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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING A DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM FOR CHINESE  
SPEAKING PEOPLE TO CREATE A CORE TEAM  
FOR THE “ABIDING CHRIST NET”  
VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

by

Sung Sub Song

Adviser: Min Ho Joo

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Professional Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: DEVELOPING A DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM FOR CHINESE SPEAKING PEOPLE TO CREATE A CORE TEAM FOR THE “ABIDING CHRIST NET” VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

Name of researcher: Sung Sub Song

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Date completed: October 2021

Problem

The Seventh-day Adventist Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR) data in December 2019 showed that among the 1.4 billion population in the Mainland China, there were 467,516 Adventist members, and the population per Adventist member ratio was about 3,000:1. Furthermore, there are about 50 million Chinese people living overseas. As a result, there is a great need to efficiently and effectively spread the Gospel to nearly 1.45 billion Chinese people around the world. In July 2020, the online Chinese discipleship network, ACN, was established to create a global Chinese discipleship network by connecting and utilizing Spirit-filled human resources, and providing discipleship programs to Chinese-speaking people throughout the world. The ACN needs

to build a core team through an online discipleship program that transcends the geographical, political, and the pandemic boundaries.

### Method

A six-week small group discipleship program was designed and conducted via Zoom video conference from February to March 2021, and the aim was to build a core team for the ACN. Among 12 enrolled members, nine members completed all the sessions. For evaluation, they were given a 4-point Likert scale questionnaire during the first and the last sessions. In addition, each participant was interviewed with the same set of questions. The data were evaluated to determine if the core team had matured to the point where it was growing by discipling other Chinese speakers or serving the ACN.

### Results

Nine core team members of the ACN were trained for small group discipleship activities. Through their relational Bible studies, prayers, and spiritual fellowship in a small group setting via Zoom video conference, they received a sense of divine calling and came to abide in Christ (abide in the Holy Spirit, abide in God's Word, and abide through prayer). The most significant change after the six-week discipleship training was the members actively participating in and leading the ACN small group activities alternatively each week. They started their own small groups to disciple and evangelize in other situations.

### Conclusion

Based on the data collected from the ACN core team members who participated in this online discipleship program, it was apparent that the participants experienced

transformational outcomes. The results of their active participations in the small group discipleship trainings and their leading of the ACN small group activities indicated that this discipleship intervention benefited and motivated the core team members to multiply more discipleship small groups.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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

by  
Sung Sub Song  
October 2021

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10/19/2021  
Date approved



## DEDICATION

I dedicate this professional dissertation with all my heart to: the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit; Hope Zhang, my life and ministry companion, prayer, and full-time encourager; Grace Hyun, my daughter, who supports and helps our family; and Peter Eun, my son, who brings joy and encourages us.

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The ACN core team members enrolled in this discipleship program participated in this research with their willing and loving hearts as well as their great contributions to the establishment of the ACN. My life mentor and colleague, Pastor Kwang Sang Cho, helped me with some brainstorming methods and has become my dialogue partner. It was a great joy for me to study and to have spiritual and loving relationships with my classmates, Albert Frazier, Alexander Voigt, Eric Frecking, Jonny Moor, Mike Manea, Nancy Allen, Ryan Whitehead, Seung Kim, Titus Naftanaila, and Travis Walker. I would like to express my sincere heart and appreciation to my wife Hope Zhang and my two children, Hyun and Eun, who have sacrificed their precious time and prayed for me as always with their love.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Description of the Ministry Context**

In December 2019, the COVID-19 disease was first identified in China, and it was later called a pandemic in March 2020. In June 2020, a Chinese speaking group started to develop an online discipleship network church for targeting Chinese speaking people in order to spread the gospel and disciple people beyond environmental obstacles such as the COVID-19, geographical, or political situations. In July 2020, the online Chinese discipleship network name, “Abiding Christ Net” was chosen, and the first Sabbath gathering occurred through Zoom video conference on July 4. A website was created at [www.abidingchristnet.org](http://www.abidingchristnet.org). My wife Hope Zhang and I initiated the ACN. I was then the Northern Asia-Pacific Division Associate Secretary. Currently I am serving at the Hong Kong Adventist College as the Dean of Students. Hope Zhang was born and grew up in the Mainland China, and she is currently ministering to Chinese speaking people as a pastor. Recently, she was called to serve as the president of the Chinese Adventist Seminary in Hong Kong.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

The Seventh-day Adventist Office of Archives, Statistics, Research (ASTR) data in December 2019 showed that among the 1.4 billion population in the Mainland China,



there were 467,516 Adventist members, and the population per Adventist member ratio was about 3,000:1. Furthermore, there are about 50 million Chinese living overseas. As a result, there is a great need to efficiently and effectively spread the Gospel to nearly 1.45 billion Chinese people around the world. In July 2020, the online Chinese discipleship network-ACN, was established to create a global Chinese discipleship network by connecting and utilizing Spirit-filled human resources, and providing discipleship programs to Chinese speaking people throughout the world. The ACN needs to build a core team through an online discipleship program that transcends the geographical, political, and the pandemic boundaries.

### **Statement of the Task**

The task of this project was to develop and implement a discipleship program to create a core team that dedicated their lives to serve the ACN. This project was evaluated by determining if the core team has matured to the point where it is growing by evangelizing Chinese speakers or serving the ACN.

### **Delimitations of the Project**

The target group of this discipleship program was limited to Chinese speaking group who attend the ACN and their family members. The implementation of this program was also limited to enrolled core team members who numbered no more than 12. This group met for only six weeks through online Zoom video conference.

### **Description of the Project Process**

I began with a theological foundation for a discipleship program through the following aspects of discipleship in the Bible: (a) divine calling, (b) abiding – the Holy

Spirit, God's Word, and Prayer, (c) bearing the fruit – character development and reproduction, and (d) being one in Christ – loving Christian communities and small group.

Recent literature was reviewed to observe the current trends in discipleship and how to develop core teams for church planting. The following three approaches were examined: (a) evangelism-leads-discipleship approach, (b) discipleship-leads-evangelism approach, and (c) loving-relational-community approach. For developing a core team who may dedicate their lives to the ACN, the following four items were examined: (a) selection of the core team members, (b) fellowship, (c) coaching to follow Jesus' life, and (d) equipping of the core team.

The discipleship intervention was developed with the following five components: (a) integrated abiding concept to discipleship, (b) loving-relational small group, (c) relational Bible study, (d) relational prayer, and (e) selection method of participation. This intervention was designed with the six sessions: (a) divine calling, (b) abiding in the Holy Spirit, (c) abiding in God's Word, (d) abiding through prayer, (e) bearing fruit, and (f) Christian communities/small group/church.

The intervention was implemented for six weeks via Zoom online video conference by the ACN, and the participants were Chinese speaking people. There were six sessions, and each session took two hours. The outline for each session was as follows: (a) ice breaking, sharing thanks, and grace-10 minutes, (b) lecture/preaching-50 minutes, (c) relational Bible study-50 minutes, and (d) relational prayer-10 minutes.

The effectiveness of this discipleship program was evaluated by determining if the core team members have matured to the point where they are growing by discipling

and evangelizing other Chinese speakers or serving the ACN. I collected the quantitative survey data from the nine participants before the first session began and after the last session finished. Then, the qualitative interviews were conducted was received after completing the last session. I took measures to ensure the confidentiality of the data and participants. The data was compared with that of the first survey, which was collected before the first session, and the second survey, which was collected after completing the six sessions. An interpretive narrative of this intervention data is detailed in chapter 5, and conclusions from the data interpretation are placed in chapter 6.

### **Definitions of Terms**

Though most of the terms appear in the context with their self-explanations, some of them may need to be defined according to their importance.

The ACN was established in July 2020 in order to disciple and evangelize global Chinese speaking people through the online. On July 4, 2020, the first Sabbath gathering occurred via online Zoom video conference. Since the first meeting, small group discipleship activities have continued every Sabbath afternoon for two hours. This organization has been advertised through the website, [www.abidingchristnet.org](http://www.abidingchristnet.org), and a couple of SNS group talk rooms have been opened to invite other people. From January, 2021, an English conversation class and a storytelling class were offered every Sunday morning for about one and half hours for attracting more people to the ACN ministries. The major focus of the ACN is to train members to become disciples of Jesus Christ and to help them create their own discipleship small groups for discipling and evangelizing others.

*Abiding in Christ* based on John 15 has been used as a popular term in Christian societies throughout the world. Chapter 2 explained that this phrase consists of three terms, *abiding in the Holy Spirit*, *abiding in God's Word*, and *abiding through prayer*. Chapter 3 quotes some meanings of abiding in Christ from Kenneson (1999) and Murray (1898, 2014, 2018). This phrase, and its three subsidiary terms are explained furthered in detail in Chapters 4 and 5 of this document.

Northern Asia-Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists (NSD) is one of the 13 divisions of the worldwide church of Seventh-day Adventists, and its mission territory includes “Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, and Taiwan” (Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2019-2020, p. 150). Before October 2017, China, Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions were also included in this organization (Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2017-2018, p. 144).

### **Summary**

This chapter briefly introduced an unprecedented ministry context which is the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the works of ACN, and how the discipleship program serves the ACN and its core group through Zoom video conference. Two quantitative surveys were conducted to perceive and understand the spiritual conditions and the outcomes of the core team members by assessing the small number of participants more objectively. In order to validate the results in quantitative surveys, I collected more data through qualitative interviews with all the participants. The interpretive analysis of this project is done with recommendations to help the ACN continue to grow and expand the Gospel kingdom effectively and efficiently. I wish and pray that it will be helpful for

other researchers or disciplers to pursue and develop similar method or concepts in the near future.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL ASPECTS OF DISCIPLESHIP

The biblical aspects of discipleship is addressed in this chapter. Based on both the Old Testament and the New Testament, this chapter examines especially what Jesus taught His disciples on Earth and how his disciples followed Him. From the Scripture's base, I address four major dimensions of discipleship: divine calling, abiding (the Holy Spirit, God's Word, and prayer), bearing fruit character development and reproduction), and being one in Christ (Christian community and small group).

#### **Divine Calling**

Firstly, this section examines the biblical meaning of call or calling. Secondly, it deals with who were called, and who were selected. Finally, it discusses the call to the transmission which culminates in the Great Commission given by Jesus.

#### Meaning of Calling

The biblical term, call or calling occurs in both the Old and the New Testaments. Motyer (1996) observed that this term is used in several ways: worship (Ps 116:4, 13; Zech 13:9; Lam 3:55; 1 Chron 16:8; Isa 12:4; Acts 2:21-36, 4:12; Rom 10:13-14; 1 Cor 1:2), election (Gen 2:19; Ruth 1:20-21; Isa 40:26, 41:9, 42:6, 43:7, 48:12-15, 49:1, 51:2, Luke 1:13; John 1:42; Matt 16:18), vocation (Gal 1:15; Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1, 1:26, 7:17-21, 12:11), initiation (1 Cor 7:21; Rom 8:30), naming (Rom 9:24-26; 1 Cor 6:11; Jas 2:7;

2 Thess 1:12), destiny (1 Cor 1:9; Eph 4:4; Phil 3:14; 1 Thess 5:24; 1 Tim 6:12; Heb 3:1; 1 Pet 5:10), and holiness (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2; Eph 4:1; 2 Thess 1:11; 1 Pet 2:21, 3:9).

I would like to categorize Motyer's analysis on the biblical term of calling into two major meanings: call to salvation (faith) and call to mission (selection). Firstly, God created humans, and called them to his divine presence (Gen 1:27, 2:7, 2:18-25). Secondly, he called them to take care of the Earth and minister to other creatures (Gen 1:26, 28, 2:15). Humans were created to serve as God's representative to manage the earth (Cabal et al., 2007, p. 5). After humans committed sin, they were destined to death, but God himself initiated to call them to salvation (Gen 3:9, 15, 21). He sacrificed an animal to provide garments of skin to Adam and Eve for covering their sins (Gen 3:21). This sacrificed animal (ram) represented Jesus Christ who came to the Earth to be sacrificed on the cross and to restore and save sinners. During Jesus's ministry on this earth, He healed and restored numerous sick and suffering people, and led them to the Heavenly Father and the eternal life (John 3:16, 1 Pet 2:9). Just as God created humans to serve, Jesus restored sinners to minister to others.

Wilson and Hoffmann (2007) distinguished three different types of callings: the call to faith, the call to minister, and the call into the ministry (p. 92). Wilson and Hoffmann observed that God is calling people to the faith and salvation, and asking them to work for saving other souls. Also they believed that God sets aside some people for serving in ministry such as Jesus's twelve disciples and the apostle Paul (Rom 1:1). These appointed people serve God in surrendered vocational ministry. Jesus called the twelve to come and see, and follow Him (John 1:35-46). Mark (3:14) indicates Jesus's ordination of the Twelve who were with Him and proclaimed the gospel. According to

Luke 6:12-13, these Twelve were selected solemnly by Jesus after He spent the entire night in prayer (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1997, p. 34).

The meaning of divine calling may point to the call, to salvation or faith for all humans, regardless of whether they are believers or non-believers. For ministering to people, it may focus on those who follow Jesus Christ no matter if they are ministers or laypersons. For developing a specific discipleship program and selecting the core group members who will participate in planting a church, and we adopted the principle of Jesus' calling of the twelve disciples.

#### Who Were Called?

Hobbs (cited in Turnbull, 1967) stated that the divine call is for service to all Christians. Jesus commanded to all His followers along with His twelve disciples that they should “go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that He commanded you” (Matt 28:19-20, NASB). “God calls every member to perform some ministry of services” (The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, 1996). Rice (1997) agreed that all Christ-followers are divinely called, and God wants us to represent Him in whatever we do. Although salvation is given to individuals depending upon their acceptance, the work of salvation for an individual may be done through other individuals' help. Therefore, divine calling is more likely intended for all of Christ's followers.

White (1911) stated that “the church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men” (p. 2). According to White, it has been God's plan from the beginning that the church shall be the agency of God's mission of salvation of men. Therefore all members who are called out of darkness into His light of salvation shall be involved with His



divine plan to show and reflect His glory (White, 1925, p. 15). LaRondelle (2015) stated that “Calvin distinguished between the visible and the invisible church of God,” but the visible church can exist only through the consensus in brotherly love.

First Peter 2:9 reads, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” As Christ-followers, whatever they are given as their vocations, they are called to serve for the kingdom of God, while every individual may be given different spiritual gifts or services. In 1 Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul states that God has appointed in the church apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healings, helps, administrations, and various kinds of tongues by giving different talents to individuals, but they are given the same Spirit who works all things in all persons in the one body of Christ. Therefore, all of Christ’s followers are called and compelled to join the body of Christ and His gospel mission.

#### Who Were Selected?

Elwell and Beitzel (1988) argued that the selection of God’s people is due to His initiative prior to all human response. The apostle John stated, “You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you” (John 15:16, NASB). Rightmire (1996) observed that Paul’s apostleship is based on the divine call of Christ, “not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead” (Gal 1:1). The book of Ephesians indicated, “Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (Eph 1:4). Elwell and Beitzel suggested that those selected should owe entirely to God, and they should not boast or compare themselves with others. God may choose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise who may boast about themselves and

choose the weak things to shame the things which seem strong (1 Cor 1:27). God may select those basic and despised things to nullify the things that look good and significant (v. 28). Therefore, “no man may boast before God” (v. 29).

Elwell and Beitzel (1988) supported that people cannot protest against their not being selected, because they all have had a chance to respond to God’s call, but they might have rejected their calling and selection. Jesus says, “For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt 22:14). Some become God’s people, others accept God’s calling, and others refuse it. Because they have become hardened as a result of sin, they trust in their own works. Although the selection belongs totally to God, the selected people “must show that they belong to God by the quality of their lives” and they “continue being faithful to the One who called them” (Elwell & Beitzel, 1988, p. 682).

Mobley (2000) observed that the Bible records the stories of unqualified reluctance for accepting God’s call in the New Testament narratives. In one story, Jesus called someone to follow Him, but he responded, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father” (Luke 9:59, NASB). Then Jesus explained about the criteria of following Him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God” (v. 60). Jesus also emphasized the priority for the kingdom of God, saying that “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (v. 62). This characteristic of divine calling is the principle of “God-first” as the first priority while all other affairs should be regarded as secondary.

Jesus’s selection of the twelve disciples may be the best example of choosing among Christ-followers for special mission purposes. In Matthew 4:18-20, Jesus called

two brothers Peter and Andrew, and He said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Then “immediately they left their nets and followed Him” (v. 20). Jesus went on from there and He saw two other brothers, James and John, and called them. They also immediately left the boat and their father to follow Jesus (Matt 4:21-22). According to Luke 5:11, they left everything and followed him. In another occasion, Jesus noticed a tax collector, called Matthew (Matt 9:9), or Levi (Luke 5:27), called him to follow Jesus. Matthew left everything and followed Him (Luke 5:28). They were not the academically-educated people, but just the ordinary ones. Jesus could see their hearts and foresee their future development of characters qualified to accomplish His gospel mission.

However, if they would have rejected His invitation to follow Him nor prioritized following Him, they might not have been selected, as Jesus said, “For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt 22:14). Jesus did not simply call those individuals, but He formed a strategic group of the twelve, and ordained them for His special mission. Before choosing and naming them as apostles, Jesus spent the whole night on the mountain in prayer to God. These twelve disciples stand as representatives of the gospel church, just as the twelve patriarchs stood as representatives of Israel in the Old Testament (White, 1911, p. 19).

#### Called to Transmit – Great Commission

Jesus says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you” (Matt 28:19-20, NASB). He explains that He Himself was sent by the Father and He sends out His disciples, then He expects His followers will make disciples (John 20:21). Moreau, Netland, and Van Engen (2000) believed that Jesus’ gospel

mission was not His alone, but it should be transmitted to His followers. Jesus Himself was filled with a sense of divine calling, and selected to train His disciples. The first official calling of His future leaders such as Peter, Andrews, James, and John was for making fishers of men (Moreau et al., 2000, p. 518). This ultimate divine mission did not stay with Jesus, and it led the group of Jesus's disciples named "apostles" to duplicate Jesus's own mission. Jesus states, "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (John 17:18), and "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message" (v. 20). He prayed that all of them may be one in the Father and Son, so that the world may believe that the Heavenly Father sent Jesus (v. 21).

Jesus's intention of sending out His disciples was to let the world know and believe in the Father and Jesus Christ whom was sent by the Father. This characteristic of transmitting and duplicating mission is the nature of divine calling. This divine calling named "the Great Commission" ultimately comes back to Jesus Himself. He promises that He will be with His followers even "to the end of the age" (Moreau et al., 2000, p. 519).

### **Abiding – the Holy Spirit, God's Word, and Prayer**

Jesus uses a good illustration of the relationship between the vine and the branches in John 15. He compares Himself to the vine, and His disciples to the branches. According to chapter 15 of John, abiding in Jesus Christ is the key element to being a true disciple who can bear fruit. In order to bear much fruit, how do we abide in Jesus? And how does Jesus abide and dwell in us? After examining the Scriptures, especially from John 13 through 17, I observe that there are three essential components of abiding in

Christ: (a) the Holy Spirit, (b) God's Word, and (c) Prayer. Although these three components will be mentioned separately in each section, they are inseparable to work for transforming the soul's heart for salvation. John 15:7 reflects a good example of the integrated work by the Holy Spirit, God's Word, and prayer: "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." The three are interrelated, but each one will be examined in a separate section.

### Abiding in the Holy Spirit

According to the Bible Conference Collection of the Seventh-day Adventists (1919), "A Christian is the one who comes to Christ, who learns of Christ, who believes in Christ, who follows Christ, who abides in Christ." It means that a Christian culminates in abiding in Christ with his or her personal and intimate relationship. Then how can a Christian abide in Christ? Prior to comparing the relationship between the vine and branches to Jesus and His disciples in John 15, in the previous two chapters of 13 and 14, Jesus explains that He will leave this world but send the Holy Spirit who may be in His disciples forever. Jesus promises that He will not leave His followers comfortless (orphans) but He will come to them (John 14:18). He will be present with His disciples through the Holy Spirit (Nichol, 1980, p. 1038). Jesus says, "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:14). It implies that He will be abiding in them through another Comforter forever (John 14:13-16).

The work of the Holy Spirit may be understood in relation to His Word. In Matthew 13, "Jesus compared understanding and receiving the Word to the planting of seed in the soil, where it takes root and bears fruit" (Wiersbe, 1996, p. 97). Jesus introduced to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well the "living water" by saying,

“whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life” (John 4:10-14). White (1897, 2017) described that this water is the revelation of God’s grace in His Word. Through His Word, His Holy Spirit works as “a satisfying fountain” to all His followers (p. 78). White stated that Christ’s presence in His Word represents Himself as the well of living water to refresh the thirsting soul. Jesus says, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water’” (John 7:37-38).

