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A Discipling Strategy for Multi-Church Districts in Zambia

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Andrews University

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ABSTRACT

A DISCIPLING STRATEGY FOR MULTI-CHURCH
DISTRICTS IN ZAMBIA

by

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A DISCIPLING STRATEGY FOR MULTI-CHURCH DISTRICTS IN ZAMBIA

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Problem

Despite the exponential numerical growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia, there are noticeable evidences that many in the church still struggle to maintain consistency in their faith commitments. This means that the church's great emphasis on evangelistic efforts that lead people to accept Christ must be balanced with a matching emphasis on helping them to walk with him in daily life. Yet the Zambia Union Conference lacks a sufficient and contextualized discipling strategy for both new and longtime members. The purpose of this project is to address this need by developing a biblical and tri-focal discipling strategy for multi-church districts in Zambia.

Method

Through library research, the theological foundations for the nature and goals of Christian discipleship were established. With this framework, a literature review was conducted on different local church approaches to disciple-making. Through an analysis of Zambian society, some of the challenges to the goals of discipleship in Zambia were revealed. The SWOT analysis of the Zambian Union Conference reveals some of the challenges that hinder local churches from becoming intentional and effective disciple-making communities.

Results

This project established the need for a clear vision for disciple-making so that the methods match the objectives, a functional equipping environment in the local church as the primary context for discipleship, a renewal of pastoral leadership that focuses on developing people, and continued “equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God” through a systematic study of God’s Word.

Conclusion

This project outlines a tri-focal discipling strategy for multi-church districts in Zambia. The strategy includes local church ministry structure that stipulate, in organizational flow, a process that meets the basic growth needs of members and addresses each of the four dimensions of our vision for discipling in a balanced way. Relevant topics are selected and a curriculum for discipling is developed. A Christian growth evaluation process is developed for assessing the progress being made.

Furthermore, pastoral leadership practices for disciple-making churches together with a project implementation outline are defined. Overall the strategy weighs heavily on connecting God's people in intentional relationships for mutual discipling.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

A DISCIPLING STRATEGY FOR MULTI-CHURCH
DISTRICTS IN ZAMBIA

A Project Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Vanny Munambeza Munyumbwe
May 2012

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Dedication

To the Zambian pastors who will choose to be equippers of the saints “for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God,” “proclaiming Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.”

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The saying “Christianity in Africa is a mile wide, but an inch deep” implies that the exponential numerical growth in membership of the church in Africa lacks spiritual depth. It is estimated that Sub-Saharan Africa alone is home to about one-in-five of all Christians in the world. But when asked to describe their religious beliefs and practices, and the role religion plays in their private and public lives, many Africans give answers that pose some apparent paradoxes. For example, while many of them are committed to Christianity, they still continue to practice elements of traditional African religions (Luis & Alan, 2010). It is also surprising to outside observers that countries like Kenya and Rwanda, which are predominantly Christian, would have their history forever marred by such gruesome and horrifying ethnic violence (BBC, 2008; Gettleman, 2007).

Christianity in Zambia is not an exception to this paradox. According to Luis and Alan’s research (2010), 90% of the Zambian population professes Christianity, 85% of these attend weekly worship, and 85% take the Bible as the literal word of God. Despite this dominance of Christianity, many still believe in the protective power of juju (charms or amulets), witchcraft, and many consult traditional healers when someone in the family is sick.

Given such a context, it will be naïve to assume that Seventh-day Adventists would be free from such inconsistencies. In fact, having grown and worked in Zambia, the author is aware that many Adventists still live in fear of witchcraft and evil spirits. Additionally, there are tribal divisions among Adventists. Conference/Mission Fields territorial realignments and the location of administrative offices are often influenced by tribal dynamics(Shumba, 2010). This, according to the apostle Paul, would be a sign that many are still “walking according to man” (1 Cor 3:1-4).

Also, the last 15 years have proved that many Adventists are susceptible to the teachings of clandestine movements, easily “tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14). The resistance of the laity to the introduction of the department of Women Ministries was largely fueled by the writings of splinter groups who charged that the department was being pushed by the Roman Catholic Church on Adventists. Embracing the department was deemed as a sign of cooperation with Catholicism. Every pastor or administrator who promoted or defended Women Ministries was seen as a sell out or perhaps an emissary of the Catholic Church. This conflict has gone on for a number of years now, leading to the closure of not less than ten churches in one Mission Field alone. What this has revealed is the vulnerability of members in Zambia to the theological views of those who are on the fringes of Adventism. This just goes to show that a lot more needs to be done to help members be grounded in the faith so that they are not easily tossed around by every wind of doctrine.

These are just some of the few examples that attest to the fact that Seventh-day Adventists also struggle to maintain consistency in their walk with the Lord. The apostle Paul would argue that this calls for continued “equipping of the saints for the work of

ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect (*teleios*/mature) man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:12-13). But the challenge is that the Zambia Union lacks a sufficient and contextualized discipling strategy for both new and long time members.

Purpose of the Study

While there is much literature already available on discipleship, this study seeks to clarify the goals of discipleship and propose an applicable discipling strategy for Zambia's cultural context. The study seeks to develop a biblical and tri-focal discipling strategy for multi-church districts in Zambia. The strategy incorporates a discipling curriculum, pastoral leadership practices and a local church structure for discipling. Hopefully this will contribute to the fulfillment of the Great Commission to "make disciples" (see Matt 28:18-20) by putting disciple-making at the center of church life.

Justification

Ignited by the apocalyptic vision of the book of Revelation, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is engaged in a mission to proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel of God's love, leading them to accept Jesus as their personal Savior, unite them with His remnant Church, and prepare them for His soon return. In pursuant of this mission, the Zambia Union continues to place a great emphasis on evangelism and church growth resulting in rapid membership growth in recent years. To conserve this large influx of members and galvanize the faith of both new and long time members, the Zambia Union needs a more intentional discipling strategy. The strategy proposed in this study seeks to meet that need.

Second, without a more intentional discipling strategy, the potential to be caught up in the dilemma of numbers versus discipling is high. It is so easy to settle for a lop-sided evangelism that boasts only in numbers yet leaves members chained in their unbiblical cultural and religious backgrounds. People who join the Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia come from different backgrounds, religious traditions and experiences. They need more than just an intellectual knowledge of the church's basic doctrines, as vital as that is. They all need continued help in their walk with the Lord. This study seeks to make discipling the center of church life and provide a proactive way to resist the tendency of treating evangelism as an event.

Third, the introduction of ecumenical Religious Education (RE) syllabuses from primary to university levels in Zambia's school system has supported and enhanced the creation of an ecumenical and pluralistic religious landscape in the country. For example, in a survey of 406 students of 39 denominations at the University of Zambia in 1999, it was found that 88% of those who did RE at senior level agreed that all Christians should unite. On whether Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism were equally valid, 50% of those who had taken RE, as opposed to 38% who had not, agreed (Carmody, 2003). This cannot be a welcome trend to Seventh-day Adventists. As George Knight (2008) puts it, from its very beginning Adventism has never seen itself as just another evangelical denomination. Seventh-day Adventism has viewed itself as a called out people with a prophetic mission and message to the world. To nurture and preserve this ecclesiological self-understanding in such a pluralistic religious context, the Zambia Union needs to be intentional about discipling both new and long time members. Otherwise the very identity of Adventism is at stake.

Fourth, each cultural context presents a different set of challenges to discipleship. It is also true that Christian discipleship has both universal qualities and local expressions. In his introduction to the *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, the editor, Richard Longenecker (1996), makes this point cogently. He argues that the New Testament presents a “number of varied portraits, depictions, and presentations that speak directly to the issues of Christian self-understanding and practice” (p. 6). He says, “While there is a certain sense of center among the presentations of New Testament authors,” each one “presents the concepts of Christian discipleship in a manner related to his own background and perspective, the perceived needs and understanding of his audience, and the specific details of the situation addressed” (p. 6). If that was true of the New Testament times, it means even now generic discipling strategies /curricula cannot be adequate for every context. Therefore this study examines some of the challenges to the goals of discipleship in Zambia. It takes a hard look at what it takes to help a Seventh-day Adventist maintain a joyful and growing relationship with the Lord in the Zambian cultural context. It examines the capacity of the church as the primary setting for discipleship. Based on these considerations, a discipling strategy that takes these contextual factors into account is proposed.

Fifth, the present organizational structure of district of churches under one pastor, with all its positives, further undermines the effectiveness of local churches. The district under the pastor’s leadership generates programs that the local churches have to implement. Add to this the programs initiated by the Conference, Union, Division, and the General Conference which the pastor is asked to implement in his district. The result is that churches have become used having programs passed down from higher

organizations irrespective of how they impact the lives of members in the local church. The church calendar is cluttered with programs most of which cannot be assessed on how well they do on building up people. And yet, biblically, the relevance of everything that goes on in the church must be judged on the basis of its contribution to building up people. Others have expressed concern on the overall organizational structure of Adventism and they have advocated for change from the top (Knight, 2006; Parmenter, 2006). The strategy proposed in this study attempts to place the restructuring where it matters most by refocusing local church ministries and re-orienting pastors from being program oriented to people oriented. Hopefully the re-orienting of pastoral ministry will also have great spiritual dividends on the pastors because they will realize that their greatest asset in ministry is their transformed lives.

Expectations

This project dissertation could potentially enhance the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church by bringing a balance between leading people to accept Christ and helping them to walk with him in the real world. The proposed discipling strategy speaks directly to some of the issues that Zambians face as they seek for a practical expression of their Christian self-understanding. The project provides a potential model for restructuring and refocusing local church ministries to make discipling the central mission of the church, and re-orienting pastoral ministry in Zambia from being program oriented to people oriented. Hopefully the curriculum proposed will also contribute to nurture and establish both new and long-time members in the love of God as well as enhance a balanced understanding of Seventh-day Adventism as God's end-time

movement without inspiring a spirit of superiority and paranoia towards people from other faith communities.

Delimitations

The proliferation of literature on the Christian life makes research on discipling a daunting task. One has to set parameters in order to stay focused. This is the case with the present work and the following are some of the self-imposed limitations.

First, this project dissertation does not focus on the personal approaches to discipleship (Beagles, 2009; B. Hull, 2006); its primary concern is the corporate/church community approaches in prompting discipleship. This is not to diminish personal responsibility for spiritual growth. But the goal is to create a nurturing church environment under which personal dimensions to discipleship are pursued and all members find a place to continue their growth.

Second, in reaching out to all people in the country, the Seventh-day Adventist church draws into church fellowship many who are HIV positive. Almost every family in the church has been affected by HIV/AIDS in one way or another. Under the burden of this scourge, pursuing a relationship with Jesus often becomes a challenge for so many people. Therefore, just as Christ met the needs of people before he bade them to follow Him, the Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia has a responsibility to respond to the HIV/AIDS challenge. However, this project dissertation does not address the question of how the Seventh-day Adventist church should respond to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Zambia. The researcher understands the pain and strain this epidemic has caused on many families. But hopefully a study that was pursued by another Zambian specifically on this issues addresses this need (Akombwa, 2009).

Third, this project dissertation does not seek to arbitrate nor take sides in the current simmering debate in the Seventh-day Adventist church on the methods of prompting spiritual growth (Dybdahl, 2008; Pipim, 2009; Wilson, 2010; Witcombe, 2009). The debate revolves around personal approaches to spiritual growth/spirituality. Summarizing the intent of *Hunger*, the book in which Dybdahl has popularized spiritual disciplines that others have found objectionable, he says; “Hunger reveals how you can truly encounter God and have a close relationship with Him. You will discover the joy and fulfillment of such spiritual practices as simplicity, solitude, worship, community, and fasting” (words found at the back cover of the book). Dybdahl characterizes his book as an invitation to return to the original definition of the Christian religion; a call to live a life of communion with God.

To the contrary, Pipim, one of the most outspoken critics of *Hunger*, charges Dybdahl as one of those “within our Seventh-day Adventist ranks wheeling the Trojan horses of spiritualism into our church. In the guise of promoting spirituality, they are knowingly or unknowingly promoting practices akin to ancient paganism, and Eastern and Western medieval mysticism” (2009). While I disagree with Pipim’s unrestrained and very subjective critique of *Hunger*, there may be a few things Dybdahl would probably state differently were he to revise his work.

In his sermon to the 2010 Session delegates in Atlanta, newly elected General Conference president, Ted Wilson (2010), waded into this controversy when he cautioned: “Stay away from non-biblical spiritual disciplines or methods of spiritual formation that are rooted in mysticism such as contemplative prayer, centering prayer, and the emerging church movement in which they are promoted.” Obviously anything

that deserves mentioning in a setting like that by the new leader of the world church must be an issue. However, this study does not address the debate because it is not germane to the goals of this study. Its mention here signifies a recognition of the views others hold on how to prompt spiritual growth; issues that will potentially continue to be part of the discussion in the church by the time the strategy proposed in this study is implemented.

Limitations

Notwithstanding the rigor applied in pursuing this study, it has some limitations like all academic works. One of its limitations is that for the profile of the country, it relies on secondary data or research carried out by others for other purposes. Inherent in this limitation is the potential for relying on less objective conclusions since every research has some level of bias. The other limitation of this work is that the strategy proposed has not been field tested since it is developed in-residence. Hopefully the cultural background and work experience of the author helps to reduce these deficits to less significant levels of materiality.

Methodology and Description

This study focuses on understanding the nature and goals of Christian discipleship. It examines the social-economical context of the Zambian society and drawing implications for discipleship. It also aims to determine the local Seventh-day Adventist church's preparedness as the primary context for discipling. Library research and analysis of the Zambia Union Conference statistics are used to gain this understanding. Additionally, anecdotal evidence that is deemed illuminative is used. The dissertation has five chapters. The present chapter outlines the purpose of the study, the

statement of the problem, the justification for the study, expectations from the study, and methodology.

Drawing on the Bible, and other theological works, Chapter 2 provides a theological foundation for discipleship by reflecting on the meaning of disciple, discipleship and discipling. The chapter also examines the New Testament for the nature and goals of Christian discipleship.

Chapter 3 reviews the relevant literature on discipleship under two themes: (a) disciple-making church (b) pastoral leadership. The chapter examines various models of disciple-making in a local church, and contemporary orientation to pastoral leadership.

Chapter 4 examines the socio-economical context of the Zambian society as well as the local Seventh-day Adventist Church's preparedness as the primary context for discipling. Thus, the chapter establishes unique challenges for discipleship in Zambia.

Chapter 5 brings together the conclusions drawn from all the chapters and answers the fundamental question of what discipling strategy would be required for the Zambia Union. A tri-focal discipling strategy for multi-church districts is outlined. The strategy includes: designing local church ministries, developing a curriculum for discipling and defining pastoral leadership practices for disciple-making churches. The chapter also provides a project implementation outline. It concludes with a *Christian Growth Assessment* process.

CHAPTER II

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP

Introduction

The unequivocal command of the risen Lord to His followers to “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matt 28:19-20), constitutes the primary mission of the church. According to this command, discipleship lies at the heart of Church life and ministry. Over the years a lot has been written in both scholarly and popular Christian literature on discipleship. But a review of the literature on this topic shows that no consensus reigns in understanding the nature of Christian discipleship. The terms disciple, discipleship, and discipling mean different things to different people. Consequently, all kinds of teachings and lifestyles have been developed—all in the name of Christian discipleship. Churches have pursued all kinds of approaches to prompt discipleship. But what actually is discipleship? Who is a disciple of Jesus? What are the goals of discipleship and how should we go about prompting discipleship in the twenty-first century?

In this chapter we will demonstrate that discipleship is *the Christian life*, and that the biblical model for discipling involves first and foremost an emphasis on learning to live life by faith in God as we walk with him in the real world. We will argue that maturity in the Christian life is not measured simply in terms of the quality of one’s outward activities, but rather by the quality of one’s faith. This is not to suggest a

dichotomy between faith and practical Christian living. While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it also results into conformity to God's law. Thus genuine faith is expressed through loving obedience and loving service. But the point of this study is that discipleship is not just a question of what we do, it is a matter of whom we trust. It is about what Christ does in us, for us and through us.

It will be suggested that while other believers are very much part of the discipling process, discipleship is initiated and sustained by God. He calls us to follow him, the Holy Spirit prompts and enables our response of love to his love, and we choose to commit to a life of obedience and loving service no matter what the cost. In order to get a good grasp of what biblical discipleship entails we will reflect on the meaning and usage of key discipleship terms in their historical and biblical contexts. The Gospels and New Testament epistles will be analyzed for teachings on discipleship. Hopefully this provides a firm biblical rootage for the discipling strategy proposed in this study.

The Meaning of Disciple

Contemporary Views on the Meaning of Disciple

A review of current literature on discipleship reveals different perspectives on what it means to be a disciple. These can be summarized into five major views: (a) a disciple is a learner, (b) a disciple is a Christian, (c) a disciple is a more committed Christian, (d) a disciple is one called to full-time ministry, and (e) a disciple is a Christian leader. Scholars and practitioners who see a disciple as a learner limit the definition of disciple to the lexical meaning. For example, Wuest (1966) states, "The word merely refers to one who puts himself under the teachings of someone else and learns from him. The context must rule as to whether the particular disciple mentioned is saved or

unsaved” (Wuest, p. 25). Ryrie (1989) notes; “A disciple is a follower of a teacher and his teachings, involving in Bible times, traveling with that teacher wherever he went” (p. 155).

The strength of the view that a disciple is a learner is that the Greek term for disciple is used in the Bible to refer to a person who is a learner or student of another. Thus, being a learner is a big part of what being a disciple entails. However, we cannot limit our understanding of disciple solely to the lexical meaning of the term. This may be too limiting, and could lead to inadequate approaches to discipling. Others have shown that the usage and meaning of *mathetes* in Scripture and generally during the New Testament time broadened beyond just a learner (Jones, 2006). This is reflected in the book of Acts where “disciple” is synonymous to “Christian.”

The second view suggests that a disciple is a committed Christian who is willing to obey the radical demands of discipleship. One of the advocates of this view notes, “If you lead a person to Christ, are you happy? Of course you are. You are elated and so is everyone else concerned. But are you satisfied? No, you shouldn’t be. Jesus told us to do more than just get converts. He told us to make disciples” (Eims, 1978). According to this view, not all Christians are disciples. Those who hold this view conclude that being a Christian does not make someone automatically a disciple even though one is a member of God’s kingdom. Commitment is the beginning point of discipleship, not the new birth. Their rationale is that discipleship requirements such as Luke 14:25-33 and Mark 10:21 imply a higher level of commitment; thus, they see a two-stage Christianity within the church: ordinary believers who have relegated themselves “to a life of mediocrity,” according to one author (Henrichsen, 1974), and active disciples. Pentecost (1972),

another proponent of this view, insists that

there is a vast difference between being saved and being a disciple. Not all men who are saved are disciples, although all who are disciples are saved. In discussing the question of discipleship, we are not dealing with a man's salvation. We are dealing with a man's relationship to Jesus Christ as his teacher, his master, and his Lord. (p. 14)

The problem with this position is that it fails to interpret the discipleship demands given by Jesus in the light of the audience being addressed. It is true that Jesus' call to discipleship included a demand for the would-be followers to count the cost, or make some radical decisions to follow him. But the same cost of discipleship was not demanded for all. For example, the demands on the rich young ruler must be balanced with the calling involving the Gerasene demoniac of (Mark 5:38-39) who was told to go home instead of following Christ. Wilkins explains this phenomenon persuasively when he says:

Jesus knew the heart of the person, knew what was best for the proclamation of the gospel, and did not call this person to the same kind of cost to which others were called. His calling was personalized in line with Jesus' knowledge of the priorities of his and Jesus' intentions for him. (1992, p. 110)

The other difficulty with this view is the notion that one can be saved without being a disciple of Jesus. A fundamental error in this view lay in its separation of the call to salvation from the call to discipleship thereby creating a two-tiered understanding of discipleship. But a close examination of biblical discipleship does not allow for two classes of Jesus' followers as suggested by proponents of this position. And a new birth experience that does not start with commitment to Jesus is foreign to Scripture. Bruinsma (2006) notes: "The biblical word for the crucial change in our inner orientation, from a state of non-commitment to the God who made and redeemed us to a state of total commitment to him on whom we know we ultimately depend is *conversion*. This

originally Latin word means: a turning around. There must be a point in our lives when that happens. It is a new start, also frequently referred to as a 'new birth'. It is not optional" (p. 161).

The third view suggests that a disciple is one who has been called out from among lay believers to enter full time ministry. This view results from observing that after being trained by Jesus, the disciples entered into full-time ministry. A classic argument for this position is one advanced by Sweetland (1987) who contends: "Everyone is called to participate in the reign of God, but only some are called to be followers of Jesus. . . . The Disciple of Jesus is called to serve other members of the eschatological community (Mark 1:31) . . . and those outside the faith community as well (pp. 17, 35).

The problem with this approach is in the failure to draw a distinction between the twelve as disciples and the twelve as apostles. The twelve were chosen from among the larger number of disciples (Luke 6:13). After that he appointed them apostles. Luke 6:17 also attests to a large number of disciples who did not follow Jesus around in full time ministry like the twelve apostles. Additionally, it is important to note that what is demonstrated in Mark 1:31, a text that Sweetland uses to support his idea, simply reflects what should be understood as a model for true discipleship. All true disciples are characterized by a life of service. The gift of salvation makes us debtors to all of God's children to serve them. Inherent in the call to be a disciple is a call to Christian service (John 15:8), whether we are in full time ministry or not. Russell Burrill (1996) goes to great length in making this point by suggesting that in fact the rite of baptism also carries the symbol of ordination to the ministry of all believers.

Additionally, a point can be made that even in the selection of "the twelve" Jesus

did not mean to restrict discipleship only to them. This number is to be traced to Jesus' goal in salvation history, the preparation of the community of God. It is probable that in their selection there is both a backward and a forward look: backward to the ancient constitution of Israel with twelve tribes; and at the same time forward to the final formation of the New Testament church. Perhaps it is in keeping with this concept that in Rev 21:14 the twelve foundation stones of the city bear the names of the twelve apostle of the Lamb. They represent the whole community of God gathered from all nations. Therefore, while we should acknowledge that some of Jesus' saying could have been meant specifically for the twelve, generally we should see in the twelve a representation of what Jesus wanted multiplied.

Donald McGavran (1980) popularized a fourth view which proposes that disciples are converts to Jesus. He insisted that the key objective of evangelism is to make disciples and interpreted disciple making as the making of converts out of non-Christians. McGavran separated disciple making into two stages: "discipling" and "perfecting." By "discipling," McGavran means bringing people to a first-time decision to follow Christ. It is an initial adhesion to the faith facilitated by minimal requirements that make accepting Christ much easier. It involves lowering the ethical demands of the gospel and the degree of understanding which is required before a person can join the church, thus creating a nominal Christian base from which to build a church. He applies the term "perfecting" to the process of nurture and development which is required to take believers from the initial acceptance of Jesus to mature faith and obedience. McGavran does not only contrast discipling with perfecting as two levels in the spiritual experience of an individual, he sees them as two different functions in the ministry of the church. With this

understanding, McGavran gave emphasis to discipling over the nurturing of church members (perfecting).

There are problem areas with this view. The first problem area is that there is no clarity in McGavran's writing on the status of those who are "discipled" but not "perfected." Are they Christians or not? Are they saved or not? At times McGavran presents discipling as a necessary intermediate stage between the non-Christian world and the church. Thus he seems to vacillate between seeing discipled people as less than real born-again Christians and on the other hand seeing them as real Christians. The second problem area concerns requirements for church membership. McGavran's critics have raised concerns over his position on the initial work of discipling that must be done before a non-Christian is baptized (Burrill, 1996). If their initial adhesion to the faith is facilitated by minimal demands of the gospel, what are the chances that additional requirements later will not precipitate a falling away when they discover the "cost of discipleship in a way they never thought of? Besides, is this not a departure from Christ's general approach when calling would-be disciples? Christ never pulled back from declaring the cost of discipleship (Luke 9:57-62). In his classic volume on discipleship, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1995) argues that the first call every Christian experiences is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. Bonhoeffer summarizes his understanding of what it means to be a follower of Christ in one potent sentence, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die" (p. 89).

The other difficulty with his view is that there is no evidence in Scripture that the two-stage separation of "make disciples" is intended. The evidence seems to suggest that discipling involves both the initial work of bringing people to Christ and a continuing

work of helping them to grow spiritually. In the words of Bill Hull (2006), “make disciples” encompasses three dimensions: (a) deliverance (the part of the Great Commission that tells us to ‘baptize them’), (b) development (this comes from the ‘teaching them to obey’ component), and (c) deployment (this comes from the ‘go’ aspect of the Great Commission). Therefore the notion that discipleship is a second stage of the Christian life is difficult to substantiate from the discipleship teachings of Jesus. Besides, the experience of conversion, which McGavran sees as the first stage, cannot be exclusively limited to someone’s initial acceptance of Christ. It is both a one time and also an ongoing experience. Hence discipling must involve much more than simply an initial exposure to Christ. Another question raised by Burrill concerns the matter of deciding what the minimal and what the dispensable prerequisites to being a discipled person are. Who makes that decision, and can these prerequisites be applied to every person everywhere? McGavranism leaves all these issues hanging.

The fifth view suggests that a disciple is a true believer, and that the new birth/conversion is the starting point of being a disciple. James Boice (1986) says, “Discipleship is not a supposed second step in Christianity, as if one first becomes a believer in Jesus and then, if he chooses, a disciple. From the beginning, discipleship is involved in what it means to be a Christian” (p. 16). According to this viewpoint, being a disciple is synonymous with being a Christian. This view is the one that most reflect the meaning of disciple as set forth in Scripture. It is very important, though, to reiterate the point made earlier that even though Scripture treats discipleship as equally applicable to all believers, we need to be careful not to universalize every demand that Jesus made on would-be followers in Scripture. This is a point over which many have tripped;

embracing all kinds of lifestyles all in the name of pursuing Christian discipleship. Some of the demands of discipleship do not apply the same to all believers. However, we need to be equally on guard against the opposite error, which is to rationalize all the demands of discipleship that seem to infringe on our comforts.

Seventh-day Adventists also express different perspectives on the subject of discipleship. Jon Paulien discusses stages of faith on his website and discipleship is presented simply as one of the stages. After describing the first stage of faith as the initial acquaintance with God, or the romance stage, Paulien writes:

The second stage I call the learning or *discipleship stage*. It is a time when believers explore, study, and learn how to fit into their new spiritual community. Finding the right mentor is crucial at this stage, as people are eager to learn and can be often led astray. This is a time of high confidence, where new believers feel that they have found the truth and can become somewhat legalistic and inflexible. If people find a healthy mentor, they will continue to grow, *moving from disciples to teachers and leaders.*” (Paulien, 2010; emphasis added)

According to this view, discipleship is a stage of Christianity one graduates from. Another Seventh-day Adventist scholar, Russell Burrill, observes that for many Adventists being a disciple simply means subscribing to the fundamental beliefs of the church (Burrill, 1996). In his appraisal of western Christianity in general, Jon Dybdahl seems to agree with Burrill when he bemoans the pervasive tendency of Christians to define Christianity in cognitive and intellectual terms (Dybdahl, 2008). In reference specifically to Seventh-day Adventists, Dybdahl comments in another place that “Traditionally the Adventist Church has emphasized intellectual truth and accepting certain facts and ideas about God. At least in many places it has not talked so much about the importance of directly experiencing God” (Rogers, 2004). For Jane Thayer (2008),

evangelism (baptizing) and discipling (teaching) are the two components of the Great Commission (Thayer, 2008, p. 9).

It is also safe to say for the most part discipleship has not been part of the Adventist vocabulary in thinking on the Christian life. Traditionally, Seventh-day Adventist discussions of Christian spirituality or the growth of Christians into the likeness of Christ have been framed in terms of the doctrine of sanctification. But lately in most Seventh-day Adventist Universities, colleges, and congregations, Christian growth is being expressed using terms such as “Biblical Spirituality” or “Spiritual Formation” (Fortin, 2010; Morris, 2003; Nae, 2003; Rogers, 2004). It is not clear, however, whether this change of terminology reflects a fundamental change in our thinking on Christian growth.

Each of the foregoing views represents a sincere desire on the part of proponents to understand the meaning and implications of Jesus’ discipleship teachings and relate them to ministry in our time. But as others have concluded, the way we interpret the teachings/sayings of Jesus on discipleship ultimately affects our concept of discipleship (Collinson, 2006; G. Tangeman, 1996; M. Wilkins, 1992). Therefore without a careful examination of New Testament discipleship, we will be stuck with this ambiguity on what it means to be a disciple, there will be no clarity on the goals of discipleship, and we will continue to hit and miss when it comes to discipling.

So who is a disciple? And what should shape the way we go about making disciples? That is a question to keep in mind as we continue to explore the meaning of discipleship in the New Testament. We will start with a reflection on some key discipleship terms in Scripture. Then we will examine some references to different kinds

of disciples in the Gospels. We will also examine the Gospels to learn from Christ's ministry with his disciples. Lastly, this chapter will end with a brief survey of the New Testament epistles for discipleship concepts.

Discipleship Terms

There are three key discipleship terms in the New Testament. These are *mathetes*, *akoloutheo* and *mimeomai/mimetes*. These words provide basic information from which the concept of discipleship is built in the New Testament. We will now examine their meaning and usage in both historical and biblical contexts. Hopefully this effort will yield helpful information from which we can distill some essential elements that will contribute to our definition of what it means to be a disciple.

Mathetes

Disciple is the most common designation for Jesus' adherents in the Gospels. In Greek the term is *mathetes*. It occurs in all the four Gospels (Longenecker, 1996). In these occurrences a broad and a narrow use of the term is discernible. It is used specifically with reference to the twelve disciples and generally to the crowds who followed Jesus with varying degrees of conviction and loyalty. It is also applied to other kinds of disciples such as to the "disciples" of John the Baptist (Matt 9:14; 11:2; 14:12; Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33; 7:18-19; 11:1; John 1:35, 37; 3:25; 4:1), "disciples" of the Pharisees (Matt 22:16; Mark 2:18) "disciples" of Moses (John 9:28). In the book of Acts *mathetes* occurs as a synonym for believers or Christians (6:1-2, 7; 9:1, 10, 19, 25-26, 38; 11:26, 29; 13:52; 14:20, 22, 28; etc.).

Mathetes is derived from the verb *manthano* which means learn or direct one's mind to something that produces external effect. Thus a *mathetes* is a "learner" or "pupil"

(Verbrugge, 2000a). A person is called a *mathetes* only when one binds oneself to someone else in order to acquire practical and theoretical knowledge. Such a person may be an apprentice in a trade, a student of medicine, or a member of a philosophical school. Hence one can only be a *mathetes* in the company of a *didaskalos*, master, or teacher.

The meaning of the term goes beyond the mere acquisition of theoretical knowledge. It includes learning through experience and not only through instruction (Friberg, Friberg, & Miller, 2000). Although *manthano* always implies an intellectual process of acquiring knowledge, external effects are always intended. It implies thought accompanied by endeavor. Hence the basic meaning of the term really is “to experience” the object of learning. The implication in the ordinary usage of *manthano* is “to seek to experience” (Kittle, 1967). In talking about Christian discipleship, John Oswald Sanders seems to capture this aspect of *manthano* when he states: “So a disciple of Christ can be defined as a learner of Jesus who accepts the teachings of his Master, not only in belief but in lifestyle. It involves acceptance of the views and practices of the Teacher and obedience to his commands” (Sanders, 1994).

The Greco-Roman culture had a variety of relationships associated with the term *mathetes*. Describing the use of *mathetes* in the Greco-Roman culture, Michael Wilkins (1992) says, the meaning of *mathetes* broadened beyond just “learner” to refer to “adherents” of a great master. The emphasis went beyond being a “learner” or “pupil” in a school to being an adherent to a great master. The emphasis shifted increasingly to the relationship between the master and the disciple. It is also worth noting that in Greek culture, the concept of “imitation” of the human master was a big part of the teacher-student relationship. In fact, *mathetes* was also applied to an intellectual link between two

persons considerably removed in time whereby one seeks to imitate the other. It referred to an inner fellowship between the two persons and the practical effects of such a relationship. Teachers and students were bound together by a certain teaching and practice of life, and the student was recognized in his imitation of the teachings and life of the teacher. No wonder the disciples were called “Christians” for the first time in Antioch, a predominantly Greek speaking context (Acts 11:19-26). In the Greek culture, it was a common practice for identifying adherents to attach the termination—*ianos/-ianoi* to the name of the leader or master.

