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Developing a Discipleship Strategy for the Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church in Brooklyn, New York

Donnieval Walker
Andrews University

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING A DISCIPLESHIP STRATEGY FOR THE DUNAMIS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

by

Donnieval Walker

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Title: DEVELOPING A DISCIPLESHIP STRATEGY FOR THE DUNAMIS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

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Date completed: July 2012

Problem

The Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church has evolved from a church that, historically, was passionately spiritual and nurturing to one that seems to have lost its sense of identity and mission. The result is an inertia that manifests itself in a breakdown in communication, the inability to translate the gospel into the “language” of the community, and a general decline in spiritual commitment.

Although some progress has been made in the recent past, there is still a gap between missional demands and practice. This appears to be symptomatic of the deeper issue of failing to experience the meaning of discipleship at the personal level.
Method

This research investigated discipleship, while employing current literature, the Bible, and supporting citations from the writings of Ellen White. These were selected for their substantial offerings and their relevance. The discipleship principles of relationship, teaching, and maturity were established with special attention given to Old Testament and New Testament nuances. Particular attention was given to Jesus’ emphasis on relationships. By extension, the family as the primary unit for the development of meaningful relationships was considered and developed not just as an illustration, but as a sample of an intentional and preemptive approach.

A series of five sermons, as well as a seminar consisting of five presentations, was employed to educate and motivate the membership toward a better understanding of how to experience true discipleship. This was accompanied by a brief survey to establish the members’ perception of their spiritual maturity.

The results were collated, analyzed, and used to inform the formulation of an appropriate strategy.

Results

It was determined that the most urgent and foundational need of the Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church was for the members to establish consistent personal Bible study and meaningful prayer life. This would establish the basis for pursuing the missional mandate. Discipleship was established as the natural model for developing and deepening a relationship with Christ in an effort to build up the kingdom of God. The insights gained were helpful in the realization of better relationships among members and an increase in membership, as well.
Conclusions

Living as Jesus lived is God’s intent for every human. Therefore, knowing him at the deepest level is of paramount importance. This is not just a mandate for all, but the privilege of all. This research has led to the conclusion that any strategy for church growth, both organically and numerically, must have at its center a strategy of discipleship. A discipleship-based church defines and distinguishes both the quality of being and the reason for being. This means having meaningful relationships with God and man and fulfilling the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19, 20.

This is achieved through the transforming power of Christ. The discipleship process is initiated through Christ and is maintained by him. The disciples’ response involves total surrender and commitment. This results in the practical outcomes of transformed homes and churches through experiencing revitalization and renewal at all levels.
Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

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

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Personal History

Jamaica

I entered the pastoral ministry on January 1, 1986 after having received a call from the West Jamaica Conference, Jamaica, West Indies. I pastored in this conference for fifteen years. During the first 13 years, I pastored multi-church (nine-church) districts. This kind of ministry required my investing time in order to train the elders to give quality leadership in the churches for facilitating growth in and nurturing members. These years saw rapid church growth and a deepening of my spiritual experience and that of my family of four.

Bermuda

In 2001, I received a call to pastor in the Bermuda Conference where I spent five years as pastor of the Southampton church. Geographically and culturally separate from the Caribbean and a part of the Atlantic Union, Bermuda offered new opportunities for me to appreciate a different culture and explore new ways of doing ministry. This, I believe was a divine strategy in providing me with the transitional advantage to

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appreciate fully and engage the diverse culture of New York and Brooklyn, in particular.

Brooklyn

In 2006, I accepted a call from the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to serve as pastor. I arrived in February of that year and was assigned to the Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church located at 461 Montauk Avenue, Brooklyn (East New York).

**Brooklyn Demographic**

Population Size

Brooklyn is one of the most thickly populated and culturally diverse boroughs of New York City, according to the census report of 2000.² It is also a very complex borough. The challenges of its complexity are compounded by its sheer size. The United States Census Bureau reported, “If the boroughs of New York City were separate cities, Brooklyn would be the third largest city in the United States after Los Angeles and Chicago.”³ The New York City’s official briefing booklet states that, of all the boroughs, Brooklyn is “the most diverse borough in terms of foreign-born members of the population.”⁴

Immigration has played a large role in recent growth in the Brooklyn area. During

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the 1990s, the New York Department of City Planning estimates that 1.2 million were admitted to New York City. By 2002, the Housing and Vacancy Survey estimates that 34 percent of city households were foreign-born. Over two-thirds of these immigrants settled in neighborhoods in Brooklyn or Queens.\(^5\) According to the 2009 American Community Survey, the top three ethnic groups in Brooklyn are White Americans—46.6%, Black Americans—34.2%, and Hispanics—19.6%.\(^6\) Of the large immigrant population residing in Brooklyn, 16.4% are of Caribbean and South America descent.\(^7\) In the East New York area, 33% of the population is foreign-born. Figure 1, below shows the breakdown by country of birth.