Ephesians 5:26 indicates, “He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.” Jesus and the Bible describe that “water for washing is a picture of the Word of God” (Wiersbe, 1996, p. 97). Water can refer to the living water only when the Holy Spirit works, helps, teaches, and refreshes the soul (p. 97). In John 17:17, Jesus says, “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth” (NASB). Jesus was asking the Father to sanctify Jesus’s disciples in truth. It implies that the Holy Spirit who the Father and Jesus will send to them may sanctify the Christ-followers in His Word. Bourdeau (1894) states, “Sanctification is called the sanctification of the Spirit, because the Spirit is the great agent that God employs in sanctifying men.” Regarding the function of God’s Word and the Holy Spirit, White (1900) states more clearly:

The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. Christ prayed, “Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth.” John 17:17. If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will. The power given us works from within outwardly, leading us to communicate to others the truth that has been communicated to us. (p. 100)

Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, the faith will come up, and He will transform us to His own image. The Scriptures are the great agency as God's inspired words, but without the help of Holy Spirit, the conversion may not occur and the truth may not be shared with others. White (1900) stated that "The Sanctification of the soul by the working of the Holy Spirit is the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity." Christ's own image and His character will be implanted in His followers' hearts. No man possesses or achieves the unselfish and pure love which is the Christ's character by trying to love others (p. 384). Only when self is merged into Christ, and the love of Christ is carved by the work of the Holy Spirit, will this love spring forth spontaneously (p. 384). In John 14:15, Jesus says, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (NASB). This indicative translation "you will keep" helps us understand that keeping His commandments is the natural result of love which is implanted in our heart by the Holy Spirit (Nichol, 1980, p. 1037).

Just as the help of the Holy Spirit is vital to reading God's words, prayers do not work without the Holy Spirit's initiating and intervening. Romans 8:26 reads, "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (NASB).

Therefore, we should abide in the Holy Spirit by inviting Him, not only for reading God's words, but also for prayers to be connected and to have an intimate loving relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:27 reads, "and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." Christ-followers should invite the Holy Spirit to abide in

their heart, and they shall abide in Him, so that the Holy Spirit will inspire the desires in their hearts (Nichol, 1980, p. 573). The Holy Spirit will initiate those desires of character transformation into Christ's image and the gospel transmission to others. In John 14:17, Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of truth will live "with us" and will be "in us." Jesus' changing the preposition tells that the Holy Spirit will not merely be "with us," but He is to be "in us" (Clouzet, 2011, p. 16). The reception of the Holy Spirit who will live "in us" makes transformation of life so powerful and concrete, and changes us forever (p. 16).

In Acts 1:4-8, Jesus commanded to His disciples that they should not leave Jerusalem, and wait for the Holy Spirit who they will be baptized with. When the disciples of Jesus followed His commanding, His promise was fulfilled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (White, 1911, p. 48). The Holy Spirit was sent to abide in them, and they abided in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Great power and grace were given to the apostles for witnessing the resurrection of the Lord. They gave themselves up to the control of the Holy Spirit who abides in them (p. 49).

Finley (2011) stated that "the Christian church began its existence by praying for the Holy Spirit" and it could not have grown without Christ's personal presence through the Holy Spirit. Clouzet (2011) stated that "The book of Acts is the record of the Holy Spirit's activity in the early church" and God can do miracles with a group of people who give themselves unreservedly to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Surrendering ourselves fully to the control of the Holy Spirit will make us abide in Him. It is certain that this promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race, the great influence and results of the Holy Spirit will be with His followers until the end (White, 1911).



## Abiding in God's Word

Jesus emphasizes that true disciples should be abiding in Him, so that the branch can bear fruit. He promises that He will abide in us if we abide in Him (John 15:4). Jesus compares Himself to the vine, and He illustrates His followers as the branches (v. 5). Being apart from Jesus, His followers cannot bear fruit (v. 5).

Right after the comparison of the vine and the branches, Jesus mentions about the importance of His words. In John 15:7, Jesus says, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." We may understand that His words' abiding in disciples is required in parallel with abiding in Christ as a condition for their answered prayer. Jesus emphasizes that His disciples should continue to abide in His Word. John 8:31-32 reads, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.". People cannot be Christ-followers unless they know and apply His Word (Wilkin, 2010, p. 408).

In John 1:1, Jesus is described as the Word who was in the beginning with God the Father. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Jesus declares Himself as the bread of life who gives life to the world (John 6:33-35). In the three times of temptations at the wilderness, Jesus showed His example about abiding in God's Word. He overcame the temptations and defeated the devil, by mentioning repeatedly "It is written" (Matt 4:1-11). Especially in verse 4, Jesus said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"

To be a true disciple of Jesus, He asked His disciples to abide in His love, by saying that “just as the Father has loved Me, and I have also loved you” (John 15:9). If they keep His commandments, just as Jesus kept His Father’s commandments, it will show an evidence that they are abiding in His love (v. 10). Therefore, to abide in Him is to live with His words. White (1897, 2017) stated that “when His words of instruction have been received, and have taken possession of us, Jesus is to us an abiding presence, controlling our thoughts and ideas and action.” When Jesus abides in us, He will be everything to us as the first, the last, and the best.

White suggested that Christ’s words become our spirit and life, and we do not live anymore, but Christ lives in us (p. 78). When self is dead, Christ becomes a living Savior, and “He dwells in us by the word of truth” (p. 78). Through Jesus’s disciples’ faithful abiding in His words, they experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the early church started in a miraculous way. Finley (2011) states that Jesus’s disciples obeyed their Master’s word to returned to Jerusalem and they prayed for the fulfillment of His promise, then the Holy Spirit was poured upon them. Abiding in Jesus’s words was crucial to His disciples. To abide in God’s Word means the obedience to His Word. If they did not obey Jesus’s commanding that they should not leave Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit, they could not experience the great success of the gospel mission works.

For our daily application of abiding in God’s words, Elliot Ritzema may give us a good illustration. Ritzema (2012) suggested that abiding in God’s words does not mean hasty reading. Serious meditating upon the holy and heavenly truths can become sweet and profitable to our soul, just like honey bees abide upon flowers until they draw out the sweet honey not just by touching the flowers. We may hear God’s words through many

methods including directly listening to sermons in church or indirectly from media tools such as internet or Podcasts. We may simply read the Bible, and sometimes we may study God's words for getting information and principles. However, without the process of enough meditating on God's Word, applying it to life may not be realized (Stevenson, 2007, p. 91). Psalms 1:2 reads, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." Joshua 1:8 says, "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."

Meditating on God's words day and night involves studying and exhorting oneself to fulfill it, and "spiritual success depends on the constant study and application of God's Word" (Cabal et al., 2007, p. 789). Meditation upon the Scripture can cleanse our mind (Stevenson, 2007, p. 91). After Nehemiah's completion of rebuilding Jerusalem, the people gathered, and Ezra read the Scripture. "And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them" (Neh 8:12, NKJV). When people understand God's words, they can be greatly joyful as a result (Campbell, 1991, p. 10).

Wiersbe (1996) stated that if we want to be like fruitful trees, we must delight in God's Word (Ps 1:2). He argued that we may lose the blessing of God when we do not love, read, and obey His Word (p. 95). Wiersbe suggested intentionally reading the Bible in order to understand God's Word to the point where "it can enter the heart and release its life-changing power" because "the Bible is not a magic book" (Wiersbe, 1996, p. 96). Wiersbe (2004) states, "The Word in the hand is fine; the Word in the head is better; but the Word in the heart is what transforms us and matures us in Christ." God's Word can

help us see and search our hearts as a reflecting mirror (Jas 1:23; Heb 4:12). If we continue to delight in the Word of God, we will naturally meditate on it, and it will help us be away from sin (Ps119:9-16, 23-24, 47-48, 77-78, 97-99) (Wiersbe, 2004, p. 83). Continuing to delight and abide in God's Word which is the truth will set us free, and it will prove that we are truly disciples of Jesus (John 8:31-32).

### Abiding Through Prayer

Jesus' life was prayerful life where He was always connected with the Heavenly Father. First Thessalonians 5:17 reads, "pray without ceasing." Jesus prayed always to communicate with the Father for depending upon Him even though He is divine Himself. He often spent entire nights in the mountains in prayer (White, 1898, p. 419). He prayed by pouring out His supplications with strong crying and tears in order to overcome the test on behalf of humanity (pp. 419-420).

The book of Luke puts more emphasis on the prayerful life of Jesus than the other gospel books do (Nichol, 1980, p. 746). Jesus went up on a mountain to pray overnight before calling and choosing the twelve disciples (Luke 6:12-16). Jesus Himself spent the entire night in prayer in a secluded nature to have communion with God, and His mind was uplifted, and the heart found rest (White, 1898, p. 291). The great purpose of prayer is to invite and enjoy the presence of God (Piper, 2004, pp. 142-43; Lewis, 2002, p. 8). It is to live genuinely in relationship with God as our Heavenly Father (Keller, 2014, p. 23).

Luke described the prayerful life of Jesus well in chapter 9. Jesus called the twelve disciples and gave them power and authority over all the demons to heal diseases, and to proclaim God's kingdom (Luke 9:1-6). In the same chapter, it tells that Jesus took five loaves and the two fish, He prayed (blessed) to the Father looking up to heaven, and

the miracle of feeding five thousand people happened (Luke 9:12-17). Verse 18 mentioned again about Jesus's praying: "While He was praying alone." At that time, Jesus revealed Himself as the Christ, the Son of Man who will suffer, be killed, and be raised up on the third day (Luke 9:18-22). Eight days after Jesus's saying these things, He took three disciples Peter, John, and James along, and went up on the mountain to pray (Luke 9:28). While Jesus was praying, His appearance became transfigured, and Moses and Elijah appeared to talk with Him, then the heavens opened, and the Father's voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!" (Luke 9:29-35).

The instances of Jesus's spending entire nights in prayer preceded the times of critical decision or crisis in His ministry (Nichol, 1980, p. 592). His prayer preceded His first missionary tour to Galilee (Mark 1:35). The whole night of prayer was spent before the selection of the twelve disciples (Mark 3:14; Luke 6:12-13). The Sermon on the Mount and the second Galilean tour were led by His prayer. The time of great crisis in Galilee (Matt 14:22-23; John 6:15, 66), the Transfiguration, and the triumphal entry into Jerusalem by riding on the colt were done with Jesus' prayers (Nichol, 1980, p. 592). White (1898) stated that the people sought for Jesus to place Himself on the throne while He was in the temple. He returned to Bethany to spend the entire night in prayer, then came back again to the temple. Jesus' longest prayer before entering the Garden of Gethsemane is recorded in John 17, and "Jesus offered His most earnest, agonizing prayer in the garden (see Matt 26:36-44)" (Nichol, 1980, p. 592).

Jesus also asked His disciples to stay in prayer, especially when He was entering the Garden of Gethsemane. Staying in prayer is vital for Christ-followers to be in

communion with God. While abiding in God's Word, at the same time, staying in ceaseless prayer, whatever we wish, it will be done for His followers (John 15:7) (Nichol, 1980; Borchert, 2002). Finley (2011) stated that prayer is the heartbeat of the disciples' gospel ministry according to the book of Acts. They gathered together for ten days and earnestly sought the promised Holy Spirit. Then the Holy Spirit was poured out to lead three thousand new souls to be converted to Jesus.

Even after the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the disciples continued to pray earnestly together (Acts 4:23-24). They lifted their voices to God in one accord in prayer. When they had prayed together in one accord, their gathering place was shaken and all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit, so that they could boldly preach the Word of God (Acts 4:29-31). Through their prayer in one accord, the Holy Spirit made them become one in heart and mind, and even shared any of their possessions as common property (Acts 4:32).

White (1956) suggested that "prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend" and it is essential "in order to enable us to receive Him"(p.93). Prayer makes us receive the Holy Spirit, and He will abide in us. Then, the great results will be repeated by the power of the Holy Spirit even in our present time as in the Day of Pentecost (White, 1911, p. 49).

### **Bearing Fruit – Character Development and Reproduction**

Jesus compares Himself to the vine, and His disciples to the branches. The condition of bearing fruit is to abide in Him (John 15:4). Apart from Him the disciples can do nothing (v. 5). This means that bearing fruit is the byproduct of abiding in Christ, and only Christ Himself bears fruit.

Then what does it mean by “bearing fruit” in John 15? In order to get the answer, we need to trace the whole sequence of Jesus’s sayings in chapter 15. Jesus explains in detail that the disciples’ abiding in Him precedes His words’ abiding in the disciples (vs. 7). Then bearing fruit is related to abiding in His love (vv. 8-9). Jesus identifies His words as His or His Father’s commandments (vv. 7; 10). Keeping (abiding in) His words or His commandments means loving one another (vv. 10; 12; 17). Jesus contrasts the word “love” with “hate” (vv. 17; 18; 19; 23; 24; 25). His saying implies that there will be two groups in the world. One will love Him, and the other one will hate Him. Those who hate Jesus will hate His followers (vv. 19). Jesus made a conclusive statement that the two commandments, “loving God” and “loving neighbor,” are the summary of the whole law and the prophets (Matt 22:40). This means that all His words or commandments converges to “love.”

In parallel with “love” there is another perspective of fruit bearing, “righteousness.” Some scholars interpret bearing fruit as “the fruit of the Spirit” or “fruit of righteousness” (Nichol, 1980, p. 1042). The fruit of the Spirit is listed in Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The fruit of righteousness is mentioned in Philippians 1:11: “the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” Ephesians 5:9 reads, “the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth” (NASB). For this verse, the KJV uses “the fruit of the Spirit” instead of “the fruit of the Light.” It implies that the characteristics of the nine fruit of the Spirit are not separable, but inclusive to the fruit of righteousness which comes from Jesus Christ.

Therefore, in regard to bearing fruit, we may focus on the fruit of the Spirit which embraces the fruit of righteousness.

The writer of Galatians lists the word, “love” first among all nine aspects of fruit of the Spirit. The characteristics of love are correlated to all the other eight fruit. “love” is representative for all the other eight aspects of fruit as an inclusive word. This way of understanding can be supported by Jesus’s declaration that two commandments (loving God and loving our neighbor) are the summary of the whole law and the prophets (Matt 22:40). The fruit of the Spirit is focused more on inward and spiritual aspects than outward actions while the inward character results in outward behaviors. The fruit is evident in the character and the life of Christ-followers or His disciples (Nichol, 1980, p. 1042). Bearing more or much fruit means continual development of Christ-like character for a lifetime (Nichol, 1980, p. 1042).

Following a fruit-bearing, it is naturally expected to have a harvest and reproduction. Jesus compares His Father to the husbandman while pointing Himself to the vine (John 15:1, KJV). White (1900) interpreted that the sower of the seed represents those who labor in Christ’s stead; yet the seed itself does not have power to spring up. God Himself has implanted; the seed grows by the power of God. At last, the seed bears fruit to the glory of God; the divine Husbandman gets a harvest (pp. 62-67). The object of the Husbandman is the production of seed, and furthermore the reproduction (p. 67). White stated that “the object of the Christian life is fruit bearing which means the reproduction of Christ’s character in the believer, that it may be reproduced in others” (p. 67). White suggested that Christ-followers should be representatives of Christ for the salvation of other souls, by forgetting themselves, trying to help others, talking of the



love of Christ, and telling of His goodness (pp. 67-68). When we receive the Holy Spirit, we will have the Spirit of unselfish love and labor for others, then we will grow and bear fruit. Therefore, bearing fruit means not only the Christ-followers' own character development, but also the reproduction of character building in other souls' hearts.

The character development for Christ-followers' own salvation occurs first, then they spread to other souls this good news of their changed life with the assurance of salvation. It is not simply spreading the information of their salvation news or Christ's life, but truly helping reproduce the same unselfish Christ-like character in other souls' hearts. This means that bearing fruit is focused on the character development or transformation into Christ, and its continual reproduction work. The surface of growing and reproducing seems a numerical membership growth, but the true fruit bearing is for making and multiplying the unselfish Christ-like disciples.

In Luke 9 and 10, Jesus gives us good examples and lessons in regard to bearing fruit. "Jesus called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases, and He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing" (Luke 9:1-2, NASB). Prior to sending out His disciples, Jesus trained them by His example. Jesus traveled with the twelve disciples from one town and village to another to preach the good news of God's kingdom (Luke 8:1).

Luke described Jesus's unselfish loving care and healing for the sick and suffering people as well as proclaiming the kingdom of God. Jesus's disciples directly witnessed His loving care and divine power for people's salvation. After showing those examples to His disciples, Jesus sent them out to do His gospel works as He did, and the result was greatly fruitful (Luke 9:6-10). Following the successful case of the twelve disciples, Jesus

organized the evangelistic group of the seventy disciples and sent them two by two to every city and place ahead of Him where He Himself was going to come (Luke 10:1).

Jesus mentioned the motif of “harvest” in the following verse, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (v. 2, NASB). Jesus identifies Himself as “Husbandman” who is “the Lord of the harvest.” Again even these bigger groups of disciples were “abiding in Christ” and their bearing fruit was greatly successful. Verses 17 and 18 read, “The seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name. And He said to them, I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.” However, Jesus suggests that they should not focus on the outward miracles and numerical results, “but rejoice that their names are recorded in heaven” (v. 20). Jesus teaches that performing miracles does not guarantee eternal life (Nichol, 1980, p. 781). His teaching emphasizes the inward transformational experience of salvation for both themselves and other souls.

In Matthew 28:19, making disciples of all the nation means not only producing disciples, but also disciplers (disciplemakers) who reproduce other disciplers. More trees may produce more fruit than only one tree. Because more trees may have more branches to bear more fruits. Training trainers may reproduce more trainees than one trainer who produces only his/her trainees without making other trainers. After Jesus’ producing disciples, the disciples evangelized others to become the disciples of Jesus, and those disciples influenced and trained other disciples to become disciplers. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Apostle Paul said, “And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also”

(NASB). Paul trained disciples such as Timothy who could teach others. Paul followed Jesus' example of training disciples to reproduce other disciples. He followed Jesus' discipling process which is more efficient and effective to reach to the ends of the earth.

The great results of bearing fruit happened even greater after Jesus ascended to heaven as He promised. Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father" (John 14:12, NASB). The book of Acts records those evidences.

### **Being One in Christ – Loving Christian Communities and Small Groups**

In this section, the loving Christian community will be reviewed as the final phase of discipleship process. The Christian loving community is the destination as the whole process of bearing fruit which has been addressed in the previous sections. In fact, the size of this Christian community is shown as both large and small groups in the Scriptures. However, many scholars observe that Jesus started His gospel ministry with the small group of disciples, and also His disciples followed Jesus's discipleship process in small gatherings in the early church according to the book of Acts.

Jesus called the *Twelve* and trained them, and He sent them out two by two to preach the gospel (Mark 6:7; Luke 9:1). Butler (2000) stated, "Faith begins with a small group of dedicated followers chosen by God." After the successful mission worked through the Twelve, Jesus appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come (Luke 10:1). Jesus formed small groups to train them to be His genuine disciples first, and He sent them out in pairs

to minister to others beyond their Christian community. Jesus knew that doing God's mission would be more effective in pairs than doing it alone.

Jesus's purpose of making disciples is not the end, but it is intended for His disciples to do the same ministry as Jesus did. Jesus says, "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst" (Matt 18:20, NASB). In the previous verse, He promises, "if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven" (v. 19). In John 15:12-13, He declares that His commandment is to love one another as He has loved His disciples. He illustrates the greatest love: to lay down one's life for one's friends. His highlighted and converged truth is to love one another, and He calls them "My friends" if they love one another as their friends, even by laying down their life for their friends (v. 14).

In John 13:33, Jesus says, "Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'" Then He gave His disciples "a new commandment" which is to love one another as He has loved them (v. 34). In the following verse, Jesus says, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." He declares that those who love one another are His true disciples. Jesus prophesied that although His disciples including Simon Peter could not follow Jesus at that time, they would follow His way later (v. 36).

Jesus taught His disciples in the setting of small groups as His Christian community that they should love one another as He sacrificed Himself on the cross for saving them from their sins and their eternal death. The Old Testament also suggests the unity of Christian community by implying the concept of small group for the intimate

loving relationship in order to fulfil God's mission as Jesus commanded to His chosen disciple group. Psalm 133:1 says, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!" Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 describes the strength and purpose of Christian community or small group, as follows:

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.