Mostly Greek disciples chose their teacher based on the fame and reputation of the teacher. In John 12:20-21, we have a record of some Greeks seeking to see Jesus. It is plausible that the Greeks came to see him in keeping with their tradition. In fact, Bertram Melbourne (2007) concludes; “Having heard of him as a great teacher, they may have come to be apprenticed to him, to learn from him, and possibly to become his disciples to benefit from his instruction” (p. 20).

In rabbinic Judaism, the equivalent of the Greek *mathetes* is the *talmidh*. Others have suggested that Rabbinic Judaism made much of the concept of New Testament discipleship (McCallum & Lowery, 2006). Rabbinic discipleship at its foundation was a social system that bound at least two people (but normally more) into a specific hierarchical relationship. The teacher-disciple relationship was expressed as a servant to master relationship. Disciples regarded their teachers higher than their own fathers and referred to them as Rabbi meaning “Revered One” or as “Master.” Hence the words of Jesus in Matt 23:8-10:

But you do not be called Rabbi; for one is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your Father; for one is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for one is your Teacher, the Christ.

The Teacher/master was regarded as the father and his disciples became his family.

Students left home and lived with the teacher; thus, a discipleship community was created. Martin Jaffee (1997) delineates a first century Jewish discipleship community from other learning relationships/settings. He asserts that the discipleship community was a setting for transmission of transformative knowledge in which emulation of the imparter of knowledge was both a primary goal of knowledge and a proof of its possession (p. 531). The training offered held out the promise that one might become in some fundamental sense a new being, just like the imparter of knowledge.

The primary goal of a disciple was to appropriate the Master's person and become just like him. That was the highest calling of discipleship. The Bible expresses this concept beautifully with the words: "A disciple is not above his teacher, but every disciple fully trained will become like his teacher" (Luke 6:40). Only through participating in the discipleship process could an individual become recognized as a teacher of the Law and earn the right to teach others. Following ordination, a disciple would then become a rabbi and go out to raise disciples of his own.

In summary, the following can be said about the concept of Greek Culture *mathetes* as: a man who directs his mind to learning some specific knowledge or conduct from another person with whom he had a personal relationship. The process of education was intentional and it had a set plan. *Mathetes* was also used to designate an intellectual link and an inner fellowship between two persons considerably removed in time with resultant practical effects in the life of the imitator. This aspect of *mathetes* is of considerable significance especially in relation to the development of the Christian use of

the term after the ascension of Christ. After Christ's ascension, fellowship with God is made possible through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The following can be said about rabbinic disciple; the disciple chose his teacher. In both Greco-Roman and rabbinic master-disciple relationships, discipleship was a voluntary initiative by the disciple. Students were attracted to their teachers based on the teacher's superior knowledge of the Torah. Students were accepted based on their abilities. Discipleship was hierarchical relationship, expressed in servant-master terms. The relationship of rabbinic discipleship was limited to an agreed-upon period of time within which the disciple memorized the teacher's words, learned his teacher's ministry, imitated his teacher's life and character. The disciple was concerned with becoming a teacher/master himself and was expected to raise his own disciples. In other words, there would be no qualitative difference between him and his master. Lastly, we should add that commitment of the student to the teacher and his teachings was the hallmark of discipleship. Discipling required commitment to a personal relationship.

Probably drawing from both the Jewish and Greco-Roman culture, the concept of *mathetes* in the New Testament includes total attachment of the student to someone (Matt 10:24-25; Luke 6:40) to learn his teaching, to learn his life, and even method of instruction. This would take place in both formal and informal contexts. The existence of a personal attachment to the teacher/master shaped the whole life of the one described as *mathetes* (Kittle, 1967, p. 441). Thus *mathetes* as used in its historical and biblical contexts applies to one who engages in learning from another both in informal contexts and through structured instructions, and it means one who attaches himself to someone who has a pedagogical character or a particular set of views or values for the purpose of

learning and obeying what is taught and illustrated by the master's life.

Akoloutheo

Another verb closely linked to “disciple” in the New Testament is *akoloutheo*. According to the *NIV Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Verbrugge, 2000b), the term in classical Greek means go somewhere with someone, accompany, and follow. In Rabbinic Judaism the term describes the relationship of a pupil to a teacher of the Torah. The pupil subordinates himself to a rabbi and follows him everywhere, learning from him and serving him. The New Testament occurrences of *akoloutheo* do not always involve being a disciple. For example, when the Gospels speak of multitudes who wondered after and crowded around Jesus (e.g., Matt 4:25; 8:1; 21:9; Mark 5:24; 10:32; Luke 7:9; 9:11; John 6:2), they use the word in a neutral sense. However, *akoloutheo* has special significance in the New Testament. Jesus uses it when he calls disciples to follow him (Matt 8:22; 19:21; John 1:43; 21:19-22). The usage of the term here denotes a call to intimate discipleship of the earthly Jesus. It involves giving up the old way of life and to take up the new calling to follow Jesus Christ (Mark 1:16; 10:17; Matt 9:9).

In summary, a review of *akoloutheo* as used in historical and biblical contexts contributes the following principles to our understanding of disciple: for the early disciples following Jesus meant literally leaving their families and belongings to accompany their master for the purpose of learning his teachings. Today, this is expressed in terms of devotion and allegiance to Christ. Other theological nuances conveyed by the term involves taking Christ's call to salvation which results in willing and loving obedience to Christ's commands, turning away from living for one's self and

turning toward God and a life of sacrificial service; it involves personal self-denial and the willingness to suffer for the sake of the Gospel.

Mimeomai/mimetes

The other key New Testament term closely associated with being a disciple/follower is *mimeomai/mimetes* (imitate/imitator). Michael Wilkins (1992) says the term imitator is one link between the disciples of Jesus in the gospels and the believers of the early Church. He concludes that the *mathetes* and the *mimetes* are one and the same thing. In classical and Hellenistic Greek, *mimeomai/mimetes* applies to a (a) a simple act of mimicking what one sees another doing, (b) the joy of following and emulating another, and (c) the representation of reality in artistic activities (e.g., theater, painting; p. 392.3).

Mimeomai/mimetes in New Testament usage calls believers to learn by imitating God, Christ or other believers who are obvious living examples for the life of faith in God. Paul exhorts his converts to a life of imitation. Five times he puts himself forward as a model and urges a church to imitate him (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:17; 2 Thess 3:7, 9; Gal 4:12). But he does not necessarily think of himself as the personal embodiment of an ideal which must be imitated. In fact, prior to the calling to imitate him, he deliberately makes a confession of his own imperfection (Phil 3:12). Paul does not only call believers to imitate him, twice he applauds successful imitation (1 Thess 1:6-7; 2:13-15), and once he urges the imitation of God (Eph 5:1). In other places he holds up individuals or churches as examples worthy of emulation (2 Cor 8:1-5; 1 Thess 2:14; Phil 2:19-30) or admonishes leaders to set an example for believers to look up to (1 Tim 4:12, 15). In summary, the usage of this term in its historical and Biblical contexts contributes the

following points to our understanding of who a disciple is: a disciple learns by imitating human models, a discipler teaches not only by his words but by being a living example of how to live a life of faith; and a disciple's perfect model is the Lord. What disciples are to imitate includes Christ's example of total dependence on the Father and his obedient adherence to his Father's will regardless of circumstances.

However, the concept of discipleship is much more expansive than these terms can convey. Hence an exploration of these terms alone may not be adequate to give us the full meaning of Jesus' command to 'make disciples'. We will now examine the phenomenon of discipleship in Scripture in order to understand what make-disciples should mean in the 21st century.

Disciples in the Old Testament

While conceding the lack of a clear evidence of a comprehensive phenomenon of discipleship in the Old Testament, Wilkins (1992) argues for the appearance of disciple/discipler-type relationships on three levels. First, on the national level, he sees it in the covenant relationship of Israel and God. The covenant was based on God's promise to be with Israel and Israel's faithfulness in following God. Wilkins observes that the concepts of "being with God" and "following God" are discipleship-type terminologies.

Second, on the individual to God level, Wilkins points to relationships of individuals who followed God in discipleship such as Abraham, Joshua, and Caleb (Num 32:11-12), King David (1 Kgs 14:8), and so on. Third, on the level of human discipleship relationships, he points to the relationships between Moses and Joshua, Eli and Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, Elisha and the Sons of the prophets, etc.

Disciples in the Gospels

Unlike the Old Testament, the New Testament reveals a more established concept of discipleship. Long before the days of Christ, discipleship was already a well established institution within Jewish culture. The Gospels refer to the disciples of Moses; “devoted traditionalists” who focused on their privilege to have been born Jews with a “special relation” to God through Moses (John 9:18-29). “They claimed to have a direct line between them and God’s revelation to Moses. They were claiming Moses’ authority for themselves and their actions,” (Collinson, 2009, p. 22).

The disciples of the Pharisees (Matt 22:15-16; Mark 1:18) make up another type of disciples found in the Gospels. They centered their activities on study and strict application of the law. They believed themselves to be a renewal movement whose calling was to protect the law (Wilkins, 1992, p. 351). They meant well but unfortunately they too followed the letter of the law but missed the spirit of it (Matt 22:15-18). Christ exposed the futility of their legalistic oriented religion when he warned: “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 5:20).

A further reference is to the disciples of John the Baptist (Matt 11:2; Luke 5:3; John 1:35) who concerned themselves with Jewish matters of purification, fasting, and prayer (Luke 11:1; Mark 2:18). They followed John’s teachings concerning repentance and the coming One. Wilkins calls John’s disciples as “members of a movement” who were more attached to the movement of God through the prophet than to God’s revelation through Jesus. To Wilkins’ point, we see the evidence in part by their concern for John’s reputation when crowds started peeling away from their hero to follow Jesus (John

3:22-30). They are on record, at least once, to have joined forces with the disciples of the Pharisees to question the practices of Jesus and his disciples (Mark 2:18-22). Although from them came the first two followers of Jesus, some did not see the true significance of who Jesus was. Even after Pentecost, we find some of them who had no clue about the Holy Spirit; hence they had to be rebaptized (Acts 19).

There is another set of disciples we find in the Gospels. These are the disciples of Jesus who abandoned him (John 6:60-66). When Jesus began his earthy ministry, many followed him as his disciples, some thinking that he was a revolutionary prophet. They were looking for a leader who would overthrow the Romans and restore the rule to Israel. When Jesus did not do things their way, they left him. They were willing to be his disciples, but on their terms and according to their expectations. When they were challenged to feed on the “bread from heaven” to renew their mind-set and transform their worldview, they shrank from their discipleship.

Within this milieu of discipleship, Christ called his followers. In this next section we will look at what Christ taught about discipleship and how he interacted with his disciples.

Christ's Teaching on Discipleship

Christ chose to use as a designation for his relationship with his followers a term that was common to the cultures of his term. The Gospels offer us the biblical account of how Jesus called, related to, shared ministry with, and taught his disciples. The account shows a discernible difference between our Lord's concepts of discipleship from those of his contemporaries. For a definition of what it means to be a disciple, we turn to some key passages where Jesus enunciated the concept of disciple.

John 8:31

“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed him, ‘If you abide in my word, you my disciples indeed.’” Jesus was speaking to new believers. To continue in his Word (or “to hold to his teaching” according to the NIV) was to make the Word their rule of life in daily practice. Discipleship begins with the reception of the Word (they believed him). Continuation in the Word would be the evidence of that reality. The term “abide” also conveys an intimacy of relationship with the Word which Paul describes when he says, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you” (Col 3:16). It is noteworthy that the same results that follow letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly are attributed in Ephesians to being filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18). Perhaps studying the Bible has a way of enhancing our ability to respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

John 13:34-35

In this passage we are given an identifying mark of a disciple of Jesus Christ. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” Disciples are known for their practical concern for others. Disciples are to express their love for others as Jesus expressed his love. The ultimate expression of Christ’s love is revealed at the cross. There we see that his love was a selfless and forgiving love. It was also a sacrificial love; his service of love to humanity came at a great cost to himself. This kind of love is the proof of Christian discipleship because it is not natural. It comes as a result of the indwelling Spirit of God in our hearts (Rom 5:5). There is a profound concept in this passage that we are to model Christ’s love to the world. Disciples are not only going to enjoy God’s love, but they also extend it to

others. According to Ellen White (1900), “the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of his character of love” (p. 415).

John 15:8

The third identifying mark of a disciple is bearing fruit. “By this is my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.” What constitutes the “fruit” that Jesus talked about? Primarily the fruit is for the glory of God. There are different aspects to the fruit which the disciple exhibits, but it is reasonable to say it is manifested in two areas. First, fruit in character; the context suggests that Christ’s focus is on love (v. 9); joy (v. 11); and obedience (v. 14). In the letter to the Galatians Paul lists nine expressions of the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22-23). We may conclude that the disciple is recognized by his likeness to Christ. Second, fruit is manifested in service (John 4:35-36). Paul also applies “fruit” in connection with those who are converted through the witness of disciples (1 Cor 16:15). Christ linked fruit-bearing to cross-carrying when he said, “unless a kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds” (John 12:24). To be fruitful, a disciple must die to a self-dominated life. The Spirit of God takes over when we come to the end of ourselves. There is a difference between trying to serve God with a view to earn his favors and service that is a fruit of the indwelling Spirit of God.

Luke 14:26-33

This passage provides three explicit descriptions of what it means to be disciple of Jesus. Jesus outlines three indispensable conditions for true discipleship. The first one is *unrivaled love*. He said: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my

disciple” (Luke 14:26). It is important to note that this verse does not mean that a disciple of Christ must completely ignore their family responsibilities and obligations. Other passages in Scripture clearly teach that husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, and children all have responsibilities. But Jesus was using the language of exaggerated contrast to make a point that a disciple must be prepared to choose Him over every one of life’s closest relationships. He must choose Jesus over life itself if such a choice became necessary. So the meaning of hate here is simply ‘to love less’. The disciple’s love for Jesus is to be supreme over love of family or self-love.

The second one is *cross-bearing*. Jesus said: “Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple” (14:27). An identical text in Matthew reads; “Anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me” (10:38). Commonly people speak of some trials, difficult situations or physical infirmities as their cross. There are two lines of evidence against this view of cross-bearing. Taking Jesus as our example in cross-bearing we see that the cross was not forced on him, but rather he offered himself (Phil 2:5-7). It was something he took up voluntarily. For him it involved sacrifice. Another line of evidence is that the text itself conveys a sense of voluntary choice to “carry” the cross. Therefore we may conclude that it is to this kind of cross-bearing that the disciple is called. It involves a willingness to suffer for the sake of the gospel. This is what John means when he talks about those who overcome by the blood of the Lamb “and they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death” (Rev 12:11).

The third one involves an *unreserved surrender*. He said: “Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). As alluded to earlier

in this chapter, hate your family, carry a cross and give up everything you have, has meant different things to different people in the history of Christianity. But what is clear from these texts is that the core of being a disciple means placing Christ above all other areas of our own life. At the core of being a disciple is a self-denying faith. In this text Christ is claiming preeminence over all earthly possessions. The story of the rich young ruler in Matt 19:21 show that our attitude toward our possessions is a clue to the reality and state of our discipleship.

According to Christ then we may conclude this section by defining a disciple as one who accepts Scripture as the rule of life, practices benevolent and sacrificial service to others, is an authentic witness to the character of Christ, has unrivaled love for Jesus, has unreserved surrender to the lordship of Christ, is willing to suffer for the sake of the gospel, and has passion to share the gospel.

Beyond these passages discussed above, there are other portions in the Gospels where we find key discipleship principles that Christ modeled to his disciples as they followed him around. He taught them through instructions, through life experiences and he demonstrated by his example what it means to be a disciple. A good place to start from is Jesus' temptations in the wilderness as recorded in Matthew chapter 4. Jesus' public ministry began with his baptism (Matt 3:13-17). This was followed by a time of personal testing in the wilderness temptations (Matt 4:1-11). In these temptations, Satan attacks the Son of God at the core of his earthly ministry. During all the three temptations, Jesus' obedience of faith was tested. George Knight (2001) rightly concludes that "all Christ's temptations were centered on having him give up his dependency on the Father—to take control of his own life by becoming 'unemptied.'" He adds: "Closely related to that issue

was the enticement to follow his own will rather than following the will of the Father” (Knight, 2001, p. 60). But through his reliance on the Father and the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ overcame where Adam failed.

Thus, from Christ’s wilderness encounter with the devil, we learn that Christ sought to model a life of dependence on God and how to live such a life amidst Satan’s assaults on our faith. He demonstrated that a life of faith draws its sustenance from God. We also learn the basic principle behind all the challenges to our faith. The key to his victory is clear, he was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1) and he had the assurance of Sonship, as he was affirmed by God the Father during his baptism (Matt 3:17). In other words, he did not doubt his standing with God. This indicates that assurance of acceptance by God can be a source of strength during trying times.

From Christ’s experience here, we also learn about the strategic importance of the Holy Spirit to the followers of Christ. Christ would enunciate this later in John 14-16, during his last session of teaching the disciples on the night before the crucifixion. He assured them that even though they would soon lose physical proximity to him, he would still be present with them in the person of the Holy Spirit. They learned by following him around, but now they would learn from the Holy Spirit, whose indwelling will continue to make real among them the presence of the Godhead. From this perspective, the life of disciple is a Spirit-led life; it is a prerogative of those who are “born of water and the Spirit . . . for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:5-6).

The next thing Matthew tells us after Christ’s temptation is that Jesus began his Galilean ministry by calling others to be with him (Matt 4:12-22). Although Christ called

his disciples one by one, it is instructive to note that he called them into a community. There are several accounts in the Gospels which suggest that discipleship has a communal dimension. Mark attests to the fact that the call to Christian discipleship includes a call to become a member of a new community (Mark 3:31-35; 10:28-30). The communal dimension of discipleship is seen also when Luke reports that “they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them” (24:33). Most importantly, Jesus himself modeled this concept on the Mount of transfiguration and in the garden of Gethsemane. It is significant that we see him modeling our need for each other during these most critical moments in his earthly ministry. Luke records that shortly after predicting his death (Luke 9:21-22), Jesus took three of his disciples, Peter, John, and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. Commenting on what he was praying for, Ellen White says;

Stepping a little aside from them, the Man of Sorrows pours out His supplications with strong crying and tears. He prays for strength to endure the test in behalf of humanity. He must Himself gain a fresh hold on Omnipotence, for only thus can He contemplate the future. And He pours out His heart longings for His disciples, that in the hour of the power of darkness their faith may not fail. (1940, p. 419)

While there, Luke says Moses and Elijah appeared and spoke to Jesus concerning his death (Luke 28-36). The appearance of Moses and Elijah has significant implications to our discussion. On one level we can say they came to encourage him that his death would not be in vain. Both of these men were in heaven, Moses having been resurrected (Jude 9), and Elijah translated without seeing death (2 Kgs 2:11-12). Therefore the event was a miniature of the grand finale when the glorified Jesus will gather with all the redeemed of the earth at the Second Advent. On another level, both of these men had been rebuked by life; they both experienced a spiritual melt-down. Ellen White writes:

Moses wearied with forty years of wandering and unbelief lost for a moment his hold on Infinite Power. He failed just on the borders of the Promised Land. So with Elijah. He who had maintained his trust in Jehovah during the years of drought and famine, he who had stood undaunted before Ahab, he who throughout that trying day on Carmel had stood before the whole nation of Israel the sole witness to the true God, in a moment of weariness allowed the fear of death to overcome his faith in God. (White, 1943, p. 174)

Because of their past experience, Moses and Elijah were heaven's choice to come and encourage the Son of God as the darkness of the coming trial pressed upon him. He felt lonely in a world that knew him not. Even his loved disciples, absorbed in their own doubt and sorrow and ambitious hopes, had not understood his mission. In answer to his prayer, heaven sent its messengers to Jesus to comfort him. Ellen White says heaven did not send angels, but

those sent were men who had endured suffering and sorrow, and who could sympathize with the Savior in the trial of his earthly life. Moses and Elijah had been co laborers with Christ. They had shared his longing for the salvation of men. Moses had pleaded for Israel: "Yet now. If Thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written." Exodus 32:32. Elijah had known loneliness of spirit, as for three years and a half of famine he had borne the burden of the nation's hatred and its owe. Alone he had stood for Goa upon Carmel. Alone he had fled to the desert in anguish and despair. These men, chosen above every angel around the throne, had come to commune with Jesus concerning the scene of his suffering, and to comfort him with the assurance of the sympathy of heaven. (1940, p. 421)

In another account, we see Jesus going to Gethsemane to pray (Matt 26:36-45). There too he went with the same three disciples. He told them, watch with me. From these Gospel accounts, we see that as Christians we all need the support and encouragement of other believers for our faith to persevere (Heb 10:24-25). Discipleship was designed to take place in community. It is a process in which we travel alongside each other to spur one another to growth in Christ.

Christ's time commitments during his earthly ministry also demonstrated to his disciples that he valued consistent prayer as a source of strength for a disciple. Despite

the demands of his ministry, Jesus regularly found time to pray either alone or with others (Matt 14:23, 19:13, 26:36; Luke 6:12; 9:28). Then he urged his disciples; “And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive” (Matt 21:22). From his example we learn that successful discipleship requires time in prayer.

Jesus also modeled the importance of service as an expression of genuine faith in God. Perhaps this comes out more clearly during Christ’s interaction with Peter in the Upper Room discourse. According to Luke’s brief account of that evening meeting, Christ revealed the devil’s desire to sift them as wheat, after which he turned to Peter and said; “Simon, Simon! Indeed Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, so that *your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to me, strengthen your brethren*” (Luke 22:31-32; emphasis added). We learn here that genuine mature faith in God is expressed in ministry to others. Thus to be a disciple of Jesus is to serve others. Through his ministry Christ demonstrated this principle to his disciples—He healed the sick, fed the hungry, etc. In this last meal with them, Jesus washed their feet (John 13:2-17). Following this he taught them: “If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet, for I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you” (John 13:14-15). This means to follow Christ in life is to be servants to one another in love. Christian discipleship according to the teachings of Jesus is a life of service that compassionately considers and responds to the needs of others as an expression of love. Service is a recurring theme that pulsates throughout the teachings of Christ. He asserted that serving the needy and the most vulnerable is serving God (Matt 25:31-46; Mark 9:36-37), he defined greatness as serving (Mark 10:43), he defined leadership as servanthood (Mark 10:44), and

demonstrated that the purpose of life is serving, not being served (Mark 10:45).

Further insights are to be found in his other teachings. For example, extensive teaching about discipleship in Mark 8:31-10:52 is linked to three predictions by Jesus of his own suffering, death, and resurrection. After each passion prediction, an account of some failure or misguided and self-interested behavior on the part of the disciples is depicted. Then a unit of Jesus' corrective teaching on the true nature of Christian discipleship follows. One of the shortcomings of the disciples depicted after the first passion prediction is their failure to heal a demoniac boy. When Christ learns about their failure, he laments: "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? (Mark 9:19). To the desperate father of the demoniac boy who pleads; "But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us," Christ answered, "If you can, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:22-23). In this exchange we can clearly see Jesus emphasizing the importance of faith.

Faith is foundational to discipleship. Christ demonstrated and taught that to be his disciple is to have faith. He lived and died with implicit faith in the love and purpose of God. We find Jesus in a number of places in the Gospels encouraging faith (e.g., Mark 4:40; 5:36; Luke 11:21), as well as speaking of faith in terms of its quality, for example, "little faith" (Matt 6:30), and "great faith" (Matt 8:10). Time and time again we see Jesus expressing concern about the faith of his disciples: when they were caught in a storm on the lake (Mark 4:35-41); when Peter's attempt to walk on the water turned disastrous (Matt 14:22-32); when they had no food to eat (Matt 16:5-12); when they worried about their lives (Luke 12: 22-29); etc. Additionally, the Gospels are replete with portrays of faith in their various characters with an aim to promote faith in their readers. For

example, several characters in particular stories of Mark's narrative are praised for their faith and are treated positively: the paralytic's friends (2:1-5), the Gerasene demoniac (5:19-20), the woman with an issue of blood (5:24-34), and Syrophenician woman (7:24-30), Bartimaeus (10:52), the Scribe (12:34), Mary (14:3-9), women disciples at the crucifixion (15:40-41), and Joseph of Arimathea (15:43). Collinson observes, "Discipleship in Mark is portrayed as a quality of life and important to that life is the quality of faithfulness—only those disciples who at the end of their lives were still faithful to him would know salvation (13:13)" (2006, pp. 32-33). The Gospel of Matthew also portrays some supplicants who model faith that meets Jesus' approval (8:10; 9:2; 15:28), while the disciples are rebuked for their lack of faith (6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8).

The failures of Christ's disciples in the Gospels are also a lesson to us. Here we learn that no one ever stops growing as a disciple. We see that even those who were with Jesus physically for some years still struggled to understand what being a follower of Jesus meant. When he told them the third time about his impending suffering and death, two of them came to him with a request to sit beside him on his throne of glory—totally oblivious to the kind of suffering that Jesus talked about. When the other disciples heard of their request, they became indignant with James and John. The most trusted three fell asleep on him during prayer meeting when he faced his greatest trials. One of them betrayed him, all of them deserted him and the outspoken Peter denied him. And yet, these are the same people the risen Lord entrusted with the Great Commission. It seems from these accounts that disciples do not have to be perfect in their understanding or practice of their faith in order to be involved in ministry. Even with a mustard seed-size

quality of faith, Christ can do great things through us (Matt 17:20). In his classic on how Jesus trained the twelve disciples, one author (Bruce, 1971) writes:

With all their imperfections, which were both numerous and great, these humble fishermen of Galilee had, at the very outset of their career one grand distinguishing virtue, which, though it may coexist with many defects, is the certain forerunner of ultimate high attainment. They were animated by devotion to Jesus and to the divine kingdom—which made them capable of any sacrifice. (pp. 16-17)

No one ever graduates from discipleship. We can also say that discipleship is not just for mature Christians, for we are all in the growing process. From this perspective we can say a disciple is one who engages in a lifelong process of learning what it means to follow Jesus and becoming more and more like him as we walk with him in the real world. Collinson beautifully summarizes the expectations of disciples in the Gospels, thus:

They were primarily learners, who were expected to grow in their knowledge and understanding of God and his kingdom. This would not just be evidenced through academic cognizance but would result in *growth in their faith relationship* with God affecting their attitudes, values, qualities of character, behavior and skills for continuing the works of Jesus. (2006, p. 99)

To summarize this section then we may conclude that discipleship is a growing faith relationship with God, expressed in loving service to God and to others, in which disciples walk alongside each other for mutual discipling.

Discipleship in the New Testament Epistles

The New Testament epistles are replete with statements regarding the nature of discipleship. Repeatedly, Paul refers to the quality of the believer's faith in his letters (Rom 14:1; 2 Cor 13:5; Col 1:23; 2:7; 2 Thess 1:3; Titus 1:13; etc.). In 2 Cor 13:5, he explicitly exhorts the reader to examine himself and see if he is "in the faith." It is possible to look at this passage and conclude that people should look at their actions to

determine whether they are believers. But the Bible never points the believer to his works to gain assurance. Ellen G White (1893) advises:

We should not make self the center and indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved. All this turns the soul away from the Source of our strength. Commit the keeping of your soul to God, and trust in Him. Talk and think of Jesus. Let self be lost in Him. Put away all doubt; dismiss your fears. Say with the apostle Paul, "I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20. (p. 71)

Therefore Paul's exhortation in the text should be understood as a challenge to his readers to examine the quality of their faith. In the book of Hebrews he makes frequent mention of the importance of dynamic faith in the believer's daily walk (Heb 10:22-23, 38; chap. 11; 12:2; 13:7). In Heb 6:12 he challenges the Hebrew Christians not to abandon their faith in spite of the intense persecution they were facing. Rather, they were to imitate the faith and patience of those who have gone before them; especially the faith and patience that Christ exhibited during his earthly ministry.

As we saw in the Gospels, the rest of the New Testament also situates discipleship in the context of the community of faith. When we read Acts 2:47, "And the Lord added to the church daily those were being saved," we get the idea that God intends discipleship goals to be accomplished through the church. The apostle Paul uses the metaphor of the church as the "body of Christ" in Rom 12 and 1 Cor 12 to emphasize unity between individual believers as well as the closeness of the relationship between the church and Christ. This makes church affiliation a response of identification with Christ. As quoted by Randy Frazee (2001), Wayne Meek makes this point: "To be baptized into Jesus Christ signaled for Pauline converts an extraordinary thoroughgoing resocialization, in which the sect was intended to become virtually the primary group for its members, supplanting all other loyalties" (p. 36). In his exegetical study of maturation and the local

church in the Pauline epistles, James Samra (2006) concludes: “For Paul the church is the place where and the means through which believers identify with Christ, endure suffering, experience the presence of God, receive and live out wisdom from God, and imitate godly examples” (p. 169).

There are other discipleship themes that we can glean from New Testament epistles. For example, in a number of places, Paul uses the word “walk” as a theological expression for the Christian life. He encourages believers to *walk in love* (Rom 14:15; Eph 5:2); *walk in the light* (Eph 5:8); *walk in the Spirit* (Gal 5:16); *walk by faith* (2 Cor 5:7); *walk in Christ* (Col 2:6); etc. Paul’s use of the word walk in 2 Cor 5:7 succinctly expresses the central idea in the epistles of the believer’s walk in Christ: “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” Among other things, what this expression signals is that the Christian life though a life of faith in Christ, is an active life, it is not passive but it is practical. It is a way of life that consciously draws its sustenance from God and lives for God and is empowered by God himself.

Perhaps nowhere in the New Testament is practical discipleship expressed more clearly more forcefully than in the books of James and First Peter. James starts by exhorting his audience; “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete lacking nothing” (Jas 1:2-4). In the second chapter he speaks of faith in qualitative terms when he characterizes the faith of a believer as being “rich” and “living” (Jas 2:14-26). His toughest punch is found in (2:17) where without any equivocation he simply says, “Faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.” Thus, for James maturity comes by exercising one’s faith.

The epistle of First Peter could rightly be called a manual for discipleship. The apostle Peter, who himself struggled to come to grips with the essence of what it means to be a follower of Jesus, pours out his heart in this epistle to help his readers be “steadfast in the faith” (5:9) With a pastoral heart he longs for the God of all grace to “perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle” the faith of his audience in the living hope of an eternal glory to which they were called (5:10). It is beyond the scope of this study to comment on every element of discipleship Peter discusses. His counsels encompass a broad range of issues from the domestic responsibilities to the social responsibilities of a follower of Christ.

By addressing his audience as the “elect” (1:2), Peter recognizes as well that Christian discipleship starts with God’s call. God calls us and the wooing of his Spirit prompts a response from us (2 Thess 2:13-15; 2 Tim 2:24-26). By addressing them as “strangers,” Peter touches on key concepts which he later develops in the book. Christ’s followers cannot get so settled and conform to the standards of this world, “they are a holy nation” (2:9), who have been chosen to live as authentic witnesses to the glory and goodness of God. They are not of this World. Thus, although we are to engage in this world, we should always remember that our primary allegiance is to the kingdom of God. In practical terms this means, among others things that Christ’s followers can embrace cultural expectations that are in harmony with the will of God as revealed in Scripture, but they will reject those that are not biblical.

Another aspect is that as “strangers” or “exiles,” Christ’s followers always look forward to their eternal home; they always live in view of that “incorruptible inheritance that is undefiled and that does not fade away” (1:4). They have a joyful Christian

experience because they do not indulge anxiety and fear as to whether they shall be saved. They have, through faith, entrusted their salvation to God who through his abundant mercy saved them and by his power watches over them until their salvation is consummated at the second coming (1 Pet 1:3-4). They can demonstrate peace, inner contentment, and abiding trust in God rather than worry and anxiety when facing trials because they look beyond suffering in hope to God's purpose. They see in each painful experience a promise of God's sovereign purpose to refine their faith (1:6-9).