\(^7\)Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Foreign Born</td>
<td>57,133</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>13,276</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>8,162</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>5,871</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>3,645</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>2,384</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>1,773</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>1,595</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1,588</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>1,358</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>1,325</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>16,156</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Brooklyn’s foreign born residents by country of birth.

Socioeconomic Background

The Dunamis Church is located in the heart of East New York. Over half of East New York’s population of approximately 90,000 lives below the poverty line and receives public assistance. Thabit, a city planner for East New York, chronicled the dynamics of historical significance that gave shape to its present socioeconomic state. He

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maps changes in population from mostly working class Italians and Jewish residents to residents of Puerto Rican and African descent. He argued that greedy and corrupt slumlords and real estate agents coupled with the city government that ignored the community played a significant role in the downturn of the area.  

**The Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church**

When I arrived for my new assignment in 2006, I was warmly received by the Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church—a 200 member congregation. I found the church to be a largely homogeneous group made up of approximately 70 percent Guyanese immigrants, with a mixture of other immigrants from the Caribbean and two American-born individuals. Many of them were second or third generation Americans of immigrant descent.

The church was basically a commuter church since the majority of the members reside in the Brooklyn area, not in the immediate East New York vicinity where the church is located. Consequently, they do not spend a significant amount of time apart from Sabbath worship in the area. Figure 2 highlights the distribution of the members’ residences in the Brooklyn area and outlines the East New York area where the church is located. The membership distribution was generated using the Batchgeo Mapping software.  

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The church is a relatively young church. It began when six of the members of the Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist Church (some elders and other officers) felt challenged by their zeal to accomplish certain objectives within the life of the church in the face of particular disconcerting administrative issues. Whether these disconcerting issues were perceived or real is still debatable. They solicited the help of a seventh member who was not an officer. These seven formed a committee to make plans for a church plant. They convened a seven-day fast, asking God for the intervention of his guiding hand. In the spring of 1989, a very small group started meeting in the newly purchased home of one of the seven. Within six months, the number of worshippers grew to one hundred. Later that year, they were assigned their first pastor. They were noted for their warmth and zealous endeavors. For the next decade or so there was rapid growth and high spirits.
However, there were factors at work in their spiritual warfare that were not evident at first.

The growth experienced was as a direct result of their dedication to intensive Bible study, enthusiastic witnessing, nurturing fellowship, and a meaningful prayer life among the members. This fervor began waning when the membership became inwardly focused and deeply ensnared by leadership conflicts with the pastor. This progression of events quickly resulted in a negative environment that ultimately divided the congregation.

In 1996, they moved to their present location at 461 Montauk Avenue in Brooklyn, East New York, and a year later, in 1997, they were officially organized into a church under the pastoral leadership of Artemas Julien. In 2001, the church had a schism due to the pushes and pulls between the leadership and the pastor. This led to 80% of the elders and a considerable number of the members establishing a new church plant. A number of new Elders replaced those who left as the church quickly tried to regroup, reorganize, and forge on. It was not long after this breakup that I was assigned to this congregation as pastor.

**Statement of the Problem**

The Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church has evolved from a church that historically was passionately spiritual and nurturing to one that seems to have lost its sense of identity and mission. The result has been an inertia that manifests itself in a breakdown in communication, the inability to translate the gospel into the “language” of the community, and a general decline in spiritual commitment. Christ established the church and has designated it as his very own body (1 Cor 12:27). Therefore, it is
organically related to him and strategically positioned to collaborate with his divine activity in the human experience. This means that the church disqualifies its own existence and denies Christ if it fails to fulfill the purpose for its existence.

Though small increments of progress have been made in the recent past as the body of Christ, this progress is not enough to justify the designation and expectation of Scripture. There is still a gap between missional demands and actual practice. This appears to be symptomatic of a deeper issue of failing to experience the meaning of discipleship at the personal level.

**Purpose of the Dissertation**

The task of this project is to develop and implement a strategy for the membership of the Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist church that will address its discipleship needs. This strategy will employ a sermon series and a seminar series of five presentations on discipleship. The discipleship strategy will be evaluated to determine if and how it contributes to the education of a new cadre of leaders, the growth of the members through spiritual formation, as well as how effectively they become and make disciples. This project advances the argument that involvement in and practice of discipleship rekindle spiritual fervor in members and keep them committed and active.

**Justification for the Project**

The principle of discipleship must be integral to the life and ministry of the church. Therefore, it is crucial that this principle be understood and applied in the local context in order to achieve effectiveness. This project recognizes that the call to discipleship is neither ritualistic nor to be done for symbolic reasons. Indeed, it is a divine
initiative that follows commitment to membership. It holds the secret to the divinely ordained process by which we are saved.

