participants will have five open-ended questions to capture their experiences and thoughts about the disciple-making process in the church, their relations with Christ, and what they expect to learn from this project. The researcher will also ask the participants a yes-or-no question as to whether they intend to be involved in the church's discipleship ministry after completing the discipleship training program. This is designed to help the researcher gather more reliable answers from the participants. Stringer and Aragón understand that, in action research, interviews are a crucial method for gathering reliable and real-world data.<sup>165</sup> The researcher will record the interview, which will be later transcribed, analyzed, and submitted to the research study. Once the transcript is written, and the study is completed, the recording and the data collected will be kept for three years in secure locations and will be erased and the transcript shredded at the end of the three years. A copy of the questionnaire and the interview questions are in Appendix C.

The researcher will use a second set of data collection methods for the study. As the researcher conducts the interviews and implements the intervention design, he will keep a reflective journal to help him reflect on his and the participants' attitudes during the research study. The reflective journal will be part of the researcher's observation during the implementation of the intervention design for the research study. The researcher will also use the reflective journal to help him identify any biases throughout the study.

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<sup>165</sup> Ernest T. Stringer and Alfredo Ortiz Aragón, *Action Research* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2021), 125.

### Intervention Plan

The intervention will also include a weekly one-and-a-half-hour discipleship training class that lasts eight weeks. This discipleship training class aims to expand the participants' understanding of the essential characteristics of a disciple that they need to acquire and develop in their lives as Christians. Abiding in God's Word, fellowshiping with other believers, abiding in Christ, denying self, witnessing to non-believers, and making disciples will be the six characteristics that the researcher will explain to the participants. The discussion will provide them with some practical components or examples in the training that they will have to practice and replicate with a family member or church members every week during the eight weeks of the training.

The researcher will meet with the participants in a small group setting once every week to explain one of the characteristics or marks of a disciple of Jesus to the participants and then give room for each participant to discuss various ways they intend to develop these characteristics in their personal lives and how they will then help other believers to develop these same characteristics.

The researcher will structure the training so the participants can express themselves openly and reflect each week on one of the six essential characteristics of a disciple. During the training session, the researcher will use the Bible and the book *Disciple's Cross, the Master Life* by Avery T. Willis Jr. to provide the participants with pertinent information on the characteristics of a disciple and then deploy them to practice with their family members or other church members.

Holding participants accountable for the tasks they will require to perform during the previous week will be one of the focuses during the training sessions. After each training session, the researcher will assign each participant some elements of the training that they will have to

practice during the week and that they will have to share with the researcher and the other participants in the following training session.

Every week at the start of the session, each participant will share with the class the date and the location where they practiced the training with a family or church member. They will also provide the full name of the person or the initial of the person they have encountered or practiced with, a summary of what they do or say or what happens during that moment or during their interactions, and the reaction of the person with whom they practice or interact. However, when some of the practical aspects of the session for the week only involve the participants, they will also have to provide and share a summary of what they do individually during the week's practical assignments with the researcher and the class.

In week one of the training, the researcher will focus the training on explaining the responsibility of a disciple to abide in God's Word. During this week, the researcher will teach John 8:31-38 to explain to them the importance of abiding in God's Word as the best means to know and to do the will of God.

Knowing and obeying God's Word will be discussed as one of the most important reasons to abide in God's Word. People can read God's Word, meditate on it, pray about it, hear it preached and taught, and see it demonstrated, but if they do not obey God's Word, they will not produce any spiritual fruit in their life.<sup>166</sup> God intends for His Word to be at the center of the life of His disciples. Once a Christian accepts the call of Christ to have a relationship with Christ, the Christian must ground his life in the knowledge of Christ by spending time with Him and learning His Word.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Avery T. Willis Jr. and Sherrie Willis Brown, *MasterLife: Developing a Rich Personal Relationship with the Master* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 1998), 6g.

<sup>167</sup> Willis and Brown, *MasterLife*, 6b.

The participants will go home and find at least three biblical passages that help them discover why a disciple must abide in God's Word. During the week, they must share those reasons with a family or another church member. At the start of the following week's session, the participants must report on their findings and share them with the researcher and the class.

In week two, the researcher will focus on the need for disciples to fellowship with other believers. During this week, the researcher will use John 13:34-35 to teach the participants the importance of fellowshiping with other believers. One identifying mark of a disciple is love for others. Love for others is one quality that characterizes a follower of Christ. Jesus commanded His disciples to love one another as He modeled for them (John 13:34-35). Fellowshiping with other believers allows believers to demonstrate love for one another. Willis wrote, "Isolation and individualism are not Christ's ways. Christ brings believers together as a family. He provides the ideal place for them to grow— His church."<sup>168</sup> It is crucial for anyone who is a disciple of Christ to remain in fellowship with a local body of believers to grow in Christ.

The researcher will assign the participants a church member with whom they do not have any relation in the church. The participant will look for a way to encourage or help that member to start building relationships. Then, they will have to report on the steps they take to start building relationship with their assigned church member during the weekly class meeting.

In week three, the researcher will focus on the need for a disciple to abide in Christ. Willis understands that "spending time with the Master is not a question of God's making time for you but of your making time for Him."<sup>169</sup> It is crucial for a disciple to develop a habit of

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<sup>168</sup> Willis and Brown, *MasterLife*, 6u.

<sup>169</sup> Willis and Brown, *MasterLife*, 6u.



having a quiet time with Christ. A daily quiet time with Christ helps a disciple develop a relationship with Christ. The best way to know someone is to spend time with that person.

As part of this week's assignment, which is based on personal spiritual discipline, the participants will spend twenty minutes every day for a week during the third week of the training to incorporate a personal schedule of adoration/worship, confession of sin, thanksgiving, and supplication to spend time with Christ. The participants will decide on the location and the time during the day. They will do it every day for a week. At the start of the following week of the training session, the participants will provide and share a verbal summary of what they did during the week's practical assignments.

In week four, the researcher will focus on denying self as one of the marks of a disciple. This week's training will help the participants understand the importance of humility in the life of Christians. Self-denying requires humility. The researcher will focus on Christ's humility in his teaching. Andrew Murray argues that humility was in all aspects of the life of Jesus. When humility, the core of Christ, is absent, the Christians' life is weak and unable to produce fruit.<sup>170</sup> Denying oneself helps the disciple in his commitment to Christ.

In week five, the researcher will emphasize witnessing to non-believers. Sharing the gospel with non-believers is a requirement for every disciple of Christ. The coursework that will be taught will focus on sharing the gospel with non-believers and the fruit-bearing effects of this discipline in the lives of the disciples. Sharing the gospel with non-believers is not only for pastors, evangelists, and preachers. It is also for anyone who is a disciple of Christ. It is a

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<sup>170</sup> Murray, *Humility*, 37.

requirement for Jesus' disciples to bear fruit that will last (John 15:1-5). It is the calling of every believer to obey and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to non-believers.

To respond to Jesus' injunction about bringing the gospel to the unsaved people, some Christians have chosen different styles of evangelization. Among them are the evangelism explosion, the way of the master, and the four spiritual laws. While these Christians tend to have the same objective, their methods of evangelization show considerable differences in how they choose to evangelize the unsaved people. During week five of the training session, the researcher will present to the participants a brief overview of these three methods of evangelization.

The researcher will distribute two samples of evangelism tracts to the participants to use as guides during an evangelism workshop scheduled for the sixth week of the training. As part of the assignment for this week's session, the researcher will instruct the participants to choose one of the samples they want to adopt and memorize at least two verses from each step found in the adopted sample, which they will use during the during the sixth week workshop on evangelism.

In week six, the training will build on week five with an evangelism workshop. The participants will practice witnessing to one another using either the model of the "Steps to Peace with God" pamphlet distributed by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association or the "Prepare For Evangelism With A Simple Outline" from Donald S. Whitney's book titled "*Simplify Your Spiritual Life.*"

At the end of this week's training session, which may occur outside of the church building, the participants will pray for a fruit-bearing witnessing moment, as they will go around the community share the gospel. To help alleviate anxiety due to first-time witnessing efforts, participants will go to the community in pairs. The researcher will ask the participants to present a brief report of their witnessing experience to community members.

In week seven, the training will focus on making disciples as a vital mark of a disciple. Not only does Matthew 28:16-20 require a disciple to witness to non-believers, it also requires a disciple to continue training and helping in the spiritual growth of new believers. It will be the primary responsibility of the participants to be disciples who continue in the process of discipling others. The researcher will provide the participants with a strategy to make disciples of believers. The steps of this strategy are as follows. First, the participants must be interested in developing a relationship with the new believers. Second, they must be a spiritual model to new believers. The participants' behaviors and attitudes can also help shape the new believers' actions and attitudes. Third, the participants will be teaching and training/mentoring the new believers. The participants must pass on what they have learned (their knowledge) to new believers through mentoring and teaching to guide and impart wisdom to the new believers. Finally, the participants must commission new believers so that they can also practice what they have learned and become disciple-makers. Becoming a disciple that makes disciple is the pivotal aspect of the life of a disciple. The participants must commit themselves to disciple others in the church.

Week eight will build on the content of week seven by motivating the participants to commit to the church's discipleship process. The researcher will also stress the need for lay leaders to be actively involved in the church's disciple-making process. William McDonald wrote, "The Savior is not looking for men and women who will give their spare evenings to Him or their weekends or their years of retirement. Rather, He seeks those who will give Him first place in their lives."<sup>171</sup> A commitment to be involved fully in the disciple-making process of the

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<sup>171</sup> William McDonald, *True Discipleship* (Kansas City, KS: Walterick, 1975), 5; see also Hawkins, *Master Discipleship*, 19.

church is a commitment to personal spiritual growth and to help other church members grow in Christ.

After the training ends, the third set of data-collection will be for the post-intervention. In the post-intervention assessment, the same set of fundamental questions in the questionnaire will be provided to the participants to evaluate their spiritual state at the end of the research compared to their spiritual state at the start. The second interview set will evaluate the intervention's effectiveness based on the participant's progress in understanding and applying the training materials and concepts with a family or church member.

The researcher will use the following two criteria to assess the effectiveness of the intervention plan: the quantity and quality of the information obtained after the training and the validity of the conclusions drawn from observations that point to the application or the practical aspects of the training by the participants. However, the real success will come when the participants get involved and contribute to the church's discipleship ministry.

### **Implementation of the Intervention Design**

Upon approval from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher met with the church committee members, informed them about his research study, and presented them with a letter from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) authorizing him to begin implementing the research project. Appendix H contains a copy of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) letter authorizing the researcher to begin his research study.

During the meeting with the church committee members, the researcher also provided the church committee members with a letter to sign, which would authorize the researcher to invite and recruit church members for his study. After explaining the nature and the importance of the research study for the church and its members to the committee members of the church, they

formally signed the letter granting the researcher permission to recruit church members to participate in the research study. A copy of this letter is in Appendix A.

One week after the committee members granted permission for the researcher to conduct his research study in the church and recruit church members, the researcher began recruiting participants. The researcher announced and informed the church members of the purpose and structure of the research project and its benefits to the participants and to the whole church.

The researcher used many of the church's communication channels to invite church members to participate in the study. The researcher invited church members to participate in the research study on Sunday mornings during announcements and during the online weekly prayer meetings on Mondays and Wednesdays. In addition, the researcher used one of the social media platforms, WhatsApp, to remind the church members of the research study and invited them to participate. As part of the invitation, the researcher informed congregants of the nature and purpose of the research study. The researcher explained the consent form that participants would have to sign and bring back to the researcher two weeks before the start of the research study.

#### Collection Of Participant Consent Forms

Two weeks before the start of the project, the researcher contacted all the potential participants and obtained their verbal permission to meet with them as a group. The researcher then met with the participants on a Sunday after the church's regular worship service, went over all the requirements and responsibilities of the participants, responded to questions and concerns about their participation in the research study, and collected the signed consent forms.

The researcher began the meeting by praying and thanking God for those who decided to participate in the research study. Lunch was provided since the meeting was scheduled just after the Sunday morning worship service.

During this meeting, the researcher again explained the purpose of the research study and the implementation protocols for the study. The researcher also explained that they would need to complete the pre-intervention spiritual assessment questionnaire and a pre-intervention interview before the eight-week training of the research study started. He further explained the required post-intervention spiritual assessment questionnaire and a post-intervention interview at the end of the study. Each of these would take 20-30 minutes to complete. Finally, the researcher reminded them of their commitment to remain in the study for the entire eight weeks, including a discipleship class of an hour and a half each week for the eight weeks.

Moreover, the researcher reviewed all the information in the consent form with the potential participants and reminded them that taking part in this research project was voluntary and that their decision whether or not to participate would not affect their current or future relations with Liberty University, Redemption Baptist Church, or the researcher-pastor. The researcher also reminded them that if they decided to participate, they could refuse to answer any questions and withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

At the close of the meeting, the researcher asked the participants for questions and concerns and then responded to them. Afterward, the researcher collected all the signed consent forms from the participants and then provided them with the preintervention assessment questionnaire they needed to complete before the eight-week training sessions.

For confidentiality, the researcher tagged each questionnaire with a distinct code corresponding to the letter the researcher secretly assigned each participant. After distributing the preintervention assessment questionnaire to the participants, the researcher concluded the session in prayer.

The researcher's goal was to enroll a maximum of twelve lay leaders in the research study, which would comprise one group. The researcher selected these twelve participants through convenient or purposive sampling.

One week before the eight-week training began, the researcher met with all twelve participants for the preintervention assessment test, which included the preintervention spiritual assessment questionnaire and the pre-intervention interview.

All the participants came with their preintervention assessment questionnaires, which included all the questions answered, and submitted them to the researcher. The pre-intervention assessment questionnaire included statements that tested the participant's knowledge concerning the characteristics of a disciple. In the questionnaire, the researcher asked the participants to check or circle the number that best expressed their level of agreement with each statement of a disciple's marks (characteristic traits).

After receiving the completed questionnaires, the researcher met individually with the participants for the interview part. During the one-on-one interview, the researcher asked each participant six questions. The researcher asked each participant five open-ended questions. The researcher asked five open-ended questions to capture the participants' experiences and thoughts about the disciple-making process in the church, their relationship with Christ, and their expectations of the project. The researcher also asked the participants a yes-or-no question as to whether they intended to be involved in the church's discipleship ministry after they completed the discipleship training program.

The planned intervention consisted of a weekly one-and-a-half-hour discipleship training class for eight weeks. During the eight weeks of training the participants, the researcher discussed and elaborated on six key characteristics of a disciple. The purpose of elaborating on

these six essential characteristics of a disciple was to enhance the participant's understanding of the defining characteristic traits they needed to have in their walk with Jesus to live as faithful disciples who could also make others become disciples for Christ.

During the eight-week discipleship training, the researcher met with the participants in a small group setting in the church building each week for one and a half hours. The researcher focused on teaching one specific characteristic during each session. In each session, the researcher defined one of the specific terms, such as disciple, discipleship/discipling, spiritual growth, witnessing to non-believers/personal evangelism, and spiritual disciplines to the participants.