The apostle John makes a connection between walking by faith and imitating Christ when he wrote in his first epistle: "He who says he abides in him ought himself also to walk just as he walked" (1 John 2:6). It is plausible to conclude that John was referring to Jesus' example of obedient faith. He may very well have been contemplating his master's prayer of submission to the shame of the cross (Matt 26:39). And so he urges, "He who says he abides in him ought himself also to walk just as he walked." Walking as he walked is to live by faith in the love of God and his purpose for our lives. This is the kind of life Christ modeled. Collinson writes, "Christ modeled the life of faith for his disciples" (2006, p. 35).

In the last book of the Bible, John presents some characteristics of God's end-time people. First, *they keep God's commandments* (Rev 12:17; 14:12). That means they are obedient and loyal to God. It is worth noting that Christian history has shown a connection between the degree to which a believer steadfastly trusts God and the degree to which he consistently obeys God. Second, they *have the testimony of Jesus* (Rev 12:17) which, according to Marvin Moore (2008), means believing everything about Jesus' life, death and ministry. The third characteristic is that they have *the patience of*

the saints (Rev 14:12). Gerhard Pfandl (2009) explains that there are vertical and horizontal aspects of patience as referenced in the book of Revelation.

In the letters to seven churches, three churches are commended for their patience and endurance (Rev 2:2-3; 19; 3:10). Vertically they are commended for their faithfulness to God, in that they wait patiently upon God. Horizontally they are commended for standing up to the temptations and endurance in trials; with Christ's endurance as their model (3:10). Fourth, they *have the faith of Jesus* (Rev 14:12), meaning they trust him, allowing him to guide their lives, and appropriating his righteousness to cover their sinfulness (Moore, 2001). Commenting on this phrase Ranko Stefanovic (2002) observes, "The phrase in this text means that the end-time saints keep afresh their living faith in Jesus, which enables them to obey and sustains them under the severe pressure of persecution because of their loyalty to Christ" (p. 454). Reinder Bruinsma (2009) summarizes these characteristics of God's end-time people thus, "obeying God and being firmly rooted in the faith of Christ-committed to a last-day mission to call the people all around the world to loyalty to their creator" (p. 201).

In summary, our discussion so far has demonstrated that the same themes of faith, authentic Christian character, mutual discipling, and loving service to God and to others permeate what is taught about discipleship in the rest of the New Testament. Calls, either explicitly or implied, for believers to be imitators or to reflect in their lives the example of Christ, and other believers who live a life of faith are made. Believers are encouraged to develop a deep trust in God so that they will then be motivated to obey him and serve him regardless of life's circumstances.

Conclusions and Implications

From Discipleship Terms

In exploring the meaning of disciple, we have examined three key terms; *mathetes*, *akoloutheo*, and *mimetes*. These words together yield some key elements of Christian discipleship. The word *mathetes* implies that a disciple is a learner. The word *akoloutheo* implies that a disciple does more than just learn/acquire theoretical knowledge—a disciple also is a follower. In relation to Jesus, followership implies obedience, devotion, and allegiance to him. The purpose of learning is so that a person can follow. A Christian disciple is a person who learns more about Jesus so that he can trust him and follow him. This means genuine Christian growth cannot take place without regular exposure to the Word of God, and teaching for discipleship is incomplete without resultant followership. That a disciple is a follower, also explains how one becomes a disciple. It means the initiative for discipleship resides with God—He is the one who calls us and we respond. Jesus says; “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (John 6:44). Our response involves a commitment to follow him/live by what he says and pattern our lives after his likeness. Which brings us to the third term—*mimetes*.

The concept of *mimetes* entails that what a disciple learns is more than just head knowledge. It involves emulating the life of Christ himself. In learning, a disciple gains understanding that compels him/her to want to be like Christ. That means the foundation to Christian character is consistent exposure to the life of Christ as revealed in Scripture, clarified by the Holy Spirit and embraced by faith. The concept of *mimetes* also situates discipleship in the context of the church community where a disciple learns by imitating

human models that are living examples of how to be a follower of Jesus.

Thus discipleship must begin with a commitment and submission to the Lord and allow for learning from each other. With Christ no longer present in bodily form, the Holy Spirit takes on a vital ministry in helping us maintain consistency in our walk with the Lord. Where, as physical proximity to Jesus characterized his relationship with his first century disciples, today we “walk in Christ” “by faith not by sight” (Col 2:6; 2 Cor 5:7). To walk by faith not by sight is to walk in obedience to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, trusting that he knows best, rather than trusting the flesh and obeying its lusts (Gal 5:16-25). To walk daily by faith is to believe that God is who he says he is; that he will do what he said he will do; and that he is in full control of our lives and circumstances no matter how difficult they may seem from a human perspective.

From the Gospels

For a definition and characteristics of a follower of Jesus, we explored Christ’s teachings on discipleship. According to Christ’s teachings, a disciple is one who accepts Scripture as the rule of life; characterized by sacrificial love for others; exhibits a Christ likeness that impacts the lives of others, has unrivaled love for Jesus, is willing to suffer for the sake of the gospel, and has unreserved surrender. Through the accounts of the Gospels, we may conclude that disciples are all Christians who are learning to trust the Lord more and more as they go through life. Discipleship is a lifelong process of growing in a faith relationship with God. It begins with conversion and continues as a growing faith relationship with God that is expressed in loving service to God and to others. This faith is based on a firm and true knowledge of the person and works of Christ, revealed to

our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8; Eph 1:13; 4:30).

From the other groups of disciples referenced in the Gospels, we can learn some valuable lessons. From those so called disciples of Moses we learn about the dangers of a “bounded set” mentality in discipling (Bauer, 2007). With this approach, the primary concern is whether or not one is inside or outside the church; hence, the most important preoccupation is movement from outside to inside. The primary goal is getting people inside the boundary of faith as defined by doctrinal beliefs. The mission of the church is narrowed to a conversion-oriented proclamation of the gospel. Evangelism or conversion is seen as an event that helps people cross the boundary rather than seeing evangelism or conversion as an ongoing process. The inherent danger is that people with a bounded set mentality are prone to worship their corporate identity or put undue emphasis on protecting the boundary. For example, according to John 9:16, the disciples of Moses conclude about Jesus; “this man is not from God,” simply because he did not observe the Sabbath quite the way they thought he should. The other shortcoming of this mentality is that it leads to pride and gives people a false sense of security based on the notion that they are in the boundary regardless of whether they are growing or not.

A lesson we can learn from disciples of the Pharisees is about the inadequacy of the idea that all that matters for Christian growth is more Bible study and outward compliance to the law. Simply hearing more sermons, learning more verses, and more doctrines hoping all of this will eventually make its way from the head to the heart and ultimately effect a change in one’s life is naïve. As vital as all these things are, they are simply not enough. Hull (2006) identifies three streams of thought regarding discipleship;

classic discipleship (which focuses on training and Bible study curricula), spiritual formation (which focuses on spiritual disciplines), and environmental/relational discipleship (which focuses on the role of the local church). His appraisal of the weakness of classic discipleship is very instructive as it relates to our discussion on Pharisaical disciples. He writes,

Classic discipleship didn't address the disciple's inner life as much as it measured performance. As a result, people grew weary of a spirituality that required completing programs but often didn't offer lasting change. For many people as soon as the program ended, so did their growth." (Hull, 2006, p. 18)

From the disciples of John we learn that spiritual exercises have their place in prompting discipleship, but they too are no guarantee for spiritual growth. Very often the primary goal for spiritual exercises is not made very clear. I remember during my high school days when a call would be made for the whole campus to fast on a particular Sabbath. Those of us who chose to fast would still go to the cafeteria, pick up our meals, and keep them until the end of the Sabbath. What we did was to keep food out of our mouths as long as the fasting hours lasted. We did it out of compliance but we had no clue what the goal was. Likewise, without a clear goal spiritual exercises deteriorate to human attempts to live the Christian life by "works of the flesh" and not "by faith."

Nevertheless, we do not need to abandon the concept of spiritual exercises simply because various writers and speakers have distorted them. I believe that spiritual exercises are a valid aspect of Christian discipleship. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus seems to assume that his disciples would fast, pray, and give alms (Matt 6:1-4, 16-18). In other places he calls on them to deny themselves and take up the cross (e.g., Matt 16:24). Therefore, what we need to do is guard against legalistic approaches to spiritual exercises

which tend to minimize God's grace in favor of personal merit. For Spiritual exercises to be biblical, we do well to take seriously Holt's (2005) two criteria:

First, does the discipline of saying know still affirm the goodness of creation? Is my motivation to gain more freedom for better service, to give up something good for something better? Second, am I expressing God's love for me or seeking to achieve it? Is my human effort replacing the grace of God? Is this effort made in order to earn the love of God? Or is this discipline a response to God's forgiving grace in Christ? Does the practice lead to the freedom of the athlete who runs in the knowledge of God's love or the bondage of a desperate attempt to earn what cannot be earned? Or am I punishing myself to atone for sins that Christ has already forgiven? (pp. 55, 56)

We also have some lessons to learn from the disciples of Jesus who left him. First, we see that people come to Christ with different motives and expectations. They come with different mental pictures of who God is. Those who turned away from Jesus represent many today who want God to conform to their way of thinking. They take the Jesus of Scripture and mold him into a version they are comfortable with. A Jesus who is fine with nominal devotion that does not infringe on cherished comforts. When challenged to "feed on the bread of life" (John 6) and be changed, they are offended and turn away. Their spirit can also be seen in some today who live with a myth that God's church is so fragile that they will do "anything" to defend it. They are not unlike Simon Peter who reached out for his sword to defend the Son of God. There is need to make sure that our discipling approaches do more than simply raise religious enthusiasts who are more attached to the church organization than they are to the Head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia, especially, faces a unique challenge of nurturing and preserving our prophetic self-understanding as God's end-time movement without inspiring a spirit of superiority, arrogance and misguided militancy.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we also need to strike a balance between the need to

nurture a healthy passion for the Second Advent while tempering unhealthy longings for eschatological fulfillments that often make believers of no earthly good. It is important to present the cost of discipleship to new believers so that they do not come to Christ with an escapism mentality, assuming that all will be rosy once they give their lives to him. Because once they discover that Christ is not going to “overthrow the Romans” in their lives, they will get discouraged. Another lesson we can learn from this group is that people have earthly concerns or real basic needs that must be addressed before we can gain a hearing for the gospel. Thayer makes this point when she comments: “A relationship with Christ is not naturally the most basic human need; it becomes the most basic need through supernatural intervention—the grace of God” (2008, p. 4).

From the Rest of the New Testament

Our discussion of discipleship in the New Testament epistles has demonstrated that the same themes of faith, authentic Christian character, mutual discipling, and loving service to God and to others permeate what is taught about discipleship in the rest of the New Testament. Calls, either explicitly or implied, for believers to be imitators or to reflect in their lives the example of Christ, and other believers who live a life of faith are made. Believers are encouraged to develop a deep trust in God so that they will then be motivated to obey him and serve him regardless of life’s circumstances.

The New Testament presents an integrated view of discipleship. It involves how the followers of Jesus live and treat others. However, both the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament show that discipleship is first and foremost about a faith relationship with God. Our contention in this study that believers must be taught that getting to know Christ better, through Bible Study, prayer, worship, etc., is what allows them to trust him

more and follow him no matter what the cost. That means, when it comes to the specific activities of discipling, the emphasis must be not only what and how, but why. It must be made clear that discipling activities are a means to an end, not the end in itself. Contrary to popular discipleship programs today, outward behavior is never intended to be the primary focus of discipleship. Rather, it is the evidence of our relationship with God. It is the evidence of our faith as James puts it.

We have also discovered that although the Holy Spirit is God's primary agent in discipling, Christ has chosen to work through the local church community to help believers maintain a growing faith relationship. Therefore a relationship with Christ, though personal, is never a private affair. The Pauline writings show that Paul's theology of the church has expectations for the local church to facilitate discipleship. In order for a church to effectively help believers grow, there is a need to make discipling the central mission of the church. Hence, in the next chapter we will examine how different models of disciple-making churches are structured. A key objective of this project is to create healthy local congregations that offer the best context for growth. For a local church to truly be a storehouse of God's grace, church members need a Christian experience that allows them to affirm: "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God (Rom 5:1-2).

CHAPTER III

DISCIPLE-MAKING CHURCHES AND PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

Introduction

In the previous chapter we concluded that discipleship begins the moment one admits personal sin and places faith in Christ as Savior and Lord. From that moment on discipleship continues as a lifelong process of a growing faith relationship with God, expressed in authentic witness to the character of God, loving service to God and to others, and in which disciples walk alongside each other for mutual discipling. Our discussion in chapter two identifies the local church as the primary context for discipleship. The New Testament theology of the church has expectations for the local church to facilitate Christian growth. An understanding of the church as a disciple-making community has implications for ministry, pastoral leadership and local church structure.

Most assessments on how well contemporary churches are doing in facilitating spiritual growth offer a very pessimistic prognosis. Win Arn and Charles Arn (2002) are among those who have deplored the lack of discipleship in the church. They say only few discipling approaches in churches accurately reflect Christ's vision to make disciples. They claim that most of the churches focus on getting decisions instead of making disciples because they assume that gaining a verbal assent to the gospel is the ultimate response to, and fulfillment of, the Great Commission. They measure church growth by

how many decisions are made. According to Win Arn and Charles Arn's assessment, this mentality is the reason for the failure of the church in facilitating Christian growth. Other authors who share this concern include Greg Ogden (2003), Dallas Willard (1998), and Robert Foster (1988). Ogden (2003) asserts that discipling through programs is one of the major causes of failure in facilitating Christian growth. Others lay the blame elsewhere. Based on case studies of 400 American churches, authors Rainer and Geiger (2006) suggest that discipling is not happening in the church because local churches are not structured to disciple. Rainer and Geiger demonstrate that the process for making disciples has become too complex and the church too cluttered. They urge for a new revolution that returns the church to God's agenda to make disciples.

Most writers on the subject of churchgoing trends and attitudes towards the church are sounding an alert to church leaders. Having analyzed these trends, Mike Regele (1995) concluded; "The institutional church in America will look very different twenty-five years from now. Indeed, several denominations may no longer exist. We are sure that there will be hundreds of local congregations that won't" (p. 11). Regele does not stand alone in this assessment. Gibbs (2000), professor of church growth in the school of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary, also shares his pessimism. He says; "If present trends continue, sixty percent of all existing Christian congregations in America will disappear before the year 2050" (p. 16). Another voice sounding the alarm is that of a notable American pollster, George Barna (2005) who predicts that by 2025, not many people will continue to rely on the local church as the primary context for their spiritual experience and expression. In fact, Barna seems to endorse the notion that people can lead a life of faith without becoming members of a local congregation. What we can learn

from these assessments is that the concept of church as we know it is losing ground in the minds of many people in western countries.

The Seventh-day Adventist church in North America does not reflect a much different trend. According to a congregational survey of the Seventh-day Adventists (Dudley, Sahlin, Richardson, & Rusu, 2000), only half of pastors and elders report that their local church is “spiritually vital and alive.” This means that a kind of malaise or low morale may be a problem in half of the Adventist congregations across the country. Another demographic survey reveals that only one half of Adventists attend church regularly in North America (Richardson, Sahlin, & Rusu, 2008).

It is possible for those from Africa, where the church is growing by leaps and bounds, to be dismissive of this picture as a Western phenomenon. Such an attitude is shortsighted and naïve. The best African church leaders can do is to take the current state of the church in America as a warning flag. As Gibbs puts it, when the decline in active membership started in much of Europe, North Americans thought they were immune from such a fate. Such a phenomenon was not likely in North America. Gibbs (2000) says:

The United States had for so many decades been an anomaly in the Western world. Americans, it appeared, were incurably religious, reflected in both the orthodoxy of their religious beliefs and the high percentage of the population that attended church each Sunday. (p. 14)

If we are to learn anything from this picture, it is that the current church growth trends in Africa cannot be taken for granted. Furthermore, no informed African church leader can make a straight-faced argument that most of those who fill the churches in Africa enjoy a robust Christian experience; that their lives are noticeably and compellingly different from the rest of society. The possibility is that many may

consciously project themselves as dedicated Christians who can rehearse all the key words of the Christian faith. Yet, many of them could have an understanding of salvation that may not be fully anchored in Christ. Thus, at the deepest level of their lives, there is an underlying insecurity and a spiritually debilitating despair. This often manifests itself in a critical and judgmental spirit which focuses on the shortcomings of others. This creates unhealthy churches. As one author observes:

A congregation of Christians who are insecure in their relationship to Christ can be a thorn bush of criticism, rejection, estrangement and party spirit. Unsure in the depth of their hearts about what God thinks of them, church members will fanatically affirm their own gifts and take fierce offense when anyone slights them, or else they will fuss endlessly with a self-centered inventory of their own inferiority in an inverted pride. (Lovelace, 1979)

As we proceed in this chapter, we want to be clear that we are not advocating for salvation by one's affiliation to a visible institution or group of believers. When asked about salvation Jesus assigned priority to faith and repentance. To the disciples he presented child-like faith as the condition for entrance into the kingdom of heaven (Matt 18:3). To Nicodemus he stressed that "unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3, 5). Therefore we affirm unequivocally our firm belief that salvation is by grace through faith in Christ; that there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

However, we do not agree with the views of those who wish to minimize the importance of membership to the local church. We still believe that

the church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through his church shall be reflected to the world his fullness and his sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom he has called out from darkness into his marvelous light, are to show forth his glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually

be made manifest, even to ‘the principalities and powers in heavenly place,’ the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10. (White, 1911, p. 9)

That Christ intended to create a continuing Christian community that he would entrust with the mission of making disciples has been ascertained in Chapter 2. It was probably at the calling of the twelve that this became even much clearer. Of this ordination the record says, “And he went up on the mountain and summoned those whom he himself wanted, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, so that they would be with him and that he could send them out to preach” (Mark 3:13, 14). Another clue is to be found in Jesus’ own assertion to Peter: “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matt 16:18). After the day of Pentecost, when God’s people became the Spirit-filled body of Christ, the Lord continued to add to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2:47). From that point on, converts in the New Testament pursue the Christian life in the context of a believing community. Thus, “enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense his supreme regard. It is the theater of his grace, in which he delights to reveal his power to transform hearts,” (White, 1911, p. 12). Hence this chapter we will review disciple-making church models that have developed and learn what we can as we seek to develop a disciple-making strategy for Zambia Union.

Disciple-Making Church Models

Different churches have responded to the mandate of disciple-making differently. Attempts have been taken to create church models that make discipleship a very high priority and even make it the foundation of local church ministry. These models maybe categorized and characterized differently by other studies. For discussion purposes, in

this study our review will be based on five categories: (a) Competency/Content-based Model, (b) Small Group-based Model, (c) Process-based Model, (d) The Master-Disciple Model, and (e) Seeker-Sensitive Model. There is overlap in many components of these models but these categories, though not perfect, are based on my understanding of the dominant characteristics of each model.

The Process-Based Models

In his book *The Purpose-Driven Church*, Rick Warren (1995) has popularized a discipleship model that is built on three key concepts: the “the five circles/levels of commitments,” “the five purposes of the church,” and “the life development process.” The growth of Saddleback Valley Community Church, which Warren founded in 1980, is the miracle story of this model. The model moves people from being unchurched to a deeper level of Christian maturity. Christian maturity is measured using a Spiritual Health Assessment instrument based on what Warren calls the five levels of learning: Knowledge, Perspective, Conviction, Skills, and Character. As Warren puts it; “knowledge and perspective are concerned with *knowing*, conviction and character are concerned with *being*. Skills are related to *doing*” (p. 358).

Warren identifies five different levels/circles of commitment: the Community, the Crowd, the Congregation, the Committed, and the Core. The community includes the unchurched that live around the church who never, or occasionally, attend. The crowd consists of those who show up for worship every week, both believers and nonbelievers. The congregation includes official members of the church, those who are committed to Christ and to membership in the local church. The committed are those who are serious about growing to spiritual maturity. According to Warren, these are serious about their

faith, they pray and give. But for one reason or another, they are not involved in ministry. The core consists of those who actively serve in ministry and mission of the church. They represent the deepest level of commitment and they are the dedicated minority of workers who serve and lead the various ministries of the church.

Concerning the goal of the church, Warren says “the goal of your church is to move people from the outer circle (low commitment/maturity) to the inner circle (high commitment/maturity). At Saddleback we call this ‘moving people from the community into the core,’” (1995, p. 131). The five levels of commitment correlate to what Warren has identified as the five purposes of the church; Outreach, Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, and Service. According to Warren, outreach targets the community, worship is for the crowd, fellowship for the congregation, discipleship is for edifying the committed, and service aims to equip the core for ministry. In this model, local church ministries are designed around the five purposes.

Once people have made a commitment to Christ, Warren breaks down the spiritual journey into stages and he uses the diagram of a baseball field to describe what he calls the Life Development Process (1995, p. 129). He then develops mandatory membership classes that are designed around these steps. Through 100 Level Classes, which focus on “Knowing Christ,” the church seeks to move people to become committed to church membership. Through 200 Level Classes, which focus on “Growing in Christ,” the church seeks to move people to be committed to spiritual maturity. Through 300 Level Classes, which focus on “Serving in Christ,” the church seeks to move people to be committed to ministry. And lastly, through 400 Level Classes which focus on “Sharing Christ,” the church seeks to move people to be committed to missions.

The leadership pattern followed in Warren's model carries a 25-30:1 ratio of small groups to each Community Leader. Community Leaders meet with small group Hosts once a month for coaching, problem solving, and to help each group complete a Spiritual Health Assessment and a Spiritual Health Group Plan. Some Community Leaders are paid staff while others serve as volunteers.

To Warren's credit, there is research based evidence in favor of the process-based model. Having done an extensive research of churches across the United States, Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger (2006) found a strong correspondence between church structural simplicity and membership growth. Vibrant churches that are growing by at least 5 percent a year are more likely to be simple churches. On the other hand, stagnant churches that have evidenced slow or no growth, are more likely to be complex churches. They define a simple church as follows:

A simple church is designed around a straightforward and strategic process that moves people through the stages of spiritual growth. The leadership and the church are clear about the process (clarity) and are committed to executing it. The process flows logically (movement) and is implemented in each area of the church (alignment). The church abandons everything that is not in the process (focus). (Rainer and Geiger, pp. 67-68)

Rainer and Geiger explain that churches that are full of different programs and activities are not often growing churches, even if the individual programs are successful. This is because they do not have a clearly defined process for discipling people. They do not move people from one stage of spiritual growth to another, and their programs are poorly managed because their energies are dissipated across so many programs. Under the four headings: Clarity, Movement, Alignment, and Focus, Rainer and Geiger summarize the process of a simple church.

Clarity involves having a clear statement of how discipleship should work in the church. Examples given include “Loving God, Loving Others and Serving the World” or “Connecting, Growing, Serving.” The key is not the content of the statement; it’s the fact that the statement should be clear. They argue that the process should be able to be visualized and explained clearly to the whole church, who should commit to the process.

Movement means that the process should be designed in such ways that people are able to move clearly from one stage to another. For instance, the church whose statement was “Loving God, Loving Others and Serving the World” had weekend worship services for helping people love God, small groups for enabling people to love others, and ministry teams for serving others. And each stage challenges people to move to the next stage.

Alignment means placing all the church's resources behind the process. This includes hiring staff that are behind the process and making sure that any new ministries fit into it. And *focus* means eliminating programs that do not fit into the process and limiting additional programs. Rainer and Geiger emphasize that the ability to explain the process easily is critical.

When it comes to church growth and strategic planning, Warren’s contribution cannot be gainsaid. The clarity of purpose and process his model offers is enchanting. Warren says the foundation of a healthy church is laid “by clarifying in the minds of everyone involved exactly why the church exists and what it is supposed to do. There is incredible power in having a clearly defined purpose statement” (1995, p. 86). Regarding evangelistic effectiveness, Warren advises that a local church must strategically target the segment of the local population that best matches the current make-up of the church. He

writes, “The more your target is in focus; the more likely it is that you will be able to hit it. The people your church is most likely to reach are those who match the existing culture of your church” (Warren, 1995, pp. 172, 174).

Most of us would also readily agree that in admitting that we discover the purposes of the church in the Bible rather than create them ourselves, Warren models a submission to Scripture that we can applaud. We applaud him for his commitment to every-member ministry. Through the use of the four-stage equipping process and the classes, every individual receives guidance from membership to maturity to ministry and to missions. There are many positive contributions his model provides. Many would also affirm Warren’s insistence on growing the church through conversions rather than just transferring the saints from one church to another. Warren makes church membership more meaningful by requiring commitment using church covenants, and church discipline. He streamlines the decision-making process in the church by abolishing long-standing bureaucratic committees. We also appreciate his heart-passion to remove any stumbling blocks in the church that might make it more difficult than necessary for a convicted sinner to repent and believe.

Where this agreement ends, however, is on the question of hermeneutics. Whereas his passion for biblical fidelity is obvious and whereas most aspects of his model are commendable, his interpretive method leads him to draw conclusions and applications from texts that do not necessarily support some of his assertions. This is more evident in Warren’s advocacy for seeker-sensitive approaches. For example, Warren claims that Jesus attracted the crowds by teaching in interesting and practical ways. He cites (Matt 7:28; 22:33; Mark 11:18; 12:37) where the crowds are variously amazed or pleased by

Jesus' teaching. But in every case, it seems the reaction is more to the authority of Jesus' teaching, than it is to his "interesting" style (Matt 7:29; Mark 11:15-17; 12:37). From all we can tell, Jesus was ready to offend his listeners if it meant clarifying the gospel. He said things in evangelistic sermons that actually made people want to kill him (Luke 4:14-30; John 6). We cannot, therefore, justify Warren's method of preaching evangelistically by presenting only the benefits of knowing Christ, or by appealing to the felt needs and tastes of unbelievers.

Second, while Warren's evangelistic zeal is exemplary, the skeptic in most of us would wonder whether his evangelistic methods which lean towards seeker-sensitive approaches could make genuine repentance really likely. See our extended assessment of "seeker-sensitive" approaches below. Third, another area of difficulty in Warren's model is that he portrays a simplistic concept of spiritual maturity. He writes:

Anyone can become physically fit if he or she will regularly do certain exercises and practice good health habits. Likewise, spiritual fitness is simply a matter of learning certain spiritual exercises and being disciplined to do them until they become habits. (1995, p. 334)

Fourth, while we concede the relative safety of rooting his model in the "biblical purposes" of the church, we object to Warren's placement of discipleship just as one of the purposes of the church that targets only the "committed." On this point Warren seems to fall prey to the McGavran two-tiered brand of Christianity that reserves discipleship only for the committed. Our argument in this study is that disciple-making is what the church exists for. This is the mission of the church. Otherwise, there is a lot to learn from Warren if one can study, understand, and adapt his model.

The Small Group-Based Church Model

In their book *Creating Community*, Glen Martin and Gary McIntosh (1997) define a small group as “a face-to-face gathering of three to twelve people on a regular time schedule during which a sense of accountability to each other and Jesus Christ is present” (p. 37). They highlight the four elements of the definition as follows:

1. Face-to-face: people interface with each other directly and personally.
2. Three to twelve people: the group is small enough for face-to-face relationship to take place.
3. Regular time schedule: the group meets at least twice a month.
4. Sense of accountability: the group members have a feeling of concern and responsibility for each other. (p. 37)

A review of the literature on small group ministry reveal two primary philosophies around which small groups tend to be organized in a local church. One option is to organize all the groups in the church around a set curriculum. Groups will be meeting at the same time, all studying the same lesson. Another alternative is to have many different kinds of groups in the church, each organized around a different purpose. Martin and McIntosh list about nine different types of small groups: Bible study groups, prayer groups, fellowship groups, task groups, training groups, accountability groups, integration/assimilation groups, house church groups and covenant groups (pp. 39-41). To that list we may add support groups.

For small group ministry to effectively contribute towards dynamic spiritual life and growth, it matters what kind of support system undergirds the ministry. Karen Hurston (1994) observes that generally churches have used three approaches to small group ministry: the Appendage approach, the Incorporated approach, and the Integrated approach. In the appendage approach, small group ministry is usually a vision of one person who starts a group of the willing while the rest of the congregation sees the groups

as an appendage to more important church activities. In the incorporated approach the church pastor values small groups and will promote them to church leadership and the congregation. But the congregation sees them as another program incorporated into the many activities of the church. In the integrated approach, participation in small groups is recognized as essential to the life of the church. Attending small group meetings is seen as important as attending church. Only those already attending a small group can be involved in official church ministries. This approach is the most effective. It is based on a conviction that ministry and Christian growth are most effectively accomplished through a company of believers who are committed to Christ, to one another, and to ministry in the world. There are different models of small group-based churches: In this section, we will examine and learn what we can from just two of them.

The Departmental Model

This model was developed by Dion Robert in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. He developed it at The Works and Mission Baptist Church, a church he founded in 1975 with only four members (himself, Helen his wife, and their two children). The church grew to 120,000 baptized members by January of 2000 (Neighbour, 2000).

Ralph Neighbour says the cell groups at Works and Mission Baptist Church are organized according to five basic homogeneous divisions: Men, Women, Children, Professionals, and Students. The composition of each cell group is based on what has been identified as levels of commitment: Guest, New Christians, Members, Disciples, and Cell Leaders. The cell leader works with three “disciples” who are being trained for future cell leadership. The cell leader and the three disciples comprise the core cell leadership. Members are baptized believers who have been trained to work the

departments and ministries of the church. They are trained in discipleship, follow-up, structure of the house church, objectives of the church, soul therapy, vision of the church, and working according to the model. New Christians are those in a 16-week period of follow-ups and mentoring by one of the disciples from the cell. Then guests are those who visit groups, and cell leaders visit with them in their homes.

The basic structure is very much like the 5 x 5 model. The cell structure is supported by ministries of other departments. Departments exist as support structures for cell groups. Department are classified as: Ministries of Help, Central Ministries, and Specialized Ministries. Neighbour explains:

At Works and Mission Baptist Church, they do not consider someone a Christian on the basis of their public confession. They aim to raise disciples, men and women who are capable of doing something for the Lord. Therefore, each new Christian must go through a four week evaluation in the Evaluation department. After regular meetings over a 30-day period with someone from the Evangelism Department, the person is assigned a cell group as the “New Christian.” At this point, he enters into the discipleship process for “New Christians,” which includes 16 weeks of meeting with a cell group “disciple” and three to six months of training. (2000, p. 246)

A unique element of this model is how Robert uses departments to serve cell groups. They do not compete with each other. With some modifications and adaptations, this model provides a good framework for those who wish to introduce small group ministry in the local church without doing away with departments. While he deserves to be commended for this and many other positive elements in his strategy, we do need to point out that Robert’s categorizing of believers into “New Christians,” “Members,” “Disciples,” and “Cell Leader” misrepresents what it means to be a disciple. Discipleship is not just a stage from which one graduates into cell leadership. He also seems to subscribe to the notion that discipleship is for leadership training only; and we have

insisted in this study that this notion is less than adequate for a complete representation of biblical discipleship.

The 5 x 5 Model

The world's largest church, David Yonggi Cho's Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea, is built on a model called 5 x 5. According to Scott Boren (2003), Cho was one of the pioneers of the cell group church. Pastoral support and prayer are key to the life and success of cell groups in Cho's model (Cho, 1998). Neighbour (2000) adapted Cho's model and he is the one who called it 5 x 5 because of the way it groups multiplying cell groups together to form subzones. Neighbour explains how this model works. He summarizes the church structure in three words: cells, congregations, and celebrations. The most important of the three is the Cell. Neighbour asserts that the cell group is the primary church. He writes:

The cell group is not just a portion of church life, to be included along with a dozen other organizations. It is church life; it is the place of family and connection; and when it properly exists, all other competing structures are neither needed nor valid. (p. 131)

Participation in church life takes place by joining a cell. The cell group is where members are nurtured, mobilized, and equipped to serve. The cell group provides a community where believers are called to be accountable to each other and where they can be transparent with one another. Neighbour continues to argue that

because the cell meets all the basic needs of the believer, it replaces the many "programs" that go on inside the traditional church. A cell group church has no Sunday school, Training Hour, Visitation Night, Midweek Prayer service, or any of the other formal services which comprise other church calendars. In place of this, each cell becomes a true community, an "extended family unit" for Christians. A cell group church sees no need for other programs. (p. 218)

A cluster of five cell groups forms a subzone under the leadership of a Zone

Supervisor. A zone supervisor must be one who has served successfully as a leader of one or two cell groups. Five sub zones, a total of 25 cell groups, form a congregation under the leadership of a “Zone Pastor.” Neighbour emphasizes that congregations “do not replace the cells as the most significant part of church life. For example, one never joins a congregation; the only available link to its ministry is to join a cell” (2000, p. 224).