There has been an observable lack of mentoring in the area of disciple making. The task of setting the spiritual tone by precept and example demands leadership in order to advance the nurturing of members and expansion of the Kingdom of Christ. This cannot be done in a mechanical fashion by merely mastering a set of skills. It must be undertaken by one who himself is intimately acquainted with the principles and is committed to the making of disciples.

The feedback received from the Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church expresses a deep desire for this church to understand and implement the goals of discipleship as outlined by Christ in Matt 28:19, 20. Personal observation notes that if the present trends continue, there will be the inevitable plateau and then certain death of a once vibrant and promising congregation. Available literature has proven helpful in addressing many of the concerns, but does not provide contextual answers to certain issues and challenges faced by this local congregation. The wealth of material available in the areas of discipleship needs to be assimilated and tailored to fit this need.

**Expectation from this Project Dissertation**

This project serves to inform the researcher about how to give meaningful leadership in promoting a culture of discipleship among the members of the Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is anticipated that the knowledge gained from these tested and proven discipleship principles, when carefully selected for their intrinsic value and adapted for their applicability, will prove useful for the purpose of the stated objectives.
It might help the Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church, starting at the highest level of leadership, to realize better relationships in the process of nurturing its members, accelerating kingdom growth, and establishing stronger, more committed Christians.

At the wider level, this work might serve as resource material, providing significant recommendations for future generations seeking to continue building up the community of faith. Due to the inevitable unanticipated discoveries that are usually made during a project of this nature, there are clear paths to follow that the limitations of time and scope of the project cannot accommodate. These will be for future researchers.

**Delimitations**

The scope of this research is limited to the Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church. It seeks to extract principles from the Bible, the writings of Ellen White, and current literature. These principles of discipleship will be implemented in the context of this local congregation. Thus, all conclusions and recommendations will be confined to this particular church, though they could be extrapolated for other congregation.

This research does not seek to address all aspects of discipleship, but will confine itself to answering questions concerning the following areas: (1) the biblical principles of relationship as an aspect of discipleship, (2) teaching as an aspect of the Great Commission, and (3) maturity as a discipleship principle. The question of Apostleship, though relevant, is outside the scope of this research. It will be alluded to but not dealt with in any detail.

Although discipleship in both the Old and the New Testament will be taken into account, the main focus will be the biblical portions reflecting the life of Jesus.

The Discipleship Movement and the Emergent Movement as contrasted and
compared in this project do not suggest their recommendation. They serve to provide a context for certain worldviews that coexists within the church, and offer answers for possible influences for certain practices and outcomes within the church. This also provides the provocation for creative reflection in an effort to find the path to the center.

The citations from Ellen White are treated as support material. It is not the purpose of this research to do an extensive analysis of her writings in any way.

Limitations

The survey evaluation was done before the above-mentioned presentations. The respondents were only from among the adult attendees who were willing to participate in the survey. The interpretation of the data is, therefore, limited to this group and can only provide generalized indicators for the full church membership. There were certain findings and conclusions that were not anticipated and suggest extensive time for fully incorporating the appropriate responses required. These will be considered in the section on recommendations for future projects.

Description of the Project Dissertation Process

The Bible, as well as the writings of Ellen White, will be used in the search for discipleship principles of relationship, teaching, and maturity. Chapter 2 will establish a biblical model that draws on the Old Testament and the New Testament. This will focus on Jesus’ emphasis on relationships.

Finally, the family, as God’s primary discipleship unit for the establishing of disciples, will be considered and developed not just as an illustration, but as a sample of an intentional and preemptive approach. These principles will be delineated and used to
establish a platform for guiding conclusions and recommendations.

Current literature on church growth and discipleship will be reviewed. This will include books and articles on principles, strategies, and programs which will help in the structuring and implementing of a sustainable strategy for discipleship at the Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church. These books will be selected for their substantial offerings and their relevance.

A survey study will be done to determine what the church already does well, as well as growth areas and how these can be engaged in order to foster discipleship building. This survey will be conducted among the adult population of the Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church and will reflect the perception of the membership with regards to where they are spiritually.

A series of five sermons as well as a seminar consisting of five presentations will be employed to educate and motivate the membership toward a better understanding of how to experience true discipleship.