The researcher encouraged the participants to express themselves freely and openly as they discussed how they intended to emulate that particular characteristic in their own lives and how they anticipated helping others develop that characteristic in their lives.

The six characteristics the researcher elaborated with the participants during the eight-week discipleship training were as follows: Abiding in God's Word, fellowshiping with other believers, abiding in Christ, denying oneself, witnessing to non-believers, and making disciples.

#### First-Week Training Session: Abiding In God's Word

On January 14, 2024, the researcher began the eight-week discipleship-training program. Ten participants arrived and committed to the eight weeks. The ten participants gathered in a small room in the church building. After the participants shared a meal, the researcher asked one participant to pray to start the first-week meeting. After the opening prayer, the researcher greeted all the participants and expressed gratitude for their willingness to participate in the research study. The researcher explained the nature and purpose of the research, particularly the



eight-week discipleship training, and explained to the participants how crucial discipleship was in each Christian's life and the church.

The first week's focus was the first essential characteristic of a disciple: abiding in God's Word. The researcher concentrated the training on clearly defining this characteristic and how it manifests in a disciple's life, behavior, and attitudes. One who abides in God's Word seeks to discern and understand what the Bible teaches, what it reveals about God and God's will, and how these insights can be applied to one's life, thoughts, and attitudes.

During this session, the researcher defined for the participants the term disciple. During this week's training, John 8:31-38 was the primary text for discussion among the participants and researcher. In John 8:31-32, Jesus declares, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

During the discussion, the researcher explained to the participants the importance of abiding in God's Word as the best means to know and do the will of God; the researcher referred to the biblical account of God's instruction to Joshua. God required His Word to be at the center of the life of His people. In Joshua 1:8, God instructed Joshua to keep the book of the Law on his lips and meditate on it day and night so that he may be careful to do everything written in it. Then, he would be prosperous. The researcher also referred to Jesus as God and is Himself the living Word (John 1:1-5;14), who came on this earth and abode in God's written Word (the Scriptures) during His earthly ministry. This instruction was intended to demonstrate to the participants that every Christian must abide in God's Word. In John 15:10, Jesus declared, "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love."

At the end of the session, the researcher gave the participants the following homework assignment for the week: to research at least three Bible passages that could help them discover why a disciple must abide in God's Word. In addition, they were instructed to share these verses sometime during the week with a family member or a church member, showing the reasons found in those Bible verses for abiding in God's Word.

#### Second-Week Training Session: Fellowshiping With Other Believers

The primary focus of week two was to teach the second key characteristic of a disciple: fellowshiping with other believers.

After the opening prayer, the researcher reviewed the results of the work assigned from week one. The participants reported their findings, sharing them with the researcher and the class. Each participant presented biblical insights about the need for a Christian disciple to abide in God's Word. Most participants came up with John 15:10, Psalm 1, Psalm 19, and Psalm 119, which underscore the need for a disciple to abide in God's Word. The participants agreed that to abide in God's Word means to be a diligent student of the Bible and its application for all of life. During this second-week training session, the researcher's teaching presentation and the group discussion focused on the need for disciples to fellowship with one another. Fellowshiping with one another applies to all believers, including newer Christians, in becoming true disciples of Christ. At the start of the teaching part of the session, the researcher discussed and defined the term "spiritual growth" for the participants. Please refer to Appendix D for more information on spiritual growth/development.

During this session, the researcher examined John 13:34-35, 1 John 1:3, and 1 John 1:7 to emphasize fellowshiping with other believers. The focus was primarily on the need to encourage one another, build up one another (1 Thess 1:11), and love one another, all of which

are essential aspects of Christian fellowship. The researcher also referred to the church gathering found in Acts 2:42-47, where all the church members actively participated whenever the church gathered, thus demonstrating Christian fellowship as part of worship. In this session, the researcher challenged the participants to fellowship with one another and assigned them to look for a church member whom they did not know well and to deliberately take steps to build a personal relationship with that church member and to fellowship with them on a personal level outside of the church gathering. According to Andrew Roberts and his colleagues, fellowship invokes images of close, supportive, personal relationships, including small groups of mutual care and sharing and times of prayer, study, and conversation with fellow Christians, as well as being nurtured in our spiritual lives through the encouragement and companionship of our friends in the Christian community.<sup>172</sup>

At the end of the session, the researcher provided each participant with a list of church members' names and phone numbers and gave them the assignment for the coming week to phone one of the church members found on the list with whom they had never had a relationship and to pray with that church member. For the assignment, the participants were asked to begin building a relationship with a church member of the same sex. They also were assigned to look for a way to encourage and begin building a relationship with that member during the week. Then, at the next session, they would bring a report on the steps they took to begin building this relationship with that church member.

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<sup>172</sup> Andrew Roberts, Nick Jones, Neil Johnson, and Tom Milton, *Fellowship* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018), 7.

### Third-Week Training Session: Abiding In Christ

During this session, the researcher instructed the participants to report on their assignment from week two. Some participants reported on their assignments by describing their steps to start building a relationship with one of the chosen church members from the telephone list handed out at the end of the second training session. The researcher allotted one minute and 30 seconds to the participants who reported on their assignments while instructing those who could not report to ensure they would report on their assignments the following week.

During this third week, the teaching focus was on abiding in Christ. An essential part of the teaching was addressing what the expression abiding in Christ meant and how it related to the participants. The researcher pointed out that every true believer or disciple must abide in Christ. In the teaching activity, the researcher directed the participants to examine John 15:1-17, in which Jesus enjoined His disciples to abide in Him.

These questions were raised during the session: “What does it mean to abide in Jesus Christ? What is involved in abiding in Christ today? The group then discussed abiding in Christ from this scripture passage. In John 15:5-6, Jesus declared, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers, and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.” Jesus compared abiding in Him to the vine and the branches. The branch abides (remains) in the vine. So, to abide in Christ, a disciple must depend on Him, interact with Him, be sustained by Him, and receive the ability to do what He wills. A disciple who abides in Christ will bear fruit, such as making disciples for Christ. Fruit bearing is proof that he abides in Christ, which is the root of his existence as a disciple of Christ.

The participants discussed and elaborated on the steps needed to conform their lives to the life of Christ, which is another way of saying to abide in Christ. They understood that they needed to depend on Christ, trust Him, obey Him, and follow His example. Those who obey God's commands abide in God, as God abides in them through the Holy Spirit who lives in them, and who bear witness with their Spirit that they are God's children (Rom 8: 16). In 1 John 3:24, God's Word declares, "Whoever keeps His commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us."

During the session, the researcher introduced and explained the term spiritual disciplines. The researcher focused on the necessity of developing the habits of a Christian or a disciple by having a personal daily quiet time with Christ through meditation, prayer, personal praise, and worship of God. These spiritual disciplines that Christians must practice on a personal and corporate level are essential to Christian conduct in abiding in Christ and living godly.

As part of the third-week assignment, the researcher instructed the participants to spend twenty minutes every day during the following week incorporating a regular personal schedule of praise/worship, confession of sin, thanksgiving, and supplication in spending time with Christ in prayer and contemplation.

The participants were free to decide on the location and time of day for doing this assignment, which they would report on at the start of the fourth week of the training session. The researcher further informed the participants that they would need to provide and share a brief summary of what they did to complete the assigned work with the whole class.

#### Fourth-Week Training Session: Denying Oneself

At the beginning of the session, after the prayer, the participants presented the reports on their assignment for the past week, and each elaborated for one minute and 30 seconds on their

daily quiet time with the Lord. The participants took turns summarizing the quiet moments they spent during the week in meditation, personal adoration, and worship of God. They also reported the place and time they chose to conduct the assigned work. In addition, the participants who had not reported on their assignment during week three of the training session were allotted an extra minute to report briefly on their missing assignment. After the participants had finished reporting on their assignment, the researcher and the participants discussed the subject of the fourth week of training, which was denying oneself. The primary biblical passages that the researcher taught the participants were Mark 8:34-35 and Philippians 2:1-11.

In Mark 8:34-35, Jesus declared, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.” In his book, *Radical Disciple*, John Stott paraphrased Mark 8:35 in those terms, “Whoever is determined to hold onto themselves and live for themselves, will lose themselves. But whoever is willing to die, to lose themselves, to give themselves away in the service of Christ and the gospel, will (in the moment of complete abandon) find themselves, and discover their true identity.”<sup>173</sup>

In that sense, John Stott also claimed that “Jesus does promise true self-discovery at the cost of self-denial; true life at the cost of death.”<sup>174</sup> Denying oneself is crucial in the life of a Christian disciple; it constitutes an essential aspect of service and fellowship in the church. The apostle Paul urged the Christians in Philippi to imitate the humility of Christ by writing in Philippians 2:3-5 “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others

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<sup>173</sup> John Stott, *The Radical Disciple: Some Neglected Aspects of Our Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 64.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.”

Further, in Philippians 2:6-11, the apostle Paul emphasized the humility of Jesus, as He was able to deny His equality with His Father God in heaven to become a man to die for sinners on the cross, a symbol of "malediction or curse" (Gal 3: 13). Andrew Murray claims that: “Jesus’ humility was simply the surrender of Himself to God, to allow Him to do in Him what He pleased, whatever men around might say of Him, or do to Him.”<sup>175</sup> In that sense, humility is surrendering oneself to God, giving up self, and taking the place of perfect nothingness before God.”<sup>176</sup>

Based on these Bible verses, the researcher taught the participants that they are called to imitate Jesus Christ and make Him their master. In that sense, as Christian disciples, they can no longer live for themselves or be the masters of their own lives. All their decisions in life must be centered on God's will. In Romans 14:7-9, God's Word declares: “For none of us lives to himself and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.”

The researcher also taught the participants that denying oneself would create in them an attitude of servanthood. Jesus taught His disciples the servant attitude in John 13 by washing their feet as an example of how they needed to serve one another. A disciple needs to have the heart of a servant. Anyone who wants to be a disciple of Jesus needs to serve others instead of looking to be served. In Matthew 20:26-28, Jesus said to His disciples, “Whoever would be great

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<sup>175</sup> Murray, *Humility*, 26

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

At the end of the training session, the researcher instructed the participants to continue with the assignment from week three of the training sessions, which required the participants to spend twenty minutes every day maintaining a personal schedule of praise/worship, confession of sin, thanksgiving, and supplication by spending time with Christ.

#### Fifth Week Training Session: Witnessing To Non-Believers

At the beginning of the session, the researcher asked the participants to raise their hands if they had continued to spend at least twenty minutes daily maintaining their schedule of personal praise/worship, confession of sin, thanksgiving, and supplication related to spending time with Christ. All the participants raised their hands, meaning they had spent at least twenty minutes on the assigned time with Christ during the previous week.

The researcher then randomly chose three of the participants to share with the group a summary of their quiet time with the Lord. After this brief review of the three participants, the researcher introduced the topic for the fifth-week training session.

The theme of the fifth-week training session was witnessing to non-believers/evangelism. The researcher started the session by asking the participants to raise their hands if they had previously regularly taken the initiative to share the gospel with non-believers. Most of the participants did not raise their hands. Afterward, the researcher introduced the need for evangelization to the participants.

At first, witnessing to non-believers/evangelism was defined as sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with those who have not yet received Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The researcher



discussed the importance of sharing the gospel with others, particularly non-believers, as the means of bringing them to Christ so they can be saved and have eternal life. The central biblical passage discussed during the instruction time was Romans 10:11-17, which declares:

For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" So, faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

The researcher explained that they needed to share the gospel with non-believers, which is witnessing. The gospel is simply the good news about Jesus Christ; it is the medium Christians need to use to evangelize the lost. In Romans 1:16, Paul declares, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

The researcher also summarized three different types of evangelizations that some Christians have used to share the gospel with non-believers: "Evangelism Explosion," "The Way of the Master," and "The Four Spiritual Laws." This summary is in Appendix E.

At the end of this session, the researcher distributed two samples of evangelism tracts to the participants, which they would use as guides during a workshop on evangelism scheduled for the sixth week of the training session and during their evangelization tour in the community. One sample was "Steps to Peace with God" from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and the other sample was "Prepare for Evangelism with a Simple Outline" from Donald S. Whitney's book *Simplify Your Spiritual Life*. The researcher instructed the participants to choose one of the samples they would adopt and memorize at least two verses from each step found in the adopted

samples. Copies of the evangelization samples, "Steps to Peace with God" and "Prepare for Evangelism with a Simple Outline," are found in Appendix F and Appendix G, respectively.

During the evangelism workshop, all the participants had to practice using one of the evangelism tracts provided by role-playing with one another. The workshop's purpose was to help them gain some training and confidence in sharing the gospel with others before going into the community to witness to non-believers.

#### Sixth-Week Training Session: Evangelism Workshop

The focus of the sixth-week training session was the evangelism workshop. At the beginning of the session, the researcher asked one of the participants to provide the group with a brief review from the previous week of training. After the participants finished the brief review, the researcher distributed the evangelism tracts to the participants. After distributing the tracts, the researcher explained the purpose of the sixth week of training, which was to practice presenting the gospel in an evangelism workshop. In this session, they practiced with one another in preparation to go out into the community to share the gospel with others.

The researcher created two types of role-playing situations for the practice session. In the first situation, they imagined each pair of participants was already friends or had a previous relationship. In the second situation, the participants pretended they had no previous relationship. In each practice session, one of the participants would present the gospel to the other.

The researcher then assigned different partners with whom to practice their presentation of the gospel. This was to help them prepare before sharing the gospel with others in public. After the workshop, the researcher asked each participant for their feedback about the practice sessions. The researcher received different kinds of feedback from the participants. Some participants responded that they felt more comfortable sharing the gospel during the practice

session and would be comfortable sharing the gospel with others in any other setting. Other participants said they felt comfortable sharing the gospel with the other participants during the practice sessions. However, they were unsure if they would be as comfortable sharing the gospel with people they did not know.

At the end of the session, the researcher and the participants prayed together for a fruitful witnessing experience, as they needed to be being bold to share the gospel with others through the power of the Holy Spirit. The researcher and the participants also prayed by asking God to remove any spirit of fear and timidity they might have when they went into the community to share the gospel with others. God's Word instruct Christians not be ashamed of the testimony about God (2 Tim 1:8), and that God has not given them a spirit of fear, but instead a spirit of power, love and self-control (2 Tim 1: 7).

#### Seventh Week Training Session: Making Disciples

At the beginning of the session, after the prayer, the participants presented the reports on their witnessing experience. Participants had one minute and 30 seconds to present their report. Most participants recounted their experience, emphasizing the shared aspect of being able to talk to others about the gospel, even though nobody received Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Some said they were not as comfortable as they should have been because it was their first time witnessing to non-believers.

This week's session focused on making disciples. The researcher's objective was to help the participants understand that Christian disciples are called to make disciples of others (a mandate). He also gave the participants some factors to consider when disciplining new believers in Christ. At first, the researcher focused on the fact that God calls all Christian disciples to make others into disciples of Christ.

During this session, the researcher provided the participants with approaches to consider when disciplining new believers, which involves relationships, modeling, teaching, training, and mentoring.