Because "a friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity" (Prov 17:17). One person helps another as iron sharpens iron (Prov 17:17). Even the God's greatest servant Moses followed Jethro's advice that he should not do his task alone but let others share Moses' burdens (Exod 18:13-27).

Cox (1998) supports that Jesus's own small group was twelve, and this size might not be much different from the size of the home churches which were referred in the book of Acts (p.28). There are many Bible verses in the New Testament where the apostles compel us to follow the unity of Christian community for fulfilling Christ's Great Commission following the concept of "one another": Romans 12:10, 15:7, 14; Galatians 5:13, 6:2; Ephesians 4:2, 32, 5:21; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11; James 5:16 (Cox 1998, p. 17). This unity based on the concept of "one another" is about having the loving relationship among Christ-followers. It is keeping Jesus's new commandment, "love one another."

Cox (1998) observes that this concept was addressed to the small groups of Christian community in the entire New Testament. Hebrews 10:24-25 says, "let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own

assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” Christ-followers need to assemble together and to grow up in loving relationship in every way into Christ (Eph 4:15-16). When anyone commits sin, they should restore him or her in the principle of “loving one another” by bearing one another’s burdens and fulfilling the law of Christ (Gal 6:1-2; 1 Pet 4:8-11). Christ’s disciples are advised to take care of and to exhort one another every day in order to keep from falling away from the living God and falling into the power of devil (Heb 3:12-14).

Before Jesus’s crucifixion on the cross, He emphasized the unity of His disciples in Christ and His love as the body of Christ for the sake of fulfilling the kingdom of God in this world. Following John 17:18: “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world,” Jesus emphasizes “being one,” saying, “they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.... I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me” (vv. 21, 23). Jesus’s chosen disciples represented various different types of character. In order to accomplish the Great Commission, they needed to come into unity of feeling, thought, and action (White, 1911, p. 20). White (1911) affirms that this unity was what Christ wanted to secure and He sought to bring them into unity with Himself.

Just before ascending to the heaven Jesus commanded His disciples not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the promised Holy Spirit by gathering them together (Acts 1:4). Then, they sincerely followed Jesus’s commandment to gather together in one place and they were constantly united in prayer with one mind (Acts 1:14). On the day of Pentecost

this resulted in great miracles of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples who became one in Christ (Acts 2:1-47). The disciples shared their property and possessions in common as anyone might have need (vv. 44-45).

It has proved that Jesus was successful in making His true disciples. The second chapter of Acts shows the great results, bearing fruit by “abiding in Christ” and “being one” in Christ’ love. Even after Jesus’s ascension to heaven, His disciples abided in His Word day by day. They continued to gather together with one mind in the temple, and were together breaking bread and taking their meals from house to house with gladness and sincerity of heart. They were praising God, and having favor with all the people. Then the Lord was adding to their number every day those who were being saved (Acts 2:46-47). This type of strong unity in the setting of small gatherings which have an intimate loving relationship is an act of worship itself (Cox, 1998, p. 28). The concept of perfected and beautiful unity of Christian community continued to be followed by many other Christians including apostle Paul.

As Christ-followers anticipated the day of Christ’s returning, they were compelled not to cease meeting and encouraging together, and teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus (Acts 5:42; Heb 10:25; 1 Cor 11:33, 14:26). The apostles taught and made disciples by visiting from house to house and small groups in homes (Arnold & Black, 1992). In early church times, small group gatherings were popular, and in the Roman society of apostle Paul’s day, the Greek term *ekklesia* translated in English as “church” had no such religious connotations, and it might be understood as “gathering” (Larson, 2000, pp. 13-14). People gathered together in their homes to break bread, and also to have home prayer meetings such as the time when Peter was in prison (Acts 12:12)

(Arnold & Black, 1992). Acts 2:42-47 provides a good example of Christian community in the early church (Arnold & Black, 1992). It portrays that Christ-followers spent time together praying, talking, eating, and worshiping in an intimate loving relationship (Arnold & Black, 1992).

This unity with Christ is “a bond of unity with one another,” and it is the most convincing proof of Christ’s character and His Power to take away sin (White, 1955, p. 286). “Being one in Christ” brings Christ-followers into a living union with Christ and the Father. To be one in Christ is for fulfilling Christ’s purpose of saving souls. Therefore, the formation of small groups is suggested also for the present time, to “work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers,” because they can “keep their bond of union unbroken, pressing together in love and unity” (White, 1902, pp. 21-22).

### **Summary**

The biblical aspects of discipleship have been reviewed in this chapter. In regard to discipleship issues, the Great Commission of Jesus is often referred to: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20, NASB). Although Christ-followers may know what they shall do from this passage, it may not describe all about discipleship. For more understanding about discipleship, I tried to address with the four dimensions of discipleship (See Figure 1): (a) divine calling, (b) abiding (the Holy Spirit, God’s Word, and prayer), (c) bearing fruit (character development and reproduction), and (d) being one in Christ (Christian communities and small groups).



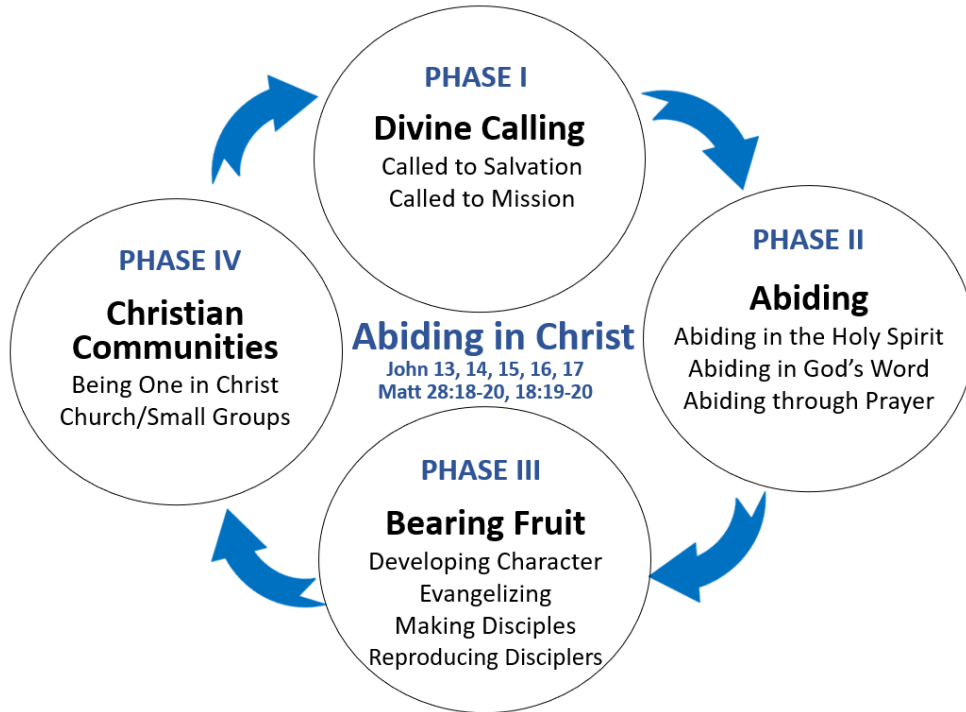


Figure 1. Four dimensions of discipleship (ACN discipleship model).

Through what Jesus says in the four gospels and the great results of His disciples' obedience to His words by receiving the outpouring of the Holy Spirit especially in the book of Acts, I could perceive a clear picture about the essential characteristics of discipleship.

As the diagram depicts the four dimensions, the Jesus calls every individual to His salvation, asks them to abide in Him, to bear fruit, and to be one in Him as Christian communities (John 15, 16, 17). This four-phase cycle continues to come back to Jesus Christ who calls us always, as Jesus says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (Rev 1:8). For the mission of salvation, Christ is the initiator and the finisher, and all these phases are the byproducts of Christ through the Holy Spirit. In fact, throughout the whole four phases, there is the same principle of "abiding in Christ" through the Holy Spirit who will

be always present with Christ-followers. As long as they seek for the Holy Spirit by praying in truth (abiding in the Word of God), He will abide in them (John 15:7).

Especially John 13 through 17 are pointing to God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit who will come after Jesus's ascending to heaven. Without the work of the Holy Spirit, people cannot understand and abide in His Word, and their prayers may not be answered either. Without abiding in His words which are summarized into "love one another," they cannot be a true disciple of Christ. Without prayer, people cannot invite and receive the Holy Spirit, and there will be no fruit from Him. Therefore, I would like to suggest that the definition or concept of discipleship should always include the integrated components of the Holy Spirit, God's Word, and prayer as well as bearing fruit and Christian communities (being one in Christ).

Abiding and keeping Jesus's commandments which converge to "love one another" can be done only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Through loving one another, intimate relationships may be made in small group gatherings of Christian community, just as Jesus selected and trained the Twelve and eventually they could successfully reproduce disciples and disciplers throughout the whole world until the present time. Even toward the end time, we, Christ-followers, can continue to reproduce disciples and disciplers by seeking for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit until His second coming, just as His disciples did by being one in Christ on the Day of Pentecost.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Relevant literature are reviewed to give an overview of current concepts of discipleship and how to develop a core team for church planting. The following three approaches are examined: evangelism-leads to-discipleship approach, discipleship-leads to-evangelism approach, and loving-relational-community approach. The section on the core team for church planting examines three topics: selection of core team members, fellowship and coaching, and equipping the core team members.

#### **Current Concepts of Discipleship**

The current discipleship approaches often focus on relationship with Jesus. They are about constructing a loving relationship with God and with one another. Literature shows that relationship is the core element of discipleship. Putman (2010) supports that the discipleship requires intentionality and relationship. Sweet (1999) stated, “postmodern evangelism also can be summarized in one word: relationships” (p. 196). The post-modern generation clings to more fellowship and relationship. As discipleship uses a method of experiential teaching and learning, “it requires conversation, modeling, encouragement, debriefing, and practice, all of which need to happen in the context of relationship” (Putman, 2010, p. 23). The small group concept has been generally applied because it is co-related.

Ogden (2007) puts an emphasis on “intimate, accountable relationships centered on the essentials of God’s word” through a small group. He argued that “human being has the desire for deep and satisfying relationships,” “because God made us for relationship with Himself and with one another” (p. 9). According to Ogden, a small group is an ideal form, since it is transparent and accountable for self-revelation to one another. Moreover, members tended to have intimate relationships among themselves in small group.

Putman, Harrington, and Coleman (2013) suggested that churches should go with biblical discipleship in relational environments and “its primary methodology is Christlike love expressed in life-on-life relationship” (p. 44). From this standpoint, the small group concept for discipleship may be adopted for maturing people spiritually. Bobby Harrington launched Harpeth Community Church in Tennessee in 1998 and he used the attractional model for discipleship to attract the “unchurched”. However, later he moved to “the relational discipleship model” (Putman et al., 2013, p. 15).

Benjamin and Walt (2018) quoted Jesus’ prayer in John 17:21 to argue for “Why Discipleship Bands?” (p. 7). They emphasized that the loving relationship among Christ’s followers is the key to success in evangelism. They note, “Banded discipleship creates the context for the supernatural love of God to become real in our lives and through our relationships for the world” (p. 7). Benjamin and Walt suggested that we should love God and love our neighbor in order to obey Jesus’ entire commandments. Practicing love must be processed in relationship. Ogden (2003) illustrated how relationship is important and prioritized among the foundational principles of discipleship by using the concept of three hinges: (a) life investment – relationship, (b) multiplication through the generations – discipling people to maturity, and (c) transformation. The first hinge is prior to the

other two. Ogden (2003) argued that program-based discipleship approach is focused on information and it is “missing the priority of relationship.” He stated that for transformation to occur discipleship “must all be processed in the context of a relational commitment” (p. 153). Ogden’s approach views that relationship is primary and foundation in discipleship.

While this relational focus in discipleship goes with other emphases of intentionality, accountability, and reproducibility, Jesus has been continually becoming the most focused. Putman (2010) defined a disciple as someone who “follows Christ (head),” “becomes changed by Jesus (heart),” and is “committed to Jesus’ mission to save people from their sin (hands)” (p. 34). The teaching and learning methods have become more direct in learning and experiential by following Jesus.

Wright (2014) observed that all the New Testament stories are about Jesus and His disciples. The New Testament stories bring us into Jesus Christ and lead us to follow Him. Hull (2006a) showed a biblical pattern of how Jesus reached and discipled the lost. Hull’s principles are the four steps: “Come and See,” “Come and Follow Me,” “Come and Be with Me,” and “Remain in Me” (pp. 232-233).

Tolbert (2011) illustrated about how to transform people into the disciples of Jesus following His method and accepting Him as the master teacher. Tolbert introduced the ten major principles of Jesus’ teachings: (a) being based on His character, (b) understanding the learner, (c) teaching developmentally, (d) using teachable moments, (e) being sensitive to time, (f) using his environment for every teaching opportunity, (g) considering their cultural needs, (h) appealing to every aspect of the learner’s mind,

emotions, and behavior, (i) using all the senses, and (j) addressing social concerns by considering their culture and ethnicity within the context of social needs (pp. 29-42).

Morgan (2018) introduced a practical aid to become the disciples of Jesus through the relationship between Christ and His followers. He addresses the practical application into their life at home and business. McCall (2012) explained how Jesus' followers should pay attention to His life and reflect Christ's character traits in their lives especially through small groups. Brines (2011) listed the characteristics of a disciple, and he pointed out Jesus' method for choosing disciples, training, and sending them on His mission.

#### Evangelism-Leads to-Discipleship Approach

This approach places the emphasis on evangelism more than discipleship. The prioritizing work is evangelism and then discipleship. Warren (1995) stated that "nothing precedes purpose," and without knowing why church exists people have "no foundation, no motivation, and no direction for ministry" (pp. 80-81). However, Warren noted, "God's purposes for His church include evangelism-but not to the exclusion of His other purposes" (p. 79). He does not mean that they exclude or ignore other things such as discipleship. Evangelism is to win souls to Jesus Christ. In other words, it is to convert non-believers into believers of Christ.

Coleman (2018) explained about Jesus' strategy of evangelism. Coleman believed that the evangelism of soul saving is the supreme purpose and motivates the discipleship process. According to Coleman, "evangelism is not an optional accessory" to Christian life, and "the heartbeat of all that we are called to be and do" (p. 74). In order to accomplish the ministry, Coleman refers to Jesus' evangelizing the twelve disciples first and training them. The Master could have evangelized immediately thousands of

followers, but He did not try to impress all of them. “He needed people who could lead the multitudes” (Coleman, 2018, p. 22). Coleman stated, “Everything that is done with the few is for the salvation of the multitudes” (p. 24). In Jesus’ strategy, evangelism started first with a few people, then these few were trained to be His disciples, and finally they were sent out to evangelize the multitudes.

Those who take this approach may support that evangelism results in discipleship. If they do their best to evangelize others by focusing on intimate relationship and Bible study, discipleship process will be made possible through experiential learning. While the evangelism-leads to-discipleship approach has a strong point with an emphasis on accomplishing the ultimate purpose of church, which is to win souls to Jesus, this approach may have its weakness. If this approach focuses on numeric growth without spiritual growth, the church will not be able to protect the multitudes, which are under the attack of satanic forces.

#### Discipleship-Leads to-Evangelism Approach

The discipleship-leads to-evangelism approach prioritizes discipleship in order to bear the fruits of evangelism. A discipleship program can include evangelism training as a part of the process. For the relationship between evangelism and discipleship, Hull ‘s (2010) statement provided some clarifications. He stated, “Discipleship means managing a system in which teaching, training, evangelism, and pastoral care take place” (p. 51). The evangelism is included as part of discipleship. Hull (2010) prioritized making disciples over other activities. He argued that “there is no way to reproduce, multiply, and decentralize people and the gospel without first diligently making disciples” (p. 24). Also he agreed that if they refuse to make disciples constantly, they will not be successful in

evangelizing the world. According to Coleman, if the multitudes have a few leaders, who they follow, they can be won to Christ. Interestingly, Coleman's concept highlighted on the necessity of the discipleship process for a few selected people who need to be trained to evangelize and nurture other multitudes. Coleman (2018) observed that Jesus used any opportunities to compel His disciples to save the lost, and His followers "needed to learn, not in theory but in practice" (p. 50).

The discipleship process of Jesus included evangelism which focused on the soul saving work as the supreme and essential element. Although Coleman's approach is about the whole discipleship process through the small group concept, the evangelism part is still vital. According to this discipleship-leads to-evangelism approach, the belief is that the genuine disciplined followers will surely bear the fruits of evangelism. Coleman (2018) observed that making disciples is prioritized above other activities of the Great Commission of Christ. For a successful discipleship program which can bear the fruits of evangelism, the following sub-sections will discuss three phases, "Life on the Vine," "Being Disciples," and "Making Disciples."

### **Life on the Vine**

Below are the literatures which relate to the continuing life of disciples and the life of abiding in Christ. Kenneson (1999) believed that God created human beings in His image and the Holy Spirit continues to restore this image "to God in Christ by working in and through the community of disciples known as the church" (p. 32). According to Kenneson, God desires to produce the fruit through the Holy Spirit and the community of Jesus Christ in our individual and corporate lives. Producing the fruit means that the individual or corporate lives "reflect the character and mission of God" (p. 33). The



branch on the Vine exists for bearing fruit. Murray (1898 & 2018) stated that the follower of Christ “as a branch in the Heavenly Vine has his place only to bear fruit for the salvation of sinners” (p. 22). Murray maintained that this fruit may continue to abide also in the Vine as long as the branch abides in Him closely and fully. In other words, if the followers of Christ abide in Him they may win more souls to Him and these souls may not leave Him. This is why discipleship is so essential and vital for bearing fruit and keeping it in Him continually.

Murray (2014) ascertained that if we abide in Christ we receive His Spirit of love from Him and compassion towards sinners. Abiding in Christ will bring us into contact with His infinite love and its fire will burn with our hearts. Then we will bear the burden of souls and devote our life to win the souls to Christ (p. 118). Murray (2014) stated that the Holy Spirit is the bond of fellowship between the Father and the Son, between Christ and believers, and between believers. Abiding in Him means living under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit to be bonded with Christ and believers. If people abide in Christ, He will breathe His desire into them and they will pray and plea to God for seeking His glory (pp. 125-126). Murray stated, “prayer is both one of the means and one of the fruits of union to Christ” (p. 122). Fervent prayer of those who abide in Him bears more fruits. Murray observes that “abiding in Christ is the place for receiving answers” (p. 127).

### **Being Disciples**

Bonhoeffer (1995) argued that discipleship is simply following Christ. He observed that “the response of the disciples is an act of obedience” and “the cause behind the immediate following of call by response is Jesus” (p. 57). To be a disciple means to

follow Jesus and His call, and to obey His word. Only Jesus has “the authority to call and to demand obedience to His word” (pp. 57-58). Bonhoeffer means that discipleship is adherence to Christ because when we are called to follow Him we will be exclusively attached to His person (p. 59). Bonhoeffer makes a significant statement that “Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship, and Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ” (p. 59).

Morgan (1897 & 2018) suggested that “the truth taught must become incarnate in the disciples.” If the followers of Christ are in right relationship with Him, they need to reveal some new aspect of truth in some daily circumstance (p. 26). Simply following Jesus requires practical obedience and application in our lives. According to David L. Cook (2013), when we receive a new life, eternal life, we are “brought into a new relationship with God” (p. 14). This relationship is a personal and direct one with our Teacher by experiencing living a new life (p. 14). To be a disciple of Christ requires having an intimate loving relationship with Him to obey whatever He commands. It requires believers to love God and one another, to read the Bible, and to pray personally and directly to Him.

### **Making Disciples**

When we are called to salvation, this invitation is not just a call to ourselves but also a call to live a life as His disciple and to win others to Christ. “Disciple making should be installed at the heart of the church, and the command product of the church is a fruit-bearing believer called a disciple” (Hull, 2007, p. 67). The objective of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) is evangelism which is “the heart of what the church is and what the church does” (p. 68). Hull (2007) argued that disciples are first born by the Holy

Spirit, “then they must be built, trained, taught, and led to commitment to Jesus Christ” as a mature disciple (p. 84). While making disciples starts with evangelism, the whole disciple making process includes going “from conversion to trained disciple maker” (p. 83). Disciple making should be intentional and the intentional effort is not a negotiable thing (p. 73). Hull believed that the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 states making disciples of all nations as a goal, and this discipleship process is to win, to develop, and multiply as many as possible (p. 82).

Multiplying disciples can be done more effectively and efficiently when disciplers (disciplemakers) train other disciples to become trained disciplers. Malphurs and Mancini (2004) stated that the job of the leader is to make more leaders and every leader in a ministry must be a leader-maker (p. 34). As more trees have more branches, and more branches produce more fruit, more disciplers can reproduce more disciples.