The results from the above investigation will be collated, analyzed, and used to inform the formulation of an appropriate strategy. The strategy will be implemented and evaluated. Within the context of the above outline will emerge the scaffolding for constructing a discipleship culture that is sustainable and replicable.
CHAPTER II

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR DISCIPLESHIP STRATEGY

Introduction

The concept of discipleship predates the advent of Christ; therefore, the Old Testament will be explored for its influence and contribution to the development of discipleship in the New Testament. Evidence of discipleship outside of biblical literature will be acknowledged, though not discussed. While emphasis will be placed on the New Testament and the life of Christ, in particular, linkages with the Testament roots will be sought. From these considerations, a definition and theology of discipleship will emerge which will provide the foundation for any and all conclusions. The writings of Ellen White will also serve as amplification of and support for biblical positions. It is envisioned that the conclusions derived will help promote the building up of the kingdom of God organically and numerically (1 Cor 12; John 15:4, 5).

Toward Defining Discipleship

At this juncture there are some very important distinctions that need to be made. This will be helpful in order to establish the principles that will define my working understanding of who a disciple is. Ogden urged that a definition of discipling is
important as the guiding vision for the nature of the discipling relationship.\textsuperscript{1} One must, therefore, have an appreciation for the different nuances of “disciple” as it is being used in the Bible.

Malphurs underscored that a study of discipleship in the New Testament will reveal clear similarities as well as differences.\textsuperscript{2} Each New Testament author wrote to a specific audience with unique backgrounds and different needs. This demanded the adaptation of the presentation of the gospel in a way that would meaningfully engage the various audiences. Longenecker pointed out that the various New Testament authors each had unique and characteristic ways of portraying authentic discipleship but, in spite of the variant approaches, there is still a certain “sense of center.”\textsuperscript{3}

As Bonheoffer put it, “The source of the disciple’s life lies exclusively in his fellowship with Jesus Christ. He possesses his righteousness only within that association, never outside it. That is why his righteousness can never become an objective criterion to be applied at will.”\textsuperscript{4} It is of paramount importance that this “center,” exemplified in the life of Christ, be clearly distinguished.

**Discipleship as God Pursuing Man**

At creation, God established that every creature would produce after its kind (Genesis 1:21, 25). This natural law has implications for discipleship. A disciple

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 130.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Aubrey Malphurs, *Strategic Disciple Making: A Practical Tool for Successful Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 47.
\end{itemize}
produces after his kind (1 Corinthians 11:1). The chief identifying mark of the disciples of Jesus is their demonstrating the kind of love that he showed (John 13:35). At the heart of discipleship must be the heart of God and the heart of God is love (1 John 4:7-11).

Discipleship is essentially about relationships—living organic relationships that are life-giving and will result in building up the kingdom of God. It stands in contradistinction to the process of proselytizing which focuses on recruitment rather than on transformation. In Scripture, God has distinguished Himself as committed to His relationship with man. He pursued Adam after his sin and committed to his salvation (Genesis 3:9, 15). In the Old Testament, God told Moses and the children of Israel to build Him a sanctuary so that He could “dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8). God’s enduring presence experienced by Israel through the sanctuary with its elaborate rituals for dealing with sin is instructive (Leviticus 16:30). It sets up the reader to appreciate better the purpose of God’s becoming man: to remove the sin barrier between God and man. John’s allusion to Jesus as the tabernacle where the Shekinah dwells speaks to this purpose (Isa 59:2; John 1:14).

Matthew applies the Isaiah prophecy of the birth of Immanuel to Jesus. The name “Immanuel” means “God with us” (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23). This hints at the theme of the entire Bible, which is the story of God’s reconciling man to Himself (2 Cor 5:19). Jesus states that his sole mission to earth is “to seek and to save . . . [the] lost” (Luke 19:10).

5Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary defines proselytizing as inducing someone to or converting someone to one’s faith.

Finally, Jesus poured his life into twelve men and fitted them for mission. He trained them and sent them into the world (Matt 10:5-8; John 17:18). Their work is representative of what is expected of every disciple: developing a meaningful relationship with Christ and with others and helping others to have a relationship with Christ. This work continues until the end of the world.

**Old Testament Roots**

To provide a better understanding of what Jesus brought to the concept of discipleship and for reasons of comparison, a brief examination will be made of Old Testament discipleship. “Even though traditional Jewish ‘disciple’ terminology is used only marginally, recent educational and sociological studies have suggested forms of master-disciple relationship in existence in the Old Testament.”\(^7\) Though there is not a linguistic proliferation of discipleship in the Old Testament, there are enough practical demonstrations of the idea to warrant its legitimacy as an Old Testament concept.

It should be noted that the Old Testament Hebrew word *talmid* is the equivalent of the New Testament Greek word for disciple, *mathētēs*. It gives the same idea of a pupil-teacher relationship but the New Testament concept conveys more nuances.\(^8\)

The use of the term disciple from the Old Testament word *talmid*, meaning pupil or learner, is derived from the verb *lamad*, meaning, to learn. Only one Old Testament

\(^7\)Michael J. Wilkins, *Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew's Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 44.