### **Relationship**

Relationships help build trust, love, and affection. They also provide emotional and even physical support in discipling a new believer in Christ. For example, the researcher referred to his personal relationship as a church pastor with the participants and other church members. His relationship with the participants makes the discipleship training sessions easier for them because they know the researcher cares about them.

### **Modeling**

Modeling implies that mature disciples are to be exemplary role models that others can follow and emulate. Other believers, particularly new believers, need to see how the participants live their lives for Christ as examples to follow, even as Christ commanded His disciples to follow Him, and as the apostle Paul wrote, "Follow me as I follow Christ." As the lay leaders observe how the researcher mentors, shows love and compassion, teaches, trains, and leads them, they must similarly show new believers what it means to follow Christ.

The participants learned that they needed to be faithful disciples of Jesus. One who is Christ's disciple devotes his life to Jesus. Any discipleship model needs to be Christ-centered. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul declared, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." In that sense, Christ is the ultimate role model of discipleship.

### **Teaching and training**

Teaching and training imply passing on the practical and intellectual knowledge one has acquired to others. Jesus taught His disciples how to engage and understand God's Word. In

Luke 24:44, the Bible declares, “Then Jesus said to His disciples, these are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” In addition, in Luke 24:45, God’s Word says, “Then He (Jesus) opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.” Not only did Jesus teach them how to interpret and understand the Scriptures, but He also urged them to obey them and put them into practice. In Luke 6:47-49, Jesus declares, “Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation.” Moreover, Jesus also taught His disciples how to pray (Matt 6:9-13).

### **Mentoring**

Mentoring implies imparting wisdom and experience to those less experienced and less mature believers in Christ, as well as empowering them, leading them, holding them accountable, and correcting them when necessary.

The two main biblical passages discussed during the teaching session were Matthew 28:16-20 and 2 Timothy 2:1-2. Matthew 28:16-20 was presented as the mandate that all Christians have as their obligation to make other disciples for Christ. The researcher explained to the participants that seeing people put their faith in Christ is essential because people need to be saved. However, they need to grow spiritually to become mature in Christ to help new believers grow in their faith in Christ as well. That is why discipleship is crucial.

The researcher explained that they needed to be fruit-bearing disciples because Jesus called them to bear fruit. Becoming a disciple who, in turn, makes disciples is the pivotal aspect

of the life of a disciple. In Mark 1:17, Jesus said to them (fishermen who would become disciples), “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” The participants are responsible, as Christian disciples, for making other disciples for Christ.

### **Delegation**

Delegation implies entrusting the trainees with the responsibility to disciple others for Christ. Disciples need to produce fruit or replicate by passing to others what they have learned during their experience of being disciples of Christ. Paul’s instruction to Timothy, whom he called his beloved child in Christ, was to pass what he had learned from Paul to others. In 2 Timothy 2: 1-2, Paul wrote, “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

#### **Eighth Week Training Session: Summary & Recap**

At the start of this session, the researcher and the participants prayed together, thanking God for everything He had done for the participants and the church through the eight weeks of the discipleship training and all He would continue to do. After the prayer, the researcher briefly reviewed the key characteristics of a disciple of Christ that were covered with the participants during the seven previous weeks of the training. In addition, the researcher stressed the need for the participants as lay leaders to be actively involved in the church's disciple-making process. The researcher also shared a quote from William McDonald, who claims that true discipleship entails commitment. The quote follows: "The Savior is not looking for men and women who will give their spare evenings to Him or their weekends or years of retirement. Rather, He seeks those who will give Him first place in their lives."<sup>177</sup> In that sense, the researcher reminded the

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<sup>177</sup> McDonald, *True Discipleship*, 5.

participants about their commitment to the discipleship training and challenged them to remain fully involved in the disciple-making process of the church as a commitment to their personal spiritual growth. He further challenged them to extend their commitment to help other church members grow in Christ.

During the teaching session, the researcher shared with the participants some of the principles that needed to guide them when discipling new believers for Christ:

*Commitment:* This principle applies to both the participants and the new believers who are being disciplined. In Acts, God's Word reports that Christians devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42).

*Investing time:* Investing conveys the participants' commitment to the value they place on living the disciples' lives and investing time and effort in discipling others. Jesus was the ultimate example of discipleship, as he invested time in the lives of His disciples. Jesus spent most of His time with His disciples for three and a half years, walking, eating, and teaching them along the way.

*Encouragement:* As new believers face discouragement, the participants need to give support, encouragement, and hope to the new believers that they will disciple to help them recognize the good in them and remind them of the partnership with the Holy Spirit, who strengthens and enables them. The participants must continually challenge the one being disciplined to remain faithful. In Hebrew 10:24, God's Word declares, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works."

*Accountability:* the participants must encourage new believers as they are being disciplined, and hold them accountable so they learn to fulfill their obligations during the discipleship process.

*Intercession:* New believers need to learn how to pray. In that sense, the participants must pray faithfully for the ones they are discipling to grow spiritually. They also need to pray openly in the presence of the ones they are discipling, and new believers should be encouraged to pray for their spiritual maturity.

At the end of the session, the participants took the post-intervention questionnaire assessment test. The researcher then collected the results of this test as part of the post-intervention process. In the post-intervention assessment, the same set of fundamental questions in the questionnaire was provided to the participants to evaluate their potential progress and learning state at the end of the research compared to their learning state at the start of the intervention. This process also evaluates the effectiveness and implementation of the discipleship training.

At the end of the eighth week of training, lunch was served, and the researcher thanked the participants for their time and commitment to implementing the discipleship training. The purpose of the discipleship training was to equip the participants as lay leaders in the church and significantly increase their involvement in the church's discipleship ministry.

The post-intervention interview was conducted the following week. During this week, the researcher met privately one-on-one with each participant. During these interviews, the researcher kept an audio recording with the permission of each participant, which only he could access to maintain the confidentiality of the participant's responses. The researcher also took notes using a password-locked laptop. The laptop and the audio recording were kept in a locked safe in the researcher's office.

The eight-week discipleship training session was one of the most critical aspects of the research project. During the implementation of the research design, the researcher was able to



fulfill the goal of teaching and training the lay leaders of the church to learn and acquire the theoretical and practical discipleship knowledge they needed to help them grow spiritually and to get involved actively in the discipleship ministry of the church. However, the quantitative and qualitative data that the researcher collected during the implementation of the discipleship training will help him analyze and evaluate how well the participants have learned the theoretical and practical knowledge that the researcher had imparted to them. This will determine the success of the discipleship training.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

This chapter discusses the targeted results of the research study as revealed by both quantitative and qualitative data. The results of the study are based on a comparison of the pre-test and post-test, pre-interviews and post-interviews, and the observational notes during the training helped determine the results of the research study.

The researcher used the following criteria to assess the effectiveness of the training program. The qualitative data was analyzed and then presented in a narrative format. The quantitative data collected from the pre-tests and post-tests was compiled and put into a form that was statistically analyzed to determine the results of the discipleship.

The researcher compared the mean performance of the participants to determine the difference in their scores for the pre-test and post-test related to the discipleship training. A statistical analysis, which is a t-test, was also applied to strengthen the results. The researcher applied the statistical analysis to the resulting data from the participants' pre-test and post-test responses to evaluate the effectiveness or significance of the discipleship-training program.

### **Participants' Demographic Data**

The ten participants in this research project were all baptized members and regular attendees at Redemption Baptist Church located in Quincy, Massachusetts, where the researcher conducted the study. The participants ranged in age from twenty-three to seventy-eight, and the average age was forty-five. The education level of the participants was as follows: Two had post-graduate degrees, two were college graduates, three had some college, and three were High School graduates. The participants included five males and five females. In addition, they all lived in the Greater Boston area of Massachusetts. They all participated in the eight-week

research study, which included the eight-week class training on discipleship, took the pre-test and post-tests, and were individually interviewed by the researcher.

### **Collective Results**

The pre-test and post-test questionnaires focused on the six essential characteristics of a disciple that the researcher covered with the participants during the eight-week discipleship training. The six essential characteristics of a disciple are abiding in God's Word, fellowshiping with other believers, abiding in Christ, denying self, witnessing to non-believers, and making disciples.

The pre-test included five questions for each characteristic of a disciple, and the exact same five questions for each characteristic constituted the post-test. The pre-test and the post-test included statements that tested the participant's knowledge level and conceptual understanding concerning the marks of a disciple before and after the discipleship training program. In the questionnaire, the researcher asked the participants to circle the number that best expressed their level of agreement with each statement of the marks of a disciple.

The researcher designed the pre-test and post-test using a Likert scale. To quantify the data for the results, as presented in the table below, the researcher assigned a numerical value to each answer.

Table 4.1 Point Likert Scale Example for Agreement

5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
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For each question, the participants had to choose one of the responses indicated in the above table. The assigned numerical value was indicated above each choice. After the participants answered the five questions in the pre-test for each separate characteristic, the researcher totaled the numerical values of each answer for the participants.

As an example, if the 10 participants responded as follows to the question on “Abiding in Christ,” showing the participants by letter and the numerical values linked to their choices as follows:

Participant:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Response:	5	4	5	2	3	5	5	5	2	1

The researcher first calculated the sum of the responses. In this example, that total would be 37 over 50. This example assumed the characteristic “Abiding in Christ.” This procedure was repeated for each question on the pre-test and post-test results. This total would then be used in a table to determine the percentage, the mean scores for the pre-test and post-test, and the P-value. A separate table was created for each characteristic of a true disciple, showing the pre-test and post-test results, the means (averages), the mean difference, and the calculated P-value.

The P-value is a statistical analytical tool used to calculate whether the goal of significant improvement for each characteristic was achieved.

After the calculation, the researcher tabulated the total score of all the participants per answer per characteristic. The pre-test and post-test results were represented in Tables 2 through 7 for each specific characteristic. Each table represents the mean for the pre-test and post-test, the mean difference, and the P-value.

The researcher also calculated the mean (averages) for the pre-test and the post-test to show the mean differences between the results. These are also included in the tables. Finally, the researcher ran a t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test mean scores indicated for the specific characteristic in each table. The t-test was used to calculate a “probability value” referred to as the P-value. The P-value is a calculation based on the mean test scores for both the pre-test and the post-test.

According to statistics, a P-value of less than 0.05 indicates a statistically significant improvement when comparing pre-test and post-test mean scores. On the other hand, a P-value greater than 0.05 will indicate little or no significant improvement toward a designated goal. In the case of this study, the goal is to learn the instructional definitive material related to the five key characteristics of a true disciple. When the discipleship training was significantly effective, this was reflected in the P-value calculations based on the mean pre-test and post-test scores.

### **Data Analysis**

#### **Test Results For “Abiding In God’s Word”**

The pre-test and post-test results for the characteristic of “Abiding in God’s Word” are represented in Table 4.2. The results showed that the participants scored an average (mean) of 41.4 for the pre-test for their scores on the five questions in the characteristic of a disciple: Abiding in God’s Word. However, after the discipleship training, the results showed that the participants scored an average of only 42.6 for the same five questions, a slight increase of 1.2 points for the average scores. On average, the participants scored more for the post-test compared to their average score for the pre-test. The mean difference showed a slight improvement in the post-test score. However, to see how statistically significant this difference in the mean scores was, the researcher then used the t-test to determine if the probability (P-value) of the mean difference was less than 0.05. The P-value of 0.065743 was greater than the significance level of 0.05; thus, there was no statistically significant difference between the mean pre-test and post-test scores, even though the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, which was positive, showed that there was an improvement.

Table 4.2 Pre-test and Post-test Scores for “Abiding in God’s Word.”

Questions	Pre-test scores	Scores %	Post-test Scores	Scores %	P-value 0.065743
1	48/50	96%	45/50	90%	
2	41/50	82%	42/50	84%	
3	42/50	84%	47/50	94%	
4	36/50	72%	34/50	68%	
5	40/50	80%	44/50	88%	
Mean →	41.4		42.6		Mean Difference + 1.2

The P-Value 0.065743 is slightly greater than 0.05, indicating that statistically the discipleship training had little significant effect.

#### Test Results For “Fellowshipping with Other Believers”

The pre-test and the post-test results for the characteristic of "Fellowshipping with Other Believers" are represented in Table 4.3 below. The results showed that the participants scored an average (mean) of 41.8 for the pre-test on the five questions in this characteristic of a true disciple, which was "Fellowshipping with Other Believers". After the discipleship training, the post-test results showed that the participants scored an average of 43.2 for the same five questions related to this characteristic of a true disciple. By comparing the participants' average scores before and after the discipleship training, the mean scores only increased by 1.4 points. The mean difference showed an improvement in the post-test scores. However, to determine how statistically significant this mean difference was, the researcher ran the t-test to calculate the P-value, which was 0.051606. Since the p-value of 0.051606 was slightly greater than the significance level of 0.05, it indicated there was not a statistically significant difference between the mean pre-test and post-test scores, even though the mean difference between the mean pre-test and post-test scores, which was positive, showed that there was an improvement.

Table 4.3 Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores For “Fellowshipping with Other Believers”

Questions	Pre-test scores	Scores %	Post-test Scores	Scores %	P-value 0.051606
1	40/50	80%	41/50	82%	
2	35/50	70%	35/50	70%	
3	44/50	88%	46/50	92%	
4	44/50	88%	47/50	94%	
5	46/50	92%	47/50	94%	
Mean→	41.8		43.2		Mean Difference +1.4

The P-Value 0.051606 is only slightly greater than 0.05, indicating that statistically the discipleship training had little or no significant effect.

#### Test Results For “Denying Self”

The pre-test and the post-test results for the characteristic "Denying Self" are represented in Table 4.5 below. The results showed that the participants scored an average (mean) of 46.6 for the pre-test compared to a post-test average (mean) of 47.4. Comparing the participants' average (mean) scores before and after the discipleship training reveals a positive difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. The mean score difference is 0.8, an increase in scores resulting from the discipleship training. However, to know how statistically significant the mean difference was, the researcher used the t-test to determine the P-value, which was 0.231982. The p-value of 0,231982 was greater than the significance level of 0.05; thus, there was no statistically significant difference between the mean pre-test and post-test scores, even though the post-test scores showed improvement.

Table 4.4 Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores for Denying Self

Questions	Pre-test scores	Scores %	Post-test scores	Scores %	P-value 0.241982
1	47/50	94%	49/50	98%	
2	47/50	94%	48/50	96%	
3	46/50	92%	48/50	96%	
4	48/50	96%	48/50	96%	
5	45/50	90%	44/50	88%	
Mean →	46.6		47.4		Mean Difference +0.8

The P-Value 0.241982 is much higher than 0.05, indicating that statistically the discipleship training had no significant effect.

#### Test Results For “Abiding In Christ”

The pre-test and the post-test results for the characteristic of "Abiding in Christ" are represented in Table 4.5 below. The results showed that the participants scored an average (mean) of 43.8 for the pre-test, abiding in Christ. After the discipleship training, the results showed that the participants scored an average (mean) of 46.2 for the same five questions related to that characteristic of a disciple. Comparing the participants' average (mean) scores before and after the discipleship training showed a positive difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. The mean score difference is an increase of 2.4 points. On average, the participants scored higher for the post-test than their average (mean) scores for the pre-test, resulting in a positive mean difference. The mean difference showed an improvement in the post-test scores. However, to determine the statistical significance of the mean difference, the researcher ran the t-test, which revealed a P-value of 0.032678. The p-value of 0.032678 was less than the



significance level of 0.05; thus, this indicated a statistically significant difference between the mean pre-test and post-test scores.