In discipleship process, making disciples includes training disciplers who can reproduce other disciplers. This is the last phase as a result of the other two phases, “Life on the Vine,” and “Being Disciples.” However, its multiplication or reproduction with winning souls and making disciples/disciplers will lead to another first phase, “Life on the Vine.” It is an on-going cycle.

#### Loving-Relational-Community Approach

Hull (2007) stated, “the mark of a disciple is love.” He observed that the “small group is getting smaller” in order to help a larger number of people who come to church stay in warm and intimate relationships” (p. 313). It means that more people are looking for an intimate loving relational community (small group or partner) in order to address their broken relationships. This section will discuss two types for loving relational

discipleship approaches, “spiritual companion” and “small group,” through the review of relevant literature, including a few of case studies.

### **Spiritual Companion**

Some literature addressed the concept of the *spiritual companion*, and other literature introduced the term *spiritual direction* which is similar to the spiritual companion. Soughers (2013) observed that the term *spiritual companion* is often used for *spiritual direction*. The *spiritual companion* concept is the context of one-on-one intimate spiritual and loving relationship which is similar to spiritual direction. The term of *spiritual direction* going with the relationship between director and recipient has been less preferred than spiritual companion because of hierarchy or inequality issues (Soughers, 2013, pp. 149-150). In the case of *spiritual companionship*, both sides expect their self-disclosure (Blackie, 2006, p. 27).

The spiritual companion concept allows more dialogue between contemporary Christians (Soughers, 2013, p. 153) without giving a superior or inferior feeling. With consideration into the increasing sensitivity of equality issues, in this research, I chose the term *spiritual companion* which refers to spiritual friends with equal status to each other. Although the *spiritual companion* concept may be used by overlapping with *spiritual direction* which has been adopted in formal literature and practice, it is intended for developing a more effective discipleship process.

Benner (2002) stated that “Christian spirituality demands journeying together” and “it includes the accompaniment of fellow pilgrims” as well as the Holy Spirit. Benner used the concept of the church from 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 as the body of Christ to conclude that “we are parts of one body as we follow Christ on the journey of personal

transformation” and “we cannot make the journey apart from spiritual companions and community” (p. 40). According to Benner, through *spiritual companionship*, we can more deeply know about self and God, and both can help each other in knowing ourselves and God. It is about intimacy and mutuality on the spiritual journey. In this way the intimate loving relationship can be developed.

Sheehan (2010) regarded *spiritual companionship* as “an intentional and mutually negotiated relationship.” Sheehan believed that through this relationship based on faith both members of spiritual companionship can grow in greater love and holiness. Their intimate relationship with each other in Christ can help produce the fruits of personal transformation by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Two persons in the *spiritual companionship* have mutual interactions as a counselor or client to each other with accompanying, self-disclosure, listening, experience sharing, support, caring, mentoring, pastoral counseling, spiritual friendship, reflection, Bible studies, and prayers by depending on the help of Holy Spirit for spiritual journey. Through this loving relationship, they can be “more attentive to receiving and responding to the guidance and direction of the Divine in the experiences” of their lives, and they can reflect upon and integrate their lives of belief and action (Sheehan, 2010, p. 6).

Sheehan (2010) shared several characteristics that identify the *spiritual companion*. I summarize the characteristics of *spiritual companion* and *spiritual director* from Sheehan (2010), Hull (2006a), and Nouwen (1989):

1. Having vital Christian faith (Hull, 2006a, p. 304).
2. Being a trustworthy and accountable person (Sheehan, 2010, p. 13).

3. Having transparency and self-disclosure (Sheehan, 2010, pp. 13-14).
4. Being a person who provides hospitality (Sheehan, 2010, p. 13).
5. Not controlling or excessing needy (Sheehan, 2010, p. 14).
6. Being a person who has vulnerability (Nouwen, 1989, p. 53) with willingness and a deep desire to grow spiritually and to walk with others on their journey (Sheehan, 2010, p. 14).
7. Having a sense of humor (Sheehan, 2010, p. 14).
8. Considering others' emotions and thinking (Sheehan, 2010, p. 14).
9. Accepting of many different personalities (Sheehan, 2010, p. 14).
10. Waiting patiently for divine direction (Sheehan, 2010, p. 14).
11. Having loving concern for others (Hull, 2006a, p. 304).
12. Able to think and act contextually (Sheehan, 2010, p. 14).
13. Praying with forgiveness and a reverence for the mystery of God, of the other, and of all of creation (Sheehan, 2010, p. 14).
14. Having a practical knowledge of theology, psychology, and scripture (Sheehan, 2010, p. 15; Hull, 2006a, p. 304).
15. Being a good listener and a faithful partner to others on the spiritual journey (Sheehan, 2010, p. 15).

The case of the Onnuri Community Church's discipleship program in Korea may be a similar example to the spiritual companionship concept in terms of one-to-one discipleship method. But the Onnuri Community Church's One-on-One discipleship is different from the spiritual companion concept. The One-to-One Discipleship program has a mentor (shepherd) and a mentee (sheep). It is designed to follow and imitate Jesus.

Shepherds teach God's words, share their Christian life experiences, and influence sheep to be transformed into the disciples of Christ.

The Onnuri's One-to-One Discipleship is a 16-week course for a shepherd to help sheep learn the basics of the Christian faith. Onnuri English Ministry (2018) stated, "It helps lay nine-foundation stones upon which believers can build the rest of their lives: Introduction, Assurance of Salvation, Attributes of God, The Bible, Prayer, The Spirit-filled Life, Fellowship, Witnessing, Temptation, and Obedience."

A shepherd has an intimate loving relationship with a sheep for nurturing his/her spiritual life to become a shepherd. If shepherds experience training more than five sheep, they can apply for becoming a lay minister of One-on-One Discipleship. This system may motivate more young people or lay persons to join this discipleship program. The Onnuri Community Church started in 1985 with 78 members, and in 1986 the membership reached 510. The Onnuri Church History (2018) shows that through the strong push for the QT and One-on-One Discipleship, as well as preaching ministry since 1988. The church membership reached 1,832 in 1989, and 75,525 in June, 2010.

This discipleship model encouraged the lay people to join the mission work resulting remarkable church growth and influenced other churches in Korea. The weakness of this approach is that a hierarchy issue may occur between the two believers who are supposed to be treated with an equal status. Nevertheless, this successful discipleship case may present a good example of strengthening an intimate loving, caring, and nurturing type of discipleship approach.

## **Small Groups**

A recent worldwide statistical report shows that church ministry trend is adopting a small group approach. According to the Seventh-day Adventist Church's headquarters' recent survey report (2018), 81 % of 63,756 survey participants expressed that they have participated in small group activities organized by their attending local churches. The survey participants were selected from all over the world where the Seventh-day Adventist church has been established. Stetzer (2006) recommends small group ministry in order to nurture relational stability in the church. He argues that "churches cannot assimilate people in crowds" and "assimilation occurs individually and in small group" (p. 408).

This relational stability also brings more souls into church to grow it numerically. The case of Pastor Miguel Angel Cerna's small group ministry is a good example of it. Cerna (1991) observed that most church ministry works are performed by groups, but they neglect to evangelize through small groups. Cerna believed that evangelism can happen best in small groups rather than big crowds (p. 32). Cerna launched small groups in the Norwalk Spanish Church with 70 adult members in 1984 (p. 207). After one year 70 new souls got baptized, and in the following year 140 baptisms occurred as a result of small group activities (p. 207). He also served the Van Nuys Spanish Church in southern California. Through his small group ministry in these two churches, he won 1,300 souls to Christ in seven years (p. 203). Evangelism or mission is the major motif to his key to success. Through soul winning activities, small group participants could experience God's presence and miracles.



The case of the Sarang Community Church for the discipleship training through small groups is similar to Cerna's approach. In 1978, Han Hum Oak (2004) opened a church with 12 attendees including three middle school students. From the very beginning, Oak started the discipleship program in a small group form. In 1979, the church attendance was 80; in 1980 it was 474; and in 1988 the total attendance was 7,480 (Park, 1998, p. 191). The number of discipleship trainees who would be the leaders of small groups was seven in 1979; 14 in 1980; 31 in 1981; 315 in 1988; and it grew rapidly to reach 1,397 as of June, 1998 (p. 192).

Park observes that this numerical growth was caused by the steadfast discipleship trainings. Oak (2009b) stated that through the discipleship programs, he received many benefits and his preaching was greatly influenced. In the book of *Called to Awaken the Laity* (Oak, 2009a), he argued that his discipleship training through small group forms has awakened lay members to discover that there is no difference between clergy and laity and they are equal in terms of becoming God's people (pp. 37, 78-82).

Hull (2006a) believed that church leaders want effective groups of determined believers to reach others for Christ, as well as a system to find and equip other leaders. For discipleship training, Hull (2010) introduced a "Power of 4" group which is "made up of three or four people of the same gender who meet weekly to discuss their daily Bible reading, to ask each other character-building questions, and to pray for non-Christian family and friends" (p. 314). This small sized group focuses on the intimate loving relationship between the group members. Of course, this context is less intimate than the case of *spiritual companionship* setting. However, according to Ogden (2007), a

triad or quad setting is superior to one-on-one. He suggests a triad or quad for the following five reasons (pp. ix-x):

1. The discipler may have less pressure to be “the answer person or the fountain of all wisdom and insight” and he/she can more naturally make dynamic group interchange.

2. Triad or quad discipling is come-alongside and more relational than hierarchical, so it can foster more growth than by one-on-one relationships.

3. The sense of groupness and the Holy Spirit may occur much more often in the group than one-on-one.

4. The group numbers may serve more as teachers to one another to get more perspectives and application, while one-on-one limits the models and experience.

5. More geometrical increase of multiplication occurs in triad or quad than in the one-on-one context.

Ogden recommends the triad or quad size of small group for a discipleship program rather than one-on-one, but he suggests that the number should not be too large. In a smaller number context they can have direct learning experiences with more interaction with true, transparent relationships, and mutual accountability. If the size is too big, the self-disclosure and openness become difficult for transformation. And also the greater numbers may “decrease access to a person’s life” (p. xi).

### **Core Team for Church Planting**

In this section a variety of literature are reviewed regarding the core team for church planting. Since the purpose of this project was to develop a discipleship program to create a church planting core team, the main focus in this section is on discipling the

core team instead of church planting itself. The first topic is the selection of core team members, and followed by fellowship and coaching, as well as equipping the core team members.

### Selection of Core Team Members

Regarding the selection of core team members for church planting, Robert E. Coleman and Bill Hull's literature provides applicable principles. Coleman (2018) stated that Jesus called a few men whom the multitudes would follow and "men were to be His method of winning the world to God" (p. 12). Apparently these men were not in prominent positions, but unlearned, ignorant, and common laboring men (p. 12). Coleman observed that the selected men were teachable although they were often mistaken in their judgments and slow to comprehend spiritual things (p. 15). They were honest and willing to confess their need, and their hearts were big (p. 15). Hull (2006b) also agreed with Coleman that Jesus chose disciples who were teachable. According to Hull, in addition to being teachable, they should be curious and interested in serving God (p. 74). Cerna (1991) suggested that small group leaders should have three basic qualifications: a totally committed Christian life, a teachable spirit, and a willingness to be led.

Jesus foresaw the future situation that great multitudes would be converted to join His churches. He needed a few leaders who could take care of the multitudes. The chosen twelve disciples or apostles played a core role for the early church planting work. Following Jesus' method of selecting disciples, the essential criteria of choosing the core team members may be spelled out as follows: (a) committed (faithful and sacrificial); (b) teachable; (c) willing to be led, be used, and to serve.

Then, how can we find those who meet these criteria? George (2010) summarized Coleman's eight points about Jesus' process of selecting twelve disciples from Coleman's book, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Among the eight points, George puts a special emphasis on Jesus' prayer. He states, "Even though Jesus was God in human flesh and He knew the hearts of all men, He spent a full night in prayer to His Father before He selected the twelve disciples" (p. 221). Before choosing the twelve disciples, Jesus spent the whole night praying to God (Luke 6:12-13). Following the example of Jesus' selection process, the discipler needs to pray to God and find the most suitable core team members.

### Fellowship

Some literatures suggested that fellowship is an essential part of the core team for church planting. Hegstad (2013) defined the church as a "visible and concrete fellowship between people" and the relationship with God. He stated, "Church is a fellowship made up of people" (p. 31). Johnson (2016) believed that fellowship between the members of the church is vital, and "Satan would never be able to overcome a church" "if even two of its elders were one in spirit" with fellowship in Christ (p. 215). Dickerson (2008) observed that among the twelve disciples of Jesus, Peter, James, and John had a special fellowship with Him. Of the three, Dickerson believed that John's fellowship was the closest because "John was the one who the disciples asked to ask Jesus intimate questions, like who would betray Him" (p. 92). John was leaning against Jesus when other disciples were asking John to ask Jesus (John 13:22-25). According to Dickerson, Jesus wants this kind of close and intimate loving fellowship with all of His followers (p. 92).

Then, how can the fellowship be developed to result in the intimate loving relationship with one another and with Christ? Coleman (2018) suggested that the direct and experiential learning can occur as Jesus' disciples stayed with Jesus who is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:5-6). Several phrases in the Bible such as "Follow me" (John 1:43), "come and see" (John 1:46), "Come, follow me" (Mark 1:17) provide a simple and good strategy for knowing, doing, and experiencing God through "constant association with Him" (pp. 28-29). Coleman observed that Jesus ate, slept, talked, walked, visited, sailed, fished, prayed, and worshiped together with His disciples for the most of His entire ministry (p. 31). Jesus' model provides the discipler of a core team a good example of how to develop the fellowship for deepening a loving intimate relationship.

#### Coaching to Follow Jesus' Life

Creswell (2006) argued that coaching is "one-on-one, customized learning" while fellowship is more like the small group context. Creswell (2006) asserted that coaching helps the core team members move from the "not-all" to the "all" category in loving and serving God by using all their skills, talents, gifts, and good personalities to "reach full Kingdom potential" (Bullard, 2005, p. 2). Jones (2004) notes, "there is no better role model for coaching that gets lasting results than Jesus of Nazareth" (p. ix).

Jones (2004) suggested that all coaches should be proficient in listening, creating an environment for change, facilitating self-awareness, and also should be able to work with personal, professional, and perhaps organizational issues about which their clients want to focus. He describes that an advanced coach would speak the truth and the secrets while holding a high level of confidence and challenging people (p. xi). Jesus often talked

about the truth and the secrets to His disciples through a question and answer method in the context of loving and intimate relationship. In this way, the disciples could discover where they were. In addition, Jesus' coaching of His disciples included prayer and dependence on God's guidance because they were vulnerable (Clough, 2016, p. 30). Jesus also trained the disciples "to coach the people of their day and to be missional in their outreach" (p. 30).

McCluskey (2008) stated that the coach's role is "to be a facilitator, a prober/questioner, a clarifier, an encourager, a challenger, and accountability partner and ultimately a conduit for the Holy Spirit" (p. 268). Archer (2006) believed that the Holy Spirit is the best tour guide to lead people's journey of life, because they may overcome desperate situations of being lost only when they "allow the Holy Spirit to lead the way" (p. 59). The Holy Spirit will guide and help coaching in individuals' discovery process (Creswell, 2006, p. 13). The coach's role is to help the core team members depend on the Holy Spirit and follow Jesus.

### Equipping of Core Team to Plant a Church

According to Stetzer (2006), the church planter needs to train and equip the church planting team members, and these trained and committed people must participate in ministry before opening a new church. Payne (2008) stated, "in God's economy, the team was and is vital to the propagation of the gospel and the multiplication of disciples, leaders, and churches" (p. 2). Then, what elements do they need to be equipped with? The literature addresses two major issues: evangelism and discipleship.

Some literatures presented the purpose of church planting as God's mission with more emphasis on evangelism. Brunner (1931) states, "the Church exists by mission, just

as fire exists by burning” (p. 108). Bosch (1995) agreed with Brunner on the purpose of church’s existence. According to Bosch, “the church’s mission is not secondary to its being,” and it exists for its mission (p. 32). Jones (2004) noted, “the Great Commission teaches that disciple-making evangelism gets priority in the mission of the church” (p. 12). He argued that the purpose of church planting is a harvest through multiplication (p. 14).

While Payne (2015) believed that “biblical church planting is evangelism that results in new churches” (p. 17), he also emphasized the discipleship component. He claimed that the Great Commission begins with wining souls to Christ, but this commission also involves teaching the new souls to obey all of Jesus’ commands (Payne, 2011, p. 5).

Cerna (1991) provided an integrated model for equipping the core team members with both evangelism and discipleship through small group. He suggested that small group meetings should fulfill many purposes: improving leadership abilities, fellowship, being bonded closer together, spiritual growth from Bible study, and evangelism (p. 69). He introduced the four basic ingredients for the training program: Bible study, worship (including praising, praying, and sharing testimony), fellowship, and mission (pp. 70-77). Through intimate loving relationship among the team members and with Jesus in the format of the small group, they may be well equipped, and directly experience the spiritual and numerical growth.

### **Summary**

The study of a variety of relevant literature shows that the current concepts of discipleship focus on relationship. In order to have intentional and intimate relationship,

one-on-one or small group type has been suggested especially in the current context.

Evangelism is part of the whole discipleship process, but it can be a vital driving force for motivating disciples to be actively and continually involved with church ministry as well as making discipleship groups come alive. The study of Onnuri Community Church's one-on-one discipleship, the Sarang Community Church's discipleship training through small groups, and Cerena's small group ministry provide a clue that discipleship programs lead to active evangelism and remarkable church growth in the context of intimate relationship through the form of one-on-one or small group.

The reviewed literature helps disciplers follow Jesus' model to select and train the core team members to be matured to the point where they are growing by discipling and evangelizing others. Coaching and equipping a core team should occur in the context of being bonded closer together with spiritual growth through fellowship, Bible study, prayer, and active evangelism. The key to the success of discipleship with evangelism is to focus on and follow Jesus' example, and to depend on the Holy Spirit.



## CHAPTER 4

### DEVELOPMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section describes the development of intervention including the ministry context, especially the concept of abiding and the loving-relational-community/small group intervention. It highlights the biblical aspects of discipleship from Chapter 2 and how they are integrated based on the literature review from Chapter 3. The second section presents the description of the intervention plan. This section describes the methodology and the structure of the four-phase training program.

#### **Development of the Intervention**

The concept of loving-relational community or small group has been implemented in many churches throughout the world for several decades. More than 80 % of church members have participated in small group activities according to the facts examined in chapter 3. For quite some time, I have been keenly interested in the small group type of Bible studies and group activities in several churches. I acknowledge that, compared to the situations where one person teaches or preaches and the others just sit and listen, the small group settings provide a more loving and relational bond between participants. As soon as I entered the Doctor of Ministry cohort in discipleship in 2018, I started

organizing more small Bible study groups than before for the purpose of discipleship development. While participating in the Doctor of Ministry program, I tried to put into practice what I learned about the effectiveness of small group Bible studies through my classes, what I examined regarding the concept of Christian abiding in the Holy Spirit, spending time in God's Word, and through prayer as stated in chapter 2, and the theoretical methods from the literature review in chapter 3.

Initially my wife and I created a Chinese speaking small group in September 2014 in the Ilsan International Church by targeting Chinese people who live in Goyang City. Through this small Bible study group and its activities, a substantial number of Chinese people got baptized, and we continued to have these similar types of small group activities in other churches which were the Ilsan English Church, and later the Paju International Church. However, we had some challenges in encouraging those Chinese participants to continually attend our group gatherings because they were not consistent in staying at one place in Korea. At times, they moved to other countries or went back to China. Especially the COVID-19 outbreaks caused our Chinese group's off-line gatherings to be scattered much faster than other Korean people's gatherings. In order to help those scattered Chinese people join our small group activities regardless of physical location, in July 2020 I established the ACN, which is an online discipleship church, by starting with a small group setting. Every Sabbath afternoon we gathered together through Zoom video conference system to worship and study the Bible. Some members participated while they were staying in China and other countries as well as in Korea.

As I hope and pray that the ACN will grow to contribute to the mission works for Chinese speaking people throughout the world, including mainland China, Hong Kong,

Taiwan, and other places, my leadership role as an initiator, organizer, and discipler has become more significant than before. This current situation accelerates the demand of special training and constant ongoing programming for our participants of the ACN activities. We have been gathering through Zoom video conference since February 2020 every Saturday for an hour of worship followed by a one- to two-hour Bible study and prayer session. Instead of creating a discipleship intervention for a new group, I decided to design a six-week discipleship program for our current initial and core team of the ACN ministry.