\(^8\)Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 54-55.
passage uses this word (1 Chron 25:8). It is used with its substantive participle, “one who is taught” (limmud), appearing in this manner only a small handful of times (Isa 8:16; probably also Isa 50:4; 54:13). The words for “disciple,” “pupil,” or “learner” (whether talmid or limmud or their cognates) have not been found in the Aramaic or Hebrew texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls, even though great stress was placed on instruction and various degrees of learning in that community. In spite of the sparse use of the actual terminology there is no need to question its relevancy as a point of reference for establishing the roots of the New Testament concept as there is no indication that the prevalence of the practice was limited to the occurrences of the actual terminology.

It should also be noted, as Wilkins cautioned, that “simply because certain terms are similar in meaning to those found in the Greek world does not mean that the same types of discipleship will occur.” The Hebrew word talmidh portrays the disciple as an apprentice following a particular course. It does not denote the strong relational component that the New Testament mathētēs conveys. To appreciate this aspect of discipleship fully, we must turn to the New Testament where the thought is developed more fully.

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12 Wilkins, Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew's Gospel, 124.
New Testament Roots

While an in-depth examination of the different patterns of discipleship emerging in the New Testament is not irrelevant, the scope of this research does not provide for the elaborate treatment of each variant pattern. The intent of this section is to establish the core principles while not ignoring the influence of different patterns. It will establish the biblical and theological basis for a discipleship strategy with a focus on how it was exemplified in the life of Christ. In the second section of this chapter, the writings of Ellen White will be utilized to support the biblical findings.

As the different patterns of discipleship are explored, the very life of Christ will be in sharp focus. His life, as it offers a life-changing discipleship encounter, will appear as the phenomenon that has absorbed the deepest interest of critics, as well as believers, for centuries. Jesus had a very wide circle of followers who were sometimes referred to as disciples. Melbourne made reference to the concentric circles of disciples around Jesus. The closer the circle, the more committed they would be. With the closest and most committed circle came special privileges and responsibilities.\(^\text{13}\) Though the twelve appear most frequently in the New Testament and witnessed the power of the Jesus-model first-hand, the innermost circle of Peter, James, and John were especially privileged (Mark 5:37; 9:2; 14:33).

Wilkins made a very vital contribution to the understanding of the discussion on who is to be included in the category called disciple and what can be reasonably expected. He pointed out that, while discipleship teaching is applicable to all Christians,

\(^{13}\)Bertram L. Melbourne, *Called to Discipleship* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2007), 63.
specialized training was reserved for the twelve chosen from among the common pool of disciples in order to fit them for future leadership.\textsuperscript{14} Their special role was that of overseeing with an emphasis on the teaching ministry. This will be explored more fully later on.

According to Wilkins, the word \textit{mathētēs}, found in the Greek New Testament, appears for the first time in the writings of Herodotus in the fifth century before Jesus.\textsuperscript{15} In Greek literature, \textit{mathētēs} meant a learner. The word often describes one who follows closely or one who is tutored, implying a closer relationship than just the passing of information.\textsuperscript{16} In the New Testament, as in the Old Testament, the idea of apprentice is ingrained in understanding the Word.\textsuperscript{17}

Though the common use of the word might not convey the degree of attachment of pupil to teacher, Zodhiates offers some clarity by asserting that “\textit{mathētēs} means more in the New Testament than a mere pupil or learner. It is an adherent who accepts the instruction given to him and makes it his rule of conduct.”\textsuperscript{18} Kittel affirmed that the real intent of the word “always implies the existence of a personal attachment which shapes the whole life of the one described as mathētēs and which, in its particularity, leaves no

\textsuperscript{14} Wilkins, \textit{Following the Master}, 44.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 72.


doubt as to who is the formative power.” The implications for the disciple are far reaching: by committing to follow the master he is rejecting his past. Melbourne summarized this thought by clarifying that not everyone who accepts Jesus enters discipleship. One may accept Jesus’ teachings but not move on to a commitment to His teachings. “This confirms the notion that discipleship involves following Jesus.” For Melbourne, following Jesus meant the involvement of one’s entire lifestyle.

In the New Testament there are references to disciples who were not followers of Jesus. The Pharisees spoke of being disciples of Moses (John 9:28). They studied his writings and passionately followed the law (John 1:17). The Pharisees themselves had their own disciples (Matt 22:16; Mark 2:18). The New Testament acknowledges that other teachers apart from Jesus had disciples. Those who followed the teachings of John the Baptist or the Pharisees were called their disciples (Matt 9:14; 14:12; Mark 2:18; Luke 11:1; John 3:25). Saul was a disciple of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Gamaliel was Hillel’s grandson and one of his most outstanding disciples who later became a leading teacher of the School of Hillel. Literature predating Jesus acknowledged disciples of Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, and that of a number of other teachers and schools whose practices followed distinct models.