Table 4.5 Pre-Test And Post-Test Scores For “Abiding In Christ”

Questions	Pre-test scores	Scores %	Post-test scores	Scores %	P-value
					0.032678
1	41/50	82%	46/50	92%	
2	44/50	88%	47/50	94%	
3	47/50	94%	48/50	96%	
4	45/50	90%	45/50	90%	
5	42/50	84%	44/50	88%	
Mean →	43.8		46.2		Mean Difference +2.4

The P-Value 0.0032678 is less than 0.05, indicating that statistically the discipleship training had a significant effect.

#### Test Results For “Witnessing To Non-Believers”

The pre-test and the post-test results for the characteristic of "Witnessing to Non-Believers" are represented in Table 4.6 below. The results showed that the participants scored an average (mean) of 33.4 for the pre-test. After the discipleship training, the results showed that the participants scored an average of 41 for the same five questions related to this characteristic of a true disciple. A slightly higher score was noted when comparing the participants' average (mean) scores before and after the discipleship training. The mean score difference was 7.6, indicating an increase in score and an improvement in the knowledge and understanding of the participants of the material related to the characteristic of "Witnessing to Non-believers," as taught in the training sessions. On average, the participants scored higher on the post-test than on the pre-test, which resulted in a positive mean difference. The mean difference showed an improvement in the post-test scores. However, to show how statistically significant the mean difference was, the researcher ran the t-test, which calculated the probability (P-value) based on the mean score

differences. The researcher found that the P-value was 0.003688. The p-value of 0.003688 was less than the significance level of 0.05; thus, there was a statistically significant difference between the mean pre-test and post-test scores for witnessing to non-believers.

Table 4.6 Pre-Test And Post-Test Scores For “Witnessing To Non-Believers.”

Questions	Pre-test scores	Scores %	Post-test scores	Scores %	P-value 0.003688
1	35/50	70%	40/50	80%	
2	34/50	68%	41/50	82%	
3	35/50	70%	40/50	80%	
4	32/50	64%	42/50	96%	
5	31/50	62%	42/50	96%	
Mean →	33.4		41		Mean Difference +7.6

The P-Value 0.003688 was less than 0.05, indicating that statistically the discipleship training had a significant effect.

#### Test Results For “Making Disciples”

The pre-test and the post-test results for the characteristic of making disciples are represented in Table 4.7 below. The results showed that the participants scored an average (mean) of 36.6 for the pre-test scores on the five questions in the characteristic of a disciple, which was to make disciples. After the discipleship training, the results showed that the participants scored an average (mean) of 42.8 for the five questions related to making disciples. Comparing the participants' average (mean) scores before and after the discipleship training, a positive difference between the pre-test and the post-test shows a mean score difference of 6.2, an increase. However, to find how statistically significant the mean difference was, the researcher ran the t-test to determine the P-value. The researcher found that the P-value was 0.000443, much less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant improvement between the

mean pre-test and post-test scores. Based on that, the discipleship training had a significant and beneficial effect on the participant's knowledge and understanding of making disciples, a vital characteristic of a true disciple of Christ.

Table 4.7 Pre-Test And Post-Test Scores For “Making Disciples”

Questions	Pre-test scores	Scores %	Post-test scores	Scores %	P-value 0.000443
1	35/50	70%	42/50	84%	
2	37/50	74%	42/50	84%	
3	38/50	76%	44/50	88%	
4	31/50	62%	39/50	78%	
5	42/50	84%	47/50	94%	
Mean→	36.6		42.8		Mean Difference +6.2

The P-Value 0.000443 is much lower than 0.05, indicating that statistically the discipleship training had a significant effect.

#### Participant Interviews

The qualitative data for the research study were taken from the researcher's one-on-one interviews with the participants and observations made during the eight weeks of the discipleship training. The purpose of the one-on-one interviews was to gather more reliable and extensive answers from the participants. During the pre- and post-interviews, the researcher asked each participant five open-ended questions to capture their thoughts about disciple making, their relationship with Christ, and their expectations for this project.

The five open-ended questions were as follows: a) Where are you in your relationship with Christ? b) What are some characteristics of a true disciple of Christ? c) What is the duty of a disciple of Christ? d) How do you feel about discipling other believers? e) What do you expect to learn from this project?

The researcher also asked each participant a yes-or-no question about whether they intended to be involved in the church's discipleship ministry after they completed the discipleship-training program.

### **Responses To The First Question**

The first question was: Where are you in your relationship with Christ? Alternatively, what is your relationship with Christ? The purpose of this question for the researcher was to know how the participants lived their daily spiritual lives as Christians.

During the pre-test interviews, all the participants responded confidently about their salvation, explaining they had received Jesus as their Lord and Savior by asking Him to forgive their sins; they had put their trust in Him and asked Him to come into their hearts. They also declared that their baptism was by immersion. They regularly attended church to worship God and contributed financially to the church. Generally, the researcher could assume that all participants understood how someone comes to faith in Christ to be saved. However, the researcher wanted to know specifically about the participants' way of life as believers in Christ outside of the church.

When the researcher asked them to be specific about their way of life as Christians, some participants specified that they prayed daily, read their Bible, and meditated on God's Word every day to know God better. Others replied that they did their best to be faithful and grateful to God by applying God's Word in their lives and living a sanctified life daily to grow spiritually.

However, during the post-test one-on-one interviews, all the participants specified their relationship with God by saying that they prayed daily, read God's Word, and meditated on it. Some specified that they mostly prayed and meditated on God's word in the morning, since they went to work in the afternoon. Others specified that they mostly spent time praying, meditating,

and reading a devotional at night before bed. Based on their responses about their relationship with God after the discipleship training, the researcher assumed that the participants saw and understood the necessity of building a healthy spiritual relationship with God through their Bible reading, prayers, meditation, and personal devotions.

### **Responses to the Second Question**

The second question was: What are some characteristics of a disciple of Christ? For this question, the researcher intended to determine whether the participants understood what being a disciple of Christ entailed.

Before the eight weeks of discipleship training, there was a divergence of views between the participants regarding their knowledge of the characteristics of a disciple. 50% of the participants described a disciple of Christ as someone with an exemplary attitude and who was spiritually mature. They also described a disciple as someone God has called to share Christ's gospel with others to win lost souls for Christ. They said a disciple includes people like Paul and Peter and the other disciples of Christ mentioned in the Bible. 25% of the participants described a disciple of Christ as someone who is spiritually mature and knows how to evangelize or share God's Word with the lost. Another 25% of the participants did not answer.

When the researcher asked participants to answer, they responded that they did not know the characteristics of a disciple of Christ and only knew the disciples mentioned in the Bible. One of the participants mentioned pastors as disciples of Christ because they are responsible for equipping church members through teaching and training to help them become mature Christians.

After the pre-test one-on-one interview, the researcher concluded that most participants understood disciples as a particular class of Christians who had a special calling from God. They did not see themselves as qualified to be called disciples of Christ.

However, after the discipleship training sessions, the participants' responses about the specific characteristics of Christ's disciples differed significantly from their responses before the discipleship training sessions. All the participants could describe the characteristic traits of Christ's disciples. They all described a disciple as someone who abides in God's Word, loves others, denies themselves in order to do God's will, has fellowship with other believers, and is determined to become more like Christ. One of the participants said, "A disciple of Christ needs to remain connected with Jesus and His Word every day to bear the necessary spiritual fruit of helping new believers become spiritually mature in Christ." Another participant declared, "A disciple is a Christian who lives with humility, values other people above himself, and looks for the interest of others." Some participants pointed out the importance of spiritual discipline in the life of a disciple. One of the research goals was to teach the participants to practice personal spiritual discipline as Christians so that they could grow spiritually. In 1 Timothy 4, the apostle Paul instructed Timothy to practice spiritual discipline as a means to be a good servant of Christ (1Tim 4:7). "The same way physical exercise and training develops and strengthens the physical body...spiritual exercise and training develop and strengthen the spiritual ability of a Christian disciple, which is far more beneficial for the present life and the life to come" (1Tim 4:8).

Spiritual self-care is crucial for a believer to grow in Christ. As a blind man cannot lead another blind man, a spiritually immature believer cannot help a new believer grow in Christ. Jesus understood this principle and declared that a blind man cannot lead another blind man because both will fall into a pit (Luke 6:39).

### **Responses to the Third Question**

The third question was: What is the main duty or responsibility of a disciple of Christ? This question aimed to determine if the participants knew as followers of Christ that they were called to disciple others for Christ.

For the pre-test one-on-one interviews, 85% of the participants responded that a disciple's responsibility was to attend church, contribute to the church's financial needs, take part in the church's activities, and share the gospel with the lost. Only 25% responded that a disciple needed to disciple new believers to help them become mature in Christ. Based on the majority of the answers from the participants for that third question, the participants demonstrated to the researcher that they were never trained to be disciples who could help make disciples of others for Christ. The researcher concluded that, after the pre-test one-on-one interview, the participants, as Christians, did not know that they were called to make disciples of others for Christ.

However, after the discipleship training sessions, the participants' answers concerning the duty of a disciple of Christ contrasted with their comments before the training. All the participants now declared that the duty of a disciple was to share the gospel with the lost and then disciple them once they became new believers in Christ. Some of them went even further to give more details by saying that they needed to build relationships with new believers, pray for them, encourage them, and teach them the Bible to apply God's Word in their lives to grow in Christ.

### **Responses to the Fourth Question**

The fourth question was: How do you feel about discipling another believer? The purpose of this question was for the researcher to determine whether the participants would agree to take an active role in the church's discipleship ministry after their training.

During the pre-test interviews with the participants, 15% replied that they did not know and added that they thought they might be able to disciple new believers once they knew how to do that. 65% of the participants responded that they would not have any issue discipling new believers once they were trained and knew how to disciple other people for Christ. 20% responded that they would know if they could disciple another believer after the training.

The researcher interpreted the participants' responses to that fourth question as being frank and believed that the participants were being honest because none of them said that they were able to disciple new believers until the end of the discipleship-training program. However, during the post-test interview, the researcher asked the participants, "Now, how do you feel about discipling another believer?" 80% of the participants declared that they felt they were ready to disciple a new believer and would consult the researcher for advice when necessary. However, 20% of the participants informed the researcher that they might need him to guide them whenever the opportunity to discipleship a new believer arises. One of the participants specifically said to the researcher, "Pastor, I might need your help a little bit when I start discipling a new believer before I can do it on my own."

### **Responses to the Fifth Question**

The fifth question was slightly different during the pre-test and post-test one-on-one interviews with participants. The question during the pre-test interview was, "What do you expect to learn from this project?" However, the question during the post-test interview was,



“What have you learned from this project?” When the researcher asked the participants the pre-test question, he wanted to know their expectations for the discipleship-training project.

All the participants informed the researcher that they decided to participate in the study because they liked the purpose of the training and that they believed it necessary for them to be disciples themselves if they were to make disciples of other people for Christ.

One of the participants specifically said, "I want to be equipped to train or disciple others for Christ because someone cannot offer to others what they do not have." In addition to that participant-specific answer, another participant declared, "I want to learn whatever the researcher thinks will be helpful to me to be able to disciple other people for Christ." During the pre-interview, all the participants showed interest in learning how to make disciples for Christ.

Since the researcher's purpose of the discipleship training was to train lay leaders to increase their participation in the church's discipleship ministry, he expected that the participants would become equipped to disciple new believers in the church from the training events.

The answers that the researcher received during the post-interview from the participants showed that they had learned and understood what a true disciple is and that the responsibility of a true disciple is to make disciples for Christ. After the discipleship training, the participants seemed to have gained a sense of the biblical concept of discipleship even though there still have room for them to acquire more knowledge and a better understanding of the characteristics of a true disciple of Christ.

### **Responses to the Sixth Question**

The last question during the pre- and post-interview was a yes or no question: "Were they now willing to commit to being actively involved in the church's discipleship ministry?" The purpose of this question was for the researcher to see if the participants were willing to become

involved in this crucial church ministry. All the participants answered that they would be actively involved in the church's discipleship ministry. One of the participants specifically said, "Pastor, the purpose of the training was to train us to disciple new believers in the church. Since we are done with the training, our responsibility is to pass what we have learned and will continue to learn to others, particularly new believers."

#### Observations During the Sessions

All the participants were eager to participate in the research project. It was the first time they had participated in any research project, and they could not wait to see what would happen during the eight weeks of the discipleship-training program.

#### **Week 1: Abiding in the Word of God**

During the first week of the meeting, there were vibrant interactions between the participants on the importance of abiding in the Word of God. The participants engaged fully with one another as they energetically exchanged ideas, leaving them feeling uplifted and valued. Their interactions promoted interpersonal connections among the group members. Some pointed out the necessity of reading the Bible and memorizing vital biblical passages. Others argued that reading the Bible and other theological texts would help them understand God's Word better. Some argued that besides spending time in the Word of God and meditating on it, applying the Word of God in their daily living was the most crucial element to abide in God's Word. In other words, the participants reached an essential conclusion to the first week's training session. They unanimously concluded that abiding in God's Word implies reading it, studying it, understanding it, applying it in their daily lives, and sharing it with others.

**Week 2: Fellowshiping With Other Believers**

During the second week's training session, the participants were eager to present their research discoveries of specific Bible passages that emphasized the importance of a disciple abiding in God's Word. All the participants did the work assigned in the first week's session and shared with the researcher and the class the Bible verses they discovered and studied the week preceding the second week's session. After presenting their reports, they also discussed "fellowshipping with one another." The participants understood that fellowship means that, as Christian disciples, they are to come together as one body in Christ with one heart, to serve and care for one another with the individual spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit has imparted to them. During this second session, the participants concluded that fellowshiping with one another implies the bond they share due to their fellowship with and mutual commitment to Jesus Christ. They also pointed out some benefits of fellowshiping, such as encouraging or inspiring one another during difficult times and assisting and serving those in need in their community. Part of this mutual bonding and Christian fellowship also involves being accountable to one another and challenging one another to live a godly life.

**Week 3: Abiding in Christ**

During the third week of the training session, some participants did not provide a report of their completed assignment from the second week of training because they still needed to do the assignment. The researcher reminded them of the necessity of completing the assigned work and instructed them to complete that assignment during the following week. The report on that would be due at the start of the fourth week of the training session, along with their assignment from the third week. Afterward, the participants discussed the meaning and importance of

abiding in Christ as they examined John 15: 1-17, in which Jesus urged His disciples to abide in Him.