### Integrated Abiding Concept to Discipleship

In the Old Testament, the book of Leviticus depicts the tabernacle picture as God's dwelling place to commune with His people. Relating to the design of devotional practices, the three items can be found in the holy place in the tabernacle tent: (a) golden lampstand, (b) showbread table, and (c) altar of incense (Lev 24:1-9). The lampstand with pure oil represents the Holy Spirit (Zech 4:1-14, Rev 1:4, 4:5, 5:6). The showbread symbolizes the Word of God (John 1:1, 6:35, 51-58, 63). The incense is for prayer (Ps 141:2, Rev 5:8, 8:3-4).

Chapter 2 mentioned in details of these three components: (a) abiding in the Holy Spirit, (b) abiding in God's Word, and (c) abiding through prayer. As the lampstand, showbread, and incense were always together at the same time in the holy place of the tabernacle, these three—the Holy Spirit, God's Word, and prayer—should be inseparable for transforming our lives and salvation. Leviticus 10:1-2 illustrates that Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu put an unauthorized fire to burn incense before the Lord against God's command, and fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them to death.

It teaches us that our prayer should be in truth and the pure Spirit of the Lord. This lesson also teaches us that it would be better to open God's Word and to meditate on it before praying. Jesus affirms this integrated abiding concept at John 15:7 by saying, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." Since Jesus ascended to heaven and He sent the Holy Spirit to represent Him (John 14:26, 16:7, 13-14), abiding in Christ means abiding in the Holy Spirit and being guided and instructed by the Holy Spirit.

Based on this solid biblical foundation, the integrated abiding concept will be applied to the design of small group activities for the discipleship training. Abiding in the Holy Spirit, abiding in God's Word, and abiding through prayer will be the essential module for the development of the small group discipleship program.

### Loving-Relational Small Group

Based on the biblical aspects of Chapter 2 and the literature review of Chapter 3, the small group setting for a discipleship program will be used to design a discipleship program for the ACN. No matter how large or small the Christian community/church is, it is inevitable to start with a small group of disciples just as Jesus and the early church did successfully. This small group format will help participants to love one another more intimately, efficiently, and effectively than in a bigger group or even a one-on-one setting.

John 13 shows the best model of loving-relational small group designed and demonstrated by Jesus. It happened at the Last Supper, just one day before the Passover, the day of Jesus' crucifixion (John 13:1). Jesus loved His disciples to the end (v. 1). He demonstrated His intimate and measureless love and humility to the group of disciples

even through washing the disciples' feet, as the servant of the servant of servants (John 13:3-17). He taught the disciples to do as Jesus did to them in a loving-relational small group setting (vv. 12-15). Jesus gave them the best example that they also should do as He loved and served (v. 15). After this great demonstration, Jesus compelled the disciples to love one another by saying, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (v. 34). He explained, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (v. 35). Jesus Himself taught them that the mark of His true disciples is to love one another as He loved them. John 13 depicts the best picture of Jesus' small group discipleship model which can show a loving Christian relationship.

In Matthew 18, Jesus taught the disciples in detail about Christian relationships and the need of gatherings and fellowship. This chapter provides good principles for Christian relationships. While Jesus emphasized both righteousness and grace, He implied the important role of small group gatherings, of even two or three people. In verses 6 through 10, He commands that we (nor our hands, feet, or eyes) should not make others stumble. His intention is severely restrictive regarding committing sin by illustrating that those stumbling blocks would be better to be thrown away than to be cast into the eternal fire. In the same chapter, from verses 12 to 14, Jesus mentioned that it is not the will of the Heavenly Father that any of those little ones perish. Even though Jesus was strict about the issue of committing sin, from verses 21 to 35, He suggested that we should forgive a sinner not just seven times, but further even to the extent of 490 times which seems to the infinite degree. Jesus reemphasized grace and forgiveness through the parable of the two debtors. From verses 15 to 20, Jesus presented a great implication of

Christian loving community/small group role. Jesus provided a principle and method of how to deal with a sinner through one another or small group setting. It is a loving-relational group setting for solving those matters which will be resolved in heaven if we do so on earth for one another (v. 18). He repeated the same principle by saying, “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven” (v. 19). Finally, Jesus declared that “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst” (v. 20).

### Relational Bible Study

The design of a discipleship program through small group settings intended to do more relational practices. It helped participants to love God and one another. Jesus declared that the whole Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments, “love God” and “love your neighbor” (Matt 22:40). All Scripture can be summarized into God’s love. It is about God’s mission of redemption and restoration of His image in humanity. It is about the restoration of an intimate loving Christian relationship between God and humans, and between humans. Therefore, when we read and study the Bible, we can start with the premise, “God is love,” and relate our lives to God, and do also the same thing to relate to other’s lives.

Walshe (2018 & 2019) suggested that we should personalize the stories and teachings in the Bible by relating them to our lives.<sup>1</sup> I believe that any Bible verses implies God’s love and His teachings which can be applied in principle, not only for the old times’ contexts, but also for our current and for the future. It means that while we

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<sup>1</sup> In 2018 and 2019, I took classes from Dr. Allan Walshe for the Doctor of Ministry discipleship concentration. One of the most impressive information presented was about the relational or reflective Bible reading method.

read and study any passages in the Bible, we can relate those stories and experiences, God, and His love to our lives as well as to our relationships with others. Timothy 3:16-17 reads, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” White (1901) states, “The Bible is God’s voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears.” She believes that the Bible scribes wrote as they were dictated by the Holy Spirit (White, 1881, p. 9).

Based on those theological and theoretical foundations, every session of the discipleship program included this relational Bible study section.

#### Relational Prayer

As noted above, the Bible study should be relational. From this perspective, the prayer should be also relational following the same principles as the relational Bible study. Right after the relational Bible study section and during the discipleship training sessions, the same format of relational prayer was designed. The method of relational prayer is to relate participants’ lives to the Scripture reading and meditation, to relate Christ and His love to their own lives, as well as to relate other people’s lives to them. This relational prayer type will connect us to our Savior Jesus. It will connect us to one another, and it will help restore our intimate loving relationships between God and us, and between humans.

#### The Selection Method of Participants

The subjects, who were involved in this project, were those who had been participating in the ACN small group activities. The selection method of the initial

participants was based on the theological aspects of Chapter 2 and the literature review of Chapter 3. I tried to follow the example of Jesus' choosing His twelve disciples from among the followers. Just as Jesus spent the entire night on the mountain seriously praying to God, my wife, Xiaoyan (Hope) Zhang and I continued to pray and ask God every morning and evening for assisting us to choose the suitable members of the core group dedicated to the ACN ministry. Through continuing prayers and God's revelation, we could contact each one personally just like Jesus called each one individually. We prayed that we could select participants who are (a) committed (faithful and sacrificial), (b) teachable, (c) willing to be led, to be used, and to serve as mentioned in Chapter 3.

Since the ACN was established to create a global Chinese discipleship network for providing discipleship programs to Chinese speaking people throughout the world, I tried to invite some others to this project who have not been attending before but willing to join the ACN activities or to serve its ministry. The subjects should not be any vulnerable groups of people such as prisoners, hospital patients, mentally impaired, pregnant women, etc. This project excluded those who are less than 18 years old.

For the purpose of designing and implementing this project and protecting subjects from coercion, a third party, my project assistant Mercy Chai presented the request for participating to this project by sharing an advertising letter through an internet chatting or a video conference system. We expected that a minimum of six and a maximum of 10 would be selected to form a group of 8-12 including my wife and myself. The main and genuine instructor will be our Lord Jesus Christ, and I may be used as His facilitating instrument for leading this group and the training sessions.



## **Description of the Intervention**

Following the development of the intervention, a design of a four-phase discipleship program cycle was used. The objectives of the intervention are as follows:

1. To help participants have a strong sense of being called to Christ's great commission.
2. To help participants depend on God, listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, and be filled with the Holy Spirit by abiding in Christ.
3. To help participants delight in the Word of God and be equipped with and practice the skills of relational Bible studies as a daily devotional habit.
4. To motivate participants to pray in relational ways, by relating to the Scripture, God, their own lives, and others' lives.
5. To help participants bear fruit by being connected to the Vine of Christ as His branches, including spiritual transformation in loving, sharing, and winning souls to Christ, and discipling.
6. To make a core team for building and expanding strong Christian communities and actively participating in the ACN ministry.

### **Structure of the Intervention**

There were four phases per one cycle of the discipleship intervention process. Phase one contained the first session of training, and phase two contained the second session of training. Phase two had three sessions of trainings from the second to the fourth. Phase three contained the fifth session, and phase four contained the sixth session (See Table 1).

Table 1

*The Structure of the Intervention: Four Phases – Six Sessions*

Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three	Phase Four
<p><b>The 1<sup>st</sup> Session:</b> divine calling</p>	<p><b>The 2<sup>nd</sup> Session:</b> abiding in the Holy Spirit <b>The 3<sup>rd</sup> Session:</b> abiding in God’s Word <b>The 4<sup>th</sup> Session:</b> abiding through prayer</p>	<p><b>The 5<sup>th</sup> Session:</b> bearing fruit</p>	<p><b>The 6<sup>th</sup> Session:</b> Christian Communities (being one in Christ)</p>

Each session took place on every Saturday afternoon. It took 120 minutes. The first 10 minutes was an ice breaking time with greetings to one another and sharing special thanks and grace that they might have received during the past week. The instructor suggested one or two persons should share their special testimonies or experiences as a follow up to what they applied and practiced during the previous week.

Following the introductions and greetings, a 50-minute of lecturing/preaching was conducted. The first 50 minutes of lecturing/preaching intended to help participants feel both instruction and sermon styles just like they experience through worship services. After that, the next 50 minutes was designated for a relational Bible study with discussion. The second 50 minutes of the relational Bible study was for intentionally applying and practicing what they learn, read, and meditate on from the instructor’s shared Bible passages. Finally, the last 10 minutes was for relational prayer. This prayer session tried to help participants discover and include prayer items which they can relate

the given Bible passages with their own lives and those of their family, neighbors, and colleagues. The time structure of each session is summarized into Table 2.

Table 2

*The Time Structure of Each Session*

<b>Ice breaking and sharing thanks and grace</b>	<b>Lecture/ Preaching</b>	<b>Relational Bible study</b>	<b>Relational Prayer</b>
10 minutes	50 minutes	50 minutes	10 minutes

Phase One: Divine Calling (1st Session)

Phase one of the discipleship program is designed to help participants have a strong sense of being called to Christ’s Great Commission. The major Bible text for the session was Matthew 28:18-20. Prior to the major topic of the Great Commission, the instructor explained about the meaning of calling based on the Bible to help participants review their own lives and become aware of God’s calling. Then, the instructor would help the participants to discover their spiritual gifts, and let them have a strong sense of being called and chosen. The detailed contents of instruction would be the Bible passages based on Chapter 2 (See Table 3).

Table 3

*The Content of the 1st Session – Divine Calling*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Bible Passages</b>	<b>Personal Application</b>
Meaning of calling	Gen 1:26-28, 2-7, 2:15-25, 3:9-21, John 3:16, Rom 1:1, John 1:35-46, Mark 3:14, Luke 6:12-13	Review own lives and become aware of God's calling.
Who are called	Matt 28:18-20, 1 Peter 2:9, 1 Cor 12:1-31	Discover spiritual gifts.
Who are selected	John 15:16-19, 1 Cor 1:27-29, Matt 22:14, Luke 9:59-62, Matt 4:18-20	Have a strong sense of being chosen.
Called to transmit – Great Commission	Matt 28:18-20, John 17:18-21, John 20:21-23	Understand the Great Commission and the need of discipleship.

After 50 minutes of lecture, the participants were guided into the second 50 minutes of the session. This time is for relating, reflecting, and applying what they learn, read, and meditate on from the given Bible passages which were presented during the first 50 minutes of the session. Through this practice, the participants were expected to confirm their sense of being called to Christ's Great Commission, and to make their resolution and commitment to the Lord. Finally, this session was adjourned with a relational prayer. During their prayer, they would relate to the given Bible passages, to God, and to others. Through these relational prayers, their relationships with God as well as with others would become more intimate, and they might experience a transformation process.

Phase Two: Abiding in Christ (2nd, 3rd,  
and 4th Sessions)

Phase two is designed to help participants (a) abide in the Holy Spirit, (b) abide in God's Word, and (c) abide through prayer. The main objective of phase two is to help the participants have a new devotional habit of integrating these three components always in order to abide in Christ and to naturally bear the fruit by becoming the branches to the Vine of Christ (See Figure 2). This phase was divided into three sessions: (a) abiding in the Holy Spirit, (b) abiding in God's Word, and (b) abiding through prayer.<sup>2</sup>

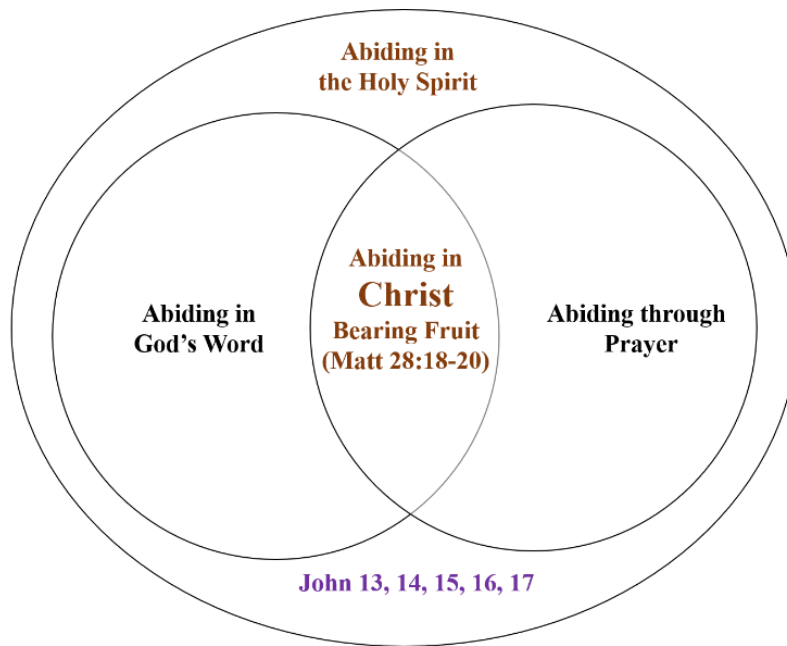


Figure 2. The abiding in Christ's integrated three components.

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<sup>2</sup> The reason why I put "Abiding in the Holy Spirit" first in the order of three components is that the Holy Spirit is the representative of Jesus Christ (John 14:16, 15:26-27, 16:7), and He will teach and guide Christ's followers into all the truth (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit will help them understand God's Word (the Scriptures) which is truth (John 17:17). He will illuminate and reveal to them the truth in the Scriptures (Eph 3:3-5; 2 Pet 1:3), as all Scripture is inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16).

## Abiding in the Holy Spirit – the 2nd Session

The main objective is to help participants understand the vital roles of the Holy Spirit and experience the outpouring of the Holy Spirit by following the experiences of Jesus’ disciples in Acts 1:4-8 and 2:1-47, and in Jesus’ parable of the Vine and the branches. The instruction was carried out based on the Bible passages (See Table 4). The time structure method of this session followed the same as the 1<sup>st</sup> session.

Table 4

### *The Content of the 2nd Session – Abiding in the Holy Spirit*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Bible Passages</b>	<b>Personal Application</b>
Jesus’ departing (ascending) and the disciples’ greater works in His name	John 14:1-14, 14:28, 16:7, 16:23-26, 16:28, 17:11, Acts 1:4-8	Ask in the name of Jesus by depending on the Holy Spirit and believe greater works occurring.
The Holy Spirit’s roles	John 14:17-18, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7-22, Acts 1:4-8, 2:1-47, Rom 8:27	Understand the Holy Spirit’s roles and depend on Him.
Vine and branches – in the Father, in Jesus, and in the Holy Spirit – becoming one	John 14:16-20, John 15:1-8, 17:11, 17:20-26	Abide in Christ and the Father through abiding in the Holy Spirit to become one.

## Abiding in God’s Word – the 3rd Session

The main objective of the 3rd session is to help participants (a) understand Jesus as the Word of God and the bread of eternal life, (b) understand the true love of God and practice the summarized commandments: *love God* and *love neighbors*, (c) practice relational Bible studies as a daily devotional habit with relational prayers, and (d) delight in His Word and presence. The Bible passages are on Table 5.

Table 5

*The Content of the 3rd Session – Abiding in God’s Word*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Bible Passages</b>	<b>Personal Application</b>
Jesus is the Word of God, and the bread of life	John 1:1, 1:14, 6: 33-35, Matt 4:4, 26:26, John 6:26-35	Understand Jesus as the Word of God, and the bread of life. Read and study the Bible every day to survive.
True disciples in love and truth to complete His commandments	Matt 4:1-11, 5:43-44, 22:36-40, Mark 12:33, Luke 10:25-37, John 8:31-32, John 13:1-35, 13:34-35, 14:21, 14:23, 15:9-17, 17:23-26, 21:15-17, Rom 13:8-10, 1 Cor 13:1-13, 1 John 4:1-21, 5:2-3, Ex 20:6, Lev 19:18, Deut 5:10, 6:5, 7:9, 10:12, 10:19	Understand the true love of God and practice it: Love God and Love One Another.
Whatever will be done when abiding in His promised Word	John 15:4-5, 15:7, 15:9-10, 15:16, 16:24	Open the Bible to read before praying as a habit.
Delight in the Word	Ps 1:2, 119:9-16, 23-24, 47-48, 77-78, 97-99, Neh 8:12, James 1:23	Feel, enjoy, and delight in the Word of God, in His presence.
Relational Bible studies	Matt 6:9-13, 18:19-20, 22:40, 2Tim 3:16, Heb 4:12, Acts 2:1-47	Open the Bible, relate life to the stories in the Bible, relate to God, relate to others, and listen to the voices of the Holy Spirit.

The time structure method of the 3rd session followed the same as the 1st and 2nd sessions. Although due to the detailed instruction and training purposes, this session was separated from the 2nd one. The instructor reminded the participants of practicing the relational Bible studies always in integration with the components of abiding in the Holy Spirit and abiding through prayer.

## Abiding Through Prayer – the 4th Session

The main objective of the 4th session was to help participants (a) ask in the name of Jesus by depending on the Holy Spirit, (b) pray together with one accord by experiencing the power of the abiding Holy Spirit, and (c) have a habit of opening the Bible to practice relational prayers by relating to Christ, the Scripture, their own lives, and others' lives. The time structure and method would be the same as the previous sessions, and the Bible passages are on Table 6.

Table 6

### *The content of the 4th Session – Abiding Through Prayer*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Bible Passages</b>	<b>Personal Application</b>
Ask for anything in His name	John 14:14, 15:7, 16:23-26	Ask in the name of Jesus by depending on the Holy Spirit and believe greater works occurring.
Power of united prayers/petitions & power of small group	Matt 18:19-20, Acts 1:14, 2:1-47, Acts 4:31	Pray together with one accord and experience the power of the abiding Holy Spirit.
Jesus' longest prayer; Jesus' earnest and agonizing prayer	John 17:1-26 Luke 6:12-16, 9:12-17, 18, 9:28-29, Mark 1:35, 3:14, John 6:15, 66, Matt 14:22-23, Matt 26:36-44	Follow the model of Jesus' prayers.
Relational/integrated prayer	Matt 6:9-13, 18:19-20, 22:40, 1Thess 3:10, 2Tim 3:16, Heb 4:12, Acts 2:1-47	Open the Bible, relate each own life to the stories in the Bible, relate to God, relate to others, while listening to the voices of the Holy Spirit, and prayer.



Phase Three: Bearing Fruit (5th Session)

The objective of phase three is to help (a) understand that bearing fruit is the by-product of abiding in Him (the Holy Spirit, God’s Word, and prayer) through reviewing Jesus’ parable of the Vine and branches in John 15, (b) understand the fruit of the Holy Spirit and practice the nine character traits toward others from Galatians 5:22-23, (c) restore the relationship with God and with others (family members, friends, colleagues, and neighbors) by loving God and one another, and (d) make their own resolution of discipling and evangelism. The Bible passages are on Table 7.

Table 7

*The Content of the 5th Session – Bearing Fruit – Character Development & Reproduction*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Bible Passages</b>	<b>Personal Application</b>
Vine and branches – bearing fruit is the byproduct of abiding in Christ (the Holy Spirit)	John 15:1-8	Understand Jesus’ parable of the vine and branches, and abide in Him (the Holy Spirit, God’s Word, and prayer).
The fruit of the Holy Spirit – character development	Gal 5:22-23, Eph 5:9, 1Cor 13:1-13	Understand the fruit of the Holy Spirit and practice the nine character traits toward others.
God’s commandments, His words, and His love	John 13:1-35, 15:7-17, Matt 22:40	Restore the relationship with God, and with others (family members, friends, colleagues, neighbors) – love God and your neighbors.
Discipling and evangelism - reproduction	Matt 28:18-20, John 14:12, Luke 8:1, 9:1-2, 9:6-10, 10:1, 10:17-18	Make own resolution of discipling and evangelism.