From these references, it is clear that the concept of discipleship was fully embraced and widespread in New Testament times. All of these references contribute to

20Melbourne, Called to Discipleship, 11.
22Wilkins, Following the Master, 74.
our understanding of disciples of Jesus. Jesus, himself, did not focus his attention on offering a definition of disciple, but rather, spent time casting his special brand through transformational teaching, with a view of bringing into sharp focus the character of his followers. Through thought provoking parables and object lessons, his frequent descriptions of what a disciple looks like were vivid and didactic.

Friends as Disciples

In order to establish the idea of a strong relational element in the Old Testament one must look outside of the actual terminology to specific examples. In the Old Testament, we find examples such as Abraham and Moses who were the friends of God (2 Chron 20:7; Isa 41:8; Exod 33:11). Enoch and Noah are described as having walked with God (Gen 5:24; 6:9). This highlights the relational aspect of discipleship with the use of the terms “friends” and “walked with.” Utley observed that the phrase “walked with” denotes intimate fellowship almost to the point of “to live with.”23 These characters were presented as personally meeting with God for instructions as God appeared to them. They would leave the encounter with God to carry out his teachings (Gen 26:5). It is clear that while God called individuals to be intermediary teachers, he alone takes preeminence as master/teacher and his people are His personal disciples (Lev 26:12).

The Old Testament also mentions groups of men called “sons of prophets” who would band together under Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha for instruction and worship (1 Sam 10:11; 2 Kgs 2:1-5; Amos 7:14). This arrangement clearly depicts a disciple and master

relationship. The Old Testament models introduce an emerging form that would later be fully developed and established in the discipleship model patterned by Christ (John 15:14, 15).

Covenant and Family Relationship

Covenant

Horton took this idea of a committed relationship further and linked it with the covenant motif rooted in the Old Testament. He emphasized that, in the Old Testament, “following after” carries the weight of a covenant and involves the head, the heart, and the whole body. This carried a commitment not just to seek after or imitate, but also carried the force of a proposition to be united. Chennattu concurred and provided a basis in the concept of family. He showed that the idea of bonding or binding, with reference to family ties, is at the root of a covenant, thus showing that by intent, a covenant was not just binding, but implied a relationship of intimacy between the two parties.

Manskar’s greatest contribution to the discipleship discussion was his emphasis on accountability. He found this thought central to the concept of covenant, which, for him, was substantively what the discipleship relationship is. He stated,

A covenant is a relationship initiated by God, signed and sealed by God with the blood of God’s Son, to deliver humankind from the powers of sin and death. Discipleship is the human response to this covenant of love . . . It is a covenant in which God has given God’s self in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in order to restore shalom to human lives and community. Shalom, a Hebrew word that

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encompasses God’s intended will for all of creation, means “wholeness, harmony, covenant, this shalom. The human covenant, this shalom.” Discipleship is living in this covenant relationship.\textsuperscript{26}

In the Old Testament, the concept of a covenant rendering the relationship between the two parties immutable by reason of blood ties is well attested to (Gen 15:9-18). Inherent in this relationship are privileges and obligations. This notion is carried over into the New Testament concept of discipleship and conveys the idea of obligations inherent in the terms of the covenant. These obligations involve certain hardships (Matt 8:20), which may include leaving houses and family (Matt 10:37; 19:27-30), self-denial and willingly submitting to the cross, which means ones willingness to die for Christ’s sake (Matt 10:38-39; 16:24-26).

Christ also warns his disciples that they would be handed over to the councils and be betrayed by their own families (Matt 10:17-23). As students, they would be treated just like their Master (Matt 10:24-26). People would have to decide between being loyal to their earthly families or to their heavenly Father (Matt 10:32-39).\textsuperscript{27}

These obligations urge upon the individual certain stark realities. These realities include surrender to unreserved commitment and unadulterated sacrifice, but not without the promise of rich rewards. In Mark 10:28-31, Jesus reassured those who must sacrifice possessions or lose family relationships as a cost for being his disciple. In vv. 29 and 30, he promised that in the fellowship of discipleship, they would receive new family relationships that would more than compensate for the family lost. Earlier, in Mark

\textsuperscript{26}Steven W. Manskar, \textit{Accountable Discipleship: Living in God’s Household} (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2000), 19.

\textsuperscript{27}Longenecker, \textit{Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament}, 44.
3:31-35, Jesus declared that his circle of disciples constituted his true family.