Congregations usually bring cells together for equipping events, special evangelistic activities, worship and praise, community projects, and social action. In this structure, a “Zone Pastor” is the first paid person in the leadership hierarchy. About this person Neighbour says:

This person is often gifted in the areas of counseling, administration, and evangelism, but not in preaching or teaching. He is usually assigned to a congregation of cells and minister among them. In no sense of the word does he become the “Senior Pastor” of the area cells and congregation he serves. His ministry is people-oriented, not pulpit-oriented. (p. 225)

Celebration events are occasions when cells gather for a demonstration of their life together. These are big city-wide events that may include musical concerts, mass baptisms, sharing of testimonies, or evangelistic reaping events. We must say other than that celebration events occur on a wider scale. Neighbour does not say enough to clearly differentiate these celebration events from congregational activities explained above. On how to assess spiritual maturity among cell members, Neighbour refrains from proposing a standard instrument for all. He says, “Edification is unique for all persons. It will be based on where they have been and where they are” (p. 257). He suggests a guideline that determines the following about cell members:

Where have they been? Are they responsible for their own lives, or are they controlled by circumstances? Do they know who they are in God? Do the decisions and choices they make reveal a God-centered value system? Are their jokes reflecting carnal aspersions to sexuality? Do they pray “on command,” not at all, or with an appetite for fellowship with the Father? (p. 257)

Neighbour concludes that being mature is measured by being responsible; hence, the Shepherd's primary assignment is: "encourage flock members to be totally responsible for properly exercising their spiritual gifts" (2000, p. 257). The Cho/Neighbour cell church structure is one of the most clear to follow.

However, like Warren, in some cases Neighbour takes too much liberty in his assertions from Scripture to support his position. For example, Neighbour claims that apart from the teaching of the apostles, leadership was not emphasized to any great extent in the New Testament. But to the contrary, the New Testament or especially the Pastoral Epistles shows that the apostles were extremely interested in making sure that elders were duly appointed in every church.

Second, based on all the metaphoric descriptions of the church we have covered so far in this chapter, the cell group church structure seems to give up more than necessary of what it means to be a church. The pattern of the church portrayed in the New Testament does not seem to be a conglomeration of cells, but one unified local body that derives its authority from Christ to conduct its own affairs, guard its doctrines and teaching, and nurture and discipline its members. Cell groups as advocated by Neighbour are fine as a fabric of church life and ministry, but a Christian's corporate identity needs to be found first and foremost in the church as a whole. In the New Testament, all of the functions of a church; worship and exhortation, Christian fellowship, instruction in Scripture, administering of the ordinances, church discipline, worldwide proclamation of the gospel—all of these are given to the same group, the congregation. From the New Testament, there is no evidence that encouragement and love were the primarily domain of the cell group, while authority to teach and to discipline were relegated to a larger

hierarchy on top of a mass of cells. All of the functions of a church are interwoven together. The same group that loves and cares for its members should also be the group that has authority to discipline those same members. And those who teach the church ought to have loving relationships with the ones they are teaching. The reason for this is that God intends for the church to present one unified and unanimous voice about what it really means to be the body of Christ. In the cell church, the unity of the church is threatened. Yet according to Paul's teaching to the Ephesians' church, unity is an indispensable priority for a discipling congregation (Eph 2:11-22; 4:3).

This critique is not meant to be a veto of the cell group church model. There are many positive contributions this model makes to discipling. Though the following list may not be exhaustive, we affirm: the emphasis on spiritual gifts and the need for a Spirit-filled life of service and witness, the mobilization and motivation of the laity to participate in ministry, the primary role of the pastor/leadership in equipping the saints, the importance of small groups as a place for accountability, and nurture, the value of encouraging groups as they grow in number to consider reorganizing into smaller groups in order to maintain intimacy, the realization that the church is not simply a building or a collection of programs, and the need to make evangelism a relational process rather than an event.

The Master-Disciple Model

Some have argued that when Jesus told his disciples to go and make disciples, they understood what he meant because he had already modeled to them both a strategy for disciple-making and a lifestyle of discipleship. Proponents of this view assert that the Gospels furnish us with details concerning Jesus discipling methods. In the classification

system used in this study, we have called this approach the Master-Disciple Model because it is based on the notion that in the Gospels furnish us with an identifiable pattern or steps-based strategy Jesus used to train his disciples.

Bill Hull (1990) has developed a discipleship and local church leadership development plan based on the way Jesus related to the disciples in the Gospels. Like Tangeman, Hull has also organized his understanding of Jesus' disciple-making strategy around the same four invitations Jesus issued to his disciples. He identifies and explains these invitations as follows:

1. John 1:38-39: "Come and See." This initial invitation, extended to the crowds, allowed those who responded to observe and see what Jesus was all about.

2. Mark 1:16-20: "Come and Follow Me." In this developmental stage, new disciples were established in the basics and began the process of spiritual growth. Spiritual development at this stage qualified an individual to be considered for an invitation to join the future leaders-to-be of stage three.

3. Matthew 9:37-38: "Come and Be with Me." Jesus extended this invitation only to the Twelve. As they continued to grow and develop, they participated with Jesus as He performed His ministry.

4. John 15:7-8: "Remain in Me." Jesus finally released His disciples, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, to go and make more disciples. For a fuller treatment of the four phases and how Bill Hull has worked them out in the practical environment of his local church, see *New Century Disciple Making* (1984). Based on his four-phased disciple-making approach, Hull summarizes the tasks of the church in four words:

Evangelize (Come and See); *Establish* (Come and Follow Me); *Equip* (Come and Be With Me); and *Empower* (Remain in Me).

Hull believes the key to Jesus' development of the Twelve consisted simply of his relationship with them. He writes, "*Choose people as your method.* Jesus' ministry centered on the training and building of disciples" (1984, p. 59). He encourages pastors to emulate the methods used by Jesus and to make discipleship the central mission of the local church rather than various churches programs and contends that the key to healthy churches is neither teaching, nor certain programs, but people and relationships.

For calling us back to learn from the Master teacher on how to make disciples, proponents of this model deserve to be applauded. They need to be affirmed also for insisting on making discipleship the heart of the church's ministry. However, it is important to point out also that this is not a perfect approach. It would work perfectly if our Christian lives were such linear that we go from one stage to another in a straight line. As Haggard (2002) observes,

Discipleship is not a linear process that says learn A; then go to B, and then try C, and then you are ready for D. If human beings were like this, Communism would have worked. But humans don't work that way. They may start on A, but then dad comes home drunk and they have an H issue that causes them to have an L discussion with the understanding of an A. (p. 128)

This is evident from the lives of the twelve themselves. At times Jesus himself could not hide his amazement at how volatile their faith was (Mark 8:17-21). Hence those who follow this approach need to be aware of this limitation and allow for some flexibility in order to adapt to how people grow. This seems to be the limitation of the process-oriented models generally. The approach is also based on a mistaken assumption that members are going to be there to complete a four-stage process, but in most places this is not the case. Thus in places with high mobility, a more holistic approach is to be favored. It is also

questionable how effective it is to do evangelism with the “come and see” approach. This approach assumes that if we do church the right way, the lost will come. This may work with those who are already seeking Christ. Otherwise the emphasis should be on “go and show” in order to reach everyone with the gospel message.

The Seeker-Sensitive Model

The seeker-centered model has been popularized by Bill Hybels’ Willow Creek Community Church. The church was founded by Hybels in 1975. Its mission was to reach irreligious people and turn them into fully devoted followers of Christ. Its approach was to present an uncompromisingly biblical message in relevant terms that these people would understand. While traditional churches see the worship service primarily as a time for Christians to gather together to worship God, Willow Creek uses weekend services to draw non-Christians to church. In his book, *Courageous Leadership*, Hybels (2002) describes how to help new seekers and/or non-Christians worship God. He advocates for designing worship services around what is most appealing to seekers. More than 1,600 churches worldwide from more than 70 denominations have adopted this model.

Leaders at Willow Creek argue that the concept of seeker-sensitivity, properly understood, is not new and should not be controversial because it is biblical. They refer to the apostle Paul who says, “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity” (Col 4:5), or “I have become all things to all people . . . for the sake of the gospel” (1 Cor 9:22-23). They say that their goal is to reach the lost and present the gospel to them in understandable terms, using relevant illustrations and effective modes of communication. They claim that all of this done to remove unnecessary barriers and helping these people in their journey toward Christ.

Seeker-centered churches claim to follow Jesus as their model. They say Jesus went out of his way to get close to those he wanted to reach. He spent time with them; he spoke their language; he taught them using illustrations they could understand; and he lovingly challenged them to follow Him. They say that Jesus took risks for the sake of God's kingdom, and he was misunderstood and criticized for it. His opponents disparagingly called him "the friend of sinners," a phrase intended as a put-down, but which he took as a compliment because according to him, he came to "seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10).

However, despite this persuasive defense of the seeker-centered model, it has some limitations. First, because seeker-centered churches make seekers the primary focus of their ministries, they often have a harder time with strong and effective discipleship. Their tendency is to settle for that which attracts crowds. Second, in their zeal for converts, seeker-sensitive churches may compromise the gospel into a form more likely to impress but less likely to save the unbeliever. By adopting cultural relevance as the guiding principle for evangelism and church growth, it is easy to abandon God's agenda and forget that the gospel will always contest, challenge, and call into question some false cultural assumptions, false gospels, false securities, and false loyalties. Yet, in order to reach an entertainment-oriented culture, many seeker-centered churches are adopting an approach that dishonors the gravity, depth, and substance of biblical truth.

Third, the seeker-sensitive model at its core takes a marketing approach to discipleship. Because essentially marketing attempts to meet an audience's existing desires or create new desires for the purpose of selling a product. Marketing typically appeals to selfishness, covetousness, pride, and fear. It is the science of psychological

manipulation for economic ends. But the gospel is not merchandise that we can buy or sell (Acts 8:18-23). Rather, it is a gift to offer, a gift to receive, and a life to live.

Although we must understand the unbeliever's mindset in order to speak the truth in love to him or her (Eph 4:15), the gospel cannot be converted into a commercial for Christ. Marketing never chastens or offends its potential customers. The gospel repeatedly chastens our self-sufficiency and offends our pride so that we might humbly rest in the sufficiency of Christ (Matt 11:28-30).

The mission of the church is not to create customers for Christianity. Rather it is to make disciples who are disciples only because they have been brought to their knees before Christ. Jesus initiated his public ministry by exclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matt 4:17). His message was antithetical to marketing. Fourth, designing worship services around the needs of seekers can diminish the appreciation of God as our audience in worship. Worship can degenerate into a performance by the preacher and singers while the seekers are the spectators. There is a lot we can learn from the seeker-sensitive model. To get a hearing for the gospel, we should learn to minister to the needs of those we seek to reach with the message. Another very important principle we can learn from the seeker-sensitive model is the concept of contextualization. However care must be taken so that the demands of the gospel are not watered down in the name of "being all things to all men."

The Competencies-Based Model

In his book *The Connecting Church*, Frazee (2001) discusses the competencies model. Frazee proceeds from a conviction that the teachings of Jesus can be summarized into two broad themes of *loving God* and *loving others*. Then he identifies 30 beliefs,

practices and virtues that have to do with loving God and loving others (Frazee, 2001, pp. 74-80). The 30 beliefs, practices, and virtues form the foundation for what he calls the Christian Life Profile. The teaching ministry of the church is built around these 30 dimensions of discipleship. They are divided into three sections with ten dimensions in each. These competencies reflect what a disciple should be and every church ministry is focused on developing these competencies in believers.

Furthermore, Frazee identifies four distinct and integrated levels of involvement for believers that will help them cultivate the 30 dimensions of discipleship: the Worship Service (Inspiration), the Community Group (Instruction), the Home Group (Involvement), and the Individual (Introspection). “The purpose of the worship service is to inspire people to become fully developing followers of Christ” (p. 93). Frazee describes how his church uses the Christian Life Profile, as a template for preaching to disciple church members. The church’s preaching calendar is built on the basis of these thirty points. Each week the sermon focuses on a particular aspect of the profile of a disciple until the full 52-week year is completed. The worship service brings all the church members, the (Large Group) together.

Frazee’s model also involves some elements of the 5 x 5 small group models. Church members are divided into zones based on where they live. Zones do not meet together, though they are overseen by what are called Zone pastors. A zone has five to seven Community Groups (Mid-size Groups). Community groups are groups of 50 people who live in the same area. These groups are led by volunteer leaders called ‘Community Group Shepherds’. “The purpose of the Community Group is to instruct people to become fully developing followers of Christ” (Frazee, 2001, p. 97).

Relationships and community begin to form at this level in the church. Community Groups meet Sunday morning following the worship service to discuss the sermon.

Community groups, in turn, are further broken down into Home Groups (Small Groups) of five to ten families who live in a neighborhood. A volunteer Home Group leader oversees the Home Group. They meet at various times during the week. “The purpose of Home Groups is to involve people in the Seven Functions of Biblical Community” (Frazee, 2001, p. 99). Frazee identifies these seven “Purposes of a Small Group” with an acronym spelling SERVICE: Spiritual Formation, Evangelism, Reproduction, Volunteerism, International Missions, Care and Extending Compassion (pp. 81-82). The Small Group is viewed as the primary organizational structure in the church. Home Groups also provides an opportunity for mutual ministry in which members function in interdependent relationships assisting each other to grow toward Christlikeness as defined by the Christian Life Profile. Each member joins the group with a commitment to his or her own growth in Christ as well as to helping the other group members grow in Christ.

This goal is facilitated by asking members to rate themselves annually using an assessment tool that is based on the Christian Life Profile. From the 30 “Core Competencies” they will select one to three areas of the profile they will personally focus on in the upcoming year. “They share these results with the rest of the group members, who in turn agree to pray for and support them in this targeted pursuit of Christian growth (Frazee, 2001, p. 100). Thus, the “purpose for each individual is to be introspective about his or her personal growth as a fully developing follower of Christ” (p. 101).

Frazee, like Hull, deserves to be applauded for identifying the role of Small

Groups in discipling. His most notable contribution in this area is that his model of Small Groups is holistic. The Home Groups are involved in all the functions which arguably would be the same functions that a local congregation pursues. There are other strengths in this model. Its prescribed curriculum makes it easy to measure. Like Neighbour's Cell Groups, Home Groups allow for a greater level of intimacy which lends itself to exploring areas of needed growth and change. They allow for more personal sharing, great focus on life change and encouragement. Frazee's internationality is admirable. The downside of Frazee's approach is its heavy emphasis on competencies. Also a predetermined tool as a basis for self-examination needs to be used judiciously to avoid degenerating into human effort oriented righteousness (see the *Christian Growth Assessment* process in Chapter 5). In conclusion, we can make two broad observations resulting from this brief examination of disciple-making church models. First, from these models we can see that their thinking about ministry is related to the way the church is organized and structured for ministry. It is the 'What', 'Where', 'When', 'How' of ministry that determines structure and organization. Second, this investigation proves the obvious, that there is no perfect model. Each model has inherent weakness and strengths. The best model is one that fits a given context. Sometimes this may require a modification of two or more models, or adaptation of some elements of different models to craft one that suits a given cultural context.

Pastoral Leadership for Disciple-Making Churches

Pastoral Leadership and Contemporary Leadership Literature

There are as many definitions of leadership probably as there are theories of leadership. After an extensive review of leadership literature, Joseph Rost (1993) coined

a definition that conveys a relational understanding of leadership. He says, “Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and their collaborators who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (p. 99). Agreeing with Rost is Stanley Patterson who says, “Leadership is a relational process engaged in by two or more people who are freely associated in the pursuit of a common purpose. The gifts and skills of each contribute to the process of moving toward the accomplishment of a common goal or purpose” (Patterson, 2010).

But what is Pastoral leadership? This is an important question for a number of reasons. First, leadership has become a pastoral role of default for most pastors in Zambia because most of them serve multi-church districts. In fact they are called “District Pastors” or “District Leaders” interchangeably. That church leaders in Zambia and Africa at large see leadership as the most important aspect of pastoral ministry is evidenced by the fact that the first program introduced at the new General Conference graduate school in Africa, the Adventist University of Africa (AUA) was a Master of Arts in leadership. The first Doctor of Ministry cohorts ever to be run by Andrews University on the continent were in leadership. The question is, What is the focus of this leadership? What should it look like?

Second, most of the people in our churches who have been exposed to leadership principles have been educated in secular approaches to leadership. Thus, they have expectations of their pastors in relation to those approaches, which rely heavily on competencies and are task-oriented. Hence it is tempting for pastors to focus on trying acquiring and functioning with the same competencies as the people in the congregation expects.

Third, denominational polity and tradition may favor one approach or style of leadership over another. Highly congregational forms of government might expect a participative and supportive leader. Churches with Episcopal or hierarchical polity might expect a directive approach, while many independent mega-church boards might prefer a leader who practices achievement-oriented behaviors exclusively.

Fourth, Thomas Wren (1995) observes: “There is a widespread perception of a lack of leadership in our society at large” (p. 9). Even within the church, many have followed the lead of the culture and express a similar crisis in leadership. Of the American church, George Barna (1993) states;

Having spent much of the last decade researching organizational behavior and ministry impact, I am convinced that there are just a handful of keys to successful ministry. One of the indispensable characteristics of a ministry that transforms lives is leadership. This may sound simplistic. Unfortunately, relatively few churches actually have a leader at the helm. In striving to understand why most churches in this country demonstrate little positive impact on people’s lives, I have concluded that it is largely due to the lack of leadership. (p. 117)

In response to the concern that there is a leadership crisis in the church, leadership in the life of the church has become the primary responsibility of an effective and successful pastor. As a result, pastors have turned to whatever resource they might find to enable them to be more effective leaders in developing the church. This includes resources that are not limited to a church context, but have sought out leadership literature primarily from the corporate business world. In fact, as others have observed, the majority of the literature that pastors look to for leadership principles draws little upon biblical or theological sources. Rather, there is a heavy reliance upon models that are rooted in sociology, psychology, business, politics, and the military. For example, Olan Hendrix (2000) assumes leadership and pastoring are similar and describes leadership primarily in pragmatic and success-oriented terms, particularly in relation to

the tasks it accomplishes. He speaks in terms of leadership skills which are required for effectiveness in any context, be it “pastor, president, CEO, executive director, or vice-president” (Hendrix, 2000, p. 33). Alan Nelson (1996) even makes the comment that to gain understanding for leading the church, one must turn to extra biblical sources. He states that “some Christians have not kept pace, thinking that the Bible is a manual for leaders. That is a problematic way of thinking. The Bible was not intended to be a leadership text, even though it illustrates the concept through many of its stories” (p. 46). Further he opines that “the Bible talks about leaders and asserts a foundational character sketch of persons who excelled, but it does not provide us with the finer points of the leadership process” (p. 48).

One has to wonder how this preoccupation with the leadership literature has shaped an understanding of the pastoral role. If leadership is the primary role of the pastor, What is this leading to look like? What are pastors to do? If leadership is the primary aspect of being an effective pastor, are the leadership models espoused through numerous publications conducive for effective pastoring? The question needs to be raised whether this emphasis on leadership as the primary responsibility of a successful pastor has not sent pastors to drink from cisterns that have caused them to lose sight of what Jesus Christ intended when he “gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as pastors and teachers” (Eph 4:11).

Insights by Eugene Peterson (1987) shed some light on what kind of orientation to pastoral ministry this unbalanced emphasis on leadership has caused. In *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity*, Peterson describes how approaches to pastoral leadership have changed:

The pastors of America have metamorphosed into a company of shopkeepers, and the shops they keep are churches. They are preoccupied with shopkeeper's concerns—how to keep the customer happy, how to lure customers away from the congregation down the street, how to package the goods so that the customers will lay out more money. Some of them are very good shopkeepers. They attract a lot of customers, pull in great sums of money, and develop splendid reputations. Yet it is still shopkeeping; religious shopkeeping, to be sure but shopkeeping all the same. The marketing strategies of the fast-food franchise occupy the waking minds of these entrepreneurs; while asleep they dream of the kind of success that will get the attention of journalists. (1987, p. 1)

Peterson further critiques how pastors have compromised their role when he states that we are

living in an age in which the work of much of the church's leadership is neither pastoral nor theological. The pastoral dimensions of the church's leadership are badly eroded by technologizing and managerial influences. The theological dimensions of the church's leadership have been marginalized by therapeutic and marketing preoccupations. (p. 2)

The point Peterson makes is that church leaders have drawn uncritically from approaches and understandings of leadership which has resulted in approaches to ministry which are antithetical to the mission of the church and which have shaped an understanding of the nature of the church different from the community Christ intended to form. The result has been a pragmatic understanding of the church as an organization and the skills necessary to run it. In this way the church is just another institution, organization, or even a "business" within society.

There is captivation with secular leadership literature that has led pastors to a place of trusting in their abilities, rather than becoming increasingly attuned to the Spirit's direction in the life of the church. This does not mean there is no value in appropriating understandings from the social science literature for guiding what pastors do in the church. Jan Paulsen (2011), former President of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, hints at this when he advises:

Spiritual leading is an imprecise concept. How do we test for it? What does it look like? Is it a private, mystical process? In this, as in all matters of faith, we shouldn't spiritualize the experience of the Spirit's leading to such an extent that we leave the intellect barren. The risks are too many. God has given us our intellects and our capacities to understand, and he expects us to use them even in matters of the Spirit, so we can find safe ground to stand on. (p. 33)

But the point is that the primary framework for guiding pastoral leadership must be different. Pastoral leadership must be discerned primarily within a theological framework in order to come to an understanding of what a pastor is called to be in the life of the church community. This is because pastoral leadership has a different end or purpose than the leadership models of the corporate business world.

Ernest White(1986, Fall) asserts that the cultural leadership models that have impacted pastors have been heavily influenced by the success-oriented culture. In rejecting these models of leadership he examines Jesus as a model leader and concludes that leadership in the church must not succumb to the temptations of power, which the organizational, CEO, or media marketing business paradigms leadership models exploit. White suggests that Christian leadership needs to exemplify servant hood, and commitment to human development.

A Renewed Understanding of Pastoral Leadership

Fortunately, there are many voices that are advocating for a renewed understanding of pastoral leadership from a biblical perspective. They seek to advance an understanding of pastoring that is primarily concerned with disciple-making.

Arthur G. Gish (1979) insists on a more biblical understanding of pastoral leadership. He notes that “the purpose of leadership is for the building up of the whole body, for enabling and preparing all members for ministry (Eph 4:11, 12).” This purpose focuses on enabling the whole community to be engaged in ministry, rather than placing

the initiative and responsibility for ministry in one person. Gish continues in stating that Jesus modeled being servant rather than master and “at the time of his temptation in the wilderness he rejected the ways of worldly power” (1979, p. 210). As referenced by Jeffrey D. Jones (2006), Parker Palmer offers a number of insights into the temptation of Jesus that provide a basis for reflection for any pastor. Basing his discussion on Luke 4:1-15, Palmer identifies four temptations that confront every pastor:

1. The temptation to prove one self—“If you are the Son of God ...” (v. 3a)
2. The temptation to be relevant—“... command this stone to become a loaf of bread” (v. 3b)
3. The temptation to power—“To you I will give their glory and all this authority” (v. 6)
4. The temptation to be spectacular—“... throw yourself down from here” (v. 9). (Jones, 1979, p. 109)

Aware of the temptations leaders face, Jones goes on to point out some positive pastoral leadership characteristics that are important for a disciple-making congregation. He says in a disciple-forming congregation, leadership is shared by clergy and laity, leadership is based in the gifts that God has given to each person, it is spiritually powered, disciple-forming, vision led, servant focused, team building, and change oriented. Jones further contends that “at the end of the day what will have had the greatest impact on our role as leaders is who we are as persons. That matters a whole lot more than the knowledge and skills of leadership we have accumulated along the way” (Jones, 1979, p. 107). As vital as skills are in ministry, according to Jones, who we are as pastors matters more to our work. Jones makes an important point here because pastors must embody what they seek to develop in others.

Eugene Peterson also clearly addresses the need for a fresh understanding of the pastoral role. In articulating his pastoral agenda he says the primary calling of the pastor

is not to run the church as a shopkeeper would run a business, but to guide or lead a people in their attending to God. Peterson expresses that the pastoral role is not one that places the pastor over the congregation, but rather the pastor is “one of the sinners . . . and is given a designated responsibility in the community. The pastor’s responsibility is to keep the community attentive to God” (1987, p. 2). For Peterson, this attentiveness involves guiding a community’s attentiveness to God through prayer, scripture reading, and spiritual direction. What Peterson may mean by spiritual direction could be debated, but the larger point he makes is that pastoral leadership is all about helping believers to become mature members of the body of Christ. In Col 1:28, the apostle Paul also talks about the goals of pastoral leadership. “We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.” In this passage, the pastor’s goal is to see that all believers in the church will be presented complete in Christ.

Ogden (1990) argues that we live in times in which there is needed for a “fundamental shift of the pastor’s role . . . visa-a-vis the people of God” (p. 96). He explains that a pastor’s task is to give the ministry away and that the pastor is most effective as an equipper in an alongside type of ministry. Ogden states, “An equipper’s job is to build in people a belief that God has called them to ministry and to help them function in accordance with their identified call and giftedness” (p. 98).

Anderson (2001) similarly draws on the Holy Spirit for his understanding of ministry within the life of the church. He says the basis for understanding ministry, including the pastoral role, has to do with the fact that Jesus did not leave his followers with a set of techniques for successful ministry; rather he empowered them with the Holy

Spirit. So Anderson states that theology and practical theology, particularly “must reflect on the contemporary work of the Holy Spirit as the praxis of the risen Christ” (p. 46).

Anderson places the locus of ministry, including Christ’s ministry and pastoral ministry, in the presence of God through the Holy Spirit. This focus on Spirit-led giftedness for ministry is voiced also by Snyder (1975) who warns that “if a denomination must depend on pastoral superstars for growth, there is something drastically wrong with its structure and, more fundamentally, with its understanding of the church” (p. 84). And so Snyder expresses that “the model in the early church was not one of an up-front superstar, but believers who worked together building up the community of faith. There were many ministers in each congregation. Like a body, each part exercised its proper function” (p. 84).

Balswick and Wright (1988) argue for a proper understanding of leadership.

Leadership must be understood not as the primary gift in the life of the church, but rather as one of the gifts. They state that

the biblical view is not that leadership resides in a person who stands off and away or over and above the Body. On the contrary, the Biblical leader is one who is part of the Body of Christ and together with the other members forms the *koinonia* of community. (p. 6)

As a gift, Balswick and Wright argue that leadership is only one of the gifts given to the church and that “persons with the gift of leadership like those with other gifts need to exercise it within the sober perspective of the community and not take themselves and their gift too seriously (Rom 12:3)” (p. 10). They express that the kind of leading that is fostered in many congregations wherein the pastor is the primary focus for leadership actually perpetuates a dependence upon the pastor and hinders the maturing of the

congregation. Instead what is required is an understanding that leadership is not focused in one person within the community of faith.

The Purpose and Role of the Pastor in Scripture

A renewed understanding of pastoral leadership must of necessity be anchored in Scripture. Ephesians 4:11-16 and 1 Peter 5:1-4 provide some of the primary roles of pastoral leadership within the context of the local church. In Ephesians 4:11 the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastors, and teachers are listed. Paul expresses these offices as God's "gifts" to the church for the expressed purpose of "equipping the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all come to the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:12-13).

There are two words worthy of noting in this passage. The English words "equipping/perfecting" come from the Greek verb *katartizo*. The term has profound implications for understanding what it means "to prepare" God's people for service. In the LXX, the term means, "to complete," "to set up," "establish," "to prepare" and "to restore" (Ezra 4:12, 16; 5:3, 9, 11; 6:14; Ps 74:16; 40:6; 68:9). The New Testament uses the words in the same way as the LXX meaning—"to prepare," "to establish, form," and "to equip, restore" (Heb 10:5; 11:3; 13:21; 1 Pet 5:10). In the Gospels, the term refers to "mending fishing nets" (Matt 4:21; Mark 1:19). In its classical usage, *katartismos* means "to put in order, restore" and "to furnish, prepare, and equip" (Brown, 1986). Thus equipping the saints involves an array of functions from training to imparting skills, teaching to establish in the faith, comforting, and so forth.

According to the *Complete Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, the

Greek word translated as “pastor” in Eph 4 is *poimēn*. This is the word Peter uses in his charge to his fellow elders in 1 Pet 5. In many of its New Testament occurrences, this word is translated “shepherd” (e.g., Matt 9:36; 25:32; Mark 6:34; 14:27; Luke 2:8, 15, 18, 20; John 10:2, 11, 14,16; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25). As a verb (*poimaino*) it means “to shepherd,” “to pasture,” “to rule,” “to care for,” “to tend,” and so on. In English, “pastor” is generally used to mean a clergyman or preacher (Mounce, 2006).

However, the application of the shepherd metaphor to pastoral ministry must be understood in the context of other Greek words associated with *poimēn* in the New Testament. Here are the words translated into English with scripture references: *episkopos*—overseer /bishop (Titus 1:7, Phil 1:1, Acts 20:28); *Presbuteros*—elder/presbyter (1 Pet 5:1, Titus 1:5, Acts 20:17, 1 Tim 4:14); *proisteemi*—to rule, (1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 5:17); and *Poimēn*—shepherd/pastor (Eph 4:11, 1 Pet 2:25, 5:1-4, Acts 20:28). A comparison of these passages will show that the terms overseer, bishop, shepherd, pastor, elder, and presbyter are interchangeable. Notice that those Paul calls elders in Titus 1:5, he calls overseers/bishops in 1:7. In Acts 20:17, 28 and 1 Pet 5:1-4 elders are called shepherds which mean they are pastors. According to Paul (1 Tim 5:17), elders like bishops are also involved in leadership. Both elders and apostles are involved in the leadership of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:1-6). From these examples we do not get an idea that the pastoral function is an exclusive domain of the clergy as we now understand it. This understanding is important to clarify the distinction between the office of the modern pastor and the functional application of pastoring.

Historical Background to the Shepherd-Leader Concept in Scripture

In a brief survey of the social and economic history of shepherding in the ancient world, Timothy Laniak (2006) sets the background to the Old Testament pastoral/shepherd imagery. Laniak observes that in both Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt, the shepherd language was used to convey the notions of both divine and human rulership. A variety of gods and goddesses were depicted as shepherds—caring providers whose wisdom, life-giving and life-sustaining power was indispensable for life. According to the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Wallis, 2004), in Mesopotamia, the title of shepherd was used with explicit reference to benevolent rule/leadership (with power, wisdom/justice, and mercy); generous provision (fertility, healing, prosperity, etc.); and able protection (military strength).

Wallis explains that shepherd deities were responsible for the promotion and maintenance of both physical life and social order, and that all hope was gone if a patron god abandoned his or her city. According to Laniak, the shepherd imagery was also used to represent human rulers as; source of justice, benevolent provider, and powerful defender. Although in Laniak's work human rulers are represented as being accountable to the gods for their rule, the themes associated with both human and divine shepherding may be summarized as provider, protector, and guide. Second, good shepherding on the part of human rulers is expressed in terms of decisions/activities and behaviors that benefit the 'flock'.

The Shepherd-Leader Concept in Scripture

It is probably accurate to conclude that the Mesopotamian and Egyptian milieu of shepherds and their flocks have the most influence on the Old Testament shepherd imagery. Furthermore, this influence would consequently provide the cultural backdrop of the New Testament texts.