#### Phase Four: Christian Communities/Small Group/Church (6th Session)

The major objective of phase four is to help participants build the unified Christian loving communities including small group and church. The instructor helped the participants (a) practice discipling first of all for each of their own family members and form a group of other people, (b) choose one spiritual companion to have an intimate loving Christian relationship with for frequently sharing, encouraging, and praying together, (c) restore the relationship with God and others, and (d) be one body in Christ, in His Word, in His love, in His Great Commission, and commit themselves to serve the body of Christ, the Christian communities/small groups/churches. The Bible passages were based on Chapters 2 and 3 (See Table 8).

Table 8

*The Content of the 6th Session – Loving Christian Community/Small Group/Church*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Bible Passages</b>	<b>Personal Application</b>
Jesus’ 12 disciples and 70 evangelists (in pairs) – small group	Mark 6:7, Luke 9:1, 10:1	Practice discipling first <del>ly</del> for each <del>own</del> family members, and make a group of other people for discipleship.
Two or three gather together in Jesus’ name	Matt 18:19-20	Choose one spiritual companion to have an intimate loving relationship with spiritually (often share, encourage, and pray together).
Love one another	John 13:34-35, 15:12-13, 17, Matt 22:40, Ps 133:1, Eccles 4:9-12, Rom 12:10, 15:7, 14, Gal 5:13, 6:2, Eph 4:2, 15-16, 32, 5:21, Col 3:16, 1Thes 4:18, 5:11, James 5:16, Heb 3:12-14, 10:24-25	Restore the relationship with God, and with others (family members, friends, colleagues, neighbors) – love God and your neighbors.
Being one in Christ’s love and mission– the body of Christ/Church - Christian community	John 17:21-22, John 17:1-26 (Jesus’ whole prayer), Acts 1:14, 2:1-47, 4:32, 5:42, Heb 10:25, Rom 12:4-5, 1Cor 11:33, 12:12-13, 20, 27, 28-30, 14:26, Col 1:18, 3:15, Eph 1:22-23, 5:23, Gal 3:26-28	Be one body in Christ, in His words, in His love, in His mission. Commit to serve the body of Christ, the Christian communities/small groups/churches.

**Summary**

For a smooth and successful intervention for the group members of the ACN, my wife, Xiaoyan (Hope) Zhang and I prayed together and brainstormed ideas every day. We believe that God has been revealing methods and contents to us, and we continue discovering progressively until now. Also, we discussed with the participants of the ACN to get their feedback. Following the *ACN Discipleship Model*, which is designed as a four-phase discipleship process, we decided to conduct a six-week discipleship training

program by recruiting and forming a small group. During these six weeks, the instructor and participants were actively involved with relational Bible studies, relational prayers, discussion, practicing what they learn, sharing what occurs, and delighting together in the abiding Christ.

## CHAPTER 5

### NARRATIVE OF INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION

During the six weeks from February 20 to March 27, 2021, I served as the instructor to present lectures and facilitated small group activities including relational Bible studies, discussions, reflections, and relational prayers. The project assistant announced and sent the Informed Consent Form (Appendix E) to all the ACN participants, and the 12 members returned them to me after signing them. One person dropped out, so 11 members participated in the sessions, and nine completed the program.

I presented instructions and facilitated each session for two hours according to the designed time structure (ice breaking and sharing thanks and grace-10 minutes; lecture/preaching-50 minutes; relational Bible study-50 minutes; relational prayer-10 minutes). After each session, the participants were given an assignment of practicing relational Bible study for 50 minutes and relational prayer for 10 minutes per day. After finishing the first session they should practice a minimum one day per week. The number of practice days increased by one after each session until the sixth session, so that they would apply the relational Bible study and prayer daily as a new devotional habit.

Among the nine participants, I could collect the quantitative survey data from the seven participants, and the qualitative interview data from the eight participants. The collected data were observed as the participants' feedbacks and their experiences.

Especially the data from the first quantitative survey, which was conducted before the first session, it would be compared to the second quantitative survey following the last session, so that how much this project impacts on each members' spiritual lives over the discipleship program period. This survey tool was assessed, and it's Cronbach's Alpha is 0.883 for the 30 question items (five items for each session theme (DC: divine calling, AH: abiding in the Holy Spirit, AW: abiding in God's Word, AP: abiding through prayer, BF: bearing fruit, CC: Christian communities). The narrative of intervention implementation is divided into six sections: divine calling, abiding in the Holy Spirit, abiding in God's Word, abiding through prayer, bearing fruit, and Christian communities (being one in Christ).

### **Divine Calling- The 1st Session – February 20, 2021**

The first session which belongs to Phase one was conducted to help members discover and feel the strong sense of divine calling. The instructor presented the four areas: Meaning of calling; Who are called; Who are selected; Called to transmit Great Commission. The quantitative survey used a four-point scale (1= Rarely/Never, 2=Not Often, 3=Quite Often, 4=Regularly/Always) for 30 items, and the five items are in the category of divine calling. The five questionnaires are as follows:

1. I believe that God created me and has His purposes for my life.
2. I acknowledge that God is working in my daily life.
3. I recognize who God wants me to be and what He wants me to do.
4. I acknowledge that God has been inviting me to do particular jobs for Him.
5. I acknowledge that I have gifts/talents to offer to God for His plan.

The data from the first and second surveys reported that the total points for the DC (divine calling) increased 9.2 % from 109 to 119, and the average four-point scale position for the five items of divine calling moved from 3.1 into 3.4.

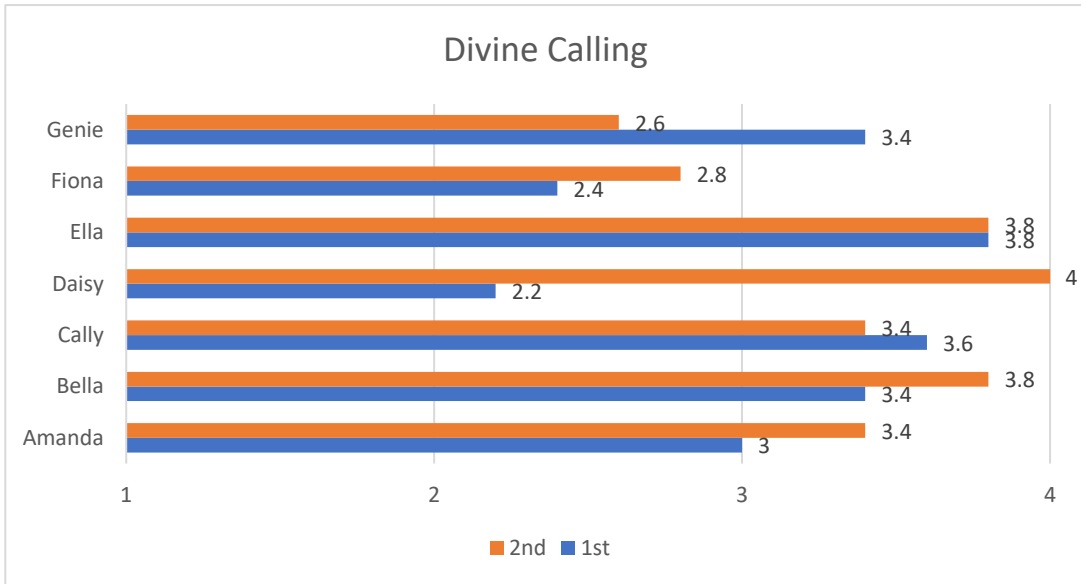


Figure 3. The result of two quantitative surveys – divine calling.

The average data for each member indicated that the four members among the seven showed more stronger sense of the DC (divine calling) after this discipleship program. Genie’s significant drop from 3.4 to 2.6 reflected her recent depression. She was facing a lot of difficulties and spiritually struggling in her recent life. (Please note that all names in this chapter are pseudonyms.) My wife spent more personally caring time with Genie by giving spiritual guardianship and mentoring to her with offered prayers. Fiona’s case showed relatively lower points while her second survey result increased. We could

observe that her struggles with a job and family sickness put a heavy burden on her and weakened her self-evaluation.

The qualitative interviews regarding divine calling had two questions: *How would you describe your vision/goal in your current and future life?*; *How would you describe your understanding of divine calling?* Amanda said that divine calling is a vision from God which leads her to dedicate herself into the holy work of redemption. She wished to become a self-supporting evangelist and she is looking forward to develop a new cell group, at her place, which connects to the ACN in the not too far future. Ella shared her learning and understanding that in order to be able to respond to God's calling, the first thing is to know God, to abide in Christ, to constantly renew herself to have the image of God, to be willing to preach the Gospel, and to bear abundant fruits. She wished that her whole family would grow and learn together in the faith of loving and relying on the Lord to become a genuine Christian family. Cally mentioned that divine calling is to do the right thing according to God's will in love, and expressed that his goal is to live a more quality and faithful Christian life. Bella understood that divine calling is an opportunity of salvation offered by God, and she thanked God for His leading in her life. She wanted to have more wisdom and power to be closer to God and to experience spiritual growth. Daisy regarded her divine calling as God's telling her what He wants her to do, while staying, cherishing, and spending time with her family and doing her best to take care of them. Hanna stated that divine calling is a clear voice from God in order to bring more people to Jesus. She described her vision that God wants her to see the false Christian teaching and He pushes her to share the truthful



one. Regarding divine calling, Fiona understood that God is calling us to get up and work for him, and we should use for God the knowledge and talents that He has given us. From this perspective, Fiona said that she would like to participate in church choir, reception, visitation, and evangelism through music. Genie shared her understanding that divine calling is to live by the standards of the Bible and to share genuine faith experiences.

### **Abiding in the Holy Spirit – The 2nd Session – February 27, 2021**

Phase two consists of three sessions: abiding in the Holy Spirit; abiding in God's Word; abiding through prayer. The topic of abiding in the Holy Spirit was presented as the first one. The instructor emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit as the most important and major component for the whole discipleship process. During the session I highlighted the disciples' greater works in the name of Jesus through chapters 1-2 of Acts and from John 14-17. In these texts, Jesus promised that whoever believes in Him will do even greater things than what Jesus did because Jesus goes to the Father and He will send the Holy Spirit (John 14:12). Also Jesus' parable of the Vine and the branches was used for explaining that abiding in the Holy Spirit is equal to abiding in Christ and the Heavenly Father and becoming one in Christ.

The five quantitative survey items for the AH (abiding in the Holy Spirit) are as follows:

1. I sense God's presence and help in my daily life.
2. I am willing to let the Holy Spirit control every aspect of my life.
3. The Holy Spirit prompts me to confess my sins and to make things right.
4. I have experiences in hearing the voices of the Holy Spirit.

5. Prior to planning, I ask the Holy Spirit to reveal His will and plan, and to lead me.

The data from the first and second surveys reported that the total points for the AH (abiding in the Holy Spirit) increased 9.4 % from 106 to 116, and the average four-point scale position for the five items of the AH moved from 3.03 into 3.31.

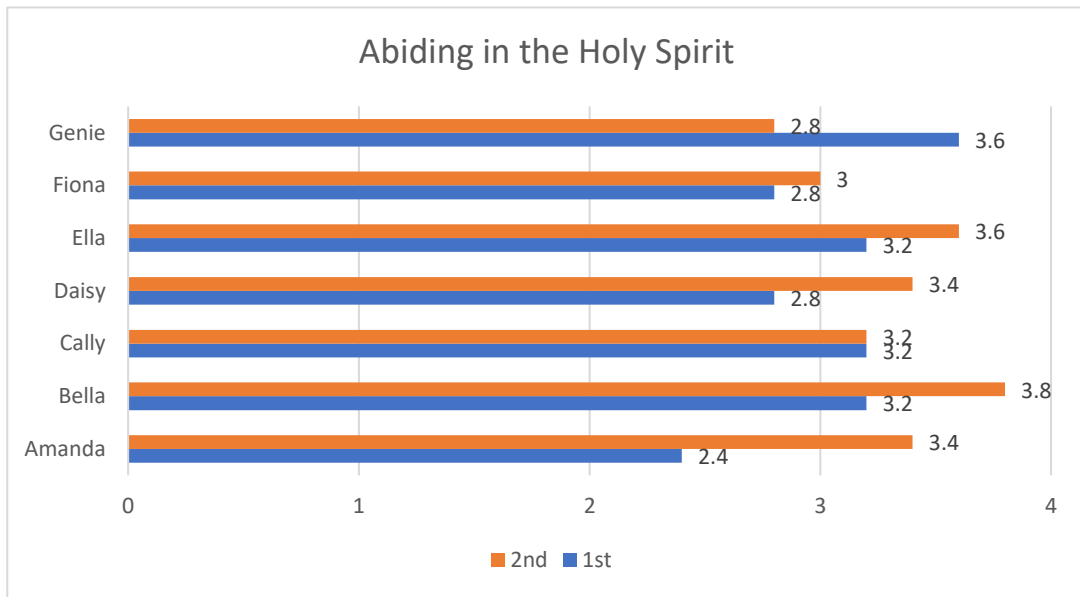


Figure 4. The result of two quantitative surveys – abiding in the Holy Spirit.

The five members among the seven indicated more recognition and application of the AH (abiding in the Holy Spirit) after this discipleship program. Especially Amanda, Bella, and Daisy recorded increase. In Genie’s second survey’s AH was down to 2.8 because of her spiritual depression, and she was provided an additional mentorship and prayer. She continued to attend our ACN meetings. Fiona’s average AH indicated 3.0 after the training program while she fell low at average 2.8 before the training. She

expressed her recognition of the Holy Spirit's guidance (See her comment of qualitative interview).

The qualitative interview question was "*How would you describe the work of the Holy Spirit in your current daily life?*." Amanda confessed that the Holy Spirit is teaching and guiding her in every corner of her daily life toward more godly life. Hanna feels that the Holy Spirit is always an alarm and mirror for life. Ella thanked the Holy Spirit for being with her every day, reminding, instructing, and reproaching her. Daisy recognized that God's grace is everywhere and she felt that the Holy Spirit is guiding her every point of her life. Fiona shared her experience that the Holy Spirit spoke to her and to let her follow God's will when she encountered some situation. Cally said that the Holy Spirit guides his life and makes work more meaningful. While most of members shared their experiences of changes in their inner being or daily lives, Bella talked about the Holy Spirit's helping her get associated with other people in the small group activities. Bella said that the Holy Spirit led her to get closer and communicate with other people every day, to learn and understand God's Word together with other members, and to speak and act in wise ways. As I have observed Bella's active participation in all the ACN activities, I could recognize that the Holy Spirit has been helping Bella enjoy all the small group meetings continually even without skipping one time.

### **Abiding in God's Word – The 3rd Session – March 6, 2021**

The topic of the third session was abiding in God's Word. The instructor presented that Jesus is the Word of God, and Jesus' greatest and new commandments were *love God* and *love one another*. The highlighted instruction was about the relational Bible study method. The instructor helped the participants relate God and His Word (any

Bible verses) to their lives and other's by starting with the premise, "God is love." Following White's (1901) statement that the Bible is God's voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears we practiced listening to God's voices through reading various Bible verses during the session.

The five quantitative survey items for the AW (abiding in God's Word) are as follows:

1. I read and study the Bible daily.
2. I meditate and delight in God's Word.
3. I apply to my daily life what I learn from God's Word/the Bible.
4. I am willing to obey God's commandments and His words from the Bible.
5. When I face with some difficulties or problems, I open the Bible to find solutions.

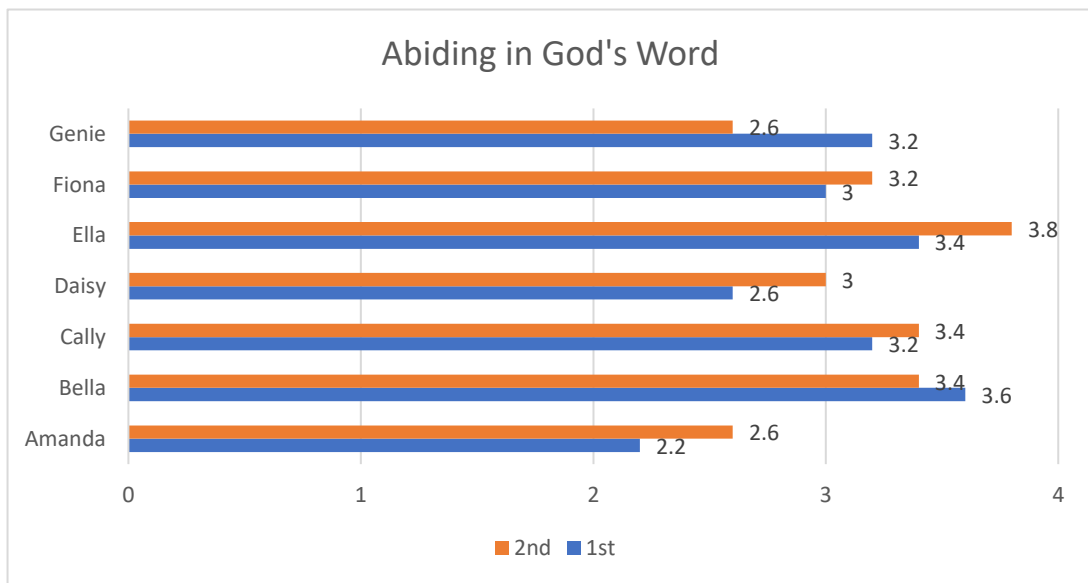


Figure 5. The result of two quantitative surveys – abiding in God's Word.

The data from the first and second surveys reported that the total points for the AW (abiding in God's Word) increased 5.6 % from 106 to 110, and the average four-point scale position for the five items of the AW moved from 3.03 into 3.14 at the level of Quite Often. The five members among the seven indicated stronger application of the AW (abiding in God's Word) after this discipleship program. Amanda, Cally, Daisy, Ella, and Fiona recorded increase. The four persons' scale points were 0.4 up, and the five participants positioned at the level of Quite Often. Genie's second survey's AW was down to 2.6 similarly as in the cases of the DC and AH because of her spiritual depression.

The qualitative question of the AW was "*How would you describe the role of God's Word/the Bible in your current daily life?*" Amanda said, "The holy Word of God gives me hope, strength, and the true wisdom which hold me up to live more godly life in this sinful world." The role of God's Word (the Bible) for Bella is to let her not be arrogant or impatient, and to speak and behave with wise words. Cally expressed that God's Word is to guide and lead him to a modest life. Daisy testified that the Scripture came to her mind when she did what God does not want her to do, and the Word of God could encourage and comfort her when she encountered difficulties. Ella said, "Sometimes I do not know how to deal with the things that I encounter. When I think and meditate, some Bible verse come into my mind suddenly. If I think about it again and again, I could understand that God is speaking to me and I become to know how to handle with the things." Fiona confessed that the Word of God becomes comfort, strength, direction, role model, and self-examination for her. Genie shared that God's

Word keeps her safe. Hanna said, “Bible verses are crucial for my daily spiritual life. Because those words are the best language to communicate with God.”

I observed that during the session participants did not share much in detail what they experienced and their directly related life experiences, but they could confirm that God’s Word could influence their lives significantly by guiding them, and they could hear God’s voices through the Scripture.

**Abiding Through Prayer – The 4th Session**  
– March 13, 2021

The topic of the fourth session was abiding through prayer. Using the Bible passages (Chapter 4), the instructor suggested that participants depend on the Holy Spirit when they pray in the name of Jesus and they have a habit of opening the Bible before prayers to relate to their own lives and others’ what God speaks through the Scripture to them. I presented to the participants a diagram, “Relational Bible Studies & Prayer,” quoting the passages from John 15:7, and Matthew 18:19-20. I emphasized that our prayers should be not only for our lives but also other’s, and through small group settings praying for one another would be much more powerful than separately praying. During the session time, I questioned to the participants why Jesus said Matthew 18:19-20: “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

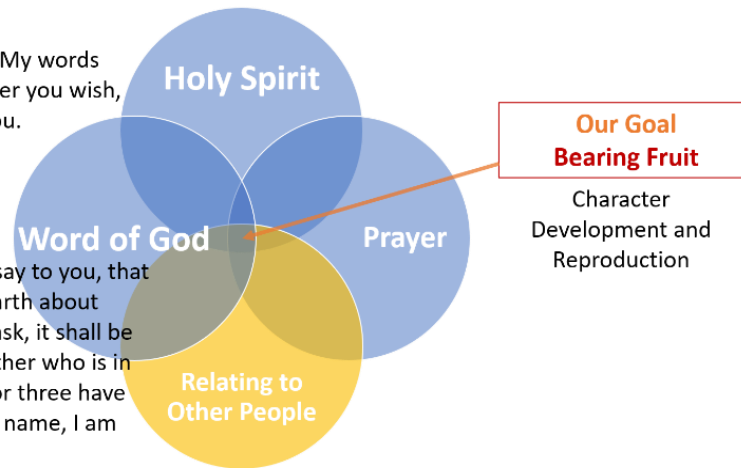
## Relational Bible Studies & Prayer

### Relational & Integrated View

#### John 15:7

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

**Matt 18:19-20** "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.



*Figure 6.* Relational Bible studies & prayer – relational & integrated view.