#### **Week 4: Denying Oneself**

During the fourth week of the training, the participants reported on their missed assignments from week two and their completed assignments from week three. There was also intense discussion among the participants while debating the meaning and implications of the fourth-week subject, denying oneself. The participants memorized the following Bible verses about Jesus' requirement for someone to follow Him. Some participants memorized Matthew 16:24, saying, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Although the content of that Bible verse was the same as the one found in Matthew 16:24, others memorized Luke 9:23, saying, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." The participants discussed their understanding that denying oneself and taking up one's cross daily was a call to self-sacrifice or to "die to self" as an absolute way of surrendering to Jesus Christ. Some indicated their understanding that to deny oneself means to let go of selfish desires and ambitions for the sake of Christ. Others understood denying oneself as adopting Christ's attitude by being humble in their interactions with others.

Some participants pointed out their understanding of "taking up their cross to follow Jesus" as accepting misunderstandings from others and tolerating deception and humiliation they might face for the sake of Christ and His gospel. Other participants went even further to declare that authentic Christian disciples must be willing to die to follow Jesus Christ. In that sense, a disciple must be willing to lose everything, such as comfort, riches, friends, family, and even his life, to follow Jesus.

The researcher also noticed evidence of trust and friendship among the participants during the training sessions compared to their attitudes before the discipleship training sessions. For example, before the training sessions began, most of them typically used to rush home after the regular Sunday church services. However, after the sessions, the participants remained for more than 30 minutes, interacting with one another and discussing the weekly training session themes.

In addition to their interactions after the training sessions, the researcher overheard some of their testimonies and comments on how often they communicated with each other on weekdays.

#### **Week 5: Witnessing to Non-believers**

The researcher observed a nervous demeanor at the start of the fifth week of the training sessions. Most participants had never taken the initiative to share the gospel with non-believers. While the participants were interacting with one another, they mostly talked about their fears of sharing the gospel with people they did not know. Their main misconception about evangelism was that they thought that when sharing the gospel with non-believers, they had to convert them and felt like they had failed if that did not happen. However, after they learned that God is the only one, through the power of His Holy Spirit, who had the power to convince and change a non-believer's heart into receiving Jesus as their Lord and Savior, their perception about witnessing to non-believers changed. After the session on evangelism, they seemed more relaxed and less anxious as they learned what it meant to witness to non-believers, knowing that the conversion of a non-believer depends on the Holy Spirit and the non-believer's response to the grace of God through faith in Christ.

**Week 6: Evangelism Workshop**

During the sixth week of the session, the atmosphere was energetic during the evangelism workshop as the participants practiced sharing the gospel and role-playing with each other. There was a spirit of collaboration among the participants as they helped one another, which showed a spirit of community. During the discussion, the participants indicated they understood and agreed that evangelizing or sharing God's Word with lost people is a divine responsibility (Ezek 3:17-19) and a mandate from Jesus to every person He has already saved (Matt 28: 19).

**Week 7: Making Disciples**

During the seventh week session, the participants asked for more evangelism workshops in the church as they shared how their confidence grew concerning witnessing to other people. They claimed they were more confident witnessing to non-believers they already knew in their neighborhood than sharing the gospel with non-believers with whom they had no relationship. In that case, the researcher encouraged them to build relationships with those non-believers at first, which would make it easier to share the gospel with them later. The participants commented on the importance of developing relationships, which would facilitate witnessing to non-believers and help disciple new believers after they receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior. They compared evangelism to birthing a baby and discipleship to caring for the baby so that he can grow and develop into maturity. They also pointed out that some Christians did not grow spiritually because they were not disciplined.

The researcher also observed that the participants emphasized the idea of coaching and mentoring in discipleship. They pointed out that these relationships help build better relationships during and after the discipleship process. Coaching and mentoring involve listening, understanding, and advising through feedback that the mentor or coach provide to the

mentee or trainee. The participants were generally interested in participating in the eight-week training program. They were always on time for the weekly sessions, and as they left the room after each training session, they indicated a desire to spend more time discussing what they had learned during the training session.

### **Week 8: Conclusion of the Eight Weeks Training**

This session was more of a summary, review, and wrap-up, along with an evaluation. The participants looked more confident than at the start of training as they answered questions from their post-intervention questionnaires.

During this last week of the training program, the participants asked when the researcher would have another discipleship-training program in the church. The participants took turns thanking the researcher for investing time in training them to be better disciples. Most of them claimed that they would continue to grow spiritually on a personal level and invest time to disciple others in the church since they were now trained to do so. They testified that the training helped them build confidence to disciple new believers for Christ. The researcher also observed a change in their conception of discipling others in the church by their willingness to participate in the discipleship ministry in the church.

### **Summary Of Results**

The following findings are summarized from the results obtained and the thorough analysis of the data collected.

As shown in Figure 4.1 and Table 8, the participants' pre-test average scores (mean scores) for abiding in God's Word, fellowshiping with other believers, and denying self were respectively 41.4, 41.8, and 46, while their post-test average scores for those same characteristics after the implementation of the discipleship training were respectively 42.6, 43.2,

and 47.4 showing an improvement in the participants' scores after the discipleship training. However, the data revealed that their p-values of 0.065743, 0.051606, and 0.241982 were greater than the significance level of 0.05. Thus, there was no significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores for those characteristics.

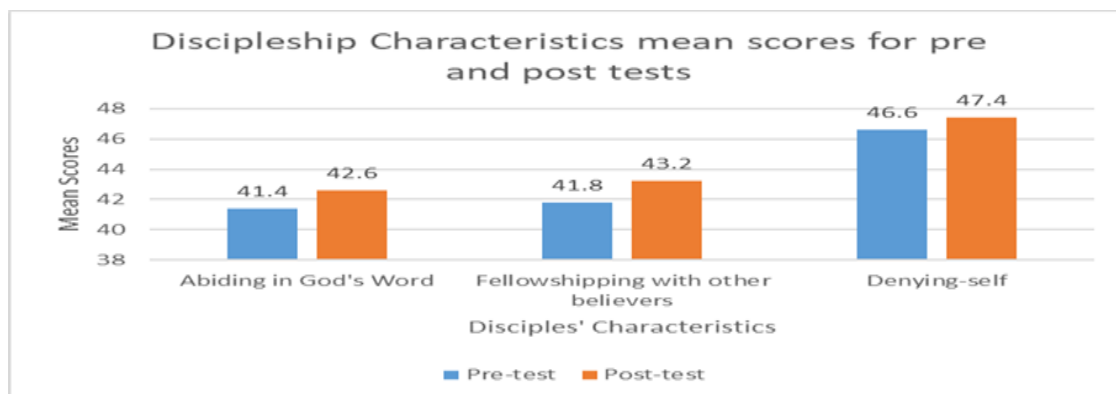


Figure 4.1 Summary Of Mean Scores For Pre-test and Post-test For Abiding In God's Word, Fellowshipping With Other Believers, and Denying Self

Table 4.8 Means Differences And P-Values For Abiding In God's Word, Fellowshipping With Other Believers, And Denying Self

Characteristics	Mean Difference	P-Value > 0.05	Effect
Abiding in God's Word	+1.2	0.065743	There is no significant effect
Fellowshipping with other believers	+1.4	0.051606	There is no significant effect
Denying Self	+0.8	0.241982	There is no significant effect

As illustrated in Figure 4.2 and Table 4.9, the participants' pre-test average scores (mean scores) for abiding in Christ, witnessing to non-believers, and making disciples were respectively 43.8, 33.4, and 36.6. However, their post-test average scores for those same characteristics after the implementation of the discipleship training showed a significant improvement to 46.2, 41, and 42.8. Importantly, the data also revealed that their p-values 0.032678, 0.003688, and



0.000443 were all less than the significance level of 0.05, providing statistical evidence of the significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test for those characteristics.

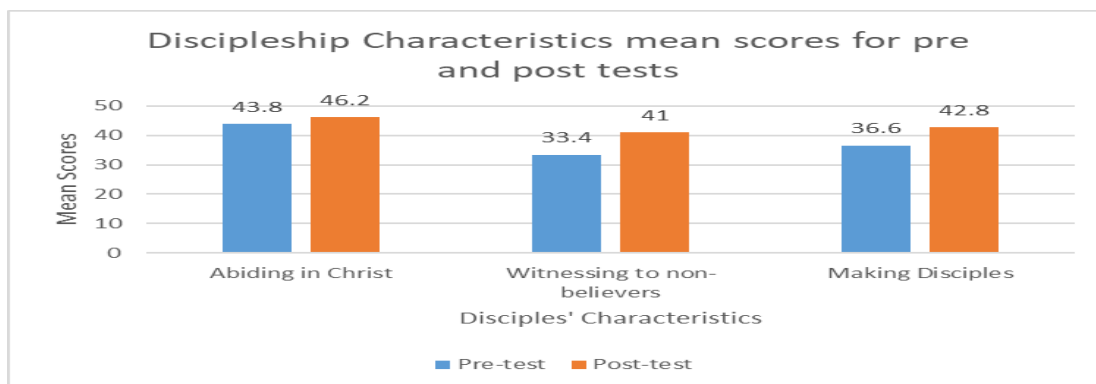


Figure 4.2 Summary Of Mean Scores During The Pre-Test And The Post-Test For Abiding In Christ, Witnessing To Non-Believers, And Making Disciples

Table 4.9 Mean Differences And P-Values For Abiding In Christ, Witnessing To Non-Believers, And Making Disciples

Characteristics	Mean Difference	P-Value < 0.05	Effect
Abiding in Christ	+2.4	0.032678	There is significant effect
Witnessing to non-believers	+7.6	0.003688	There is significant effect
Making disciples	+6.2	0.000443	There is significant effect

The other phase of the research study was focused on the responses of the participants in the interviews conducted by the researcher before and after the discipleship training. The purpose of these interviews was to record the experiences and ideas of the participants regarding their relationship with Christ, the church's disciple-making process, and their hopes for this project. Based on the pre-and post-interviews, the participants clearly articulated their understanding of the necessity of building a healthy spiritual relationship with God through prayer, meditation, Bible reading, and personal devotions.

Before the discipleship training, when it came to expressing their knowledge of the discipleship process in the church and their responsibilities as disciples, most participants could not adequately articulate the characteristics of a disciple. However, after the discipleship training, all the participants were able to clearly articulate the characteristics of a disciple and recognized their responsibility to make disciples of others for Christ. In addition, they all expressed their commitment to actively participate in the church's discipleship ministry.

In addition to the quantitative data collected from the pre-test and post-test, the interviews that showed the participants' progress in elaborating adequately on the characteristics of a disciple of Christ after the discipleship training, the researcher observed the enthusiasm and commitment of the participants to be equipped into becoming disciples who can make disciples of others for Christ.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The DMIN action research project was undertaken to implement a discipleship training program that would equip lay leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance their involvement in the church's discipleship ministry. This initiative was a significant step towards fostering a culture of active participation and personal spiritual growth within the church community while recognizing the significant contribution of the lay leaders.

The researcher anticipated this research project would achieve a positive result in the participants' understanding of the disciple-making process. It was expected this would be reflected in a substantial increase in their involvement in the church's discipleship ministry and serve as a tangible testament to their own personal spiritual growth as well as to become a source of inspiration for others. This journey of personal growth and development is a beacon of hope for our church community.

The research project was conducted at Redemption Baptist Church with the intention to address some of the challenges faced by the church and to inspire personal spiritual growth in the lives of those who participated.

Redemption Baptist Church is a small church which has encountered some hurdles in its discipleship ministry. While the church encourages active participation in its ministries, the involvement of some members, particularly the lay leaders, in the church's discipleship ministry has not been as robust as the pastor of the church expected. The researcher believes this is the result of two factors 1) some have not realized the importance of this ministry and 2) they have not been properly trained. In other words, lay leaders had never been trained to disciple others. Consequently, this ministry has been almost exclusively the responsibility of the pastor. Discipling others is a fundamental requirement for the Christian life and the growth of the

church. However, discipleship necessitates a mature disciple who embodies the biblical marks of a follower of Christ, guiding new believers in living their lives, as Christ requires.

Therefore, a strategic plan of discipleship training was chosen for this research study at Redemption Baptist Church. Its aim was to teach a select group of lay leaders the essential characteristics of a genuine disciple of Christ, and train them to apply these traits in their own lives and to actively participate in the church's discipleship ministry.

For the research intervention design, the researcher employed a mixed-methods approach. The implementation of the intervention design was an eight-week discipleship training consisting of an hour and a half training session each week. During these sessions, the researcher was to teach the participants the necessary characteristics of a genuine disciple of Christ and assign training applications involving the traits learned.

This structured approach aimed to enable the participants to become true disciples who are in turn able to make disciples of other people for Christ and to increase their participation in the church's discipleship ministry. The participants were all Haitians and active members of Redemption Baptist Church, selected using convenient or purposive sampling.

The researcher employed a comprehensive data-collection process, utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data was collected through a pre-intervention test before the discipleship training and a post-intervention test after the training was completed.

The qualitative data was gathered through a pre-interview before the training, a post-interview after the training, and through careful observations by the researcher during the training sessions. This rigorous data-collection process ensured the reliability and validity of the research findings.

To assess the effectiveness or the success of the implementation of the intervention design, the researcher compared the mean (average) scores of the pre-test and the post-test to find any positive mean difference. Moreover, to determine how significant the differences between the pre-test scores and the post-test scores were, the researcher used a t-test that helped him conclude whether the implementation of the discipleship training had a significant impact on what the participants learned about making disciples of others for Christ.

The overall results of implementing the intervention design were effective in all the aspects of the training that the researcher initially expected or anticipated.

The study results indicated that discipleship training increased the participants' understanding and ability for these three characteristics of a disciple: abiding in God's Word, fellowshiping with other believers, and denying self. Although the improvement was not statistically significant, after the training, the researcher noticed an increase in the participants' desire to abide in God's Word, which is one of the essential characteristics of a disciple of Christ. It is imperative for a true disciple to know the will of his master. The best way for a master to reveal his will is through his words or teaching. For a disciple of Christ to do the will of his master, he needs to know and apply his master's words or teachings, which are contained in the Bible. This means to live according to Christ's will. No Christian can obey and do the will of God without knowing God's will, which is revealed in His Word (i.e., the Bible). Gorman wrote, "The "obedience of faith" can be achieved only when one knows the will of the one to be obeyed, namely, God."<sup>178</sup>

The results of the study also showed an increase in the participants' awareness of the importance of fellowshiping with other believers. A disciple needs to have this important

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<sup>178</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 134.

characteristic, allowing him to use his spiritual abilities to encourage and help other believers to grow spiritually. Fellowshiping with one another demonstrated how Christians are inseparably connected based on their relationship to God as one in the body of Christ.<sup>179</sup> Fellowshiping with one another is so crucial, Andrew Roberts and his colleagues wrote to remind Christians that, “any Fellowship they have with each other is inspired first by the gracious relationship they have with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ”.<sup>180</sup> According to Allen Jennie, Christians depend upon one another because they are created for deep connection.<sup>181</sup> Allen understands that the Bible was written in the context of people living their lives in relation to others. In that sense, she wrote, “The Bible does not speak to individuals. It is written for people living out their faith together! And this all matters so much because we make each other better. We remind each other of God and His plans for us. We fight for each other to not be distracted by sin. We complete each other. We need each other to live out the purpose of God.”<sup>182</sup>

The findings of the research study also suggested the participants had an increased understanding of Christ's calling to deny themselves as a requirement for Christ's disciples. Jesus made it clear that anyone who wants to follow Him must deny themselves, take their cross every day, and follow Him (Luke 9:23). Dietrich Bonhoeffer defined self-denial as, “knowing only Christ, no longer knowing oneself. It means no longer seeing oneself, only him who is going ahead, no longer seeing the way which is too difficult for us. Self-denial says only: he is going ahead; hold fast to him.”<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Roberts, Jones, Johnson, and Milton, *Fellowship*, 14.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>181</sup> Jennie Allen, *Find Your People: Building Deep Community in a Lonely World*, First Edition (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook, 2022), 16.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-32.