Israel's foundational story as a nation can be traced to the promise made to Abraham in Gen 12:1-3 for a name, a nation, a land, and a blessing for the world. Jon Paulien (2003) says, "Genesis 12:1-3 is like the hinge of the Pentateuch" (p. 32). He says from this passage the Pentateuch unfolds as "an intentional package put together to show the theological grounding of God's dealing with Israel" (p. 33). Israel's journey to nationhood took place in the wilderness (Deut 32:10-12). Throughout their wilderness wandering, Scripture presents God as the Shepherd of Israel (Ps 80:1). We find the same themes of Near Eastern shepherding attributed to God in the Old Testament. As the Shepherd of Israel, "The Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to *lead* them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night" (Exod 13:21, emphasis added). He was their *provider* (Ps 78:24-29; 105:40-41) and their *guide* (Exod 15:13, Ps 78:52).

Concerning the means by which the Lord led Israel, the Psalmist says, "You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron (Ps 77:20). Here God is represented as the Shepherd while Moses is represented as his under-shepherd. Interestingly, it was also in the wilderness setting that God's chosen leader Moses was trained for his role while tending sheep in the deserts of Sinai. The prophet Hosea says;

“The Lord used a prophet to bring Israel up from Egypt, by a prophet he cared for him” (Hosea 12:13). Thus, Laniak reasons that

Moses became an extension of the “hand of God” leading his people—as a prophet he was YHWH’s unique spokesman to the community (Exod. 33:11; Deut 18:18), an extension of God’s guiding, nurturing presence for Israel. Moses was the means by which God led and fed his people in the wilderness. (pp. 87-88)

The relationship of Moses to God here portrays what is at the heart of the biblical concept of pastoral leadership. Biblically speaking, pastoral leadership is nothing more than God leading his own people through an appointed under-shepherd. That means a pastor has no agenda of his own. The mission belongs to God and it must be accomplished God’s way. We all remember how Moses’ ministry started with a misplaced sense of his ability as a leader to lead his ‘own’ people (Exod 2:11-14). But God had to equip Moses for his mission. He gave him a staff with supernatural power (Exod 4:1-13). Moses’ growth as a shepherd leader is so remarkable that Scripture says; “Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face” (Deut 34:10). God is yearning for this intimacy with those he has called to shepherd his flock in a world that is not their ultimate home. He wants them up-close just like he consulted with Moses all the time at the “Tent of Meeting” until as Laniak observes:

YHWH had thus succeeded in merging the concerns of his own heart (Exod. 3:7, 9, 16; Num. 11:12) with those of his servant. The plight of the people, for better or worse, was now inextricably tied to Moses’ own destiny. His prayer for their salvation is remarkable: “So Moses went back to the Lord and said, ‘Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written’” (Exod. 32:31-32; Deut. 9:19-20; Rom. 9:3). (2006, p. 89)

The idea of a shepherd ruler among the Israelites did not end with their wilderness experience. It was reinforced again in the Promised Land when David the son of Jesse was similarly called from tending sheep to become the shepherd of God’s people (Ps

78:70-72). David was Israel's archetypal good shepherd ruler in Canaan. When God's people apostatized and exile was inevitable (Jer 2), the prophet Jeremiah blames it on lack of good shepherds (23:1-7). For, "The priests did not ask, "Where is the Lord?" Those who handle the law did not know me; the rulers (*Shepherds*) also transgressed against me; and the prophets prophesied by Baal and walked after things that did not profit (2:8). Similarly, in Ezekiel 34, the leaders (shepherds) of Israel are castigated for their neglect and abuse of God's flock.

God's solution was a promise of good shepherds to the remnant of Israel. The language of this promise points to more than human shepherds. It seems again like in the wilderness period the true Shepherd of God's flock is God himself. For in Ezekiel 34, the Lord says; "Then I will set over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them; I the Lord have spoken" (vv. 23-24). Since David was already dead, this must be pointing to his descendant. In Jeremiah 3, God says; "I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding" (v. 15).

Again the phrase 'after my own heart' is an allusion to a Davidic type of shepherd (1 Sam 13:14). This becomes even more explicit in Jeremiah 23:4-6 where the reference is to the righteous branch/sprout/successor of David who will reign as king and act wisely. The prophet concludes by saying "And this is his name by which he will be called, The Lord our righteousness." That this reference is to Christ becomes apparent in the New Testament (e.g., Matt 2:6; 1 Cor 1:30, etc.).

Jesus the Model Shepherd

Space does not allow for an exhaustive examination of shepherd language associated with Christ in the Gospels. For the purpose of this study we will look at a couple passages in the Gospel of John. John chapter 10 seems to provide the richest example of shepherd/pastoral imagery. As if contrasting himself from the shepherds of Israel (Ezek 34), Jesus said;

I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know my own and my own know me, even as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd—My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. (John 10:11-16, 27)

From this passage, we can learn a few lessons from the model shepherd. First, Jesus is emphasizing that laying down one's life for others is the model expression of love. For the ancient shepherds, risking one's life was occasionally necessary to defend and protect the sheep. But the phrase Jesus uses here emphasizes Christ's intentional and purposeful decision to submit to death for the sake of those he loves. This sacrificial love for the sake of the flock is unlike that of a hired shepherd who is out to benefit himself instead of the flock. A hired shepherd's concern is not merged with that of the owner of the sheep. Second; the other emphasis in Jesus' explanation is the intimate knowledge between flock and shepherd. He said, "I know my own, and my own know me," "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

Another passage of interest in the Gospel of John is John 21:15-17. This discussion between Jesus and Peter demonstrates that Christ's disciples were also sent as shepherds to feed his sheep. In this passage, Peter is charged to shepherd the flock of

God. Without getting into the semantics of the discussion, some things stand out in this encounter. First, before the charge, Peter was reminded of the mission, “as the Father has sent me, I also send you,” and he was endowed with the Holy Spirit “and when he had said this, he breathed on them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:21-23).

Second, the charge was repeated three times and each time it was preceded by the question, “Do you love me?” That means love for the chief Shepherd; love for the owner of the flock would be the motivation for tending the sheep.

Third, Peter was charged; “Follow Me!” Jesus placed an enormous emphasis on the disciples’ relationship with him. This final encounter with Peter demonstrates the intended outcome of that intimacy. Pastors are under-shepherds who cannot do their work well if they do not know the chief shepherd. Their calling to feed the flock is predicated on their followership and their love for Christ.

Fourth, in this charge three times Jesus places an emphasis on ‘my sheep.’ Perhaps this was to prohibit Peter from treating them as his own. It is also in keeping with our conclusion earlier in this study that the church belongs to God. God is the ultimate shepherd of his people. He calls human under-shepherds to work for him, though at the risk that they presume prerogatives reserved for the owner. To be a shepherd is to be responsible for the flock and responsible to the owner.

Pastors as Under-Shepherds

As evidenced in his first letter, it is clear that the apostle Peter did not think that shepherding was reserved for him alone or just the apostles. In this letter he calls on the elders of the church, whom he embraces as “fellow elders,” to “shepherd the flock of God” (1 Pet 5:1-2). As pointed out in Chapter 2, Peter begins his letter by addressing

believers as “God’s elect” (1:1), “strangers,” or “pilgrims,” “in the world,” “dispersed,” among the nations. They are exiles awaiting their promised land (1:4). They are a “Temple community” whose only secure identity is in the “household of God” as living stones, or a holy priesthood (2:5; 4:17). Then Peter goes on to encourage his fellow elders to shepherd the flock of God. Peter’s concern to the shepherds is that they do the work of shepherding willingly (5:2). Clearly Peter learned his lesson from that last encounter with Jesus (John 21:15-17), now he reminds his fellow elders that the nature of leadership among Jesus’ followers is that of eager service prompted by the love of Jesus. Christ is the shepherd (1 Pet 2:25) who, through the elders (the shepherds of the flock 5:2-4), cares for his sheep. The modern day pastor fulfills the biblical concept of shepherd when he focuses on building up people.

Conclusion and Implications

Disciple-Making Churches

Our review of disciple-making church models shows some observable characteristics that they share in common. The review has also revealed that an understanding of the church as a disciple-making community has implications for ministry, and local church structure. Most of the models examined use holistic small groups in some form, as an integral part of the whole of a church’s ministry. Most of the spiritual nurture, learning, equipping, and ministry occur through active small groups. Other characteristics involve: a shared ministry between laity and clergy, a clear purpose, an intentional strategy, an equipping process, and leadership development, and a ministry structure that serves the purpose. Many who have studied churches that take the challenge of disciple-making seriously point to these ministry principles with just some minor

variations. In his book *The Disciple-Making Church*, Gary Tangeman (1996) summarizes his findings using the letters in the word “DISCIPLE.” Tangeman proposes nine elements that form the basis for the disciple-making church: **D**efined purpose, **I**ntentional strategy, **S**mall groups, **C**limate for change, **I**nspiring worship, **P**rayer foundation, **L**ay ministry, **E**vangelism, and **S**imple structures. After an extensive survey of contemporary literature on congregational renewal and transformation, Jeffrey Jones (2006) also identifies eight qualities that are key to the ability of any congregation to be a disciple-making community. In *Travelling Together: A Guide for Disciple-forming Congregations*, Jones’ list includes: Spiritual vitality, vital transforming worship, a focus on God’s mission, gifts and call are the basis for ministry, shared ministry of laity and clergy, a commitment to equipping, lean, permission-giving structures, and holistic small groups (pp. 78-102).

The disciple-making church models we have examined share most of these characteristics. However, we can only make one observation concerning a serious omission in the area of small group ministries. Not one of the models we have examined places the family as the basic unit or cell or group of the congregational life. We feel this is a major oversight because what happens in the family has a huge influence on how we live out the Christian life. It is in the family where people are intimately known. Therefore family members are better positioned to hold us accountable to our commitments to the Lord. The home provides the immediate and essential context for faith nurture and expression. An effective discipling strategy in the Zambian cultural context is one that recognizes the role of the home as a critical player in discipleship; it is one that seeks to forge a partnership between the church and the home so that both can provide an environment for faith maturation.

Another very instructive phenomenon in the models that have been examined is that their understanding of discipleship shapes the discipling strategy. That is why we took time in Chapter 2 to lay a biblical foundation for discipleship so that our strategy is driven by what we are trying to produce. In Chapter 2 we examined key passages in the Gospels where Christ summarizes the disciple's call. In Mark 8:34, "If anyone wants to be my followers, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." In Luke 14:26, 27, 33 he says; "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple" (v. 26), "Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple" (v. 27), and "Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple" (v. 33). In the Gospel of John he says; "If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed" (John 8:32), "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35), and "By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples" (John 15:8). These passages as well as other New Testament passages give us some key indicators of discipleship.

Based on our understanding of discipleship, the following are what we consider to be the key essential elements to a disciple-making congregation in Zambia: a clear vision, a structure that serves the vision, a grace-oriented church, a Christ-centered church, a biblically-balanced church, a family-oriented church, an equipping church, a caring church, and a Spirit-driven church. The structure we propose draws a number of components from the models examined. Rick Warren's process provides a framework for

the way we structure local church departments. The Department model and the 5 x 5 model of small group-based inform our small group ministry in many ways. The church departments exist to serve small groups. Much of church life takes place in small groups. The approach of dividing small groups based on the geographical location of members is something that goes well with the Zambian context. A major difference is that the small group ministry we propose starts with the home as the basic discipleship unit of the local church.

It has been said that the Christian church started in Palestine as a fellowship. It went to Greece and they made it a philosophy. It came to Rome, and they made it an institution, it came to Europe, and they made it a government, and Americans made it an enterprise (associated with Richard Halverson, former United States Senate chaplain). Well, maybe it is about time that Africa reestablished community in the church by making it a spiritual kinship or heaven's extended family on earth, characterized by interdependent relationships where everyone is known by name, ministered to according to need, and is held accountable to the family values. To accomplish this purpose, a small group ministry is a key component of the strategy proposed in this project.

Pastoral Leadership

Our review of pastoral ministry has led us to the conclusion that an understanding of pastoral leadership in light of a biblical ecclesiology is critical to making discipling the central mission of the church. As under-shepherds, pastors in the local congregation are called to equip members. Their success in ministry is measured not in terms of tasks accomplished, but by how effective one is in helping people grow in their walk with God. To accomplish this purpose, those who hold the office of "pastor" must be willing to

decentralize pastoral leadership by sharing ministry with lay people. This renewed understanding of pastoral ministry is critical to reorienting pastoral leadership from being program oriented to being people oriented. The goal of pastoral leadership demands it: “We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, *so that we may present every man complete in Christ*” (Col 1:28; emphasis added).

Like their chief shepherd, pastors must learn to invest themselves in a few people whom they can train, nurture, and equip so that they can multiply their influence through them. Thus a primary pastoral function is to create opportunities and environments in which members both new and old are nurtured and equipped for ministry through authentic and Christ-centered relationships in the context of the local church.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF ZAMBIAN SOCIETY AND THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Introduction

In the literature review on disciple-making church models shows that an understanding of disciple-making as the central mission of the church has implications on church structure and pastoral leadership. We have seen that local church approaches to discipling differ from place to place. Most of the church models examined use small group ministry as a large part of their ministry structure. However, their approach to small group ministry also differs from church to church. This is to be expected because these approaches are tailored to meet specific discipleship goals in each given context.

This chapter analyzes Zambian society in order to establish the challenges of discipling both new and long-time church members in Zambia. The investigation is premised on the contention that each context presents a different set of challenges to discipleship. Furthermore, Michael Wilkins (1992) defines discipleship as “becoming like Jesus as we walk with him in the real world” (p. 123). The population of concern to this study is people who are immersed in the ordinary stuff of life in the villages and cities of Zambia; they eat, raise children, care for the sick, and bury their dead. This suggests a need to examine some real-life negotiations that they face as they seek to respond to the grace of God and become like Jesus. Attention to culture, religious,

economic, and other social forces/systems influencing these negotiations is critical.

The chapter also examines how well positioned the local Seventh-day Adventist church is as the primary setting for disciple-making. On this question, the hypothesis for the study is that pastoral practices in Zambia and the local church structure needs to be more intentional about making wholistic discipling the central mission of the church. To test this hypothesis, the position of the church in Zambia will be analyzed.

Design of the Chapter

The central design of the chapter involves a review of relevant literature on the Zambian society and the analysis of the Zambia Union statistical data. A description of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia will be based on information from the General Conference Office of Archives, the Zambia Union office, and a review of the literature on the history of Adventism in Zambia. A description of Zambian society will be based on information from the Zambian government office of central statistics, and a review of scholarship on Zambia in the past 20 years. Additionally, anecdotal evidence based on my life and work experience will be used.

Country Analysis

Geography

As shown in figure 1, Zambia is a land-locked Sub-Saharan country sharing boundaries with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Tanzania in the north, Malawi and Mozambique in the east, Zimbabwe and Botswana in the south, Namibia in the south west, and Angola in the West. The country covers a land area of 752,612 square kilometers (which is 290,584 square miles). Comparatively, the area covered by the country is about the size of the state of Texas. Administratively, Zambia is divided into

nine provinces and 72 districts. Of the nine provinces, two are predominantly urban: Lusaka and Copperbelt provinces. The remaining seven; Southern, Central, Eastern, Western, North-Western, Northern and Luapula are predominantly rural provinces.



Figure 1. Map of Zambia.

Zambia lies between 8 to 18 degrees latitude and 20 to 35 degrees longitude. It has a tropical climate and vegetation with three distinct seasons: the cool dry winter from May to July, the hot dry season in August and September and a wet warm season from October to April. Zambia has four main rivers; the Zambezi, Kafue, Luangwa, and Luapula, and four lakes: Tanganyika, Bangweulu, Mweru, and the man-made Kariba. These water bodies are the major sources of water for the country. The northern part of the country receives the highest rainfall, with an annual average ranging from 1,100 mm to over 1,400 mm. The southern and eastern parts of the country have less rainfall

ranging from 600 mm to 1,100 mm annually, which often results into droughts (Simon, Pletcher, & Siegel, 2007).

Religious Context

Prior to contact with Christianity or colonialism, it is argued that the people of Zambia were peoples who had a high degree of openness to other ways of living including religious (Carmody, 2003). Various waves of immigrants brought different religious views. Thus openness and willingness to integrate new religious ideas and practices seem to have been part of pre-Christian Zambia. Today, Zambia has many Christian churches and groups who constitute roughly about 85% percent of the country's 12.9 million people. There are also Hindus, Muslims, and Jews who together form about 1 percent of the population while the remainder would be classified as traditionalists.

The Christian churches are clustered into three main bodies known as the Christian Council of Zambia (C.C.Z.) established in 1965 comprising the majority of the Protestant churches, the Evangelical Fellowship (E.F.Z.) set up in 1963 which includes Protestants with more fundamentalist orientations to biblical interpretation, and the Zambian Episcopal Conference (E.C.Z.) came into existence in 1964 for Roman Catholics. The Seventh-day Adventist church is not a member of any of these bodies. But Adventists usually participate in the joint meetings of the three mother bodies. Despite such a variety of Christian denominations and other religions, Zambia boasts of an exceptional religious harmony. This is evidenced by an ecumenical and religiously pluralistic approach that Zambia adopted in religious education as discussed in Chapter I. The religious education syllabi from primary to university levels in Zambia are predominantly educational and not confessional in focus. In this way, they are acceptable

for the religious education of students regardless of creed.

The Zambian Culture

Zambia today exhibits a rich diversity of cultures. Space and the scope of this chapter do not allow for an extended examination of Zambia's rich cultural elements. But the following list of common cultural elements is reviewed because of their relevance for understanding socialization, support-networks, leadership, and other aspects of traditional Zambian society.

The Family and Kinship

The basic unit of African society is the family (*Mukwasi*). This includes the nuclear family, the extended family, and the clan. A Zambian family, like most African families, can be thought of as a group. The most important duties of this group are to reproduce, nurture, and educate the young to become productive members of the family and the society at large. This training process is also referred to as socialization. It is informal and unstructured for the most part. The family is the primary setting and the natural environment for the growth, wellbeing, and protection of children. In traditional Zambian society, the clan (*Luzubo*) is the ultimate community. It is a traditional social unit consisting of families tracing descent from a common ancestor and following the same hereditary chieftain.

Kinship (*Mukowa*) refers to blood relationship between individuals and is used to describe relationships in a narrow as well as a broad sense (Harris & Moran, 2000). Kinship relationships define an individual's identity as well as their status in society. From time immemorial, kinship in Zambian has served as the pattern through which people view all interpersonal relationships. For example, since a person's kin group

provided their sense of identity, deciding to which kin group a child belongs has traditionally been a crucial issue. African culture almost universally uses unilineal descent, which means that a person belongs to the family of only one of their parents. Descent group identity not only defines who has rights to a child but also whose positions and wealth that child has rights to inherit once he or she grew up.

In the patrilineal system, all the children belong to the father's family and the transfer of wealth is from father to his children. In matrilineal families, children belong to the maternal uncle. In such kinships, a person belonged to the family of one's mother and a son usually stood to inherit positions, status, and belongings of his mother's brother, not those of his father. A larger proportion of Zambian families are matrilineal than are patrilineal in organization. Within the country's nine provinces, most households in the four provinces of Central, Northwestern, Luapula, and Copperbelt are matrilineal. The Namwanga and the Ngoni in the Eastern province, the Lozi in the Western, and the ILA in the Southern province are patrilineal.

Another powerful element of kinship relations is the concept of corporate ownership of property. Unlike the individualism found in Western societies, family relationships are the most important and are given priority over individual needs. Africans traditionally conceived their socio-economical standing in terms of the group to which they belonged. The group owned not only all land and property, but also all the individuals who made up the group. Group members saw themselves as part of a community in which each individual had few personal rights, but instead had numerous rights through relational ties to other members of the group. Like most Africans, traditionally Zambians also view a kin relationship with an individual as a right to that

individual and anything that they may own or produce. For example, this is the background/basis for dowry; a payment a kin group expects to receive if a man desires to marry one of their women and take her to his family's kin group in a patrilineal society. Her kin expects to be compensated for the loss of production in food and offspring that she would have contributed to the kin group. Consequently, the payment of dowry generally is a shared responsibility by the family of the man who desires to marry.

With the dynamic nature of the Zambian culture, the notion of corporate ownership of property sometimes strains kin relationships. It is losing its appeal and most of those who have been exposed to other worldviews, have little tolerance for this way of thinking. This is especially common when family members who work in urban areas are trying to invest in land and livestock in the village while kin group members use their wealth at will without consultation.

Another fundamental characteristic of kinship in Zambia is the practice of Kinship care (*Kulelwa*). Kinship care, otherwise known as care by relatives or family friends, is one of the most significant forms of out-of-home care for children who are unable to live with their parents. It is a form of alternative care that is family based, within the child's extended family, or with close friends of the family known to the child. It may include relatives, members of their tribe or clan, or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child. Kinship care generally provides the best possible environment for children who might not be able to live with their natural parents. Although Kinship care has been part of the Zambian society historically, it is perhaps much more prevalent and perhaps more needed now because of the HIV pandemic which continues to increase the number of orphans. When compared with other forms of alternative care such as

orphanages or adoptions in developed countries, the practice of kinship care provides a host of benefits for children. Primarily, it enables children to remain with people they are familiar with, reducing the need for separation from loved ones, and preserving attachments and a sense of identity.

Other advantages include: preservation of family, community, and cultural ties; reinforcement of a child's sense of identity and self-esteem, which flows from knowing their family history and culture; avoidance of distress resulting from moving in with strangers; reduced likelihood of multiple placements (although sometimes children may find themselves being "passed round" to members of their extended family); and avoidance of institutionalization and its associated risks. Kinship care is rooted in long-standing traditions of "looking after one's own." It is part of Africa's extended family system which provides a social support network and natural safety-net for kin group members in times of need.

Despite the many benefits of Kinship care, there are concerns that many families who take on this extra responsibility may be struggling to cope with stresses that come with such a responsibility. Some children in kinship care may be exposed to harm physically, socially, and emotionally. This raises further concerns for their future well-being, despite the best intentions by kinship care families. It is not a big secret that many kinship care families face financial strain when raising a child or children in the family. Often families may face difficulties in meeting the educational and health needs of the child. Other challenges include lack of parenting and child communication skills, particularly for grandparents and older kinship care families. These skills are badly needed. There are also significant concerns regarding the potential for exploitation,

abuse, and neglect of children in kinship care since this is not a regulated system. Reports abound of incidents where children in kinship care do not receive the same parental treatment that parents give to their own children. Sometimes kinship care children go through a lot of hardships and are left with emotional scars which can stay with them the rest of their lives.

It is important to note here that the Seventh-day Adventist church, like other churches in Zambia, draws some of its members from such families. Thus Sabbath after Sabbath some church members or some children go back to such living environments after a nice sermon on the love of God. This has implications for discipleship.

Shame and Honor

Using the criteria of external and internal sanctions, some scholars differentiate between shame-based cultures and guilt-based cultures (Lewis, 1992). They say the feeling of shame originates from an external sanction while guilt arises from an internal value system. They distinguish between the terms “guilt” and “shame.” Shame is defined in experiential terms. As quoted in Sara Hines Martin (1994), Gershen Kaufman and Lev Raphael assert:

To experience shame is to feel seen in a painfully diminished sense. The facial signs of shame are eyes down, head down, eye averted, or blushing. Shame is the most disturbing experience individuals ever have about themselves. Self-esteem, identity, and intimacy are all vulnerable to the disruptive effects of shame when shame becomes internalized and subsequently magnified, growing like an emotional cancer within the self. (p. 19)

In *Facing Shame: Families in Recovery*, Merle A. Fossum and Marilyn J. Mason (1989) state:

Shame is an inner sense of being completely diminished or insufficient as a person. It is the self judging the self. A moment of shame maybe humiliation so painful or an indignity so profound that one feels one has been robbed of her or his dignity or

exposed as basically inadequate, bad, or worthy of rejection. A pervasive sense of shame is the ongoing premise that one is fundamentally bad, inadequate, defective, unworthy, or not fully valid as a human being. (p. 5)

In contrasting shame from guilt Fossum and Mason observe that

guilt is the developmentally more mature, though painful feeling of regret one has about behavior that has violated a personal value. Guilt does not reflect directly upon one's identity nor diminish one's sense of personal worth. It emanates from an integrated conscience and set of values. It is the reflection of a developing self—while guilt is a painful feeling of regret and responsibility for one's actions, shame is a painful feeling about oneself as a person. The possibility for repair seems foreclosed to the shameful person because shame is a matter of identity, not a behavior infraction. (pp. 5-6)

In his book *Shame and Grace: Healing the Shame We Don't Deserve*, Lewis B.

Smedes (1993) agrees with Fossum and Mason when they say:

The difference between guilt and shame is very clear—in theory. We feel guilty for what we do. We feel shame for what we are. A person feels guilty because he did something wrong. A person feels shame because he is something wrong. We may feel guilty because we lied to our mother. We feel shame because we are not the persons our mother wanted us to be. (pp. 9-10)

Thus according to the foregoing observations, the origin of guilt is an awareness of having violated one's values, standards, or rules. It is a painful feeling that affirms, "I am a person who holds this value; I violated my word or my agreement or my value and I need to make amends, take responsibility, or apologize and seek forgiveness." On the other hand, the origin of shame is in the violation and diminution of personhood. This is when a person feels qualitatively different from other human beings. A major outcome of a personal identity grounded in shame is that the individual has no ability for bonding and intimacy with other people. It is difficult to let someone get close to you if you feel defective and flawed as a human being.

However, shame is not always bad. As Smedes (1993) points out in his word to the reader, "Shame is not necessarily a bad thing to feel—But unhealthy shame is often

an unhealthy feeling of unworthy that is distorted, exaggerated, and utterly out of touch with our reality” (Smedes, 1993, p. ix). He further says the good news is that unhealthy shame can be healed and that the healing “gets its best start with a spiritual experience—specifically, an experience of amazing grace” (p. ix). John Bradshaw (2005) as well discusses shame in terms of health shame and toxic shame. He says shame is a healthy human feeling that can become a true sickness of the soul. According to Bradshaw, there are two forms of shame just as there are two kinds of cholesterol, HDL (healthy) and LDL (toxic).

As a healthy human feeling, shame is an emotion that teaches us about our limits and moves us to get our basic needs met. Bradshaw defines healthy shame as “the basic metaphysical boundary for human beings” (2005, p. 8). He says, “Healthy shame is the foundation for developing manners and a sense of modesty,” (p. 13).

Ultimately, Bradshaw says healthy shame is the source of humility, awe and reverence when experiencing the immensity and mystery of life. In this sense, healthy shame becomes an essential foundation of spirituality. But Bradshaw explains. “Instead of the momentary feeling of being limited, making a mistake, littleness, or being less attractive or talented than someone else, a person can come to believe that his whole self is fundamentally flawed and defective” (p. 21). At that point shame is no longer a healthy emotion that signals our limits; it has become a state of being, a core identity. This is what Bradshaw calls toxic shame. He defines it as “an excruciatingly internal experience of unexpected exposure,” and “an all pervasive sense that ‘I am flawed and defective as a human being’” (p. 29). Bradshaw further explains:

Toxic shame is unbearable and always necessitates a cover-up, a false self. Since one feels his true self is defective and flawed, one needs a false self that is not defective

and flawed. Once one becomes a false self, one ceases to exist psychologically. To be a false self is to cease being an authentic human being. The process of false self formation is what Alice Miller calls “soul murder.” (Bradshaw, 2005, pp. xvii-xviii)

We must warn, however, that there is need to be cautious about labeling one culture as wholly guilt-based and another wholly shame-based. Both characteristics are usually present in all cultures. It is also arguable that the two cannot really be completely divorced from each other. As John Bradshaw (2005) says, guilt can either be the guardian of conscience (in this sense guilt is a later development of healthy shame) or the neurotic tormenting voice that judges every behavior as inadequate (in this sense guilt is a later development of toxic shame).

Nevertheless, there are some cultures that are dominantly guilt-based and others shame-based. In a guilty-culture, someone will defend his or her innocence even if everyone else is blaming them. What counts is one’s internal individualistic judgment. But in a shame-culture (sometimes referred to as honor-shame culture), what other people believe is much more important. Thus, principles may be derived from a desire to preserve honor or avoid shame to the exclusion of any other consideration.

The problem is that this value system gives license to engage in secret wrongdoing as long as no one knows. The other problem is that in a shame-culture it is not enough to be innocent. One needs to be seen to be innocent; that one does not engage in questionable behavior, but that there is need to stay away from it not to be tainted by association in any way. Thus, suspicion and guilty-by- association is rife in a shame-culture.

Based on my best understanding of the theory, and going by my own upbringing and my life experience in Zambia, I have come to the conclusion that the Zambian culture is mostly shame-based. Shaming and humiliation are the common techniques employed

in personal relations, to censure behavior, especially the socialization of children. It seems Zambia's kinship orientation is designed to create an individual who is in harmony with the community. High value is placed on acceptance and belonging; the basis of which is conformity to the expectations of community. Shaming and humiliation are the common techniques employed to beat people (from the cradle to the grave) into conformity. When conversing with authority figures such as elderly people, young people express deference and respect by gestures of polite gaze aversion.

The pain of toxic shame is not an experience that can be endured for long. Shame-based people find relief from the pain of shame through some automatic defensive cover ups. Donald Nathanson (1992) summarizes these hiding places of toxic shame into four major behavior patterns: *withdrawal*, *avoidance*, *attack self*, and *attack other*. Each of these categories represents a set of strategies by which an individual has learned to handle shame. In each case the purpose of the strategy is to make the shame feel differently.

Poverty

Once a middle-income country, Zambia began to slide into poverty in the 1970s when copper prices declined on world markets. According to Lise Rakner (2003), about two-thirds of Zambians live in poverty, placing the country among the world's poorest nations. Unemployment is a serious problem in the country. A series of national surveys conducted by the CSO—the Social Dimensions of Adjustment Priority Surveys of 1991 and 1993 and the Living Conditions Monitoring Surveys of 1996 and 1998, in particular, provide trends in the various dimensions of poverty in Zambia in the 1990s. Data from these surveys show that, in general, poverty in most of the critical dimensions increased during the 1990s.

Rakner observes that the defining event in Zambia's economic history was the collapse in copper export earnings and the government's response to this collapse. Once the price of copper collapsed on the world market, the Zambian economy collapsed along with it. Anthony Mwanaumo (1999) reports that copper export earnings fell from US\$3.4 billion in 1974 to US\$1.8 billion in 1975 and declined steadily after that to a low of US\$725 million in 1994. Thus, in a span of less than 20 years, Zambia went from one of the richest, most promising countries in independent Africa to one of the most indebted and worst economies.

Believing in the illusion of constant wealth from copper exports, the government's initial reaction to the deteriorating economy was continuous borrowing from the IMF and the World Bank. They saw no need to restructure the economy. They believed that the market for copper would pick up and the economy would rebound. Fundanga and Mwaba (2001) assert that the IMF and the World Bank appeared to share this optimistic view and continued to lend sums of money to the country. Consequently, Zambia became heavily indebted to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. According to Taylor, by the late 1980s, Zambia had accumulated an external debt of nearly \$7 billion and could not meet its debt-service payments.

Distribution of Poverty

The World Bank *Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment* report on Zambia (Kozel, 2007), documents widespread poverty along a number of dimensions in the country. It includes material deprivation, human deprivation, vulnerability, and social stigmatization. Poverty estimates are calculated using the cost-of-basic-needs method. It involves determining a valorize requirement per adult and per day. Then a food basket required to

meet the calorie requirement is created and priced. After that an additional cost of basic non-food items is included. Based on these estimates, a poverty line is established. Usually two poverty cutoffs are used assessing poverty in Zambia—variously called; poverty and core poverty or poverty and extreme poverty. The poverty line is determined at the minimum level of consumption below which people are unable to meet their basic needs for food and other basic non-food needs. At the time of the World Bank survey the poverty line was determined at \$US15.00 per month per adult (the official exchange rate then was (\$US1.00-KZambia 3800.00)). Extreme poverty line is determined by reducing the minimum level of calorie consumption to 72%.