**Family and Discipleship**

Horton saw one’s own family as his nearest mission field. In support, he cited Acts 2:39, which states that the promise of salvation and the Spirit-filled life is for the hearers as well as their children. Deuteronomy 6:7 clearly underscores the discipleship element of the covenant between God and his people, which speaks to one’s obligations to his own offspring. The importance of diligently passing on knowledge of God by precept and example from one generation to the next cannot be overemphasized. It is God’s insurance policy against subtle evils of the surrounding nations, as well as guaranteeing the continuance of covenant blessings from one generation to the next (Deut 6:1-10).

Boice stated, “First, it is often the case—indeed, it is generally the case—that God works in families and thus uses one who has become a Christian to draw his relations after him.” Thus the concept of starting from the closest to the farthest in the discipling process is well attested to in the Bible (Acts 1:8; John 4:16).

Henderson cited Jesus as redefining and realigning his familial ties in the very discipleship process. His argument was based on Mark’s use of “outside” and “with” as contrasting two different kinds of relationships.

In Mark 3:31, 32 Jesus’ mother and brothers are twice described as “outside”, a term that not only locates them as physically remove from Jesus, but also highlights the contrast in Mark 4:10, between those “with” Jesus and those “outside.” Further, when Jesus himself hears a report of family members who seek him (Mark 3:32), he

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responds by naming those seated around him as his mother and brothers (Mark 3:33-4). He then established a new criterion for family: “Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother” (Mark 3:35). Luke adds “these which hear the word of God” (Luke 8:21).³⁰

Thus, by recasting the meaning of family as those who obey by following the will of God, Jesus was highlighting one of the original purposes of family: to preserve the will of God and foster obedience to the same.

Longenecker understood the central idea of Heb 2:10-18 as the solidarity of the Son of God with his people. This solidarity is explicitly stated in family terms (v. 11). This is affirmed by directly linking Ps 22:22 and Isaiah 8:17-18 (vv. 12-13) with this claim. The “brothers and sisters” (adelphoi mou) of the psalmist comprised “the congregation of the faithful” or the covenant people with whom Jesus lifts his voice in singing the praises of God. The resultant experience for the covenant family is to be separated from the common and profane and be set apart for sacred use in the same way that Jesus experiences perfect consecration to God.³¹

Likewise, in Mark 3:31-35, Jesus identified his followers seated around him as his true family and references them to the term “whoever” in v. 35, thus expanding the concept beyond the immediate time and place. Thus, here again, discipleship is presented as obedience to God that has Jesus as its catalyst and that includes an ever-widening circle of Jesus’ followers as his family.³² The idea of family establishes a deep relationship based upon the binding element of a covenant.


³²Ibid., 10.
The Great Commission

The Great Commission, Matt 28:19-20, has served as the reference point and rallying cry for evangelistic endeavor throughout the centuries following the pronouncement of Jesus. It sets the agenda for the church left by him and signals the official passing of the baton to be carried throughout every era of the church. It also holds the formula for the survival of the church through the passing on of the “Jesus gene” through its progeny.

Establishing a Pattern

The Great Commission forms the basis for instructing any discipleship process. It informs both the nature of the mission and the method. It encapsulates a systematic, clear, and repeatable process for the church in accomplishing Jesus’ mission. Finally, the promise of Jesus’ indwelling power renders the undertaking as fail-proof. Matt 28:19-20 summarizes the process that Jesus demonstrated as he revealed his intent for his disciples by his life.

John, the forerunner of Jesus, established a pattern of teaching and baptizing and his disciples continued following him, as did the disciples of Jesus (John 1:28; 3:22, 23). It is clear from Matt 4:24-9:34 and Matt 9:36-10:42 that Jesus is establishing a pattern here that is not incidental, but intentional.

Baptizing and Teaching

It is inescapable that the expected outcome of spending time with Jesus and learning from Him is to equip one for imparting in precept and deed what he has learned.
The main verb in Matt 28:19, 20 instructs us to “make disciples.” Malphurs advanced that the two participles in Matthew 28:20—“baptizing” and “teaching (Greek baptizontes and didaskontes)—should not be taken as an attendant circumstance. He contended that they do not fit the normal pattern for attendant circumstance participles as they are present tense and follow the main verb. In addition, “they make good sense as participles of means; i.e., the means by which the disciples were to make disciples was to baptize and then, to teach.” This directly instructs the disciple-making process. This process engages the entire church “to move people from pre-birth (unbelief) to the new birth (belief) and then, to maturity.”