<sup>183</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, 51.

Bonhoeffer understood that those who enter discipleship share in the death and suffering of Jesus. In that sense self-denial is not the end of a devout and happy life. It rather marks the start of fellowship with Jesus Christ.<sup>184</sup> Disciples of Christ bear one another's burdens as Christ bear their burdens. By bearing one another's burden, Christ's disciples are fulfilling the law of Christ (Gal 6: 2).<sup>185</sup>

The results also showed that there was an increase in the participants' understanding and ability for the characteristics of abiding in Christ, witnessing to non-believers, and making disciples. When it came to these three characteristics, not only were participants post-test mean scores higher than their pre-test mean scores, but the results showed significant differences between their post-test and pre-test scores, indicating a strongly significant improvement. In that sense, the findings indicated that discipleship training is crucial to increase a Christian's ability to be a disciple who can make disciples for Christ.

Before the discipleship training, the lay leaders at Redemption Baptist Church did not show any interest in discipling new believers due to their lack of discipleship training. They were never trained to disciple other people for Christ. As a result of the discipleship training, significant progress was realized. This training helped the participants increase their knowledge and understanding of the discipleship process and their commitment to participate actively in the church's discipleship ministry. The training also helped dispel misconceptions about discipleship, and stimulated their willingness to become involved in this ministry.

The results of the study clearly showed an increase in all the post-test scores compared to the pre-test scores. Although there was not a statistically significant difference for some of the

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<sup>184</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, 53.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

characteristics of a disciple such as, abiding in God's Word, fellowshiping with other believers, and denying oneself, there was some improvement in the participants' knowledge and understanding for those characteristics.

However, when it came to the other three characteristics: abiding in Christ, witnessing to non-believers, and making disciples, the discipleship training yielded statistically significant progress, as anticipated.

All the mean differences for abiding in Christ, witnessing to non-believers, and making disciples between the pre-test and post-test were positive and statistically significant, showing the effectiveness of the discipleship training.

These results no doubt impacted the participants' ability to disciple others for Christ, which will also benefit the church. Anyone must be in a close relationship with Christ before they can minister to other people around them effectively.<sup>186</sup> Brandon Guindon wrote,

Abiding in Jesus will always lead to action, but the abiding must come first. When we abide, the Holy Spirit will fill us and prompt us to act. Likewise, we must prioritize this with the church, calling them to abide by Jesus. This is vital because the abundant fruit Jesus produces when we remain close to him is becoming healthy disciples ourselves and then making healthy disciples of others.<sup>187</sup>

God's Word states that a branch cannot bear fruit on its own if it is not attached to the vine. Based on that, Jesus clarifies that those who do not remain in Him or abide in Him cannot produce fruit on their own (John 15:4). Abiding in Christ is essential for making disciples of others for Christ. Guindon wrote, "If the goal of our journey is to make disciples of Jesus, we must first learn how to abide in Christ—the first essential practice or guardrail in a disciple-

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<sup>186</sup> Brandon Guindon, *Stay the Course: Seven Essential Practices for Disciple Making Churches* (HIM Publications, 2018), 24.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.



making church. That is, before we can make healthy disciples, we must first be a healthy disciple.”<sup>188</sup>

Making disciples is all Christians' obedience and necessary answer to their master's commands. It is the culminating aspect of remaining in Christ. Jesus said that every branch in Him that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit (John 15: 3). Jesus's final command to His disciples was to go and make disciples. Thomas A. Tarrants wrote, “Jesus' simple, yet brilliant Plan—making disciples, who would in turn make other disciples, who would make still more disciples and so on until He returns—really works! He is counting on us to fulfill our assignment, and there is no Plan B.”<sup>189</sup>

Every Christian needs to be a disciple who makes disciples for Christ. According to Romans 12: 3-8, everyone saved by grace through faith in Jesus is called to minister to God. In that sense, making disciples is not reserved for pastors or a particular class of Christians. Making disciples of others for Christ is the responsibility of all Christians.<sup>190</sup> Thomas A. Tarrants says,

Discipling is a ministry to which all believers are called in some fashion. Someone has said that each of us needs to be in relationship with at least one person who is like a “Paul”—a more mature believer who can disciple (spiritually mentor) us; at least one like “Timothy”—a person younger in the faith whom we can disciple; and one or two peers like “Barnabas” (who encouraged Paul) to cheer us on.<sup>191</sup>

Reaching the lost is a significant part of the discipleship process.<sup>192</sup> Every Christian should witness the lost to reach them and pursue them for Christ. Guindon writes, “Reaching the lost is

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<sup>188</sup> Guindon, *Stay*, 23.

<sup>189</sup> Thomas A. Tarrants, “Learning to Make Disciples of Jesus: The Calling of Every Believer,” *Knowing & Doing C.S. Lewis Institute*, (2013): 1.

<sup>190</sup> Harrington and Patrick, *Disciple Maker's*, 29.

<sup>191</sup> Tarrants, “Learning,” 2.

<sup>192</sup> Guindon, *Stay*, 32.

everyone's job, not just one pastor that has a specific gift. Staff and leaders in the church should model for volunteers in the church a lifestyle of sharing their faith and making disciples."<sup>193</sup>

There was definite progress in the participants even though the researcher had hoped to see a higher increase for all the characteristics covered during the discipleship training. Their learning gains and resulting commitment to actively participate in the church's discipleship ministry prove that the participants were not just recipients of the training, but active contributors. Their involvement in the training was crucial in preparing them to disciple others for Christ, which will help the pastor carry out the responsibility of discipleship in the church.

Overall, the results of the comparison between the pre-test and the post-test, as well as the pre-interview and the post-interview responses of the participants, imply that the implementation of the discipleship training was effective in increasing the participants' understanding and knowledge of the characteristics of a disciple who can make disciples of others for Christ.

The researcher concluded that the discipleship training not only enhanced the participants' knowledge, ability, and confidence in discipling others for Christ, but also fostered their personal spiritual growth.

Prior to the training, these lay leaders lacked a comprehensive understanding of discipleship, which hindered their ability to disciple others effectively. The training has successfully addressed this gap, leading to progress in maturity for each participant.

Through the discipleship training, participants were not just given the opportunity to rectify their misconceptions about discipleship, but they underwent a transformative experience. This experience nurtured their love and understanding of God and equipped them with the vision

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<sup>193</sup> Guindon, *Stay*, 36.

and strategy to guide and train others in their discipleship journey. The training's transformative nature holds promise for the future of discipleship in the church.

The qualitative data collected during the interviews demonstrated the participants' progress in their understanding of the characteristics of a disciple of Christ. After the discipleship training the participants expressed enthusiasm to learn and apply the knowledge gained as they participated in the discipleship training. The researcher concludes that the quantitative data and analysis recorded for the participants after the discipleship training generated optimism for the future influence and contribution of these participants for the benefit of the church.

### **Research Implications**

The research findings suggested that discipleship can have a crucial effect on the ability of a believer to grow spiritually in Christ and to foster the spiritual growth and development of others. Church leaders and pastors must intentionally promote discipleship in their churches. They need to teach and train church members to be disciple-makers for Christ.

The research findings further revealed that a philosophy of discipleship needs to be both theoretical and practical. As God's Word declares in Matthew 28:20, true disciples of Christ are to teach others to observe all that Jesus have commanded them." In that sense, Christians must learn and practice Jesus' commands. Christians cannot be content with only acquiring information; they also need to apply these teachings of Jesus, putting them into practice; living their lives in obedience to and relationship with Jesus to live their lives as Jesus did.

At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus urged His followers to build on the rock instead of the sand by not only being hearers but also doers of His Word. According to Jesus, everyone who hears His Word and practices it builds on the rock. While the one who hears His Word and does not apply it to his life builds on the sand (Matt 7:24-27). One can agree with

Allin Dana who wrote, “Simply having enough information isn’t true discipleship— true discipleship involves application and transformation.”<sup>194</sup>

Church leaders and pastors need to be intentional in discipling church members by training them to be disciples who can in-turn make disciples of others for Christ. In that sense, every true believer needs to be trained as a disciple so he/she can, in turn, train and disciple others for Christ. This process, known as the discipleship cycle, is a practical way to imitate Jesus' method of discipleship, for Jesus Himself not only taught and trained disciples, but also commanded them to make disciples of others. It involves identifying potential disciples, bringing them into a faith-commitment to Christ, investing in their spiritual growth, training, and mentoring them so they can disciple others. Jesus was able to pass His teaching to other faithful people, primarily His 12 disciples, who in turn were able to pass Jesus' teaching to others. This discipleship cycle can also be seen in how Barnabas passed the knowledge of God’s Word on to people like Paul (Acts 9:26-30, Acts 11:25-26), who passed it on to people like Timothy, whom he instructed to pass it on to other people as well (2 Tim 2:1-2).

When Jesus saves someone, He does not just see them as Christians who only attend church on Sundays. He sees them as potential disciple-makers, entrusted with His mandate to go and make disciples of others (Matt 28:18-20). Each Christian has the potential to play a significant role in this mission and to be a conduit of His love and teachings.

The findings from this research project underscore the need for pastors to embrace the equipping-leader model. Pastors understand that one of their roles in a healthy church is to equip

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<sup>194</sup> Dana Allin, *Simple Discipleship: Grow Your Faith; Transform Your Community* (Carol Stream, IL: NavPress Publishing Group, 2019), 29.

and empower church members.<sup>195</sup> Rob Dempsey wrote, “In a clergy-driven church, the pastor sees his role as doing the work of the ministry. In a healthy church, the pastor sees his primary role as equipping and training the saints to do the ministry.”<sup>196</sup>

This model is not about the pastor being the center of everything, but about assisting God's people to become spiritually mature disciples who can disciple others for Christ. It is about challenging and encouraging and training every follower of Jesus to grow spiritually and fulfill their potential for God. Leroy Eims wrote,

Every new believer is expected to achieve his or her full potential for God. And most of them would if they had the opportunity, if someone would get the food within reach, if someone would give them the help they need, if someone would give them the training they should have, and if someone would care enough to suffer a little, sacrifice a little, and pray a lot.<sup>197</sup>

A discipleship ministry would significantly impact Christians if church leaders, pastors, and church members all embraced the equipping-leader model in which all Christians would be given the necessary training to grow in their faith.

### **Evaluation of the Intervention Design**

In this section, the researcher aims to discuss the research post-study by evaluating some of the intervention design's strengths and weaknesses.

#### **Strengths**

One of the strengths of the research study lies in the fact that the research intervention design was comprised of a mixed-methods approach. Combining quantitative and qualitative data-collections was vital in determining the effectiveness of the discipleship training.

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<sup>195</sup> Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is ...: How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishing Group, 2013), 13, ebook.

<sup>196</sup> Earley and Dempsey, *Disciple Making*, 13.

<sup>197</sup> LeRoy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Zondervan, 1978), 11.

This strategy helps the researcher gain a more complete picture than a standalone quantitative or standalone qualitative study, as it integrates the benefits of both methods. This integration not only enhances the depth of the research but also broadens the researcher's understanding of the data derived from the study. This is a testament to the value of this approach.

In addition, the qualitative data gathered from interviews and observations were beneficial by supplementing the data which helped confirm the accuracy of the quantitative data, further highlighting the benefits of the mixed-methods approach.

Another strength of the intervention design is that, during the discipleship training, the researcher encouraged and facilitated discussions among the participants. The researcher allowed the participants to express themselves freely and openly as they discussed how they intended to emulate the six disciple characteristics in their own lives and how they anticipated helping others develop those characteristics in their lives. This approach helped the researcher observe the participants in their peer-to-peer discussions and collaborations while providing them with information and feedback to facilitate their attainment of the research project's objectives.

Another strength of the research is the utilization of both pre-intervention and post-intervention tests. The pre-tests and post-tests helped the researcher measure the participants' general knowledge before and after the study. This practice also helped establish specifically what the participants needed to learn during the training sessions. The pre-test and post-test formats are also excellent ways for the researcher to gather data to improve the effectiveness of his teaching and better benefit the participants.

### Weaknesses

One of the areas for improvement of the research study lies in the time allotted for the teaching session, which prevented the researcher from instilling more discipleship principles into the participants' minds. Discipleship is a long-term process. It is not something that can be completed in an eight-week session. Discipleship is also an ongoing process and requires lifelong commitment.

The second weakness of the research study is that it was more theoretical than practical. Although all six disciple characteristics are essential in helping the participants develop their discipleship understanding and skills, they also require an approach that involves considerable practice under supervision. There is a need to be able to observe first-hand what disciples look like in actual practice. The apostle Paul who understood the modeling aspect of discipleship said it best to the Christians of Philippi in Philippians 3:17, “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.”

Based on that, if the researcher were to design this study again, he would make some changes. He would design the intervention for a longer duration and implement more practice sessions for the participants to better capture their ability to disciple others for Christ.

The researcher would also have recognized the value of recruiting participants from other Haitian churches and from churches with different ethnic backgrounds. This would have diversified the samples used during the research study, enhancing the inclusivity and representation of the study's findings.

### **Research Applications**

The DMIN action research revealed the effectiveness of discipleship training in equipping lay leaders to acquire the skills and knowledge they needed to participate actively in

the church's discipleship ministry. Despite having been church members of other churches for more than five years before they came to Redemption Baptist Church, the lay leaders were never trained in discipleship. Being a disciple who can disciple others for Christ is Jesus' mandate to all who follow Him. Since the findings of this research study demonstrated an increase in the participants' knowledge of the essential characteristics of a disciple of Christ, church leaders and pastors can incorporate this discipleship training in their churches to train their members to equip them to disciple others for Christ.

This action research study is not exclusive to training lay leaders. It is a resource that can be utilized by any believer who aspires to disciple others for Christ. Furthermore, the research study can serve as an inquiry-based teaching tool, a valuable resource for church leaders and seminary professors. This inclusive approach aims to enhance the ability of Bible students and church members to disciple others for Christ, thereby extending the reach and impact of the research study.

The discipleship training method, such as the (triads/quads) discipleship model, offers numerous benefits. It fosters meaningful relationships among church members and facilitates mutual learning. Similarly, the discipleship training method used in this research study provides a natural platform for Christians to form closer bonds and promote accountability and spiritual responsibility. These advantages underscore the value of this method and encourage its implementation in churches.