Based on these two cutoffs, the report estimates national poverty at 56% and national extreme poverty at 36%, with the vast majority of the poor residing in rural areas. That means 56% of Zambians are not able to meet their basic needs, and 36% would not meet their basic food needs alone even if they were to forego all non-food consumptions. The distribution of Zambia's poor by province shows that the poorest provinces are Western, Luapula, Northern, Eastern and North-Western. However, although Lusaka and Copperbelt have relatively low poverty rates, they also have large populations. Consequently, they are home to large fractions of Zambia's poor.

Poverty has many implications for discipleship. Under the burden of such poverty, pursuing a relationship with Jesus is rarely the first priority for most people. The first priority is to survive. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954), primary needs must be satisfied before people can attend to secondary needs. Unfortunately spiritual needs are not part of the primary needs for a lot people.

Urbanization of Society

In traditional Zambia, the family was basically secure, extended, and stable. There was little mobility. Both parents were frequently home and shared life together. Relatives lived nearby and were in continuous interaction with the family. Most people were born, raised, married, and died within a hundred miles of their birth place. In this environment, the family provided a natural setting and made a significant contribution to a person's upbringing.

The urbanization of the Zambian population has had some destabilizing effects on the country's traditional communal support structure. It has caused us to be less friendly, simply because it is difficult to relate to so many people. Thus one can live in Lusaka with millions of people and yet feel lonely. Neighborhoods are places where people know and care for each other. But highly mobile people do not have long-term relationships. Without long-term relationships, the depth of care and sharing is often shallow. It takes knowing someone for a period of time before enough comfort develops to share deeply. The church, of all communities of course, depends on long-lasting relationships. Therefore it is critical that connecting people in intentional relationships be a part of any viable disciple-making strategy in the Zambian society.

A Profile of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zambia

History

History points to David Livingstone as the father of the Christian mission in Zambia. Sent by the London Missionary Society, Livingstone opened up mission stations in the heart of Africa. He came to Zambia in 1851 through the south and worked his way up north until his death at Chitambo village in 1873 (Rotberg, 1965).

Following the footsteps of David Livingstone, approximately 14 churches and religious groups entered Zambia between 1880 and 1910 in order to spread the Christian message among the indigenous peoples (Carmody, 2003). Among them were the Seventh-day Adventists. The Seventh-day Adventist work in Zambia started in 1905 when William H. Anderson established what became known as Rusangu Mission Station in Monze of the Southern province (Land, 2005).

From the south, Adventist missionaries made their way up north and throughout the country opening mission stations. The earliest mission stations were: Rusangu in the south, Musofu in central, Chimpempe in the north, Mwami in the east, and Liumba in the west. Through the establishment of mission stations/schools and the efforts of local evangelists, the Seventh-day Adventist church grew rapidly. Among the early local evangelists were: James Mainza, who was the first Zambian to be baptized as a Seventh-day Adventist (Robinson, 1979), Jacob Desha, Philip Malomo, Malatini Mpofu, Mulomba, Mwanachilenga, and others (W. H. Anderson, 1919).

Early Impact of Adventists in Zambia

Relations With Other Churches

Shortly after Anderson established Rusangu mission station, the Catholic Jesuit fathers also established a mission station at a nearby place called Chikuni. The two mission stations had a very good relationship contrary to Reinhard Henkel's assertions that initially there was a skirmish over the locations of their mission stations because both were vying for a site next to Monze (Henkel, 1989). Though both mission stations were established in 1905, the reality is that the Adventists settled first. According to Anderson (1919), Adventists actually helped the Jesuit fathers transport their goods to Chikuni

without any charge. Anderson sent an ox-wagon and a local driver who spent one week helping the Jesuits settle and start their work. Friendly relations were thus established between the two mission stations. Early missionaries did not consider the Jesuit fathers as competitors. Unfortunately, today such a gesture extended to a Catholic institution would be an anathema to most Seventh-day Adventists in Zambia. For some reason, this reflects a general Seventh-day Adventist stance towards other religious communities. As Jan Paulsen (2011) observes, “Among Adventists, there is a deep suspicion of anything that suggests a cozy relationship with another religious or spiritual community” (p. 63).

Entrepreneurship

Among the many Christian churches that dominated the Southern province, Seventh-day Adventists distinguished themselves in the area of agriculture. Agriculturists have observed that all of the prominent farmers in Southern province were members of the Seventh-day Adventist church (Henkel, 1989). Early observers attributed the success of Adventists as farmers to a general atmosphere of business efficiency and self-reliance (Gluckman, Peters, & Trapnell, 1948). This orientation to entrepreneurship was not unique to the Southern province Adventists. A study of Adventists in Luapula province by Karla Poewe (1989), reveals that most successful businessmen were Seventh-day Adventists.

Education

Explaining the relationship between Adventism and entrepreneurship, Peters (1976) concluded that the determining factor was education through mission schools. He goes on to say that Rusangu missionaries wanted to develop African Christians into hard workers. They taught not only Christianity, but also self-reliance and the accomplishment

of goals through diligence at work. It is fair to say that education has been the most successful strategy through which the Seventh-day Adventist church has impacted the country. In fact, Poewe (1989) notes that the first members to join the Seventh-day Adventist church in Luapula province did so because they wanted an education which the church was noted for providing.

Political Affairs

Politically, Adventists also played an important role in Zambia. They were part of the struggle for independence. It is said that four out of five founding members of Zambia's first political party, Northern Rhodesia African Congress, were Seventh-day Adventist farmers of Keemba Hill in Monze (Henkel, 1989). Having achieved a high level of agriculture production, these former Rusangu students were the only African farmers to be granted the same status as white farmers. They used this position of privilege to take on political action to end colonialism. They were not indifferent to the plight of the nation. Even after the party was dissolved, the Keemba Hills farmers continued to openly voice their views against government measures that they did not accept.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Today

Organization

Until 1972, the Seventh-day church in Zambia was under the Zambezi Union with headquarters in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. With three local fields, 24,101 members, 147 churches, and 45 pastors, the Zambia Union was organized on June 1, 1972. At that time it was under the Trans-Africa Division. Ten years later, the Union had grown to 48,443 members, 312 churches, and 78 pastors. It became part of the Eastern Africa Division in

1981. Since then, the Union membership has grown remarkably. For example, Table 1 which is based on a 10-year period from 1998 to 2008 (Archives, 2008), illustrates the growth trends of the Union. In 2004, Zambia Union was organized into a Union

Table 1

Ten-Year Growth Trends

| Field | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Churches | 1,078 | 1,146 | 1,230 | 1,306 | 1,365 | 1,419 | 1,505 | 1,592 | 1,678 | 1,700 | 1,787 |
| Companies | 2,135 | 2,706 | 2,753 | 3,026 | 3,121 | 3,155 | 3,405 | 3,524 | 3,504 | 3,563 | 3,638 |
| Beginning Membership | 283,738 | 309,200 | 332,915 | 359,244 | 381,585 | 408,303 | 437,527 | 471,095 | 497,030 | 530,165 | 567,881 |
| Baptisms | 46,005 | 43,750 | 45,804 | 36,008 | 34,566 | 39,816 | 47,901 | 37,843 | 41,443 | 46,465 | 52,529 |
| Professions of Faith | 1,185 | 997 | 711 | 541 | 494 | 545 | 420 | 438 | 272 | 441 | 278 |
| Transfers In | 6,793 | 8,053 | 7,489 | 8,770 | 7,537 | 7,312 | 8,086 | 9,684 | 9,055 | 6,928 | 8,969 |
| Transfers Out | 7,793 | 9,086 | 8,843 | 9,016 | 7,478 | 7,941 | 10,582 | 11,784 | 12,624 | 8,105 | 12,252 |
| Deaths | 1,814 | 1,681 | 1,542 | 1,802 | 1,660 | 1,887 | 2,180 | 1,961 | 2,046 | 1,898 | 1,633 |
| Dropped | 5,407 | 5,247 | 5,100 | 5,660 | 4,969 | 5,200 | 5,359 | 4,771 | 3,899 | 3,114 | 2,777 |
| Missing | 11,474 | 5,635 | 2,733 | 5,129 | 4,278 | 3,652 | 3,910 | 3,450 | 578 | 1,051 | 394 |
| Total Gains | 53,983 | 52,800 | 54,004 | 45,319 | 42,597 | 47,673 | 56,407 | 47,965 | 50,770 | 53,834 | 61,776 |
| Total Losses | 26,488 | 21,649 | 18,218 | 21,607 | 18,385 | 18,680 | 22,031 | 21,966 | 19,147 | 14,168 | 17,056 |
| Adjustment | -2,033 | -7,436 | -9,457 | -1,371 | 2,506 | 231 | -808 | -64 | 1,512 | -1,950 | 43 |
| Net Growth | 25,462 | 23,715 | 26,329 | 22,341 | 26,718 | 29,224 | 33,568 | 25,935 | 33,135 | 37,716 | 44,763 |
| Ending Membership | 309,200 | 332,915 | 359,244 | 381,585 | 408,303 | 437,527 | 471,095 | 497,030 | 530,165 | 567,881 | 612,644 |
| Growth Rate | 8.97% | 7.67% | 7.91% | 6.22% | 7.00% | 7.16% | 7.67% | 5.51% | 6.67% | 7.11% | 7.88% |
| Accession Rate | 16.63% | 14.47% | 13.97% | 10.17% | 9.19% | 9.89% | 11.04% | 8.13% | 8.39% | 8.85% | 9.30% |

Note: General Conference Archives, 2008 Annual Statistics.

Conference as part of the Southern African-Indian Ocean Division. By the end of 2008, the Zambia Union Conference had 612,644 members, 1,787 churches, and 220 pastors.

The Union has two conferences and five mission fields; it operates three hospitals, a dental clinic, one university, and one printing press. Table 2 shows conferences, mission fields, membership distribution, churches, and pastors.

Table 2

Zambia Union Conference Statistics

| Name of Field | Churches | Beginning Membership | Accessions (Bap & POF) | Deaths | Dropped & Missing | Ending Membership | Ord & Lic Ministers |
|---|--------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Central Zambia Conference | 532 | 177,165 | 19,778 | 558 | 1,674 | 192,863 | 55 |
| Copperbelt Zambia Field | 368 | 97,444 | 7,059 | 293 | 470 | 103,356 | 30 |
| East Zambia Field | 95 | 12,566 | 1,126 | 12 | 81 | 13,354 | 10 |
| Luapula Zambia Field | 191 | 58,973 | 3,555 | 285 | 286 | 61,607 | 12 |
| North Zambia Field | 153 | 35,646 | 3,380 | 44 | 163 | 39,064 | 10 |
| South Zambia Conference | 348 | 147,049 | 14,616 | 388 | 109 | 160,503 | 31 |
| West Zambia Field | 100 | 39,038 | 3,293 | 53 | 388 | 41,897 | 18 |
| ZAMBIA UNION CONFERENCE | 1,787 | 567,881 | 52,807 | 1,633 | 3,171 | 612,644 | 220 |

Source: General Conference Archives, 2008 Annual Statistics.

Strengths

A strong urban presence is one of the strengths of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia. Not too long ago, Adventism in Zambia was largely a rural church. Of its 92, 900 adherents in 1983, only 27% lived in urban areas (Henkel, 1989). The church has worked hard to overcome this deficit over the years. Currently the church draws its membership from all walks of life. It is actually the second largest protestant denomination in the country following the Pentecostals (Luis & Alan, 2010). Some high profile members include the clerk of the National Assembly, director for Zambia

Revenue Authority, about 30 members of parliament and government ministers, just to name a few. Additionally, one of the strong opposition parties in the country is led by a Seventh-day Adventist. The other notable strength of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia is its laity. The commitment of the Zambian laity to the church is remarkable. They preach most of the sermons on a given Sabbath throughout the country. They provide leadership to local churches. They promote departmental work at district and conference levels. They organize camp meetings. Some of the most outstanding soul winners in the Union are laymen. In April 2009, 13,000 women from one conference gathered for one week of training and worship. Even more important is the youthful makeup of the church. The majority of people who join the church are young people. This is to be expected given the makeup of the Zambia population.

Weaknesses

The Zambia Union has done well in leading people to accept Christ. This is evidenced by the Union's exponential numerical growth over the years. However, one of the weaknesses in the church is an insufficient process to help people mature in Christ after baptism. This is evidenced by the data presented in chapter one.

With over 40,000 new members baptized every year, most of who are drawn from other Christian traditions or religious background. With many of them young people, it is critical that an intentional discipling process is established. Second, due to inadequate finances, local conferences and mission fields cannot afford to provide a pastor for every church. As a result, the Pastor/church and Pastor/member ratios are high. The average

pastor in Zambia is in charge of 8-10 churches (see Table 3). Most congregations also lack church buildings. Thus, so many Seventh-day Adventist churches worship in public school classrooms.

Table 3

Pastor/Church and Pastor/Member Ratios

| Field Name | Accession Rate | Members/Church | Churches/Minister | Members/Minister |
|--|----------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Central Zambia Conference | 11.16% | 362.52 | 9.67 | 3,506.60 |
| Copperbelt Zambia Field | 7.24% | 280.86 | 12.27 | 3,445.20 |
| East Zambia Field | 8.96% | 140.57 | 9.50 | 1,335.40 |
| Luapula Zambia Field | 6.03% | 322.55 | 15.92 | 5,133.92 |
| North Zambia Field | 9.48% | 255.32 | 15.30 | 3,906.40 |
| South Zambia Conference | 9.94% | 461.22 | 11.23 | 5,177.52 |
| West Zambia Field | 8.44% | 418.97 | 5.56 | 2,327.61 |
| ZAMBIA UNION CONFERENCE | 9.30% | 342.83 | 8.12 | 2,784.75 |

Note: General Conference Archives, 2008 Annual Statistics.

The ministry system in local churches is tailored to the traditional Seventh-day Adventist blueprint based primarily on departments: Youth, Stewardship, Personal Ministries, Sabbath School, and many others. With all its positive contribution to the mission of the church, this system has its own limitations. It does not accommodate every spiritual gift available in the church. Local churches are forced to replicate an inflexible system in which sometimes they have more offices to fill than people who can fill them, and in some churches you have more people than there are church roles to be filled. Departments become mini churches that compete for available resources, which results into conflicts.

Opportunities

The Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia enjoys an environment that is friendly and open to Christianity. A more extended discussion of the religious context will be offered later in the chapter, but suffice it to say, the nation is fertile for the gospel. The church currently runs a weekly program on the government owned National Television. The current Union President serves on the National Constitution Review Commission appointed by the President of Zambia. In June 2011, the President of Zambia attended a very large Seventh-day Adventist meeting where he made a financial donation to the church and pledged to allocate funds for Dorcas work every year. At the end of July during the same year he was the commencement speaker at Rusangu University graduation. The religious openness of the population has been part of the reason for the exponential growth of the church.

Threats

The religious openness of the Zambian people is a mixed blessing. The advantage is that people are not hostile to Christianity or other religious views. But the downside is that sometimes it leads to syncretistic tendencies or vulnerability to the inroads of ecumenism. Theological extremism, as explained in Chapter 1, is the other threat facing the church. In the light of such threats, our duty is to refocus the local church to its God-given mission of helping people experience the fullness of a life lived in fellowship with the loving personal God.

Conclusion and Implications

This was not meant to be an exhaustive analysis of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zambia nor the Zambian society. But hopefully what has been covered gives

some cues on two things; that there is need to be intentional about discipling. There is also a need to ensure that local churches in Zambia are well positioned to become disciple-making communities of faith. We started this chapter with a hypothesis that pastoral practices in Zambia and the local church structure needs to be more intentional about making wholistic discipling the central mission of the church.

Our findings have shown that due to inadequate finances, the pastor/church and pastor/member ratios are high in Zambia Union—an average of 8-10 churches per pastor. The disadvantage with this is that pastors have become expert programmers who have little time to focus on developing people. And yet God's design is to bring spiritual leaders to a standard of life by his grace, which he wants them to help reproduce in others. Thus there is a need for a discipling strategy that re-orientes pastors from being program oriented to being people oriented.

Because of financial challenges, a lot of churches do not have church buildings. They use classrooms or other public places. Thus a disciple-making strategy that takes much of church life into small groups is just the pragmatic thing to do. The theological extremism that was discussed also demonstrates the need for a continued systematic study of God's Word. There are implications for the role of the church in a shame-honor dominated culture. The church can either feed people's shame or be an agent of healing. Otherwise a graceless religion that tells people to do something and follow a set of rules to measure up to or in order to be accepted and belong simply reinforces the cultural damage of toxic shame. The potential for shame-honor culture to foster duplicity between the public and private self of people should be offset by encouraging believers to embrace honest self-reflection as an integral part of Christian growth.

Because of the burden of poverty, discipling approaches in Zambia should include meaningful efforts to meet the real needs of people. As Monte Sahlin puts it (2004), “The mission Christ gave the church always begins right at the point where human needs intersect with God’s will” (p. 111). Christ ministered to people’s needs before he bade them “Follow Me.” What this section has revealed is that the Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia cannot afford to ignore the issue of suffering under the burden of poverty. People must see that we are genuinely interested in helping them earn a living. The church needs to articulate a Christian perspective on work, wealth, poverty, and suffering. Seventh-day Adventists in Zambia must be taught to get involved in community life like those early members of the church, and help make their communities better places.

Giving attention to the role of the home in disciple-making is critical for the Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia. As shown in Chapter 4, most of the churches that share a pastor in multi-church district arrangements have an average of 340 members. They share pastors due to insufficient funds. That also means they cannot afford a church school where Christian Education is provided. Thus, the discipling efforts of local churches do not benefit from the support/contribution of church schools. Even if church schools were readily available, it is not feasible that many families would afford the cost due to high poverty levels.

Without good training, parents are left with the option of counting on Sabbath School, youth programs, and other congregational activities to foster the faith of their children. As vital as all these church programs are, the reality is that they are not enough without the intentional efforts of modeling faith in the home setting. Besides, most of the

education that goes on in the church relies heavily on the schooling-instructional model as the prime mode for the transmission of learning, it is short on life-related modes of learning (Collinson, 2006). The home setting offers the best ideal for discipleship because here example and instruction go hand-in-hand.

Another thing to consider is the composition of the Zambian church. The rapid growth of the church entails that a large percentage of the membership are first generation Seventh-day Adventists whose grasp/appreciation of the mission and message of the church may not be very deep. Yet the homes of those affiliated with a local church represent the church life outside the walls of the congregation. When the Christian faith is properly nurtured in the family, the home represents the domestic expression of the church. Therefore to strengthen the church's "outposts," the Christian home, this project is intentional about guiding and nurturing church families.

Furthermore, and probably most importantly, focusing on the home is one way to ensure that both the church that gathers as a congregation and the one that gathers in homes offer supportive and complimentary spiritual climate for faith development. Otherwise mixed messages will negatively affect the quality of what we are trying to produce. For example, it is difficult for the church to succeed in helping members to relate to God on the basis of his love if they are socialized to the contrary in their daily interactions at home. The "hidden curriculum" in the home socialization can undo everything the church is trying to teach. Charles Betz and Jack Calkins (2001) argue:

If your family has labeled you a "loser," it is difficult to think that God thinks any differently. If your life has had few significant care-givers, it is hard to believe God cares. If you have gone through divorce, separation, significant illness, or other tragedies, heaven's affection seems strictly for others. (p. 73)

Thus, families need to be nurtured so that members learn to practice non-shaming communication and treat each other with dignity and respect regardless of age or gender. In this cultural context, a church environment where people are shown God's love and are nurtured to relate to God and to each other on the basis of God's love is indispensable. Thus a discipling strategy for Zambia should include not only a biblically-balanced curriculum but also focus on connecting members in Christ-centered long-lasting and authentic relationships. Zambians traditionally thrive in community.

CHAPTER V

A DISCIPLING STRATEGY FOR MULTI-CHURCH DISTRICTS IN ZAMBIA

Introduction

The Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia exists to glorify God by making disciples. An adequate disciple-making strategy must be shaped by a biblical view of discipleship. That is why in this project we started off by defining discipleship.

The reality is that inadequate perspectives on discipleship lead to inadequate approaches to discipling. For instance; many believe that the discipleship process is primarily about teaching biblical doctrine to new believers (Collinson, 2006). Hence, they develop discipleship training programs that are structured in such a way as to cover biblical doctrines. To be clear, learning biblical doctrine is an indispensable element of the Christian life. Paul makes this clear in his first letter the church at Corinth:

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Cor 15:1-4)

To the Romans he writes: “For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” He follows this affirmation with a series of rhetorical questions, “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? He concludes with

another affirmation; “So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:13-14, 17).

For Paul, faith is the appropriate human response to the Gospel; it is the appropriate human posture before God in light of the Gospel. Because trusting God at its most basic level means knowing who we are and knowing who God is. And the Word of God helps to clarify our need as well as the sufficiency of the Lord. That is why biblical teaching is a large part of the strategy we propose in this project. However, unless the purpose of learning doctrine, namely, to develop a faith relationship with God, is clearly and frequently expressed in the teaching process, doctrine may become merely academic knowledge with no real impact in the lives of learners.

There is also usually a fundamental lack of clarity in communicating the goals of discipleship. For example, currently Seventh-day Adventists are emphasizing “Revival and Reformation,” of which many would admit that in reality what is being talked about is “Christian growth.” While we must admit that the emphasis is timely, it is also important to be clear on what we are reviving and what the results will look like. The former President of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church, Jan Paulsen (2011) expresses skepticism on whether it is even appropriate to think of revival as a goal we can reach and pass. He insists, “The term reformation is perhaps in even greater need of clarification than is revival. Reformation suggests the need for specific actions, but they must also be spelled out” (p. 117). There is a pervasive tendency among Christian churches of emphasizing discipleship by adopting catchy slogans and implementing creative programs without very clear goals. The solution is to define the goals of discipleship and articulate what we are trying to accomplish in clear terms so

that we have a way of assessing progress being made. A review of the teachings of Christ on discipleship is a great help to this process.

Others take behavioral issues as the primary focus of the discipleship process. This is perhaps the most common error committed, often by most of us. In an effort to measure the results of the discipleship process, discipleship leaders often focus on the outward, visible changes. Discipleship programs are designed that require participants to complete a survey at the beginning of the program in which they record such information as how many times a day they pray, how many times a week they read the Bible, how much they give financially to the local church, how often they share their faith with others, etc. Then at the end of the program, the survey is readministered. If an improvement in the areas assessed can be quantified, the assumption is made that Christian growth has occurred. But is this always an accurate assumption to make? One presumes that the Pharisees would have scored high were such an instrument administered in their day, yet clearly not all of them were mature believers.

The unintended consequence of this misplaced focus on outward works is that the person being disciplined develops the mistaken impression that the more visible activities they engage in—Bible reading, praying, attending church, etc.—the more mature they are. Such believers who mistakenly think they have a growing relationship with the Lord simply because of what they do are often surprised when they discover that in the face of adversity they are not able to say with Paul, “For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him until that day” (2 Tim 1:12). Although a faith relationship with God always manifests itself through an authentic Christian witness and works of love to others, outward activities in themselves are no

guarantee of the inward condition of one's heart. Furthermore, encouraging new believers to focus on their behavior has the unfortunate effect of working directly against the true measure of Christian discipleship—faith in God. One cannot be preoccupied with himself and the Lord at the same time. To be preoccupied with one's own actions and behavior distracts from the ability to trust and depend on the Lord.

If the apostle Paul were to comment on some of the contemporary approaches to discipleship, he would probably start by asking the same question he asked the Galatians: “Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal 3:3). He would then insist as he did to the Colossians, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving” (Col 2:6-7). Paul makes it clear that the believer is saved by faith and he must also grow mature by living a life of faith in God. Reading his letters one gets a sense that he understands the Christian life as one that starts, is maintained, and comes to culmination through dependence on God. In her classic volume on the Christian life, *Steps to Christ*, Ellen G. White (1893) comes to the same conclusion; she writes:

Many have an idea that they must do some part of the work alone. They have trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, but now they seek by their own efforts to live alright. But every such effort must fail. Jesus says, “Without Me ye can do nothing.” Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness, all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly, by abiding in Him, that we are to grow in grace. He is not only the Author, but the Finisher of our faith. It is Christ first and last and always. He is to be with us, not only at the beginning and the end of our course, but at every step of the way. David says, “I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.” Psalm 16:8. (p. 69)

In this project, we insist that biblical discipleship involves first and foremost an emphasis on living by faith (Gal 2:20). For, “it is true that there may be an outward correctness of deportment without the renewing power of Christ. The love of influence

and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions. By what means, then, shall we determine whose side we are on?" Ellen G. White asks (p. 58). Certainly we cannot answer this question by resorting to measuring Christian growth simply in terms of the quality of one's outward actions, but rather by the quality of one's faith. Our analysis of discipleship concepts in the New Testament suggests that the main purpose of discipleship is to help believers develop a growing faith relationship with God. George Knight (2001), correctly suggests that "the real issue from the New Testament perspective is whether a person is in a faith relationship with Jesus Christ. *That is the issue—the only issue.* SIN is breaking a relationship with God, while FAITH is entering into and maintaining a relationship with Him. To have FAITH is to be safe in Jesus" (p. 53; emphasis added).

In order to avoid the pitfalls of faulty approaches to disciple-making, we started off this project by examining both the Gospels and the New Testament epistles for a definition of disciple. According to our findings, a disciple is one who has responded to the love of God and is growing a faith relationship with God. A faith relationship with God is expressed in an authentic Christian witness to the character of God and loving service to God and others. It is pursued in the context of the church community where believers walk alongside each other for mutual discipling.

Proceeding from this view of discipleship, an adequate disciple-making strategy must of necessity involve four key dimensions: inviting people to respond to God's call to salvation; connecting believers with one another in intentional relationships for nurture and mutual support; equipping them for a faith that works in real life, and sending them

for service. Clearly the Zambia Union is doing a better job in leading people to accept Christ as their personal savior. The exponential numerical growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia attests to the church's great emphasis on evangelistic efforts. However, despite the noticeable evidences that many in the church continue to struggle to maintain consistency in their faith commitments, the Zambia Union Conference lacks a more intentional and sufficient discipling strategy for both new and longtime members. Beyond the baptismal class and the Sabbath School lesson, there is no intentional and systematic approach for the purpose of establishing people in the faith. Extenuating factors against an effective disciple-making strategy include, among other things, a lack of a clear vision for disciple-making, a less than intentional local church ministry structure, program-oriented pastoral leadership, and a lack of settings and opportunities for members to form intentional and long-term authentic relationships for mutual support.

In this project we address this need by proposing a tri-focal discipling strategy for multi-church districts in Zambia. This strategy is informed by a review of disciple-making church models as to the key elements of a church that makes disciple-making its central mission. As shown in Chapter 3, key elements that distinguish churches that take disciple-making seriously include: a clear purpose for discipleship, functional structures that serve the purpose, holistic small groups, shared ministry with the laity, intentional pastoral leadership, a focus on equipping, etc.

In this project we propose a strategy that includes: a clear vision for disciple-making, local church ministry structure that stipulate, in organizational flow, a process that meets the basic growth needs of members and addresses each of the four dimensions of our vision for discipling in a balanced way. Relevant topics are selected and a

curriculum for discipling is developed. A Christian growth evaluation process is developed for assessing the progress being made. Furthermore, pastoral leadership practices for disciple-making churches together with a project implementation outline are defined. Overall the strategy weighs heavily on connecting God's people in intentional relationships for mutual discipling.

A Clear Vision for Disciple-Making

We light fires in people's hearts when we find a slogan, theme, or sentence that captures the essence of a cause. Our passion for disciple-making is ignited by a world-changing vision of: ***Inviting** people to a life of faith in Jesus Christ through the proclamation of God's Word and inspiring worship, **building up** their faith through a systematic teaching of God's Word and experiences of authentic relationships, **equipping** them for a faith that works in the real world and **sending** them to transform the world one life at a time.*

The vision embraces a global mission but places the action locally by focusing on one life at a time. To some who erroneously think that emphasis on discipleship focuses the energy of the church inwards, thus diverting attention from "soul winning," this vision makes clear that discipleship is not self serving; rather it is mission oriented—it is all about changing the world. It also envisions the focus of church life/ministry where it ought to be—people: we invite people, we build people, we equip people and we send people. The vision also provides a criterion for church structure. It is one thing to verbally affirm that every dimension of our vision is important, but it is another thing to develop structures that target all of them equally. Thus, our local church ministry clusters are structured primarily around the four dimensions of our vision.

As important as a concise vision statement is, in disciple-making a catchy slogan/ statement is not enough. The goal must be clearly defined. The next section defines the goal of discipling.

The Goals of Discipling Clearly Defined

In Chapter 2, we came to the conclusion that the goal of discipling is to lead people into a growing faith relationship with God. This faith is based on a firm and true knowledge of God wrought in their hearts by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. However, we need to differentiate the genuine biblical faith which we are talking about here from a mere flittering fuzzy feeling about religion or sheer optimism.

Faith Defined

There is a need at this point to be specific in our definition of faith in order to be sure of what we seek to develop. The literature on faith development offers a variety of definitions of faith. A lot of them tend to be more psychological rather than theological. For example, James Fowler (1981) states:

Faith is people's evolved and evolving ways of experiencing self, others and the world (as they construct them) as related to and affected by the ultimate concerns of existence (as they construct them) and of shaping their lives' purposes and meanings, trust and loyalties, in the light of character of being, value and power determining the ultimate condition of existence (as grasped in their operative images—conscious and unconscious—of them). (p. 18)

Sharon Daloz Parks (2000), in her book *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, defines faith as “the dynamic composition of meaning” (p. 137). She explains that human beings are creatures that must seek and find meaning, and that faith is the way we make sense of things. However, from a theological perspective, faith is more than a generic human search for meaning. Rather it is a certain conviction wrought in the heart by the Holy

Spirit, as to the (truth) of the gospel, resulting in hearty reliance (trust) on the promises of God in Christ and a (yielding) of one's life to God (Heb 11; Rom 14; Gen 3:22). The work of the Holy Spirit, Bible Truth, growing trust in, and a yielding of the will to God are all part of what constitutes Christian faith.

John Westerhoff (2000) talks of faith as “a way of behaving which involves *knowing, being, and willing*” (p. 87). He states his formal definition of faith as “an action which includes thinking, feeling and willing. It is sustained, transmitted and expanded through our interaction with faithing selves in a community of faith” (p. 89). Although differently stated, Westerhoff captures three of the four elements of the definition of faith favored in this project: thinking (Truth), feeling (Trust) and willing (Yielding). But in this project we choose to include the work of the Holy Spirit in the definition of faith to clearly differentiate Christian faith from a generic human feeling of optimism or a quest for meaning. It is a gift of God. Westerhoff, however, makes a very important contribution to our understanding of faith maturation through the last part of his definition of faith where he says; “it is sustained, transmitted and expanded through our interaction with faithing selves in a community of faith.” That means, a community of faith offers the best context for spiritual growth. But as pointed out in Chapter 3, it takes a certain spiritual climate for a congregation to fulfill this role. Otherwise a “congregation of Christians who are insecure in their relationship to Christ” does not provide the best environment for Christian growth.