This question motivated the participants to accept and apply what Jesus said into their lives, and to share their reflections by relating to their own lives and others. The five quantitative survey items for the AP (abiding through prayer) are as follows:

1. I pray to God on a daily basis other than meal time.
2. I experience answers to prayers frequently.
3. Prior to making important decisions, I pray and ask for God's will and plan.
4. I willingly pray for others and hear the answered prayers from them.
5. Prior to praying, I usually read the Word of God.

The data from the first and second surveys reported that the total points for the AP (abiding through prayer) increased 3.9 % from 102 to 106, and the average four-point scale position for the five items of the AP moved from 2.91 into 3.03. The five members among the seven indicated there was an increase for the AP after this discipleship

program. Cally's records showed status quo at 2.8, and Genie's second survey indicated 0.6 down because of her depression period.

All the seven participants answered with the scales of "Quite Often" or "Regularly/Always" for the item of "Prior to making important decisions, I pray and ask for God's will and plan." At the second survey, for the item of "Prior to praying, I usually read the Word of God," three participants among the seven marked at "Not Often." Among the three one person recorded at "Rarely/Never" before the session, but after the session the position was slightly up to "Not Often." I observed that they were not familiar with the method of opening the Bible prior to prayers, while the six members were fine with the other items by marking at "Quite Often" or "Regularly/Always." One member's answers for the item "I willingly pray for others and hear the answered prayers from them" were status quo at "Rarely/Never."

The qualitative question of the AP was "*How would you describe your current prayerful life?*" Amanda confessed, "Too lazy. I need a heart of more hunger and thirst for righteousness which may motivate me to pray more eagerly." Through this session and the two surveys, she could do her self-examination to realize that she felt lacking in prayer. Bella said, "The current prayer life is not enough for my spiritual growth. I must rely on God's power and learn more about the Bible and God's Word to communicate better with God and to become a complete believer." She perceived that prayer is to communicate with God, but she would more belief in God and the power of the Holy Spirit for her prayerful life. Cally expressed that prayer is to let him communicate with God, and he prayed from time to time with reflection and gratitude. Daisy said, "Prayers are not in normative forms, and I communicate with God anytime and anywhere."



Basically they are for my gratitude to God, and questioning with ‘Why about the main contents of happenings.’ Fiona also agreed that prayer is to communicate with God and to ask God’s will. She expressed that through prayers, she can thank, praise, confess, and repent. Genie said that she often prays for her work and study, but she does not pray for others unless she is willing to receive their prayer requests. Hanna said, “I would say my understanding of prayer is deepened and now I am trying to give more time to listen to God’s will.” She testified that every morning she reads the Bible verses before praying in order to listen to God. Ella shared that she prays every day, but just praying is not enough. Through the session, she realized that she should read the Bible before praying and she started to use this method every day.

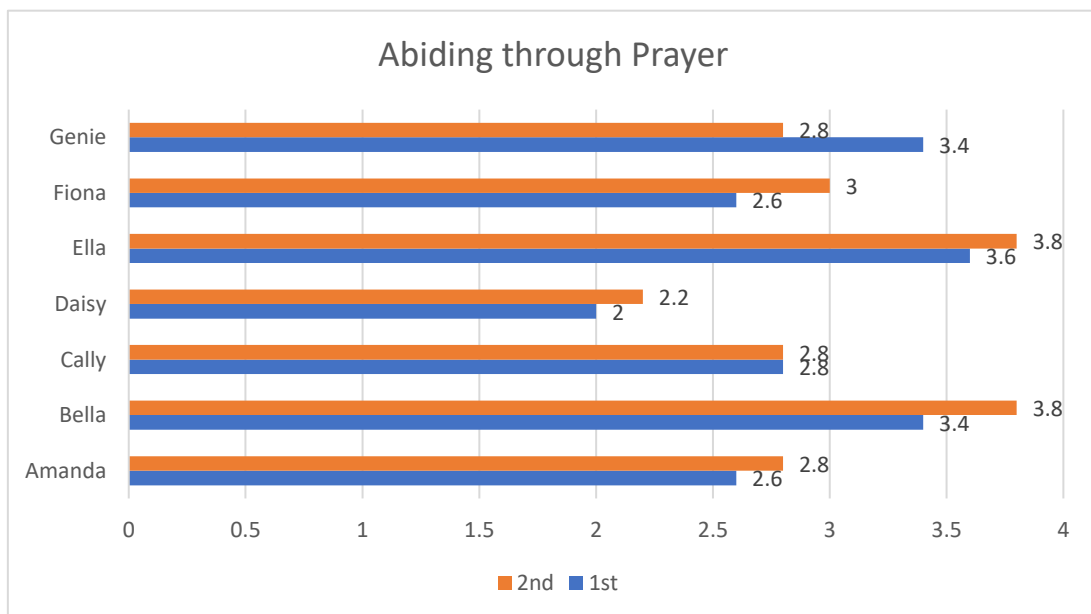


Figure 7. The result of two quantitative surveys – abiding through prayer.

**Bearing Fruit – The 5th Session –  
March 20, 2021**

The topic of the fifth session was bearing fruit (BF). The instructor lectured that bearing fruit is the by-product of abiding in Christ (the Holy Spirit, God’s Word, and prayer) according to John 15:1-8. Galatians 5:22-23 was introduced for practicing the nine character traits of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. I suggested that bearing fruit should include having the loving relationship with God and with others (John 13:1-35, 15:7-17, Matt 22:40), and encouraged the participants to make their resolution of evangelizing and discipling others (Matt 28:18-20). In this session, I also used the same diagram of “Relational Bible Studies & Prayer” which was presented at the previous session for showing the commonality which is the spot overlapped by the four circles (the Holy Spirit, God’s Word, Prayer, and Relating to Other People). The commonality is pointing to character development and reproduction which are the goals of bearing fruit.

The five quantitative survey items for the BF (bearing fruit) are as follows:

1. I enjoy witnessing or sharing with others about spiritual things and my testimonies.
2. I willingly show my love to meet others' needs.
3. I experience forgiving others who hurt me.
4. I kindly treat others regardless of their age, culture, or beliefs.
5. I am using my spiritual gifts, time, and money to help and tell others about Jesus.

The survey reports shows that the total points for the BF (bearing fruit) increased 9 % from 99 to 108, and the average four-point scale position for the five items of the BF moved from 2.83 to 3.09.

The four participants' average scale indicated increase compared to the first survey, while two's average points are down and one's stays status quo. I discovered that the first item and the last one were weak areas for the participants. For the first item, "I enjoy witnessing or sharing with others about spiritual things and my testimonies," At the second survey one participant chose "Rarely/Never," and the two indicated "Not Often," while the four participants answered with "Quite Often" or "Regularly/Always." For the fifth item, "I am using my spiritual gifts, time, and money to help and tell others about Jesus," the four participants marked "Not Often," while the three answered with "Quite Often" or "Regularly/Always." I observed that they reported higher gradings for the character development areas, while they marked at lower scale points for evangelism.

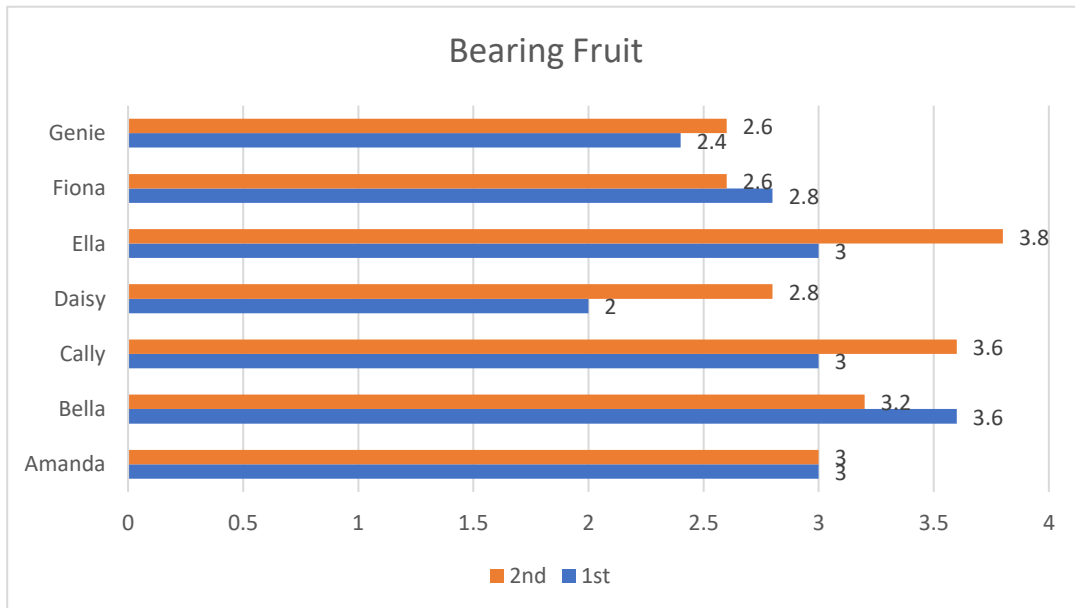


Figure 8. The result of two quantitative surveys – bearing fruit.

The qualitative interview question was “How would you describe the current spiritual/religious condition and activities of your daily life?” Amanda said, “I did bear some fruit in my past daily life such as the way how I treat my families and others, the progress on my personality, less complaints, and more appreciation, but I clearly know that I am still too far away from bearing more fruit of the Holy Spirit.” Bella confessed that she could be connected with other people spiritually, and her faith could make her life extraordinary and not boring. She furthered that her spiritual, physical, and mental state has been improved compared to the previous time, and she is not tired of doing her daily house works, hard things, and she could live the diligent life of a good housewife. Cally shared that he would continue to grow spiritually through non-stop learning.

I believe that his constantly abiding in Christ through the Holy Spirit, the Bible studies, and prayer will bear fruit. Daisy expressed that she would like to do actions instead of saying. She believed that God is far greater than I knew before, and I started to become genuine without a fake smile and to do try her best to do good deeds for others, even to strangers. Ella confessed that She is trying to learn rely on the Lord and to practice her faith in every corner of her life. Fiona shared that she studies the Bible more to understand God’s Word, follows the example of Jesus Christ, loves people around her, spreads the Gospel to them, and does what she can do. Genie expressed her current concern of her recent beliefs and struggling with her interaction with others, and she would like to focus on her own spiritual life following God’s Word from the Scripture. Hanna felt that her efficiency in her spiritual life and activities need to be improved.

**Christian Communities – The 6th  
Session – March 27, 2021**

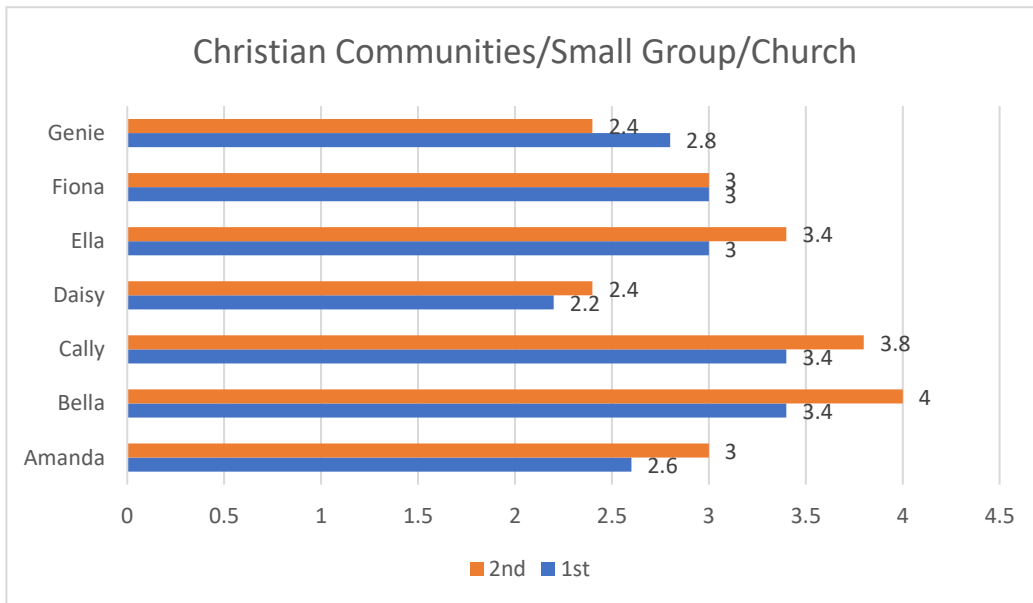
The topic of the sixth session was the Christian communities/small group/church. The instructor tried to help the participants understand about Christian loving communities to be one body in Christ and practice discipling others. They were encouraged to restore their relationship with God and others. The instructor presented the significant importance of small group gatherings following the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 18:19-20, “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.” Especially during the session, Bella responded to other participants with her strong acknowledgment and compelled faith of Jesus’ covenant promise based on the same verses that we could receive God’s answers through small group gatherings and love one another to become one in Christ’s love and mission.

The five quantitative survey items for the CC (Christian Communities/Small Group/Church) are as follows:

1. I willingly serve God and His church wherever and whenever I am needed.
2. I attend church services or small group activities almost every week.
3. I feel a close loving relationship and unity with others in church/small group.
4. I enjoy worshipping with others and inviting non-believers to my church.
5. I mingle with non-believers in my community to form new Christian friendships.

The survey reports shows that the total points for the CC (Christian communities/small group/church) increased 8 % from 102 to 110, and the average four-point scale position

for the five items of the CC moved from 2.91 to 3.14. The five participants' average scale indicated increase compared to the first survey, while the two's average points did not increase. Especially all the seven participants responded to the first item which is about willingness to serve God and His church with "Quite Often" or "Regularly/Always." The five persons marked at the scale 4, and the two at 3. However, the fourth item which is about inviting non-believers to church/small group was weak area for the participants compared to other items. The first survey indicated that the average point of the fourth item was 2.57, and it was slightly up 2.71 at the second survey. For the fifth item which is about mingling with non-believers in the community and forming new Christian friendships, the comparison between the first and second surveys indicated the increase of average point from 2.71 to 3 which falls to "Quite Often."



*Figure 9.* The result of two quantitative surveys – Christian communities/small group/church.

The qualitative interview questions for the CC were three: (a) “How would you describe your current relationship (walking) with Christ?,” (b) “How would you describe your current relationship with other believers?,” and (c) “How would you describe your current relationship with other non-believers?” Amanda expressed that her relationship with Christ has become a little bit closer, but a little bit “colder” because she is going through a tough period in her life. Bella shared her feeling that she could maintain a good relationship with Christ as a good friend with a kind of mutual trust. Regarding her relationship with others, she felt lukewarm with other Christians, and she does not have much close relationship with non-Christians while she would like to depend on the Holy Spirit’s works.

I observed that she has been actively attending faithfully to our ACN small group activities without skipping for more than a year, and she showed her enthusiastic participations to all the sessions of discipleship. Although Bella felt that her current relationships with others seem not active as she wished, she expressed about her depending on the Holy Spirit to reach to the extent where she can have close relationships with others. Cally suggested that Christ is the benchmark and beacon for guiding our steps, and we should make progress Christian loving relationship together. He furthered that we should also love potential believers. Daisy shared her perspective of relationship with Christ as subordination. When God commands, she hears, feels, and obey. Regarding the relationships with Christians or non-believers, Daisy did not differentiate between them. Regardless they are Christians or not, she would like to help if they need.

Ella shared her experiences that her relationship with Christ was close for some period of time, and sometimes it became less when she felt exhausted with many things.

For relationship with others, she would not hesitate to help and care for others if they are in need, and sometimes she shared the Gospel with them. Fiona witnessed that she could receive strength and peace from Christ as she believes in Christ. She regarded brothers and sisters in Church as one family in Him to encourage, love, help one another. Fiona would like to learn the character of Christ to care for other non-Christians in need, and preach the name of Jesus to them.

Genie expressed that her relationship with Christ seemed not clear since she was recently struggling with her spiritual life. For the relationship with others, she would like to observe interactive experiences more. Through her continuous participations to our ACN small group activities even after the six sessions of discipleship, I could see her positive implications from her spiritual struggling that she would like to experience Christ and to restore a good relationship with others through Christian communities. Hanna who actively participated in the sessions described that her relationships with God and others are active, faithful, and passionate.

### **Summary**

This chapter described the influences of the discipleship intervention on the nine ACN core team members who participated in the six-week training program. The participants could learn and practice not only during each two-hour session, but also during the week days after each session in accomplishing their given assignments of relational Bible studies and prayers. They could share and practice what they learned with their family members and others. Among the nine members, I collected the quantitative survey reports from seven, and eight of them responded to the qualitative interviews. The collected data reflected the discipleship intervention's impact on the participant's lives.



Through a SPSS test, I received the result of Cronbach's Alpha 0.883 for the quantitative survey questionnaire with a 30-question items which had six areas (DC: divine calling, AH: abiding in the Holy Spirit, AW: abiding in God's Word, AP: abiding through prayer, BF: bearing fruit, CC: Christian communities). With the proved reliability level, the collected quantitative data revealed that the intervention helped the participants' spiritual growth increase in all six training areas.

In addition to the quantitative survey data, the qualitative interviews could provide more information on the participants' experiences with the intervention. The interview results also revealed that the participants' awareness of divine calling increased and their abiding in Christ were more motivated through the intervention. They indicated partially weakness in the areas of bearing fruit and Christian communities. The following chapter will address with these results further with an analysis works.

## CHAPTER 6

### PROJECT EVALUATION AND LEARNINGS

#### **Summary of the Project**

The purpose of this project was to develop and implement a discipleship program to train and build the core team that will create their own discipleship small group for discipling and evangelizing others or serve the ACN. Among those ACN – involved people, 12 participants showed their interests in this project, and sent me their signed Informed Consent Forms. I designed the intervention with four phases – six sessions and conducted it for six consecutive weeks every Sabbath afternoon. During the six-weeks of sessions, nine of participants completed this training program.

Two quantitative surveys were conducted, one prior to the first session, and the other after the last session to compare and evaluate the participants more objectively. Also, I collected more data through a qualitative interview process to make up for the weakness in the quantitative surveys. This chapter describes the evaluation, outcomes, summary of conclusions from Chapter 2 – 4, my personal transformation, and recommendations.

#### **Description of the Evaluation**

This section presents the evaluation and interpretations of the data from the intervention (Chapter 5), and some conclusions and outcomes are described.

## Evaluation Method

For ensuring an ethical form of evaluation, the survey questionnaire form and interview questions were submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Andrews University (Appendix B). Before conducting the surveys and having each interview with the participants, my assistant sent them an Informed Consent Form (Appendix E), and they returned it to me after signing it. The quantitative surveys and interviews were conducted and the data were collected. Participant's pseudonym was used for this document report.

In order to assess this project's accomplishment of building the core team members who will serve the ACN or create their own discipleship small groups, I chose to conduct two quantitative surveys with the same questionnaire, and then compare the data for each individual and the whole team. The interview data served to triangulate the quantitative surveys.

## Interpretation of Data (Chapter 5)

The comparative analysis for each individual participant and the whole team between two quantitative survey responses revealed the following points:

1. Majority of participants responded stronger to a sense of divine calling, while I recognized that some particular participants needed more help, care, and mentoring with prayer supports.

2. Most of the participants showed their strong awareness of the importance of Holy Spirit, and knew that they should depend on God and try to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. After finishing the training program, it further proved that it helped them to seek for the Holy Spirit.

3. For the abiding in God's Word, the comparative analysis indicated the participants' improvement showed that they liked to study the Word of God and to apply the Scripture into their challenging lives.