The implementation of the discipleship training as an inquiry-based strategy for training church members should be encouraged by pastors and embraced by other church leaders to continually train church members and new believers to be disciples who can make disciples of



others for Christ. This will help to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ who commanded His followers to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19).

Living as a disciple of Christ must be every Christian's goal. Christians who read and understand God's Word cannot deny that they are called to be disciples who make disciples of others for Christ. In that sense, the six characteristics covered during the discipleship training are essential to help any believer in Christ strengthen their faith and grow into maturity in the likeness of Christ. Although these six essential characteristics in themselves are not what someone needs to be saved because God's Word declares that God saves sinners by grace through faith (Eph 2:8), they are qualities that any saved person or disciple of Christ needs to help them grow spiritually and to become disciple-makers for their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

These six essential characteristics can be applied or implemented anywhere from Christian schools and discipleship training schools to children's ministry as a discipleship curriculum to help others grow in their faith and become disciple-makers for Christ.

Every Christian must strive to demonstrate the following key characteristics of a true disciple: Abide in God's Word, fellowship with other believers, deny himself, abide in Christ, witness to non-believers, and make disciples.

These six characteristics are all required by Jesus Christ, the head of the church. Jesus makes it clear that His authentic disciples are those who abide in His Word (John 8:31). In John 15: 4, Jesus said abide in Me. Moreover, fellowshiping with other believers is a crucial component in Christians' lives because God has called them into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ (1Cor 1:9). Since Christians are called into fellowship with God's Son, Jesus Christ, they also need to be in fellowship with one another. The apostle John, in 1 John 1:2-3, declares:

The life (Jesus Christ) was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to

us— that which we have seen and heard we also proclaim to you so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Denying self is also a crucial requirement for Christ's followers. Jesus said in Mark 8:34, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." In that sense, following Christ is a call for total surrender to Him. This means denying selfish desires for His sake.

Witnessing to non-believers is something that all Christ's followers need to do because it is also commanded by Jesus Christ of His followers to go into all the world and to proclaim His good news to the whole creation (Mark 16:15).

Lastly, all Christ's followers are called to make disciples of others for Christ. Those are commands that all Christians need to follow, as Jesus declared in Matthew 28:20 when He said: "Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you."

Another application to this discipleship training process is related to Christian parenting. The role of parents in teaching their children to follow all of Jesus' teachings is crucial. In Deuteronomy 11, God calls upon parents to impart His commands to their children. Just as God expects parents to commit to His commands, He also requires them to teach His commands to their children. Deuteronomy 11:18-19 states, "You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." This is why it is important to implement these six essential characteristics, found in God's Word, as a family discipleship-training curriculum. This will help Christians teach their children to strengthen their faith, develop their character, and nurture their spiritual growth.

Teaching children to abide in God's Word is not just a Christian duty, but is also a pathway to their spiritual growth. It is crucial to help them grow in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by teaching them how to read and interpret the Bible; how to study it, understand it, and apply it in their daily lives.

Teaching children to abide in Christ and deny themselves will help them understand that they need to surrender their lives totally to Christ and depend on Him for their spiritual sustenance, as God says in Matthew 4:4: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Teaching children to fellowship with other believers is not just about socializing, but about fostering their spiritual development. It will help them understand the profound importance of the church community in their lives. In Hebrews 10:24-25, God's Word declares, "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

Teaching children to witness to non-believers will encourage them to share their faith with their peers. In 1 Peter 3:15, God's Word declares, "But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."

Lastly, teaching children to make disciples of others for Christ will help them understand that they also need to bear spiritual fruit as true followers of Christ.

For Sunday school curriculum developers and planners, the research study may be used as a reference or basis for developing the curriculum in Sunday school classes to train

Sunday school participants. For future researchers, the results of this research may be the basis for further studies and can be used as related literature.

### **Research Limitations and Further Research**

Before implementing the research design, the researcher anticipated some limitations to the research that would likely negatively affect the outcomes. The first limitation was that some of the participants might be unable or unwilling to continue with the research, which would affect the sample size and the quality of the research. To address this, the researcher implemented a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy, including regular check-ins and flexible scheduling options.

Another limitation was that some of the participants might be biased in their answers because of their relationship with the researcher as their church pastor. Their desire to please the pastor may influence their responses. To mitigate this, the researcher emphasized the importance of honest and unbiased responses and assured the participants of the confidentiality of their answers. Furthermore, the time commitment required and the participants' work and family responsibilities could constitute another limitation for this research study. The researcher worked on some of the anticipated limitations and was able to prevent them. However, other limitations were beyond the researcher's control. Although the researcher asked the participants to be honest in their responses to the questionnaires and the interviews, they potentially answered the questions in a way that pleased the researcher. Since the researcher was also the participants' pastor, they might be inclined to impress the researcher and try to answer the questions in a way that would please the researcher. This could have led to an overestimation of the effectiveness of the discipleship training, as the participants might have felt pressured to provide positive

feedback. Consequently, the findings of this study should be interpreted with some caution, particularly in terms of the participants' reported experiences and perceptions.

Future studies, taking advantage of insights from this research, hold promise for more effective data collection methods. For instance, a study could explore the effectiveness of having someone other than the pastor conduct interviews and use mail-in anonymous questionnaires. This approach could enhance response confidentiality, leading to more accurate and unbiased data. Such advancements in research methods could significantly contribute to the field of social sciences or religious studies.

A similar study also should be conducted with a larger group of subjects to determine whether similar findings might be obtained. This is because a larger sample size can increase the reliability of the findings and reduce the impact of individual biases. Additionally, a larger sample size could also provide more statistical power, allowing for more robust analyses and potentially uncover more nuanced results.

Another limitation of this research study was the duration of the project and length of time for the training sessions. Discipleship is a lengthy and ongoing process. Training and mentoring someone to be a disciple who can make disciples of others for Christ might require more time to achieve more enduring effectiveness.

The duration of the sessions (1 hour and 30 minutes) and the eight-week discipleship training (one day a week) could have also influenced the study's findings. Acquiring all the necessary discipleship knowledge is important for achieving lasting quality results. Observing the participants during their hands-on practical experience in disciplining another believer will help determine the real, practical effect of the discipleship training. The limited duration and frequency of the training sessions might have hindered the participants' ability to fully grasp and

apply the discipleship principles, potentially affecting the overall effectiveness of the training. Further study should be conducted over a more extended period, and more time should be allotted to hands-on training for the participants.

Future studies should also place a significant emphasis on the practical application of participants' knowledge. While this study's findings indicated an increase in participants' understanding of the six essential discipleship characteristics, it was challenging to verify in practice their ability to disciple others for Christ.

Therefore, an observational post-discipleship research study should be conducted to assess the practical effectiveness of the discipleship training. This increased focus on practical application could enhance the relevance and impact of future research in this area.

In general, implementing the discipleship training has greatly impacted the participants' discipleship knowledge, as expected. The outcomes of the research study demonstrated the value of discipleship training in the church. The researcher believes the project's positive results will serve as a catalyst to energize the lay leaders at Redemption Baptist Church to participate actively in the church's discipleship ministry. It is important to note that this is not the end of their journey. The participants must continue to learn and grow in their faith, constantly striving to deepen their understanding of God's Word and their relationship with Him. As the body of Christ, the church needs to reach its full potential, striving to attain the full measure of the fullness of Christ, who is the head of the church. For the church to achieve its objective, God's people must be trained and prepared to do their work in building up the church. God's Word makes it clear that when each part of the body of Christ does its special work by helping other parts to grow, the whole body will grow healthy and build itself up in love (Eph. 4:13-16).

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**APPENDIX A**

Date:

Redemption Baptist Church  
67 Washington Street  
Quincy, MA 02169

Dear committee members:

As a graduate student in Strategic Christian Ministry at the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting a research study as part of a Doctor of Ministry degree requirement. My research project aims to address the causes of lay leaders' lack of participation and train them to increase their participation in the church discipleship ministry.

I am writing to inform you and ask your permission to contact church members to invite them to participate in my research study. The research will only involve 12 participants who must be 18 years of age or older, including men and women who are church members. The researcher will use a triangulation data collection method for the research study, including interviews, questionnaires, and observations. These three methods of collecting data will be used to gather better information on the veracity of the participants' responses. The researcher will provide the participants with two sets of triangulation data collection. The first set of triangulations of data collection is for the preintervention that will take place one week before the intervention starts to assess the participants' understanding of the disciple-making process, their responsibility as disciples of Christ, and their responsibility in the church. The research will have a training phase between the pre-intervention and the post-intervention. During that phase, the participants will attend a one and half hour discipleship class once a week for eight weeks. The post-intervention interviews, questionnaires, will take place with the participants two weeks before the end of the research study to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention based on the progress of the participant in understanding and applying the contents of the training materials and concepts with a family or church member.

I will give the participants informed consent before participating in the research study. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and participants can withdraw at any time during the research study.

Thank you for considering my request. Should you choose to give me your approval for my project, please email me at [REDACTED]. A permission letter document is also attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Robermann Dorceus  
DMIN student at Liberty University/ Pastor of Redemption Baptist Church.

Date:

At this moment, the committee members of Redemption Baptist Church grant permission for Pastor Robermann Dorceus, DMIN student at Liberty University, to conduct a research study as part of a Doctor of Ministry degree requirement. This permission allows Pastor Robermann to conduct his research with all the willing participants in the church.

For the committee members of Redemption Baptist Church

Br.

Br.

Sr.

## APPENDIX B

### Consent

**Title of the Project:** Implementing a Discipleship Strategy Plan for Lay Leaders at Redemption Baptist Church to Help Them Grow Spiritually.

**Principal Investigator:** Robermann Dorceus, DMIN candidate in Strategic Christian Ministry, Liberty University.

**Invitation to be Part of a Research Study:** You are invited to participate in a research study about discipleship at Redemption Baptist Church. To participate, you must be at least 18 years old or older at the start of the project, an active member of Redemption Baptist Church, and willing to sign this consent and confidentiality agreement document.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:** Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop anytime. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University, Redemption Baptist Church, or the researcher-pastor. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Purpose of this research study:** The purpose of this research project is to implement a discipleship training to equip lay leaders in the church to increase their involvement in the discipleship ministry, and the research project training will be specifically to train and enable the participants to become capable of discipling others.

**Procedure:** If you agree to be part of the research study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Commit to participate in the eight-week research.
2. Complete a pre-intervention interview followed by a spiritual assessment test and a post-intervention interview followed by a spiritual assessment test within the respective schedule. Each intervention with the assessment will take about 50 minutes.
3. Participate in a group discussion at the church on a Sunday afternoon, including all the other participants. This group discussion will last one hour.
4. Participate in one-and-a-half-hour discipleship class once a week for eight weeks.
5. Commit to practice some of the components of the training with a family member or church members during the eight-week training.

**Benefits of the research:** The direct benefits the participants should expect are

1. Having a better understanding of the discipleship process.
2. Understanding their roles as Christ followers and their responsibilities as lay leaders in the church as it relates to the discipling of others.
3. Developing skills to disciple others, and
4. Building an effective and influential discipleship culture at Redemption Baptist Church.

**Risks and discomforts:** The risks and discomforts involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life as followers of Christ.

**Compensation:** Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study. When necessary, the church may help participants cover the cost of training materials.

**Confidentiality:** Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject.

- All the interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others cannot easily overhear the conversations. Participant responses will be anonymous and kept confidential.

- The transcript of the interviews and of the focus group discussion will be stored in a password-locked laptop and the audio recording will be kept in a locked safe in the researcher's office. No one except the researcher will have access to the recordings and the transcripts and he will access them only for the purpose of the research study. Once the transcript is written, and the study is completed, the recording and the data collected will be kept for three years in secure locations and will be erased and the transcript shredded at the end of the three years.

- Participants will be instructed to maintain the confidentiality of things shared in the context of the research study; however, I cannot assure participants that other group members will not share what will be discussed with persons outside of the group. I will strongly discourage members from sharing the content of discussions within the study-group with other people not in the study program.

**How to Withdraw from the Study:** If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

**Contact and Questions:** The researcher conducting this study is pastor Robermann Dorceus. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, (name), at (email).

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant? If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515, or email at irb@liberty.edu

**Your Consent:** By signing this document, you agree 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 of 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 me as part of my participation in this study.

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature & Date

## APPENDIX C

### Pre-Intervention/Post-Intervention Individual Assessment

Direction: please check or circle the number that best expresses your level of agreement with each of the statements below

<b>Abiding in God's Word</b>					
I accept the Bible as the word of God or the primary means of God to speak with His people.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I read the Bible, which is God's Word, every day.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I do not only read the Bible; I study it to understand it.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
Every month, I have memorized at least two Bible verses.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I spend time meditating on God's Word and applying it in my daily living.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
<b>Total Point Value for "Abiding in God's Word"</b>					

<b>Fellowshipping with other believers</b>					
I am in a small group and participate actively in the small group.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I meet regularly for prayer and fellowship with other fellow Christians.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I seek to make peace and reconcile with everyone who has an issue with me.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I always show love to my fellow believers even when they have offended me.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I do not go around and gossip or criticize my brothers and sisters in Christ.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
<b>Total Point Value for "Fellowshipping with other believers"</b>					

<b>Abiding in Christ</b>					
I have a daily quiet time with Christ.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I do my best to make Christ the lord of my life.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I make Jesus the priority of my daily life.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I follow a daily spiritual discipline process to grow in Christ	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I am aware of the Lord's discipline in my life	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
<b>Total Point Value for "Abiding in Christ"</b>					

<b>Denying self</b>					
I completely give my life to Christ.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
My Christian commitment is to follow Jesus and be like Him.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I am ready and eager to use my time, money, and everything I have for the sake of Christ and His gospel.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
In my Christian life, I do not look for human approval I look for God's blessings.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
As a Christian, I am ready to lose my life for Christ	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
<b>Total Point Value for "Denying self"</b>					

<b>Witnessing to non-believers</b>					
One of my duties as Christian is to witness to non-believers.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I pray each day for the conversion of at least one non-believer in my neighborhood.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
Sharing the gospel with non-believers is a mandate, not a suggestion to believers.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I do my best to make friends with non-believers to share the gospel with them.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I have shared God's Word with at least one non-believer over the last month.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
<b>Total Point Value for "Witnessing to non-believers"</b>					

<b>Making disciples</b>					
I demonstrate my love toward new believers by often praying for them.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I am aware that as a disciple of Christ I am called to disciple others for Christ.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
I use my way of life as a model to influence positively a new believer	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
Over the last 2 months, I spent time with a new believer to help them grow in Christ.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
Making disciples is not a suggestion; it is a mandate for all believers in Christ.	5: Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
<b>Total Point Value for "Making disciples"</b>					



**Pre-Interview Questions**

- 1) Where are you in your relationship with Christ? Alternatively, what is your relationship with Christ?
- 2) What would you say are some of the characteristics of a disciple of Christ?
- 3) What is the main duty of a disciple of Christ?
- 4) How do you feel about discipling another believer?
- 5) What do you expect to learn from this project?
- 6) Will you be involved in the discipleship ministry of the church if trained?