A grace-oriented community of believers provides the best faith forming experiences. Therefore the local church structure, the pastoral leadership, and the discipling curriculum outlined below (Figure 2) attempts to create such congregations.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Marks of a Disciple</p> <p>The Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia exists to glorify God by making disciples who possess and/or express the following characteristics:</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Marks of a Disciple-Making Church</p> <p>The church will advance this mission by providing a ministry environment that is grounded in the following essential elements:</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Love God and Others</p> <p>Relate to God on the basis of his love, acceptance and provision in Christ, which they demonstrate by their unrivaled love for God, sacrificial love and practical concern for others.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">A Grace-Oriented Community of Faith</p> <p>Where people are embraced by God’s love and are encouraged to relate to God and to each other on the basis of God’s grace in Christ, and the church is understood as a community constituted as “People of God” on the basis of God’s grace to “proclaim his excellences”</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Abide in Christ</p> <p>Draw their identity from Christ, live in loving obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and manifest a deepening desire for participation in public worship as well as personal devotions, and daily communion with God through prayer</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">A Christ-Centered Community of Faith</p> <p>Where a devotion to God’s glory is modeled, Jesus is recognized as the “cornerstone,” the center that holds together all the teachings and ministries of the church and his disciples experience the joy of who they are in Christ</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Abide in God’s Word</p> <p>Confident enough to act on their convictions as to the truth of the gospel resulting in ever growing dependence on Scripture as the rule of conduct in life and yet not so dogmatic about their beliefs that they allow no room for fresh perspectives and/or better expressions</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">A Biblically-Balanced Community of Faith</p> <p>Where the gospel is clearly proclaimed and lived, commitment to the prophetic identity of Adventism and her statement of belief is uncompromised, yet permission is granted for people to search, question and explore their beliefs within the parameters of the “Foundation of the apostles and the prophets”</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Has authentic Relationships</p> <p>Participating in long-lasting, grace-filled, supportive and authentic relationships in the context of the local church and are humble enough to permit others to hold them accountable to their commitment to the Lord</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">A Family-Oriented Community of Faith</p> <p>Where the Christian home is the primary unit for discipleship; friendships are formed in the context of small groups, with an emphasis on building long-lasting and grace-based relationships where believers are encouraged to open their hearts in transparent trust to each other around the truth of God’s word in the spirit of mutual accountability</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Involved in Ministry</p> <p>Have passion to serve God and others demonstrated by a growing, commitment to the church as God’s appointed agency for the salvation of man and, desire to participate in ministry using whatever gift of the Spirit received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">An Equipping Community of Faith</p> <p>Where, there is a clear biblical basis for participation in ministry, believers are equipped to serve in ministry according to their spiritual gifts, and they are helped to identify ministry opportunities that best suit their interests and set of gifts</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Persevere in Trials</p> <p>Peace, contentment, and joy characterize life rather than worry and anxiety; demonstrates trust in Christ when facing life problems and are willing to suffer for the sake of the gospel based on a deep conviction in the Spirit’s presence in one’s life</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">A Caring Community of Faith</p> <p>Where members are ministered to according to need and are helped as they translate the teachings of Jesus into ways of living in Zambia and the world; where mutual care is known as part of what it means to live interdependently in the “Body of Christ”</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Has a Practical Spirit-filled Living</p> <p>Experience God’s personal empowering presence through the indwelling Holy Spirit who convicts of sin, of righteousness and judgment, bestows gifts for ministry, guides into all truth, comforts and cultivates Christian character</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">A Spirit-Driven Community of Faith</p> <p>Where the Holy Spirit is corporately sought as God’s personal and empowering presence, and the presence of the Holy Spirit is recognized as being at the heart of what it means to be “The Temple of God,” and the Holy Spirit is affirmed as the key player in all of Christian life, from beginning to end</p> |

Figure 2. Characteristics of a disciple and marks of a disciple-making church.

Now we know what we are trying to develop, we know how it develops, we can tell when we see it, and we know the proper environment for growing faith. The next step is to outline a local church structure for discipling, a curriculum for faith building and some possible measure for testing the progress being made in disciple-making.

A Structure That Serves the Vision

After a review of the literature on discipleship, it has become clear that the biggest challenge to developing a biblical disciple-making philosophy of ministry is not necessarily getting the right scriptural words or the right principles on a sheet of paper. The biggest challenge is to adjust the organizational mechanisms of church life to make disciple-making the structural framework. What we do in this project is work with the currently existing ministries in the Seventh-day Adventist church. But for the purpose of bringing balance and focus to the process of disciple-making, and in accordance with our vision, these ministries are clustered according to the role they play in the process.

Thus, in this section we outline a local church ministry structure designed to advance the four dimensions of our vision: *inviting* people to faith in Jesus Christ, *building up* their faith in Jesus, *equipping* them for a faith that works, and *sending* them to change the world. To stay close to, and consistent with the Seventh-day Adventist nomenclature, these ministry clusters are called: Worship & Evangelism Ministries, Fellowship & Nurture Ministries, Stewardship & Equipping Ministries, and Outreach Ministries respectively. A fifth cluster is included for Specialized Ministries. Another key component of this structure is a small group ministry that starts with the family as the basic discipleship unit of the local church. We also outline a leadership structure that

makes facilitating for the growth of members the primary responsibility of church leadership.

Local Church Ministry Clusters

The following structure attempts to stipulate, in organizational flow, a process that meets the basic growth needs of members. The primary aim of this structure is to address each of the four dimensions of our vision for discipling and to do so in a balanced way without neglecting one piece of the process.

1. **WORSHIP & EVANGELISM MINISTRIES**
 - 1.1. Preaching ministry
 - 1.2. Prayer ministry
 - 1.3. Music ministry
 - 1.4. Special Services ministry
 - 1.5. Guest Services ministry
2. **FELLOWSHIP & NURTURE MINISTRIES**
 - 2.1. Small Group ministry
 - 2.2. Women's ministry
 - 2.3. Youth ministry
 - 2.4. Men's ministry
 - 2.5. Children's ministry
3. **STEWARDSHIP & EQUIPPING MINISTRIES**
 - 3.1. Ministry placement
 - 3.2. Treasury services
 - 3.3. Health ministries
 - 3.4. Education ministry
 - 3.5. Records & Clerical services
4. **OUTREACH MINISTRIES**
 - 4.1. Community services
 - 4.2. Personal witnessing
 - 4.3. Literature ministry
 - 4.4. Volunteer ministry
 - 4.5. Global mission
5. **SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES**
 - 5.1. Communication & media services
 - 5.2. Plant service
 - 5.3. Church & district relations
 - 5.4. Church and community relations
 - 5.5. Economic empowerment

6. LEADERSHIP TEAM (MISSION BOARD)

- 6.1. Worship & Evangelism Ministries elder
- 6.2. Fellowship & Nurture Ministries elder
- 6.3. Stewardship & Equipping Ministries elder
- 6.4. Outreach Ministries elder
- 6.5. Specialized Ministries elder

As should be expected, these ministry clusters are not exclusive. Rather, the emphasis is on what their primary focus is. For example, the Worship Ministries while focusing on drawing people to Jesus Christ also provide for continual renewal and affirmation of faith for both long time and new members of the church. Thus, it continues to be part of what goes on in small groups. But thinking of our church ministries this way brings balance to all dimensions of discipleship some of which have not received enough emphasis.

There are other advantages for this ministry structure in the local church. First, this structure is elastic; it can expand or shrink based on the size of the church while still focusing on the local church's major functions of disciple-making. Therefore the structure does not have to be replicated in its entirety in every church. Some churches can only afford level one staffing while others can go up to level three. We will use the Fellowship & Nurture Ministries cluster to illustrate this point.

1. FELLOWSHIP & NURTURE MINISTRIES ELDER

- 1.1. Small Group ministry leader
 - 1.1.1. Family Units coordinator
 - 1.1.2. Kinship Groups coordinator
 - 1.1.3. Bible Study Groups coordinator
 - 1.1.4. Growth Groups coordinator

In level one staffing churches, the Fellowship & Nurture ministry *elder* is responsible for all the fellowship and nurture functions of the church. In level 2 staffing churches, the Fellowship & Nurture ministries elder is assisted by five ministry *leaders*

(Small Group Ministry, Women's Ministry, Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, and Men's Ministry) under him. In level three staffing churches the Small Group Ministries leader has five ministry *coordinators* under him/her as shown above. That means Family Units have their own coordinator as well as the other three types of groups. The structure is designed to continue expanding down to individual member functions. The idea is to involve as many people as possible in ministry.

Second, in this structure the role of elders changes from a scheduling oriented mindset ("I am in charge this week; you are in charge the next week, etc.") to a ministry function-based mindset where each elder is in charge of a cluster of ministries.

The third benefit of this structure is that the ministry clusters are designed to put people who share similar interests, passion and experts in ministry teams. This is much like the human body imagery of the church. The human body is composed of many organs, but these organs operate in clusters to form about ten body systems. One of these systems is the digestive system. The digestive system is made up of the mouth, esophagus, stomach, and other organs. In the same way, for example, the Fellowship & Nurture ministries elder works with five other people (the leaders of small group ministries, children's ministry, women's ministry, youth ministry, and men's ministry) to accomplish the goals of nurture and fellowship. This way, the level one leader serves as a coach and model for the level two leaders. A key benefit of ministry teams will be decentralized/distributed leadership. Distributed leadership allows for a broader participation in developing ministry goals and action plans. This approach enhances a sense of ownership for self-initiated ministry goals. This is because ministry activities are carried out mostly by the same team members who take part in conceptualizing the plans.

Decentralized leadership also means decentralized decision-making, rather than concentrating all the powers in the church board. That means instead of working with a church board that has to meet every month as per current practice, local churches work with two governing bodies: the Mission Board and the Church Council. The Mission board is comprised of all level one officers (church elders) of the church. The primary responsibility of the Mission board is to always keep the mission of disciple-making before all ministry leaders. The board meets every two months for purposes of coordination, oversight, and other routine decisions that are beyond the purview of ministry teams. The church council is comprised of all level one and level two officers (church elders and ministry leaders). The council meets twice a year; year-end, and mid-year. Larger churches could appoint additional members both to the Mission board and the Church council for wider representation. The rest of the nuts and bolts of ministry are left to the ministry teams.

Small Group Ministries

The “body” imagery of the church indicates that believers are to grow and serve the Lord through interdependent and lasting relationships. Although faith is formed through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit works through personal trusted relationships in the context of the local church and the home setting. The nonthreatening environment of a small group provides the ideal setting for facilitating Christian growth. It allows for the development of authentic and trusting relationships in which frequent and close contact allows us to learn from the example of others. In small groups we can open our lives to others in meaningful self-disclosure and vulnerability. We can also be held accountable to the growth that we say we desire.

Therefore in this section we outline a small group ministry which draws from church models examined in Chapter 3. It includes the family as the primary discipleship unit of the local church herein called a *Family Unit*. The other small groups are: Neighborhood groups herein called *Kinship Groups*, *Bible Study Groups*, and homogeneous triads herein called *Growth Groups*. A Family Unit consists of members of the same household. Three to five Family Units make up a Kinship Group based mostly on the regions of the church. Experts in the field of small group ministry discourage against geographically based groups. The affinity attraction factor suggests that people pre-select each other based on relationships of natural affinities.

Proponents of this view argue that people accept care best if you honor interpersonal chemistry. However, it is also common knowledge that assignment-based groupings best prevents people from being overlooked in the church. Furthermore, due to some mobility limitations in the Zambian context, forming Kinship Groups based on geographical locations seems to outweigh the need for other, otherwise legitimate, accommodations. Growth Groups are accountability and prayer groups formed out of Youth ministry, Men's ministry and Women's ministry. Each member joins with two others of the same sex for mutual accountability and sharing of personal life experiences and prayers.

Family Units

We have included Family Units as part of Small Group ministries to elevate the role of the home as a critical player in facilitating Christian growth. The home is the place in which we learn to value ourselves and relate to others. We learn to forgive, develop trustworthiness, to listen, settle conflicts, share emotions, seek justice and peace,

and care for each other. To quote David Anderson (2009), “The homes of people who worship, study, serve, and play in our own congregational settings provide the immediate and essential context for faith, moral, and character formation from the earliest stages of life until our dying breath” (p. 20). Anderson further says, “The church must understand how relatives and friends are already servants of the church evangelizing the world and fostering faith formation in daily life contexts” (p. 20). The Family Unit strategy proposed here stems from one conviction, the recognition of the need to value, equip, and renew the life of the Adventist home as the primary discipleship unit for church members, especially young people.

Anderson notes, “At the heart of effective Christian education, effective Christian faith formation, and effective ‘religious socialization’ is not the classroom but a lifestyle that includes specific faith practices, especially those in the home” (p. 50). Many studies (D. Anderson, 2009; Anderson & Hill, 2003; Westerhoff, 2000) have identified four ways in which Christian homes play a critical role in faith formation: Caring conversations, Family devotions, Family Service Projects, Family Rituals and Traditions. These are the basis for our efforts in helping families to develop and sustain Christian faith in the home. Home-based faith building goals are developed based on these four key factors.

Caring conversation

To achieve this goal, members are taught how to listen and respond to each other’s concerns and relate the love of God in daily conversations. Listening and responding to the daily concerns of each other with love, honor and respect is itself a way to express God’s love to each other. Members are also taught how to confront each other in redemptive ways that help another come to the need of God’s grace. This allows them

to grow in faith and relationship to one another as they learn to trust, resolve conflicts, forgive, work, and play together. The primary goal of caring conversations is to make sure that each family member is first and for most affirmed as a precious child of God who is forgiven and saved by the death of Jesus Christ and daily dependent on the Holy Spirit for strength. Each family member must be helped to develop an individual identity that is complete in Jesus Christ. Family members are equipped to help each other learn to live in, and trust in God's love; for this is the practical experiential aspect of faith that makes up the daily contentment of discipleship (Rom 5:1-11).

Family devotional life

To achieve this goal, families are taught to develop an attitude of gratitude to God, how to share daily Scripture readings and develop lifetime patterns of Christian study. The Bible is to the spiritual life what food is to our physical body. Hence a portion of each day should be set aside for the family to read, reflect, and meditate on God's Word. A simple four-step study process is provided for a guide.

1. Prayer—invite the Holy Spirit to make the Word of God come alive in your heart
2. Observation—(what does the text say?): Read and examine exactly what is in the text before jumping to any preconceived ideas. Note the larger context of the text and background is necessary.
3. Interpretation—(What does it mean?): Draw conclusion as to the meaning of the passage to the original audience and to us today.
4. Application—(What does it mean to mean to me?): Pay attention to the voice of the Holy Spirit by asking “so what” questions: How does God want to change my life as a result of this truth? What am I going to do about it?

Family rituals and traditions

The common rituals in the Seventh-day Adventist church are: baptism and Holy Communion. But there are other daily routines, celebrations, and other ways families can use to identify who they are, what they value and believe. Rightly planned, these simple

occasions and traditions can be an important tool for weaving God into the everyday interactions of family members. Hence in this strategy families are taught how to incorporate biblical values, faith enhancing practices and build family identities through milestone events such as rites of passage, baby dedication, birthday, marriage, baptism, anniversaries, graduation, first job, moving, family reunions, and such practices as preparations for the Sabbath, etc. These are used as a valuable opportunity for people to pause and reflect on the work of Christ in their lives and recommit their lives to him as a family and as individual family members. Some of the occasions are also used as witnessing opportunities to their neighbors.

Family service projects

This involves sharing the gospel through words and deeds by offering service to the church and community as a family. One of the best ways for people to develop their faith is by serving people. Service that is done as a family establishes it as a family value. Service creates an emotional bond of those working together. Christ modeled this in his training of the twelve. George Barna (2003) argues: “Our faith is founded on the notion of expressing love in real ways, not simply discussing it as an intellectual concept” (p. 74). Therefore families are encouraged to live and express their faith by pouring themselves out in service to God and fellow human beings.

These are not presented as an obligation, but as a loving and grateful response to God’s love for them. Each family is encouraged to identify a ministry or service project which they can do together as a family. These service/ministry activities are coordinated through Kinship Groups. Additionally, Kinship Group coordinators continually reinforce the importance of outreach efforts in which families work together. Each family is

challenged to pray for and target a specific family/individual they would like to lead to Christ.

Heads of households (who are in charge of Family Units) are designated as Family Ministries Leader. To avoid indistinctness, the current *Church Manual* position bearing that title is renamed Family Life Director. Once a quarter, Family Ministries leaders meet with the district pastor for a weekend-long training on the four home-based faith building activities. Trainings also include parenting classes that address the child's social, physical, and faith development. Other classes concern such issues as: understanding our culture and how it impacts discipleship, financial stewardship, sharing one's own faith, dealing with family and kinship conflicts, sharing forgiveness, and enhancing caring conversations. Family Ministries leaders meet once a month with the Family Units coordinator for sharing, testimonies, and mutual support.

Kinship Groups

Urbanization in Zambia, like many African countries has affected the effectiveness of the traditional and natural support system of kinship. Traditionally, knowledge and important lessons of life were passed on from one generation to another through the "fireside" storytelling by village elders. This is the way values were passed on and sustained in the country. With many people moving to cities, this has all changed and now people have to struggle on their own.

The Kinship Group strategy is an attempt to recover as best as we can this indigenous method of learning and growing through a process of "Life rubbing off on Life." It is important to note here that this way of passing on faith is not unique to

traditional Zambia. In their book, *Frogs Without Legs Can't Hear: Nurturing Disciples in Home and Congregation*, Anderson and Hill state:

In the context of personal, trusted relationships—often those in one's own home or some other non-congregational setting—people are more receptive to the Christian faith. Such experiences become the work of the Holy Spirit through which people are “experiencing, proving, and feeling” the Word of God. (p. 23)

Therefore central to the Mixed Small Group model we propose in this project are to some the use of the term “Kinship” may imply that these groups consist of blood relatives. God forbid, we simply use the term here as a model concept of how we hope to see these groups function and how group members will view each other—as truly brothers and sisters in the Lord. Kinship Groups are not based on blood relatives. They consist of Family Units from the same geographical area of the local church. Thus they are neighborhood-based groups. In this model, the Kinship Group is the primary church. Member visitation, mid-week prayer meetings, and other such activities are coordinated in Kinship Groups. The primary responsibility of Kinship Groups is threefold: fellowship, nurture, and ministry. They pursue these goals through a ministry process that is characterized by four words: Contact, Connect, Care, and Christian service. These four emphasis areas are coordinated by the deaconate ministries in each Kinship Group. That means each Kinship Group has four deacons/deaconesses, each one coordinating one emphasis area.

Contact

The purpose of this emphasis is to start a new member assimilation process in order to bridge the gap between “joining” and “belonging” to the body of Christ. It seeks to heighten a sense of belonging, the experience of acceptance in the church, and ensure that each member belongs to a group where he/she is known by name, missed when

absent and knows that their contribution to the life of the church is valued. To achieve this goal, Contact Coordinators from Kinship Groups also serve as part of the Guest Services staff during Sabbath worship. Their primary responsibility includes but not limited to coordinating personal contacts/visits of all new attendees during Sabbath worship, Kinship Group meetings as well as all Kinship Group members as follows:

1. First time guests during worship/group meetings: contact/visit within 48 hours of first attendance.
2. New members: contact/visit once per week for the first month, contact/visit twice in the second month, and visit once per month for one year.
3. Regular members: contact once per month and visit once per quarter.
4. Non-attending members: contact within 48 hours those absent from worship or group meetings.
5. Missing members: visit a member who is absent from worship three weeks in a row or missing group meetings three times in a row (except for traveling and other such reasons).

Connect

The purpose of this emphasis is to ensure that each member is growing in relationship in God, others, and self. It exists to create an environment and opportunities for Kinship Group members to connect with others in the body of Christ through fellowship, with God through worship, Bible study, and prayer; and with the Seventh-day Adventist church through a systematic study of the church's heritage. The primary responsibility of the Connections coordinator includes but not limited to: coordinate the planning of group fellowship meals, welcome, and connect guests to other members of the Kinship Group, coordinate the planning of mid-week group meetings and Friday vespers, and promote attendance at all Kinship Group events. The coordinator also meets regularly with the lay pastor to plan for and evaluate the mid-week and Friday vesper studies.

Care

The purpose of this emphasis is to deepen the personal experience of love and ensure that each member is ministered to according to need. Kinship Groups will provide primary care for their members. Such care would include prayer support, encouragement, hospital visitation, visiting the sick and shut in, bereaved, etc., as well as finding resources that meet the group member's needs. When the situation goes beyond the ability of one group to attend to, the Care Coordinator of that particular group meets with other Care coordinators from other Kinship Groups to facilitate for a church-wide level response. Church-wide level responses include funerals, weddings, and other such situations that involve church members. Two questions summarize the Kinship Group care ministries; "What burdens can we bear for each other? What cares can we together cast upon the Lord?"

Christian service

The purpose of this emphasis is to strengthen commitment to, and enlist every member, in the church's mission. The Christian Service Coordinator ensures that every member is trained for ministry and is using whatever spiritual gift they have to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. This involves service done inside the church and outside into the community and the world. This includes inviting others to faith in Jesus. Through an initiative called F.I.R.E (Friends In Relational Evangelism), members are equipped to cultivate, and relate in positive and nurturing relationships with their neighbors at work and in other settings. Thus a major function of this ministry is to promote and create opportunities for Family Service projects.

Kinship Group leadership is composed of an elder designated as lay pastor, and four deacons and/or deaconesses. Each deacon/deaconess is assigned to coordinate one of the four focus areas of emphasis. Deacons/deaconesses can combine these functions depending on the size of the church. The leadership teams meet once every quarter for weekend of training with the district pastor. Kinship Groups meet once a month on Sabbath in the afternoon for fellowship and mission emphasis. They meet every week on Wednesdays in the evening for prayers and for the Growing Christian studies. Friday vespers is dedicated to prayers and Adventist heritage studies.

Bible Study Groups

The purpose of Bible Study Groups is to expand the knowledge of Scripture and provide balanced biblical teachings in non-threatening, interactive group settings where people learn to apply biblical principles to their daily lives. The group has 8 to 12 members each. They meet every Sabbath morning for study of the weekly lesson and faith affirmation. Faith affirmation is guided by personal sharing based on the ongoing spiritual growth assessment (see below for more information on this process). Every Sabbath before they launch into the weekly lesson, members take turns reflecting on one question after which the group leader gives concluding remarks. They pray together and then enter into the lesson study.

This group takes the place of our traditional Sabbath School class. What we have avoided is to count on this group to meet all current goals of Sabbath School as set forth in the Seventh-day Adventist church *Working Policy*. This has not worked well in most places. Bible study usually takes all the time. We have also deliberately chosen to stay away from the “Sabbath School Class” terminology in order to make the lesson

discussion more interactive and avoid the predominant use of the schooling-instructional approach which relies heavily on the lecture method. It is the responsibility of Bible Study Group Coordinators to ensure that the lesson discussion is characterized by four elements: faith-building, discussion-friendly, attention-retaining, and application-oriented.

Faith-building

People are growing through the study of God's Word as evidenced by an ongoing spiritual growth assessment (How are you? What has God been teaching you lately? Where have you seen him at work in your life and in the world?)

Discussion-friendly

Features questions designed to help the group meaningfully dialog together.

Attention-retaining

Has enough creativity and real life illustration for the group to retain the possible maximum interest in learning.

Application-oriented

Lead the group to practical application of scripture truths that enable each person to mature in Christ.

Others may wonder why have Bible Study Groups when this emphasis could still be part of what Kinship Groups do. The strategy includes Bible Study Groups to avoid a radical departure from the current Sabbath School structure of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Second, Kinship Groups are cross-generational while in most places currently

Sabbath School classes are organized according to age and the Bible study guides as well are age tailored.

Growth Groups

A Growth Group is an intentional relationship involving three people of the same sex established for the purpose of growing together toward maturity in Christ. For coordination purposes one of the group members is designated as a group leader. However, this is a nonhierarchical, peer mentoring relationship in which discipling partners feel safe and free to explore who they are in Christ, and share personal challenges of faithfulness. Arguing for the efficacy of groups of three in enhancing spiritual growth, Ogden (2003) observes:

Three ingredients converge to release the Holy Spirit to bring about a rapid growth toward Christlikeness. These can be summarized in the following biblical principle: When we (1) open our hearts in transparent trust to each other (2) around the truth of God's Word (3) in the spirit of mutual accountability, we are in the Holy Spirit's hothouse of transformation. (p. 154)

To make this possible, group life in Growth Groups is characterized by four indispensable ingredients: Covenant, Commitment to mutual accountability, Confession, and Commune with the Lord together.

Covenant

The three sign a mutually agreed covenant that spells out the importance and sensitivity of their relationship. Individual groups are free to customize their own covenants. However, to preserve confidentiality and enhance a healthy personal disclosure, groups are encouraged to base their covenants on the following standard key elements:

1. I will not violate the Golden rule in how I use information shared in the group

2. I will contribute to foster an atmosphere of honesty, trust and an ever-increasing openness and transparency to allow for mutual confession for the purposes of mutual up building.
3. I will restrict my confessions to my own failures and my own areas of needed improvement
4. I will ask, 'If Jesus were here, what would he do or think about this issue?'

Commitment to mutual accountability

Discipling partners in Growth Group give each other permission to hold them accountable to the growth that they say they desire in their spiritual walk. This peer accountability is done in love to create an atmosphere where group members build each other up in Christ and encourage one another. Group members respect each other's past trials, life hurts, spiritual struggles, and current feelings without being judgmental. Yet speaking the truth in love is critical to the process. Thus confronting lovingly to get each other to the need of God's grace is part of the process. Ogden argues: "Love is the womb in which Christ can be formed in us. Chicks best emerge from the egg to new life when they have received the warmth of a nesting hen" (p. 131).

The spiritual growth assessment process is a key component of what goes on in Growth Groups. Group members share the results of their annual spiritual growth assessment results. Each member commits to a plan for growth. This involves spiritual disciplines that place them in the presence of Christ's shaping influence. Everyone commits to interdependently support and pray for each other in their individual spiritual walk. For more information on the assessment process please see below. Group members call/contact each other at least once in 48 hours. They meet weekly for prayers and sharing on the week's challenges and victories.

Confession

A significant part of the discipling relationship is to share personal challenges of faithfulness. Confession is a necessary means to free us from the bondage of sin and addiction. As Ogden puts it, “Bringing the shame of our guilt into the light before trusted members of the body of Christ can have a liberating effect. Once something is admitted before others, it begins to lose its power to control. Sin flourishes in the darkness, but its power dissipates in the light” (2003, p. 161). My experience in the church tells me that there are very few church members who have either the regular habit or the safe context in which they feel safe to confess and reveal to another human being their personal spiritual failures. Yet as Ogden further observes, “Our willingness to enter into this kind of a relational intimacy makes a statement about our true and sincere desire to invite the Lord to change our lives by any means necessary” (2003, p. 154). That is why given Zambia’s shame-based culture, Growth Groups are critical to the discipling process in the Zambia Union.

Commune with God together

Group members call/contact each other at least once in 48 hours. However, through an initiative called “GETHSEMANE,” each group is encouraged to find a location and regular time where and when they meet weekly together to engage in a transparent and intimate conversation with the creator of the universe in a come-as-you-are fashion. This is a time when they praise the Lord for who he is, thank him for blessings, acknowledge and confess to God specific failures, seek his forgiveness and power for specific victories, and intercede for others.

A Curriculum That Produces the Product

This discipleship curriculum is based on 22 discipleship goals for a growing Seventh-day Adventist Christian. They are just an expansion of the eight characteristics of discipleship that we covered previously. The topics are not arranged in order but the curriculum covers the basic growth needs of a disciple. They reflect a fourfold purpose of: establishing believers in the love of God, connecting them to self and others in the family and church community, equipping them for authentic Christian witness, and sending them forth for service. See Figure 2 for the growing Christian curriculum.

Pastoral Leadership Practices

Our review of pastoral ministry in chapter three led us to the conclusion that as under shepherds, pastors in the local congregation are called to equip members. Their success in ministry is measured not in terms of tasks accomplished, but by how effective one is in helping people grow in their walk with God. Often that which gets passed off as church leadership falls short of the essence of pastoral leadership as set forth in Scripture. The apostle Paul offers the most concise description and purpose of an equipping model of pastoral leadership in Eph 4:11-14. Paul defines equipping, not in terms of pastoral functions, but in terms of results: (a) doing the work of ministry, (b) the body of Christ is being built up, (c) the whole body is attaining a unity of faith, and (d) the community together is expressing the full stature of Christ. Thus, according to Paul, equipping is happening if people are no longer children in the faith who are so vulnerable that the latest wind of doctrine sweeps them away. Ogden (2003), who defines equipping in functional terms, classifies the biblical usage of the word into three categories:

| DISCIPLESHIP GOALS | RELEVANT TOPIC | LEARNING OUTCOME |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| Develop a growing relationship with God that is characterized by an unrivaled love for him | God's Love for Man | Members will be able to relate to God on the basis of his love, acceptance and provision in Christ and respond in personal adoration, prayer and praise for who God is |
| Develop an individual identity that is complete in Christ and not based on what one does, has or his/her popularity | Identity in Christ | Members will be able to internalize the reality of their position in Christ as God's children with infinite value in his sight |
| Understand the Cross as a manifestation both of God's wrath against sin and of the depth of his love and mercy for man | The Life and Death of Christ | Members will have a new perspective toward God, self and others and commit themselves to a life of self-denial and loving obedience to God |
| Understand that a person comes into a right relationship with God and is saved by his grace through faith in Jesus | The Experience of Salvation | Members will not exhibit insecurity in their relationship to Christ but will develop a joyful Christian experience based not on the righteousness of works but on the righteousness of faith |
| Study the Bible to know God with an understanding that the foundation of discipleship is constant exposure to God's revealed truth, which when illuminated by the Holy Spirit and received by faith leads to Christian growth | Bible Study & Christian Growth | Members will choose to belong to Bible Study Groups, make a commitment to spend time regularly in personal Bible study and obey Scripture as the rule of conduct in daily life |
| Experience God's personal empowering presence through the indwelling Holy Spirit who convicts, gives ministry gifts, guides, comforts and cultivates Christian character | The Holy Spirit | Members will pray for the in-filling of the Holy Spirit and make a commitment to engage in other Christian disciplines that open their lives to the work of the Holy Spirit daily |
| Understand that the road to Christian growth is filled with the devil's traps by which he seeks to weaken faith in God and destroy God's children | Spiritual Warfare | Members will be able to overcome the five characteristic strategies of Satan: Temptation, Deception, Slander, Possession & Physical attack/Oppression |
| Perseveres with peace, inner contentment and abiding trust in Christ rather than worry and anxiety when facing life problems, and be willing to suffer for the sake of the gospel | The Christian Life & Suffering | Members will know that suffering is not from God, but see in each painful experience a promise of God's sovereign purpose in shaping the inner qualities of life, see their responses to trials as a measure of maturity; knowing that each crisis is an opportunity for victory or defeat |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Praying to God to know him and experience the reality of spiritual empowerment through constant communion with God as a way of life. | Prayer | Members will know that God desires our fellowship and provided prayer as the means of communicating directly with him through Jesus Christ, that prayer releases us from fear and worry, and will commit to regular times with God in prayer |
| Understand that through his intercessory ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, Christ makes available to believers the benefits of his atoning sacrifice on the cross for all and he is able to save fully those who come to him. | The Sanctuary | Members will know that we are not on our own in the great controversy, we have an advocate before the Father whom we can trust with our lives and salvation since he ever lives to intercede on our behalf |
| Build a Christ-centered Christian home that serves as the primary discipleship unit of the local church | The Christian Home | Members will be able to joyfully participate in the four home-based faith building practices and foster grace-oriented family relationships |
| Belong to a community of faith – “the people of God” who support and encourage one another as they live out their faith commitment and minister to the people they are in contact with | The Church | Members will choose to belong to the local church as the primary context for discipleship, embrace the message and mission of the church and commit to discipling others |
| Understand that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the Remnant church of Bible prophecy, and a global spiritual family of people from different cultural backgrounds | Mission and Message of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church | Members will be committed to uphold the unity of the church without expecting from every culture a uniformity of action in ministry practices or other faith expressions of a non moral nature |
| Develop Christ-centered long-lasting, accountable and authentic relationships in the context of the local church | Christian Fellowship | Members will choose to belong to and participate in Growth Groups and Kinship Groups in the context of the local church |
| Understand that God is love and he expects from us a response of love for him and a demonstration/extension of his love to others | F.I.R.E | Members will be able to relate in positive loving relationships with neighbors, workmates and others outside the church |
| Understand that each child of God has God-given abilities to serve and build up the body of Christ to the glory of his name | A SHAPE Profile For Ministry | Members will discover their special place in God’s mission and seek for opportunities to participate in ministry to others both in the church and in the community |
| Understand that Ellen G. White was God’s messenger whose writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction in daily life | The Gift of Prophecy (Reading Ellen White) | Members will be able to interpret, faithfully and lovingly apply to their lives and to others the inspired counsel from the writings of Ellen G White |

| | | |
|--|------------------------|--|
| Share our faith with others out of joy based on what God has done for us for the purpose of witnessing to his character | Witnessing for Christ | Members will be able to identify people in their sphere of influence who need to know Jesus Christ and joyfully share the gospel on the basis of personal experience |
| Understand that God is the source of life, and as a loving benefactor he expects from us a response of gratitude for his bountiful blessings as a demonstration of our faith in him | Tithe & Offerings | Members will commit to support the ministries of the local church and global church by regularly returning a faithful tithe and ever increasing amounts of free will offerings |
| Grow in relationship with self, and understand the internal barriers and beliefs that keep us from loving and freely obeying God and cooperate with what the Holy Spirit is doing deep in their hearts | Self-Awareness | Members will embrace and value honest self-reflection as an integral and vital part of Christian growth and commit to an annual assessment of their Christian experience. |
| Understand that Jesus died to save us from sin and now lives to restore us to physical, mental, and spiritual wholeness | Total Life Stewardship | Members will be able to value all of life from the perspective of the cross and commit to maintaining and improving their personal spiritual, social mental, and physical health |
| Understand that God is the moral standard by which all moral judgments are measured and that humans are responsible to God in both personal and social moral obligations | Christian Ethics | Members will know that God has revealed his moral standards through human conscience, Scripture and the witness of the Holy Spirit, commit to abide by Christian ethics and never violate their conscience |

Figure 3. The growing Christian curriculum.