4. The newly introduced method of Bible study and prayer which was a relational way were not familiar with the participants. I observed that participants would like to open their hearts to God and speak any confidential things to Him, but they hesitated to or declined sharing their private and confidential matters. Through this training program, they understood a little more about sharing, and they are willing to apply it. Their improvement in relational prayer was relatively less increased compared to the other five components. They were especially weak in praying for others. I observed that longer period of practice with trainings and spiritual fellowship may improve it.

5. For the bearing fruit area, while their total average point has increased substantially, the data indicated that they focused on character development rather than evangelizing others or doing actions.

6. Regarding Christian communities/small group/church, the data analysis revealed a high increase in the whole team's average point. They showed a strong willingness of serving God and His church, but the idea of inviting non-believers to church/small group was a weak area compared to other items, though their average point was up slightly at the second survey.

The data from the qualitative interviews allow me to understand more about the participants spiritual situation and their process of transformation. As they participated through the six-week program, they began to review and reflect their spiritual conditions and to habituate a new or better devotional habit. Also I could recognize about which

areas they need to improve and how they need others help for improving their transformational works. Especially, the interview responses revealed that relationship with others, especially non-believers, was weak and challenging, while they felt that their relationship with God was fine. Also some of them expressed that their actions of discipling or evangelizing non-believers was weak.

Several participants reported that they are willing to participate and serve continually in the ACN discipleship small group activities. After finishing the whole sessions of trainings, they appreciated the six-week training program, and suggested that they should practice in leading the ACN small group by taking turns in order to be equipped with skills of facilitating and discipling other group of peoples before creating their own small groups.

Since the end of the last session in March, I have observed that each member could facilitate and lead the ACN small group activities after seeing their spiritual transformation and growth. Some of them have started Bible studies and prayers with their own family members, and some others are preparing for their own small groups. This indicates that this discipleship intervention was necessary and helped the core team members to grow spiritually and to be equipped with skills of organizing and leading new discipleship small groups. It motivated them to remain and continue to be connected to the ACN. Through this project, they were convinced that the ACN would be their continuous and central network point which can help and provide valuable resources for their own small group ministries.

## Conclusions and Outcomes From the Discipleship Intervention

The collected data convinced that this discipleship intervention improved the core team members' spiritual growth and their continuing active participation. It motivated each individual participant to create their own small group. Through the interactive activities using the ACN small group, they learned how to bond and build a unity through Abiding in Christ (the Holy Spirit, God's Word, and prayer). After the training program, they expressed their desire to start and lead their own groups which is a major outcome.

Another outcome is to see the possibility of discipleship training through the online. Even in the situation of COVID-19 pandemic where people are not allowed to meet in physical face to face settings, the online discipleship training or small group activities could be an alternative; though they may be not the best way, compared to the in-person meetings. Furthermore, I learned that discipleship should not be one-time event, but continuous, and this type of discipleship training via Zoom video conference could make people be connected always no matter where they are, and even overcome their busy schedules. Because of this strength in continuous activities we could make our lifetime commitment to one another for discipleship influence, applying the principle of Jesus' promise, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18).

### **Summary of Chapter Conclusions**

This section serves as the supporting summarized concepts and principles from Chapters 2, 3, and 4 for this discipleship intervention in order to draw the overarching conclusions.

## Biblical Conclusions – Chapter 2

The Scripture provides strong foundations for this discipleship intervention. The major Bible passages for designing of this intervention were Matthew 28:19-20 and John's Gospel chapters 13-17. The four dimensions of intervention are divine calling, abiding in Christ (abiding in the Holy Spirit, abiding in God's Word, and abiding through prayer), bearing fruit, and being one in Christ (Christian communities/small group/church).

The most important and leading component is the role of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised His disciples that He would never leave them as orphans, but He would send the Holy Spirit, which is mentioned in John 13 through 17 as well as in Mathew 28:20. Abiding in the Holy Spirit is placed at the center of ACN Discipleship Model. Abiding in Christ mostly means abiding in the Holy Spirit while abiding in God's Word and abiding through prayer should always be together as an integrated part. I placed this integrated concept of Abiding in Christ at all the four phases of discipleship process, because the discipleship process would not work unless we are abiding in Christ.

For Christian intimate loving relationship, the best picture of Jesus' model was depicted in John 13. Jesus loved His disciples to the end, until His death (John 13:1). Just like Jesus' washing His disciples' feet, and in the way of Jesus' loving His disciples, we are compelled to serve others and love one another. These teachings of Jesus can be implemented in Christian communities/small group/church following Jesus' promise, "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matt 18:19-20).

### Theoretical Conclusions – Chapter 3

The various literature helped understand valuable concepts and principles of discipleship. “Discipleship – leads to – evangelism approach” was adopted for this discipleship program instead of choosing “evangelism – leads to – discipleship approach.” It is claimed that evangelism is the by-product of discipleship process, while it can be a vital driving force for motivating members to be actively involved with ministries. According to the literature review the current concepts of discipleship focus on relationship. “Loving – relational – community approach” was adopted as the most workable and appropriate for this discipleship intervention.

There were several successful churches which adopted “discipleship – leads to – evangelism approach” and “loving – relational – community approach” (detailed in Chapter 3). They are the cases of Onnuri Community Church’s one-one one discipleship, Sarang Community Church’s small group discipleship, and Cerena’s small group ministry. They experienced a remarkable church growth through their discipleship training in the type of small group.

Through the literature review I chose the small group discipleship type focusing on the Christian loving relationship, and implemented the designed discipleship program with an expectation of evangelism as the by-product of discipleship intervention.

### Methodological Conclusions – Chapter 4

Based on the biblical aspects (Chapter 2) and the literature review (Chapter 3), I developed a four-phase discipleship program cycle which was designed as a six-week intervention. The implementation methods were small group interaction with intimate loving relationship, relational Bible studies, and relational prayer. Since I learned the



relational or reflective Bible study method in 2018 from the lecture of Dr. Allan Walshe, I continued to practice it. I could experience more inspiration through relating God's Word to every aspect of my life. From the teachings of 2 Timothy 3:16 and Ellen G. White's suggestion that we should regard the Scripture as the voice of God, the intervention sessions included this relational Bible studies and prayers. Relating to the design of new devotional practices, I presented the integrated abiding concept which consists of the Holy Spirit, God's Word, and prayer. For visualization, I used the tabernacle picture in Leviticus 24:1-9 that depicted (a) golden lampstand, (b) showbread table, and (c) altar of incense. The lampstand represents the Holy Spirit, showbread for God's Word, and incense for prayer. The data collection and evaluation were designed both through quantitative and qualitative research methods with comparative analysis, because these combined methods could help more objectively evaluate and take care of each individual participants' spiritual growth.

### **Overarching Conclusions**

The ACN small group discipleship intervention was effectively and efficiently conducted via Zoom video conference. Though it was not a traditional in-person format, it could achieve the goal of training a core team who would serve the ACN or multiply discipleship small groups including evangelizing others. This intervention project (Chapter 4) was designed and implemented based on biblical foundations (Chapter 2), and it adopted the small group format and principle of Christian intimate loving relationship which was examined through the literature review (Chapter 3). The collected data from the quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews proved that this intervention improved the participants' spiritual growth and motivated them to continue to be

connected to the ACN and to expand this discipleship network (Chapter 5). Overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic obstacles, participants could continue to have their spiritual and social fellowships through the online video conference which is a hybrid face-to-face meeting. Although participants are not able to shake hands and to eat together in the same place at the online meeting format, they could enjoy meeting together in the hybrid face-to-face beyond their physical places, which may adopt the principle of the Holy Spirit's omnipresent connections and works for us.

### **Personal Transformation**

Through this ACN discipleship project, I could see how God has been leading and opening new ways and brought a significant impact on my life and ministry works. First, though the COVID-19 pandemic depressed me severely with a big threat early in 2020, I was taught and reminded that the loving and creative God could overturn and utilize even the pandemic limited situations for His mission works. Second, throughout the whole process of this project including the Biblical and literature researches and experiential learnings with about four years of practice, I was convinced that God called me to do this discipleship ministry for the rest of my life. Third, after my heart was changed through this project experience, I decided to leave Korea and to continue the ACN discipleship movement for global Chinese people while serving as the Dean of Students in Hong Kong Adventist College. Lastly, I believe that the key to the success of discipleship is abiding in the Holy Spirit with God's Word and prayer, and I should be constantly connected to God as well as others beyond any circumstances.

## **Recommendations**

From my experiences of this discipleship project research and intervention process, I have a number of recommendations for further actions and research purpose.

1. The biblical aspects for abiding in Christ provide a clue that abiding should be a constant work with being connected to God and others. I observe that because of people frequently moving from place to place, they are not able to be continuously connected to one another if we use only a physical meeting space method. I recommend that churches and institutions create and operate a discipleship small group network by helping members continually be connected to one another through any possible channels or tools including the Internet.

2. The ACN was established for Chinese-speaking people. I discovered that there is a great potential for applying this discipleship method to other people groups too. Since discipleship needs small group gatherings regularly and continuously, I recommend that every member should create and facilitate a minimum of one discipleship small group, and hold a minimum of one meeting for two hours per week. I believed that once we are connected to others we should never be disconnected. This may be my discipleship movement, and we may need further studies on establishing a worldwide discipleship network.

3. The literature review found that evangelism is a by-product of discipleship process while it can motivate members to be continually involved with church ministry. Though I am convinced that abiding in Christ naturally bears fruit, I recommend that the small group discipleship activities should include intentional evangelism and community services.

4. From the collected data and my personal observation, I discovered that people would like to study the Bible in a more informative/cognitive way without publicly reflecting or relating to their life issues when they are in a small group format, because they may be concerned about privacy or confidentiality. Though the ACN discipleship intervention tried to improve this weak point in the limited online format, I learned that a six-week discipleship program may be too short to see the good result of reflection and relationship building within a small group. Therefore, spending more time together is recommended.

5. The online Zoom video conference format provided a remarkable convenience and advantages in helping people meet easily, but some people did not like to show their face through the video. This may be a hindrance for opening their hearts and emotional interactions with one another, and it may be a challenge to build up the environments of Christian intimate-loving relationships. I recommend further study on how to improve this weakness.

### **A Final Word**

Jesus teaches that all the law and prophets hang on the commandments of *love God and love one another* (Matt 22:40). The apostle Paul compelled that we should owe nothing to anyone except to love one another, because in loving our neighbor we will fulfill the law (Rom 13:8), and the whole law is fulfilled in one word, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Gal 5:14). Jesus is still speaking to us, “If two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst” (Matt 18-19-20). I wish and pray that everyone will have a small group that

practice the Christian loving relationship and follow Jesus' model from the Scripture especially, John 13-17 to humbly serve and to become one in Christ. This will bear fruit as the great outcome of fulfilling the Great Commission, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt 28:19-20).

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL CONSENT LETTER



December 23, 2020

Institutional Review Board  
Andrews University  
4150 Administrative Drive, Room 322  
Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355

67-20 Beonttwigi-gil,  
Paju-si, Gyeonggi-do,  
10909, Rep. of KOREA  
Telephone: 82-31-910-1500  
Fax: 82-31-919-4412

To Whom It May Concern:

Sung Sub Song has discussed with me his Doctor of Ministry project, *DEVELOPING A DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM FOR CHINESE-SPEAKING PEOPLE TO BUILD A CORE TEAM CALLED "ABIDING CHRIST NET" VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE*.

Song will be conducting his research through the Abiding Christ Net small group activity via Zoom video conference. While serving as the Associate Secretary of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, he and his wife Hope Zhang have established Abiding Christ Net, an online discipleship network church for Chinese people.

As the Director of the Ministerial Association of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, and the mentor of Sung Sub Song for this project, I have given my consent to the project, that it may contribute to the development of discipleship in the Church and help new believers experience life transformation.

Sincerely,



Ron E. M. Clouzet, DMin  
Director, Ministerial Association/Chaplaincy/SOP  
Northern Asia-Pacific Division  
+82-31-910-1562  
clouzet@nsdadventist.org

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF RESEARCH APPROVAL FROM IRB



January 20, 2021

Sung Sub (Paul) Song  
Tel. +82-10-7233-3004  
Email: [sungsubsong@gmail.com](mailto:sungsubsong@gmail.com)

**RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**  
**IRB Protocol #:** 21-003 **Application Type:** Original **Dept.:** Doctor of Ministry  
**Review Category:** Exempt **Action Taken:** Approved **Advisor:** David Penno  
**Title:** Developing a discipleship program for Chinese speaking people to build a core team of  
"Abiding Christ Net" via Zoom video conference.

Your IRB application for approval of research involving human subjects entitled:  
"Developing a discipleship program for Chinese speaking people to build a core team of  
"Abiding Christ Net" via Zoom video conference" IRB protocol # 21-003 has been  
evaluated and determined Exempt from IRB review under regulation CFR 46.104 (2)(i):  
Research that includes survey and interview procedures in which information obtained is  
recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects  
cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subject. You  
may now proceed with your research.

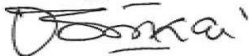
Please note that any future changes made to the study design and/or informed consent  
form require prior approval from the IRB before such changes can be implemented.  
In case you need to make changes please use the attached report form.

While there appears to be no more than minimum risks with your study, should an  
incidence occur that results in a research-related adverse reaction and/or physical injury,  
this must be reported immediately in writing to the IRB. Any research-related physical  
injury must also be reported immediately to the University Physician, Dr. Katherine, by  
calling (269) 473-2222.

We ask that you reference the protocol number in any future correspondence regarding  
this study for easy retrieval of information.

Best wishes in your research.

Sincerely,



Mordekai Ongo, PhD.  
Research Integrity and Compliance Officer

Institutional Review Board – 8488 E Campus Circle Dr Room 234 - Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355  
Tel: (269) 471-6361 E-mail: [irb@andrews.edu](mailto:irb@andrews.edu)

APPENDIX C

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

**Survey Questions - Abiding Christ Net 2020**

These survey questions will be used before the first session and after the last session, and the results will be compared for each participant.

No.	How often is this statement true of you? Circle one number for each statement.	Rarely/ Never	Not Often	Quite Often	Regularly /Always	Fill blank cell with circled number					
1	I believe that God created me and has His purposes for my life.	1	2	3	4						
2	I sense God's presence and help in my daily life.	1	2	3	4						
3	I read and study the Bible daily.	1	2	3	4						
4	I pray to God on a daily basis other than meal time.	1	2	3	4						
5	I enjoy witnessing or sharing with others about spiritual things and my testimonies.	1	2	3	4						
6	I willingly serve God and His church wherever and whenever I am needed.	1	2	3	4						
7	I acknowledge that God is working in my daily life.	1	2	3	4						
8	I am willing to let the Holy Spirit control every aspect of my life.	1	2	3	4						
9	I meditate and delight in God's Word.	1	2	3	4						
10	I experience answers to prayers frequently.	1	2	3	4						
11	I willingly show my love to meet others' needs.	1	2	3	4						
12	I attend church services or small group activities almost every week.	1	2	3	4						
13	I recognize who God wants me to be and what He wants me to do.	1	2	3	4						
14	The Holy Spirit prompts me to confess my sins and to make things right.	1	2	3	4						
15	I apply to my daily life what I learn from God's Word/the Bible.	1	2	3	4						
16	Prior to making important decisions, I pray and ask for God's will and plan.	1	2	3	4						
17	I experience forgiving others who hurt me.	1	2	3	4						
18	I feel a close loving relationship and unity with others in church/small group.	1	2	3	4						
19	I acknowledge that God has been inviting me to do particular jobs for Him.	1	2	3	4						
20	I have experiences in hearing the voices of the Holy Spirit.	1	2	3	4						
21	I am willing to obey God's commandments and His words from the Bible.	1	2	3	4						
22	I willingly pray for others and hear the answered prayers from them.	1	2	3	4						
23	I kindly treat others regardless of their age, culture, or beliefs.	1	2	3	4						
24	I enjoy worshipping with others and inviting non-believers to my church.	1	2	3	4						
25	I acknowledge that I have gifts/talents to offer to God for His plan.	1	2	3	4						
26	Prior to planning, I ask the Holy Spirit to reveal His will and plan, and to lead me.	1	2	3	4						
27	When I face with some difficulties or problems, I open the Bible to find solutions.	1	2	3	4						
28	Prior to praying, I usually read the Word of God.	1	2	3	4						
29	I am using my spiritual gifts, time, and money to help and tell others about Jesus.	1	2	3	4						
30	I mingle with non-believers in my community to form new christian friendships.	1	2	3	4						
<b>Totals</b>											
DC=Divine Calling AH=Abiding in the Holy Spirit AW=Abiding in God's Word						DC	AH	AW	AP	BF	CC
AP=Abiding through Prayer BF=Bearing Fruit CC=Christian Communities											

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## **Project Questions**

### Introduction

1. What attracted you to attend the Abiding Christ Net discipleship group?
2. How would you describe the Abiding Christ Net to others?

### Demographic/Factual

3. Age
4. How many years have you been a Christian?

### Divine Calling

5. How would you describe your vision/goal in your current and future life?
6. How would you describe your understanding of divine calling?

### Abiding in the Holy Spirit

7. How would you describe the work of the Holy Spirit in your current daily life?

### Abiding in the Word of God

8. How would you describe the role of God's Word/the Bible in your current daily life?

### Abiding through prayer

9. How would you describe your current prayerful life?

### Bearing fruit

10. How would you describe the current spiritual/religious condition and activities of your daily life?

### Christian Communities (Being one in Christ)

11. How would you describe your current relationship (walking) with Christ?
12. How would you describe your current relationship with other believers?
13. How would you describe your current relationship with other non-believers?

### Conclusive/Exit

14. If you are willing, how would you like to commit to the Abiding Christ Net?

### Quantitative Survey Questions

The quantitative survey questions will be used before the first session and after the last session, and the results will be compared for each participant.

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Andrews University

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Sung Sub Song is conducting a research study as part of his doctoral project, in partial fulfillment for his Doctor of Ministry at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

**Research Title:** DEVELOPING A DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM FOR CHINESE SPEAKING PEOPLE TO BUILD A CORE TEAM OF “ABIDING CHRIST NET” VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE.

**Purpose of Study:** To develop and implement a discipleship program to create the core team what will dedicate their lives to serve the *Abiding Christ Net* (online Chinese discipleship network church).

**Duration of participation in study:** I understand that I will be asked to complete the survey form and an interview which will take approximately 30-60 minutes of my time.

**Benefits:** Satisfaction in a better understanding of discipleship concept, process methodology, and a new devotional habit, and experiencing a transformed life through abiding in Christ.

**Risks:** No known risks.

**Voluntary Participation:** I have been informed that my participation in this study is completely voluntary. I am aware that there will be no penalty or loss of benefits I am entitled to if I decide to cancel my participation in this study. And that there will be no cost to me for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality:** I understand that my identity in this study will not be disclosed in any published document. At the time of the surveys and interview, my name will come up with a pseudonym, and the researcher will keep the records encrypted and the data will be stored in a password protected computer and will be kept for at least three years.

**Contact:** I am aware that I can contact the supervisor of Sung Sub Song Dr Min Ho Joo (+82-10-2473-3004, mhjoo@nsdadventist.org) or Sung Sub Song (+82-10-7233-3004, sungsubsong@gmail.com) for answers to questions related to this study. I can also contact the Institutional Review Board at Andrews University at (269) 471-6361 or irb@andrews.edu.

I have read the contents of this Consent and received verbal explanations to questions I had. My questions concerning this study have been answered satisfactorily. I hereby give my voluntary consent to participate in this study. I am fully aware that if I have any additional questions, I can contact Sung Sub Song or his advisor.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature (Subject)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Researcher Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## REFERENCE LIST



## REFERENCE LIST

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VITA



## VITA

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**Background:** I was born on April 27, 1970, and raised in Korea. I have four older sisters, one older brother, and one younger brother. I was grown as an atheist, but I got baptized into the body of Christ and became a Seventh-day Adventist at an age (1995). Through my evangelism, my parents and younger brother to Jesus Christ and they became Seventh-day Adventist members.

**Family:** I was married on October 27, 2002, to Xiaoyan (Hope) Zhang who is from Lanzhou, China. We have two children, Hyun Song (Born in 2006) and Eun Song (Born in 2011).

### **Education:**

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2015-2018 MA in Theology from Sahmyook University (Korea)

1994-1999 University of Seoul (Korea)  
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1986-1989 High school diploma from Honam High School (Korea)

### **Experience:**

2021- Dean of Students of Hong Kong Adventist College (Hong Kong)

2015-2021 Associate Secretary of Northern Asia-Pacific Division (Korea)

2012-2015 Assistant Secretary of Northern Asia-Pacific Division (Korea)

2006-2011 Media Center Manager of Northern Asia-Pacific Division (Korea)

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