**Post-Interview Questions**

- 1) Now where are you in your relationship with Christ? Alternatively, what is your relationship with Christ?
- 2) Now what would you say are some of the characteristics of a disciple of Christ?
- 3) What is the main duty of a disciple of Christ?
- 4) Now how do you feel about discipling another believer?
- 5) What have you learned from this project?
- 6) Now will you be totally involved in the discipleship ministry of the church after being trained.

## APPENDIX D

### Christian Formation and Human Development Addendum

*Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development* is a classic book written by authors who are all evangelicals and reflect the wide range of people who make up contemporary evangelicalism. The book has three sections. The book's first part, which consists of chapters 1-2, gives its readers some understanding of a Christian foundation for joining theology and social sciences. In the book's section of chapters 3-6, the author discusses the traditional aspects of human growth. These chapters discuss the formation of the mind, personality, morals, and faith. Finally, the book's last section, comprised of chapters 7-9, deals with human development from three more specialized aspects, including adult, spiritual, and cultural. These are more in-depth and pertinent to Christian educators.

Although this book has introduced its readers to various popular developmental theories along with a theological perspective on those theories, the researcher will focus on one of the three specialized dimensions of human development addressed in the last section of this book, mainly chapter eight, which is spiritual development.

The purpose of this paper is to summarize spiritual development, articulate how the future participants in the researcher's action research will grow theologically (Christian formation) when the human developmental theory is applied, and elaborate on how it can be measured and determined through the researcher's action-oriented intervention of his methodology.

### **Summary of the Human Development Theory and Theological Perspective**

In the book's eighth chapter, the author's premise is that people are spiritual beings who can experience God through His grace.<sup>198</sup> Nowadays, people experience a social phenomenon known as spiritual hunger. There is a resurgent interest in finding a spiritual center among people from all backgrounds and religions. In that regard, the author acknowledges that the variety of religious expressions of faith in contemporary culture demonstrates the rise in spirituality. It would be inaccurate to believe that spirituality is simply a Christian term or that its utilization is solely the privilege of the church. In the broadest sense, spirituality refers to the entirety of one's existence rooted in ultimate truth, in the spirit, and sensitive to existence's spiritual side that sustains and transcends one's physical, natural self.<sup>199</sup>

The author first examines spirituality in this chapter before describing Christian spiritual development. Then, the author presents his readers with several definitions or focuses of spiritual formation. The author understands that examining spiritual growth from a biblical perspective is vital because of how Scripture influences it. In addition, he then argues for spiritual formation as the Church's primary responsibility. The author claims that "people are formed and shaped in the context of the Christian community as they encounter the Triune God in worship, fellowship, discipleship, and service."<sup>200</sup>

Moreover, the author goes on to identify different types of understanding of spiritual formation among different faith traditions. Furthermore, the author elaborates on the connection between developmental theory and spiritual formation by claiming that "spiritual formation is as

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<sup>198</sup> James Riley Estep et al, *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology & Human Development* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Academic, 2010), 11.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 19.

significant as the other dimensions of human development, but it partakes of the same processes of maturational unfolding across the human lifespan.”<sup>201</sup>

### **The Effect of the Application of the Spiritual Development in the Life of the Participant**

The apostle Paul acknowledges that the Spirit-filled person makes judgments about everything. However, his conclusions are not based solely on human standards (1 Cor 2:15). The Holy Spirit controls the life of a spiritual person. The author understands spiritual formation as “a focus on the inner transformation of the human person into the likeness of Jesus Christ.”<sup>202</sup> The author further argues that the inner transformation takes place as humans participate in avenues of God’s grace, such as worship, prayer, Bible study, communion with the Triune God.<sup>203</sup> When there is an application of the spiritual development in the ministry context of the researcher, the future participants will spiritually care for their selves, relate to others in the Christian community and serve others. All of these are characteristics of mature disciples or Christians.

The apostle Peter points them out clearly in his first epistle by asking Christians to love one another, to be hospitable to one another, and that they use their spiritual gifts to serve one another as good servants of God's varied grace (1 Pet 4: 8-10).

Another essential aspect of spiritual formation is the idea of a person being formed or transformed into the image and likeness of Christ. In that sense, Spiritual formation refers to the essential nature, the inner part of a Christian that is transformed into the likeness of Christ.

Maddix understands that although a Christian does not become divine nor a savior, he would

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<sup>201</sup> Estep et al, *Christian Formation*, 75h.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

have real Christlike character and behavior.<sup>204</sup> The future participants will be in a fruitful relationship with God within the community of believers. Their lives will be reflected in a spirit-directed, disciplined lifestyle and demonstrated in redemptive action in the Church and the world.

### **Measurement of the Spiritual Development Through the Action-Oriented Intervention**

Through the action-oriented intervention approved in the Methodology section, the researcher anticipates a display of theological growth based on the personal spiritual growth of the participants and their love for God's Word. Spiritual development inspires people to engage in spiritual disciplines for a more profound understanding and experience of God. The spiritual disciplines allow people to experience a way of life focused on God by deepening one's love and understanding of God.

Through the action-oriented intervention approved in the Methodology section, the researcher also anticipates a display of love and commitment from the participants in service to God and the Church. Based on the researcher's understanding of the effect of spiritual development in the life of a Christian, he has the hope that through the action-oriented intervention, the future participants will display their theological growth through their relationship with Christ, their full and active participation in the discipleship ministry of the church, the community of faith as disciples of Christ as their lives are being transformed into becoming more like Christ.

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<sup>204</sup> Estep et al, *Christian Formation*, 12.

## APPENDIX E

### Brief Summary Of The Three Types Of Evangelization Methods

**The Way of the Master.** The "Way of the Master" evangelism method which is a technique developed by TV-show hosts Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron, choose to preach or evangelize the lost by applying the Mosaic Law to show them their sin and ultimately bring them to repentance and faith in Jesus- Christ.<sup>205</sup> When they meet with others, they start their conversation with this question: "Do you consider yourself to be a good person"<sup>206</sup>. If their encounters give them a positive answer, they go over the Ten Commandments with them, which are followed by another question: "Do you think that you would be found innocent or guilty and would be going to heaven or hell?"<sup>207</sup>

**Pros:** This method makes people aware of their culpability and how they break God's Laws. This method also makes people aware of the consequences of breaking God's law. Another positive aspect in this method offers to the evangelist the ability to get very fast into a friendly and in-depth conversation with a stranger.

**Cons:** There is an elevation of the Law, particularly the Ten Commandments. No presentation of Jesus as the substitute for the sin of humanity. People cannot be saved by following the Ten Commandments. They need to put their faith in Jesus-Christ so that they can be saved. There is no salvation without Jesus-Christ.

**The four spiritual laws.** The four spiritual laws, on the other hand, come up with four laws that are depicted as spiritual laws. This method is operated through the distribution of tracts, which are written by Dr. Bill Bright, the president of Campus Crusade for Christ<sup>208</sup>. The following is brief statement of the four laws:

The first law is drawn from John 3:16 saying, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life". The second one that is drawn from Roman 3:23 saying that" man is sinful and separated from God". The third one is drawn from Romans 5:8 saying," Jesus Christ is God's only provision for our sin". The fourth one is drawn from John1:12 saying, "We must place our faith in Jesus Christ as Savior in order to receive the gift of salvation and know God's wonderful plan for our lives"<sup>209</sup>

**Pros:** The Four Spiritual Laws method is an attempt to summarize the Gospel briefly and clearly and at the same time remain faithful to the biblical texts. The four Spiritual laws method starts with a positive note by announcing to the lost that God loves them and has a plan for their

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<sup>205</sup>Ray Comfort, "Way of the Master." Living Waters, February 5, 2024. <http://www.wayofthemaster.com/>.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup>Bill Right, "The Four Spiritual Laws." Campus Crusade for Christ, <http://4laws.com/laws/english/flash/fourlaws.swf>.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

life. I think almost everyone would like to be loved especially by God. I also think that the use of the booklet is very helpful and effective. Even when those who have to present the message would lack the skill and knowledge to do effectively, since the message is well written and concise it can be left as a follow up material that can be read and understood at a later time. We can see that the salvation by grace through faith is presented in the four laws. We can also notice the emphasis that is put on receiving Jesus -Christ as the only way for man's salvation.

**Cons:** The four spiritual Laws method is operated through the distribution of tract. They not really share verbally the Gospel with others. People do not have the opportunity to listen to the Gospel. Another weakness is the fact that the four spiritual laws method does not put any emphasis on hell. We can say that it is true God loves us, and he has a wonderful plan for us. However, if we do not pay attention to God and his plan for us, and we die in our sins we will go to hell. People need to know what is also reserved for them if they die without Christ.

**The evangelism explosion.** The evangelism explosion itself is an evangelism method developed by Dr. D. James Kennedy. This method focuses on going either door to door or talks to people on the street by asking them two fundamental questions about their faith. These are the two questions that they ask in order to engage their encounters in a spiritual debate. The first question is “Do you know for sure that you are going to be with God in heaven? Moreover, the second question is “If God were to ask you “why would I let you in my heaven?” what would you say.<sup>210</sup> After the diagnostic questions, they explain the Gospel by presenting a biblical view of grace, man, God, Jesus-Christ and faith.<sup>211</sup>

**Pros:** The evangelism explosion approach can be very effective because of their two starting questions. People can find interest in listening and answer to those questions. Because the approach brings some comfort to them. People like to be comfortable. They do not like confrontation. Theologically, they have a very well written tract that present a strong account of the death of Christ as the substitute for sinners. They also give a very good presentation of the saving faith, which is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. This means that our salvation lies only on Jesus-Christ sacrificial death, not what we have done to get us into heaven.

**Cons:** We can realize that as the four Spiritual laws, the Evangelism explosion does not make any mention of hell. No one wants to offend anybody these days. They are playing nice. I think we need to let people know the danger of not accepting Jesus-Christ as their Lord and Savior. We need to let them know that both Heaven and hell are real. If they do not accept Jesus-Christ as their Lord and Savior, they will go to hell.

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<sup>210</sup> Dr. D. James Kennedy, “Evangelism Explosion.” Evangelism Explosion EE International. <https://www.evangelismexplosion.org/>.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

## APPENDIX F

### STEPS TO PEACE WITH GOD

#### God's Plan—Peace and Life

God loves you and wants you to experience His peace and life.

The BIBLE says: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). John 10:10 Jesus said, I have come that they may have life and have it more abundantly.



#### Our Problem—Separation

Being at peace with God is not automatic, because by nature you are separated from God.

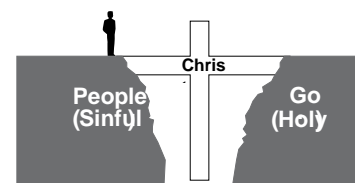
The BIBLE says: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Isaiah 53:6 says, All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way



#### God's Remedy—The Cross

God's love bridges the gap of separation between God and you. When Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the grave, He paid the penalty for your sins.

The BIBLE says: “He personally carried the load of our sins in his own body when he died on the cross” (1 Peter 2:24). Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

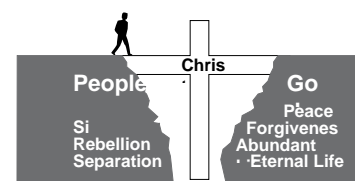


#### Our Response—Receive Christ

You cross the bridge into God's family when you receive Christ by personal invitation.

The BIBLE says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

Romans 10:9 says, “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”



To receive Christ, you need to do four things:

1. ADMIT your spiritual need. “I am a sinner.”



2. REPENT and be willing to turn from your sin.
3. BELIEVE that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.
4. RECEIVE, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and life.

CHRIST says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in" (Revelation 3:20).

The BIBLE says, "Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13).

### **What to Pray:**

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died for my sins. I want to turn from my sins. I now invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as Lord and Savior. In Jesus' name, Amen.

### **Credited to**

**Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.** (<http://www.billygraham.org>),

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"Continuing the lifelong work of Billy Graham, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association exists to support and extend the evangelistic calling and ministry of Franklin Graham by proclaiming the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to all we can by every effective means available to us and by equipping the church and others to do the same."

## APPENDIX G

### Prepare For Evangelism With A Simple Outline

Many Christians think they cannot adequately share the gospel unless they have had formal training in evangelism. I am for evangelism training, but training is not necessary before you can tell someone about Jesus and give your own testimony about how you came to know Him.

In John 9 we read of a man born blind who, within an hour after his conversion, is witnessing to Ph.D.'s in religion (the Pharisees). Obviously, he'd had no evangelism training, but he was able to talk about Jesus and his own conversion. As Martyn Lloyd Jones used to say, after being saved and after hearing countless presentations of the gospel in sermons, if Christians still believe they cannot evangelize without massive amounts of training, then either they've heard very poor preaching or they've been very poor listeners.

However, it does boost one's confidence in sharing the gospel to know a general outline of what to say and to have some appropriate verses of Scripture committed to memory. Several years ago, I developed an outline to hang my thoughts on, along with at least two key verses for each section. I do not follow it woodenly in every situation, for each evangelistic encounter is unique. And sometimes I condense it a bit. But having a full presentation of the gospel ready on my lips does give me a sense of direction and a feeling of preparedness. You're welcome to adapt the outline for use in your own personal evangelism.

1. **There is one God, He is the Creator, He is holy, and He is worth knowing.** See Deuteronomy 4:39; Isaiah 46:9; Genesis 1:1; 1 Peter 1:16. Such a God is worth our pursuit!
2. **Everyone is a sinner separated from God.**  
See Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:2. We have no idea how unholy we are in comparison to God.
3. **There is a penalty for sin.**  
See Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:27; Romans 14:10; Mt. 25:46. The penalty is judgment and Hell.
4. **Jesus paid that penalty for all who believe.**  
See Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18. Jesus took God's judgment so believers could have mercy.
5. **No one can earn God's forgiveness and favor.**  
See Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5. We're not saved by our works, but by faith in Jesus' work.
6. **We should respond with repentance and faith.**  
See Mark 1:15; John 3:16. We should turn from sin and turn to Jesus for forgiveness.
7. **We can have assurance of eternal life with God.**  
See 1 John 5:13. Jesus' resurrection and God's Word assure believers of forgiveness.

***Responding to this great message from the Bible.***

- A.** It is not only right for you to live for the God who created you and owns you, but you will find your greatest fulfillment only when you fulfill the purpose for which you were made, and that is to know God and live for Him.
- B.** Do you believe this great message of the Bible? Genuine belief in its truth is demonstrated by turning from living for yourself and believing that because of His death and resurrection Jesus Christ can make you right with God.
- C.** Are you willing to express repentance and faith in prayer to God right now?

From Donald S. Whitney, *Simplify Your Spiritual Life* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress, 2003).

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**APPENDIX H: IRB APPROVAL LETTER**

September 15, 2023  
Robermann Dorceus  
Glenn Stone

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY23-24-444 Implementing a Discipleship Strategy Plan for Lay Leaders at Redemption Baptist Church to Help Them Grow Spiritually

Dear Robermann Dorceus and Glenn Stone,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds that your study does not meet the definition of human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study/project is not considered human subjects research because (1) it will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(1).

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

**For a PDF of your IRB letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study Details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page.**

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

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

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair*  
**Research Ethics Office**