(a) mend/restore, (b) establish/lay foundation, and (c) prepare/train (pp. 135-136). It is obvious that no one individual has all the gifts or time to cover the whole territory of equipping ministry and produce these results.

To accomplish this purpose, those who hold the office of “pastor” must have as their primary responsibilities to create a functional equipping environment, decentralize pastoral leadership by developing lay leaders, and to model a life of faith. This renewed understanding of pastoral leadership is critical to our goal of “presenting every man complete in Christ” (Col 1:28).

The local church structure outlined in this chapter represents what I consider to be a functional equipping environment. Central to helping create and manage an equipping environment is a commitment to building community and accomplishing ministry through small groups in multiple forms. The ministry structure embraces a team ministry approach in order to give ministry leaders an opportunity for mutual equipping. We emphasize a growing partnership between the church and the family in which the church equips the family to be its basic unit for discipling. The small group ministries create an environment and opportunities for people to grow together in community. However, there is need for leadership development. Small Group leaders must be given the tools they need to carry out their roles. As quoted by Ogden, Howard Snyder in *Liberating the Church* states that discipling is the primary focus of a pastor's ministry: "Essentially, the pastor's first priority is to so invest himself or herself in a few other persons that they also become disciplers and ministers of Jesus Christ" (p. 177).

Transitioning Churches to Disciple-Making Communities

The disciple-making strategy proposed in this chapter will be implemented in two districts to be selected in the Central Zambia Conference; one in the urban area and the other one in a rural setting. It is expected that some tweaking may be necessary as the strategy is implemented. As it is, it will take a period of about three years to transition these churches into intentional disciple-making communities. The strategy will be implemented first in an urban district. After one year in the urban district, the implementation process will be launched also in the rural district.

Year One

In the first year the pastor conducts in every church a discipleship seminar based on the *Growing Christian Curriculum*. The seminars will be conducted every Wednesday evening, Friday evening, and Sabbath afternoons at designated centers. Two or more churches, depending on the size of the district, will meet at one center for the seminar. After all the members have gone through the series, the *Growing Christian Curriculum* will be used for teaching new members over a period of one year following their baptism. The second goal for the first year is to start transforming households into primary discipling units of the local church by designating heads of household as Family Ministries leaders and training them in the home-based faith forming practices. Simply described, the pastor is a mentor and a teacher for this first year; he mentors Family Ministries leaders and he teaches the church as a whole during the seminars. After completing the *Growing Christian Curriculum*, members and church leaders will begin to see the need to better position the local church as a disciple-making community where members support and encourage one another as they live out their faith commitment and minister to others from their personal experience. The seminars will create a fertile environment for selling the vision.

Year Two

In the second year, the new local church ministry structure is introduced and implemented. Church elders in charge of ministry clusters and ministry leaders for every church are chosen. Following the selection of church elders and ministry leaders, the pastor launches a leadership coaching process. Each church sends teams of leaders to the coaching center. The church teams come to six meetings at the center. These meetings

are held approximately every two months. Meeting one lasts from Friday night–Sunday afternoon. It is attended by all ministry clusters together. It deals with the qualities of a disciple-making church and administrative matters of church life.

Meetings 2-6 are held on Saturday afternoon–Sunday afternoon. These are targeted at specific ministry clusters. For example, meeting two would be attended only by Worship & Evangelism leadership teams from each church, meeting three by Fellowship & Nurture leadership teams, and so forth. The focus of this coaching process is on the six-meeting training materials as well as providing an opportunity for local church leaders to start establishing a relationship with the pastor.

The second goal for the second year is to start transforming Sabbath School classes into Bible Study Groups and choose group coordinators whose primary gift is teaching. A weekend seminar for Bible Study Group coordinators is conducted to equip them with skills on how to lead and teach effectively. They will learn how to facilitate group meetings based on the four areas of emphasis for Bible Study Groups.

Year Three

In the third year Growth Groups will be introduced together with the *Christian Growth Assessment* process. From the first year members will be prepared; seminars will be offered during camp meetings on the importance of discipling partners to the Christian life. The role of assessment will be explained to avoid its negative effects.

Another goal for the third year is to divide each church into Kinship Groups. Lay pastors will be selected for each group. These will also be trained with skills for group leadership as well as other skills for effective nurture and fellowship. Lay pastors are among the key leaders of the local church. As earlier stated, much of church life goes on

in Kinship Groups. That is why the pastor's primary leaders in the local church are the church elders, lay pastors, and family ministries leaders. These he will seek to turn into the embodiments of his sermons; the examples of what it means to walk with the Lord in real life.

In the Family Ministries leaders, church elders, and lay pastors, the pastor will invest himself, develop relationship, and stay in touch. Most importantly he will model to them what he expects them to model to members. The pastor recognizes that his sermons alone will not do. His team of leaders must be the filter through which his sermons put on flesh. They must be the ongoing embodiment of Christ and the written Word. God, through the incarnation of Christ showed himself in a person. The pastor will labor to produce men and women in whom God dwells through the power of the Holy Spirit so he can continue to show himself through their lives. George Muller understood the power of teaching through modeling. He wrote in his journal (Pierson, 1999):

If I, a poor man, simply by prayer and faith, obtained without asking any individual, the means for establishing and carrying on an Orphan-House, there would be something which, with the Lord's blessing, might be instrumental in strengthening the faith of the children of God, besides being a testimony to the consciences of the unconverted, of the reality of the things of God. This, then, was the primary reason for establishing the Orphan-House. . . . The first and primary object of the work was (and still is) that God might be magnified by the fact, that the orphans under my care are provided with all they need, only by prayer and faith without anyone being asked by me or my fellow-laborers whereby it may be seen, that God is faithful still, and hears prayer still. (p. 37)

According to David Platt, Muller wanted to live in such a way that it would be evident to all who looked at his life—Christian and non-Christian alike—that God is indeed faithful to provide for his people. Platt says Muller risked his life trusting in the greatness of God, and in the end his life made much of the glory of God (Platt, 2010). The pastor's primary responsibility is to produce such leaders in the district. For the pastor to accomplish this

he must himself embody the image of a growing Christian, live a life and lead a ministry, by God's grace, in a way that proves God is real; God is trustworthy, God answers prayer. The pastor should be able to say to others in his districts, "Be imitators of me as I imitate Christ."

Measuring the Progress in Faith Maturation

Although the question of how we measure Christian growth has no easy answers, what is clear is that God expects his children to grow and the Bible encourages examination of one's Christian standing.

1. "Let us search out and examine our ways"(Lam 3:40)
2. "Now the Lord of Hosts says this: 'Think carefully about your ways'" (Hag 1:5)
3. "But let a man examine himself" (1 Cor 11:28)
4. "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith (2 Cor 13:5)
5. "Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people, but as wise" (Eph 5:15)

There are two dangers in measuring faith that must be avoided. The first is the tendency to compare ourselves with others in the community of faith. Usually this leads to either an unhealthy self-condemnation or a pride of self righteousness. No Bible story best portrays this attitude than the story of the Pharisee and the Publican in Luke 18:9-14. The second problem is the natural inclination to rely on human efforts in working towards meeting the expectations of the assessment process just for the sake of better scores next time. The aim of a discipling process is not to focus on better conformity to expected standards per se, but rather a mature faith in God which then leads to a strong relationship with him.

Thus a Christian growth assessment process should be a deeply spiritual and prayerful exercise during which the guidance of the Holy Spirit is Key. That is why the Psalmist says, "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. See

if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way” (Ps 139:23-24). So the Holy Spirit must be allowed to do the revealing of heart issues or else the appraisal will be superficial.

In this project we propose a twofold assessment process. There will be an ongoing; less structured and not so detailed assessment conducted during Bible Study Group meetings. This will consist of a simple set of questions, answered honestly, at the beginning of each lesson discussion throughout the year. The questions focus on depth of belief, attitude of dependence on God, and evidence of practical faith in the life of a believer. As a guide, the questions could include:

1. Name several characteristics of God and explain how that characteristic impacts your life.
2. How does God show that his promises can be trusted?
3. Name several instances in the Bible that illustrate each point
4. Describe some event in the last several weeks you believe you could have handled better.
5. What was your reaction based on?
6. Can you find a parallel situation in the Bible?
7. How did the Biblical character respond? Was it from faith, or not? How could the Biblical Character have responded better?
8. What would a faith based response look like?

As the discipling process moves forward, the believer should be able to articulate answers to these questions more fully and more comfortably. It is expected that through their own answers, believers will see how they can improve their ability to walk in faith

as modeled by biblical characters. This is a tool for encouraging ongoing sharing of life events, personal disclosure, reflective Bible study, and prayers for one another in Bible Study Groups.

Second, each member will commemorate his/her baptism date (or birthday for those who no longer remember the day they were baptized) by candidly and prayerfully completing an annual evaluation of their spiritual growth. This assessment is an adaptation of the *Spiritual Growth Assessment Process* by the LifeWay Institute (www.lifeway.com/discipleship). The process follows three simple steps.

1. A week before one's baptism anniversary, each church member designates a day of prayers and fasting for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the process. At the end of the day, a *Christian Growth Assessment* instrument is prayerfully and candidly completed. This instrument helps a member assess his/her Christian growth related to eight characteristics of a disciple of Jesus (see appendix).
2. Then a member distribute copies of the *Christian Growth Observation Response* sheet to at least three people who interacts with him/her in daily life contexts such as a family member, Growth Group member, and Kinship Group member (see Appendix B).
3. Then he/she will work on an intentional personal *Annual Christian Growth Plan*. Discuss the plan with discipleship partners in the Growth Group. With the help of discipleship partners, a member commits himself/herself to this personal growth plan. Each member then commemorates his baptism anniversary by celebrating the victories made and committing to this growth plan in identified areas.

Conclusion

This project responds to the need for a more intentional disciple-making strategy for multi-church districts in the Zambian Union of Seventh-day Adventist church. It is anchored in a solid theological foundation on what constitute Christian discipleship. An examination of different perspectives on discipleship as well as different local church approaches to disciple-making, shows that our conception of what it means to be a disciple of Christ affects how we go about making disciples in the 21st century.

Furthermore, our goals for disciple-making are also determined by what we consider to be the character of a disciple of Jesus.

We have argued in this project that disciples are all Christians who have responded to God's love and are growing a faith relationship with God as they go through life. Discipleship begins with conversion and continues as a lifelong process of learning to trust God. This faith is based on a firm and true knowledge of the person and works of Christ, revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8; Eph 1:13; 4:30). To that end, we have proposed a curriculum for establishing new members in their journey of faith.

Proceeding from an understanding that the local church is the primary context for disciple-making, we examined different local church approaches to disciple-making and discovered how an understanding of the church as a disciple-making community affects local church ministry structure. We have proposed a ministry structure for transforming local churches into disciple-making communities. Recognizing the critical role of pastoral leadership to disciple-making in the local church, we have argued for a renewed commitment to equipping on the part of pastors in Zambia. We have also proposed a Christian Growth Assessment process for evaluating the impact of this strategy on the lives of people. We look forward to testing this strategy in the field and fine-tuning it as we proceed so that we can better serve God's people in Zambia.

APPENDIX A

CHRISTIAN GROWTH ASSESSMENT

(Adapted from the *LifeWay Institute* spiritual growth assessment process)

| Christian Growth Assessment | |
|--|--------------|
| <p>As you complete the assessment, avoid rushing through this process. Listen for God’s voice to encourage and challenge you. Consider this experience as a one-on-one time with God. Be intentional in your growth towards Christlikeness. Use the scale below to respond to each statement</p> | |
| Never – 1 | Seldom – 2 |
| Occasionally – 3 | Frequent – 4 |
| Always - 5 | |
| GROWING CHRISTIAN INDICATORS | RESPONSE |
| ABIDE IN CHRIST | |
| 1. My commitment to Christ takes priority over every human relationship or self interest. | |
| 2. When making choices, I regularly seek Christ’s guidance first. | |
| 3. My relationship with Christ is motivated more by love than duty or fear. | |
| 4. I experience life change as a result of my worship experience. | |
| 5. When God makes me aware of his will in a specific area of my life, I follow his leading. | |
| 6. I believe Christ provides the only way for a relationship with God. | |
| 7. My actions demonstrate a desire to build God’s kingdom rather than my own. | |
| 8. I relate to God on the basis of his love, acceptance and provision in Christ. | |
| 9. I draw my identity from who I am in Christ and daily surrender my heart and my will to God | |
| 10. I commune with God regularly through his Word, prayer and other Christian disciplines and look forward to that time with Christ. | |
| Abide in Christ Total | |
| ABIDE IN GOD’S WORD | |
| 1. I value the Bible as a revelation of God’s character and the plan of salvation, and I regularly read and study it to know God better. | |
| 2. Regular participation in a Bible Study Group characterizes my life. | |
| 3. I believe the Bible is God’s Word and provides his instructions for my life. | |
| 4. I read the writings of Ellen White and other study aids to enrich my understanding and application of Bible truth | |
| 5. I study the Bible for the purpose of discovering truth for daily living | |

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| 6. Whenever the Bible exposes an area of my life needing change, I respond by making things right. | |
| 7. Reading and studying the Bible is making significant changes to my thinking patterns and to the way I live. | |
| 8. I know how to faithfully interpret and apply to my life and to others the counsels from the writings of Ellen G. White. | |
| 9. I can answer questions about life and faith from a biblical perspective | |
| 10. I replace impure or inappropriate thoughts with God's truth. | |
| Live By God's Word Total | |
| PRAY IN FAITH | |
| 1. My prayers focus on discovering God's will more than expressing my needs. | |
| 2. I trust God answers when I pray and wait patiently on his timing. | |
| 3. My prayers include thanksgiving, praise, confession, and requests. | |
| 4. I expect to grow in my prayer life and intentionally seek help to improve. | |
| 5. I spend as much time listening to God as talking to him. | |
| 6. I pray because I am aware of my complete dependence on God for everything in my life. | |
| 7. Regular participation in group prayer characterizes my prayer life. | |
| 8. I maintain an attitude of prayer throughout each day. | |
| 9. I believe my prayers impact my life and the lives of others. | |
| 10. My time commitments demonstrate the importance of prayer in my life. | |
| Pray in Faith Total | |
| BUILDING AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS | |
| 1. Jesus is the primary relationship in my life and through him I am building intimate accountable relationships with people in my church. | |
| 2. I am careful in my closest relationships to avoid people or situations that may negatively impact my Christian values and principles. | |
| 3. I belong to a Growth Group and abide by the group covenant | |
| 4. I generally share personal things such as feelings, joys, struggles, spiritual failures, and needs, with my discipleship partners. | |
| 5. I allow others to hold me accountable for my Christian growth. | |
| 6. When I am wronged by others, I generally respond with a forgiving attitude with no bitterness or resentment. | |
| 7. I admit my errors in relationships and humbly seek forgiveness from the one I have hurt. | |
| 8. I intentionally make time in my schedule to fellowship and interact with my Kinship Group members | |
| 9. Regular gathering with my church family for worship, fellowship, service study and mutual support characterize my Christian life | |
| 10. Spiritual matters tend to come up as a normal part of my daily conversation with my Christian friends | |
| Building Authentic Relationship Total | |

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| 1. I relate in positive loving relationships with neighbors, co-workers, and others | |
| 2. I demonstrate the love of Christ in all my interactions with others for the purpose of witnessing to God's goodness. | |
| 3. I know people in my sphere of influence who need to know Christ. | |
| 4. I joyfully share the gospel with others based on my personal experience in Christ. | |
| 5. I consider my occupation as a calling to ministry and routinely seek for opportunities to talk about Jesus while interacting with others | |
| 6. In the last six months I have invited someone to attend a church service or my Kinship Group meeting. | |
| 7. I regularly pray for the spiritual status of people I know who are not believers. | |
| 8. I feel comfortable to share my faith with my family, neighbors, relatives, friends and co-worker effectively. | |
| 9. I am prepared to share my personal testimony at any time. | |
| 10. My actions demonstrate a belief in and commitment to the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 19-20). | |
| Witness For Christ Total | |
| INVOLVED IN MINISTRY | |
| 1. I understand my spiritual gifts and use those gifts to serve others. | |
| 2. I serve others expecting nothing in return. | |
| 3. I know my SHAPE profile | |
| 4. I go out of my way to show love to people I meet. | |
| 5. Meeting the needs of others provides a sense of purpose in my life. | |
| 6. I share biblical truth with those I serve as God gives opportunity. | |
| 7. I act as if other's needs are as important as my own. | |
| 8. I expect God to use me every day in his kingdom work. | |
| 9. I participate in ministry at my local church. | |
| 10. I help others identify ministry gifts and become involved in ministry. | |
| Ministry To Others Total | |
| PERSEVERE IN TRIALS | |
| 1. Peace, contentment, and joy characterize my life rather than worry and anxiety. | |
| 2. I demonstrate patience in difficult times because I trust Christ to help me through any problem or crisis I face. | |
| 3. I remain confident of God's love and provision during difficult times. | |
| 4. I am willing to suffer for the sake of the gospel. | |
| 5. When facing difficult times I never doubt that suffering is not from God. | |
| 6. I normally see in each painful experience a promise of God's sovereign purpose in strengthening my faith. | |
| 7. I understand that suffering is one of the traps the devil uses to weaken my faith in God | |
| 8. I treat every trial as an opportunity for victory or defeat. | |

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| 9. Prayer in the midst of trials gives me strength and changes my perspective | |
| 10. I encourage others to pray and join them in carrying their burdens before the Lord in prayer | |
| Perseveres in Trail Totals | |
| BUILDING A CHRIST-CENTERED HOME | |
| 1. I cherish my family and I am committed to help every family member relate to God on the basis of his love, acceptance and provision in Christ. | |
| 2. I hold as sacred my family commitments and responsibilities to my spouse, children and parents. | |
| 3. I am modeling a life of faith to my family through both teaching and living an authentic Christian life. | |
| 4. I am helping my family to reflect the character of Christ in all our interactions with our neighbors and others | |
| 5. I am hospitable and welcome into my home members of my extended family and others God brings to my attention | |
| 6. I value and participate in family-based faith forming practices and consider my home as the basic discipleship unit of my local church | |
| 7. I encourage prayer in my family and talk about God's answers to personal prayer | |
| 8. I am gentle and kind in my interactions with family members. | |
| 9. I practice non-shaming communication and treat every family member with dignity and respect. | |
| 10. I respectfully confront and challenge shaming behavior directed to me or any member of the family | |
| Building a Christ-centered Home Total | |
| FAITHFUL IN STEWARDSHIP | |
| 1. I accept life—both now and in eternity—as a gift from God for which I demonstrate gratitude to him | |
| 2. I worship God as a living sacrifice by accepting his lordship and choosing his will over my own will daily | |
| 3. I am responsible for my spiritual growth and take advantage of opportunities and support my family and my local church provide. | |
| 4. My time commitments demonstrate that I value my relationship with God over work/career/hobbies/ and all other temporal things of this world. | |
| 5. My lifestyle demonstrates that I know my body is a temple of God, and the overall purpose of my life is to glorify God in whatever I do | |
| 6. I consider every opportunity to work for a living as a gift from God and work hard to provide for my economic needs. | |
| 7. My view and use of material possessions demonstrate that I know all I have belong to God and it is one of the ways my faith in God is tested | |
| 8. I return a faithful tithe to my church because I believe the church is the primary context designed by God for me to use my material possessions to further the work of God's kingdom. | |

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| 9. I sacrificially contribute offerings in proportion to my income to support the mission of my local church and the global church. | |
| 10. Economic challenges generally help me focus on the spiritual and eternal dimensions of life rather than on the material and temporal. | |
| Total life Stewardship Totals | |
| UPHOLDS A CHRISTIAN ETHIC | |
| 1. I understand that personal love for Jesus Christ and the desire to follow him not matter what the cost is the basis of true Christianity. | |
| 2. Having received salvation as a free gift of God through faith in Christ, I joyfully affirm and apply biblical standards to my life and use the Bible as a guide for the way I think and act. | |
| 3. I exercise my Christian liberty within the context of the spiritual interests of others in my church. | |
| 4. My responses to moral questions are determined by what the Bible says. | |
| 5. Generally my public and private self are the same. | |
| 6. In all my business dealings, my professional and personal life, what I choose to do reflect my concern to honor the Lord. | |
| 7. I demonstrate honesty in my actions and conversations, and I do not act in ways that violate my conscience. | |
| 8. I am generally mindful of how my actions will affect my witness to the watching world. | |
| 9. I live by biblical standards of sexual morality and I avoid situations in which I might be tempted to think or do immoral things. | |
| 10. I embrace cultural expectations that are in harmony with the Bible and reject those that are not biblical. | |
| A Christian Ethic Total | |
| “SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART; TRY ME AND KNOW MY ANXIOUS THOUGHTS; AND SEE IF THERE BE ANY HURTFUL WAY IN ME, AND LEAD ME IN THE EVERLASTING WAY,” (Ps. 139:23-24) | |

APPENDIX B

CHRISTIAN GROWTH OBSERVATIONS: RESPONSE SHEET

You have been asked by a fellow believer to participate in an intentional process to evaluate his/her spiritual growth. Your observations will be used to help develop a growth plan for the upcoming year. In order to provide a helpful evaluation, ask the Lord for guidance before completing this form. Even though these are subjective responses, God can use them to affirm and challenge this fellow traveler on the journey of discipleship. Authentic change occurs as the community of believers help one another grow spiritually. Use the following scale to respond to each statement.

Never – 1 Seldom – 2 occasionally – 3 Frequent – 4 Always – 5 Not observed – No

| Growth Indicators | Responses |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Relationship with Christ takes priority over every human relationship or self interest. | |
| 2. Seeks Christ's guidance first when making choices. | |
| 3. Relationship with Christ is motivated more by love than duty or fear. | |
| 4. Demonstrates life change as a result of worship experience. | |
| 5. Submits to God's leading when confronted with the will of God in any specific area of life. | |
| 6. Believes Christ provides the only way for a relationship with God. | |
| 7. Demonstrate a passion to build God's kingdom rather than personal ambitions. | |
| 8. Relates to God on the basis of his love, acceptance and provision in Christ. | |
| 9. Draws personal identity from a relationship with Christ and demonstrates total surrender to the will to God | |
| 10. Commune with God regularly through his Word, prayer and other Christian disciplines and look forward to that time with Christ. | |
| Abide in Christ Total | |
| 1. Reads and studies the Bible to know God better. | |
| 2. Regularly participates in a Bible Study Group. | |
| 3. Values the Bible as God's Word and obeys its instructions for life. | |
| 4. Reads Ellen White and other study aids to enrich understanding and application of Bible truth | |
| 5. Studies the Bible for the purpose of discovering truth for daily living | |
| 6. Responds by making things right whenever the Bible exposes an area of life needing change. | |
| 7. Shows some significant changes in worldview and way of life as a result of reading and studying the Bible. | |
| 8. Faithfully interprets and lovingly applies the counsels from the writings of Ellen White to personal life and to others. | |
| 9. Can answer questions about life and faith from a biblical perspective | |

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| 10. Memorizes Scripture. | |
| Live in the Word Total | |
| 1. Engages in daily prayer time. | |
| 2. Talks about God's answers to personal prayers. | |
| 3. Solicits prayer concerns from others. | |
| 4. Encourages others to pray. | |
| 5. Initiates times of prayer in group settings. | |
| 6. Demonstrates complete dependence on God for everything in life. | |
| 7. Regular participation in group prayer characterizes life. | |
| 8. Maintains an attitude of prayer during difficult times. | |
| 9. His/her prayer life has positive influence on others. | |
| 10. Time commitments demonstrate the importance of prayer in life. | |
| Pray in Faith Total | |
| 1. Is building intimate accountable relationships with people in the church. | |
| 2. Avoids situations or closest relationships that might negatively impact Christian values and principles. | |
| 3. Belongs to a Growth Group and abides by the group covenant | |
| 4. Shares personal things such as feelings, joys, struggles, spiritual failures, and needs, with discipleship partners. | |
| 5. Permits others to hold him/her accountable to his/her faith commitments and the desired Christian Growth. | |
| 6. Generally respond with a forgiving attitude when wronged by others. | |
| 7. Admits errors when corrected and humbly seeks forgiveness from those hurt. | |
| 8. Intentionally makes time to fellowship and interact with Kinship Group members | |
| 9. Regular gathering with church family for worship, fellowship, service study and mutual support characterize Christian life | |
| 10. Usually brings up spiritual matters as a normal part of daily conversation with Christian friends. | |
| Builds authentic Relationships Total | |
| 1. Relates in positive loving relationships with neighbors, co-workers, and others | |
| 2. Demonstrate the love of Christ in daily interactions with others. | |
| 3. Aware of close acquaintances who need to know Christ. | |
| 4. Joyfully shares the gospel with others from personal experience in Christ. | |
| 5. Considers his/her occupation as a calling to ministry and routinely seeks for opportunities to talk about Jesus while interacting with others. | |
| 6. Has invited someone to attend a church service or Kinship Group meeting in the last six months. | |
| 7. Regularly solicits prayers for the spiritual status of acquaintances who are not believers. | |
| 8. Is comfortable to share his /her faith with family, neighbors, relatives, friends and co-worker effectively. | |

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| 9. Is prepared to share a personal testimony at any time. | |
| 10. Demonstrate a belief in and commitment to the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 19-20). | |
| Witnessing for Christ Total | |
| 1. Understands his/her spiritual gifts and uses those gifts to serve others. | |
| 2. Serves others expecting nothing in return. | |
| 3. Knows his/her SHAPE profile | |
| 4. Goes out of his/her way to show love to others. | |
| 5. Meeting the needs of others provides a sense of satisfaction in life. | |
| 6. Shares biblical truth with others as God gives opportunity. | |
| 7. Considers the needs of others as important as his/her own. | |
| 8. Stands ready to serve in any capacity when asked. | |
| 9. Participates in ministry at the local church. | |
| 10. Helps others identify ministry gifts and become involved in ministry. | |
| Involved in Ministry Total | |
| 1. Peace, contentment, and joy characterize life rather than worry and anxiety. | |
| 2. Demonstrate patience in difficult times. | |
| 3. Expresses confidence in God's love and provision during difficult times. | |
| 4. Willing to suffer for the sake of the gospel. | |
| 5. When facing difficult times he/she never doubts that suffering is not from God. | |
| 6. Normally sees in each painful experience a promise of God's sovereign purpose to refine character. | |
| 7. Understands suffering as one of the traps the devil uses to weaken faith in God | |
| 8. Treats every trial as an opportunity for victory or defeat. | |
| 9. Finds strength and change of perspective through prayer when facing trials. | |
| 10. Prays with others facing difficult times. | |
| Perseveres in Trail Totals | |
| 1. Cherishes his/her family and demonstrates the love of God to the family | |
| 2. Treats family commitments and responsibilities to spouse, children and parents as sacred. | |
| 3. Models a life of faith to the family through both teaching and living an authentic Christian life. | |
| 4. Contributes to the family's ability to reflect the character of Christ to their neighbors and others. | |
| 5. Hospitable and kind to relatives and others. | |
| 6. Fully participates in family-based faith forming practices. | |
| 7. Talks about God's answers to personal prayer. | |
| 8. Treats his/her family as the basic discipleship unit of the church. | |
| 9. Practices non-shaming communication and treats every family member with dignity and respect. | |

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| 10. Protects him/herself and others against shaming behaviors. | |
| Building a Christ-centered Home Total | |
| 1. Understands life—both now and in eternity—as a gift from God and demonstrate gratitude to God. | |
| 2. Submits to the lordship of Jesus by choosing his will over his/her own will daily | |
| 3. Takes responsibility for spiritual growth and embraces opportunities and support the family and the local church provide. | |
| 4. Time commitments demonstrates that he/she puts God first over work/career/hobbies/ and all other temporal things of this world. | |
| 5. Treats her/his body as the temple of God and chooses to glorify God in her/his lifestyle. | |
| 6. Embraces every opportunity to work for a living as a gift from God and works hard to provide for his/her economic needs. | |
| 7. His view and use of material possessions demonstrate that he/she recognizes God’s ownership. | |
| 8. Returns a faithful tithe to the church | |
| 9. Contributes offerings in proportion to income to support the mission of the local church and the global church. | |
| 10. Economic challenges generally help him/her to focus on the spiritual and eternal dimensions of life rather than on the material and temporal. | |
| Total life Stewardship Totals | |
| 1. Personal love for Jesus Christ and the desire to follow him not matter what the cost is the motivation for his/her way of life. | |
| 2. Joyfully affirms and applies biblical standards to her life not as a basis for salvation. | |
| 3. Exercise Christian liberty within the context of the spiritual interests of others in the church. | |
| 4. His/her responses to moral questions are determined by what the Bible says. | |
| 5. Generally his/her public and private self are the same. | |
| 6. Choices and actions in business dealings, professional and personal life, reflect a concern to honor the Lord at all times. | |
| 7. Does not act in ways that violate his/her conscience. | |
| 8. Generally mindful of how his/her actions can affect his/her witness to the watching world. | |
| 9. Lives by biblical standards of sexual morality and avoids situations which might expose him/her to temptations. | |
| 10. Embraces cultural expectations that are in harmony with the Bible and reject those that are not biblical. | |
| A Christian Ethic Total | |

APPENDIX C

ANNUAL CHRISTIAN GROWTH PLAN INSTRUCTIONS

After receiving completed observations from three people enlisted, pray over the responses before looking at the specific scores. Average the scores of each indicator and write the average score as follows:

- Abide in Christ -----
- Live by God's Word -----
- Pray in Faith -----
- Build authentic Relationships -----
- Witness for Christ -----
- Involved in Ministry -----
- Build A Christian Home -----
- Has a Christian Ethic -----
- Persevere in Trials -----
- Faith in Stewardship -----

Compare the scores with your personal assessment totals. Ask yourself these questions and discuss your answers with your discipleship partners:

1. Where do the observer scores agree with my personal scores?
2. Where do the observer scores disagree with my personal scores? If the observer scores disagree with my scores, do they agree with each other? If so, could this be a blind spot for me that need attention?
3. Review any "NO" (not observed) responses. Should the people closest to me be seeing more of these actions? If the answer is yes, consider addressing this as you complete your **Annual Christian Growth Action Plan**.

APPENDIX D

ANNUAL CHRISTIAN GROWTH ACTION PLAN

1. Decide on your action plans by doing the following:
 - Look at areas with less scores
 - Write down concrete disciplines you will participate in to allow the Spirit of God to work more fully and more freely in your life to bring about desired change.
 - Look at areas with high scores
 - Write down concrete steps you are going to take building consistency in these areas and helping others grow in this area.

2. Enlist your Growth Group members to commit to the following:
 - Meet with your group to overview your assessment and for prayers together about you plan.
 - Agree how often you are going to meet with your group in a year to discuss progress on your plan.
 - Permit your Growth Group members to affirm your success and to challenge you to stay focused on the plan.
 - Pray regularly by yourself and “in Gethsemane” with your group members

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