Jesus used parables as an important teaching tool. These parables hold significant implications for discipleship. In Matthew 13, Jesus spoke seven parables to his disciples; then, in v. 51, he asked, “Have ye understood all these things?” Upon their positive response, he told an eighth parable consisting of one verse (v. 52): “Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.” Jesus leaves no doubt as to the intended interpretation. He uses the verb form of mathētēs (mathēteuō), which means to instruct with the purpose of making a disciple. Jesus likened the disciple to the scribe, whose chief role was to search and understand the deep truths of

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35 Ibid., 246.
Scripture and teach the same. “‘Every scribe’ here means every man or woman who takes part in opening the treasures of God’s Word to others. Christ here deals, not with the ability of the Twelve to understand ‘all these things’ (Matt. 13:51), but with their ability to pass them on to others.”

The parables of Matthew 13 focus on how the kingdom of God grows. They emphasize the importance of receiving, understanding, and dispensing the teaching of Jesus as central to the process of the growth of the disciple and the expansion of the kingdom.

The church then develops a culture of living and learning the revealed will of God in the life of Christ through personal encounter as well as in the written word. Anderson notes that while carrying out the mandate of Matt 28:19, 20 “includes cognitive reflection on truth as doctrine, practical theology takes into account the truth of experience.” Thus, spiritual disciplines became integral to the life of the New Testament believer. Acts 2:42 states, “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

Paul’s charge to Timothy established the primacy of the teaching ministry in the New Testament church. He admonished him, “Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you” (1 Tim 4:13).

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established the teaching ministry as one of the primary gifts to strengthen the church and provide a sense of direction.

The teaching ministry that Jesus left with his church was by no means intended to be concepts and ideas merely spoken. Jesus announced his manifesto in terms that undoubtedly advanced a comprehensive spiritual agenda, addressing practical and social needs (Luke 4:18-21). In his parting words, he emphasized that his disciples are commissioned to carry on a ministry after the same order of his ministry (John 17:18; 20:21). His ministry was powerful and credible because the people saw what they heard. White states, “The officers who were sent to Jesus came back with the report that never man spoke as He spoke. But the reason for this was that never man lived as He lived.”

Maturity

The purpose of the close relationships forged by Jesus was to establish an environment and a culture conducive for disciples to become like the Master. Jesus established and declared the single overarching criterion for determining a mature disciple as love (John 13:35; Matt 5:44-48). Love underpins every action of a disciple and without it, even the ultimate sacrifice of giving one’s life for the sake of the gospel is rendered null and void (1 Cor 13:1-3). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spelled out what mature love looks like by citing examples of a mature disciple’s response to typical life demands. He concluded in chapter 5 by challenging the disciple with the ultimate goal of the discipleship process, which is to restore in man the character of his Creator.

Matthew 5:48 states, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

The “perfection” of Matt 5:48 speaks to the disciple’s maturity. The Greek word employed for perfect is *teleioi* from the root word *telos*, which means “goal” or a degree of completeness, with the possible implication of purpose or result—“completely, totally, entirely, wholly.”⁴¹ In the context of Matt 5, the mature disciple will achieve completeness or wholeness of character as demonstrated in the acts of God his heavenly Father. What does the Father do—he makes his rain fall on the just and the unjust. This has important implications for the mindset and actions of those who claim God as Father.

The maturing disciple will exhibit clearly distinguishable lifestyle practices commensurate to his maturity. His lifestyle does not just establish his maturity, but serves to identify the source of his discipling. Acts 4:13 reveals that when the high priests heard Peter and John, they were able to determine that they had been with Jesus. The source of their discipling was manifest.

The concept of maturity is aptly illustrated by comparing the process of the human infant as it grows into adulthood. Paul contrasts being mature with being infants or children in the faith. This suggests that the mature person is one who has attained knowledge and exhibits the commensurate life application. This person stands in contradistinction to the novice. Paul chided the Corinthians “as infants in Christ” who are still drinking milk when they should be eating solid food (1 Cor 3:1-2). Later, in this same letter, Paul drew a direct contrast between being children versus being adults:

“Brothers and sisters, do not be children in your thinking; rather, be infants in evil, but in thinking be adults [teleios]” (1 Cor 14:20). Paul further depicted the mature Christian as one who is not easily manipulated in matters of doctrine (Eph 4:13-14).

Ellen White on Discipleship

**Discipleship is the Privilege of Everyone**

Ellen White spoke to discipleship from a very practical background. For her, the motivating force behind one’s commitment to be a disciple was the love of God as demonstrated in the life and sacrifice of Jesus.\(^4^2\) This powerful theme of God’s sacrifice and human response runs through all her writings and calls for a sacrifice no less than one’s total surrender and absolute commitment to the cause of Christ. This is not seen as an obligation, but a joyous privilege. The following summarizes well the essence of her position:

> It is your privilege ever to grow in grace, advancing in the knowledge and love of God, if you maintain the sweet communion with Christ it is your privilege to enjoy. In the simplicity of humble faith ask the Lord to open your understanding, that you may discern and appreciate the precious things of His Word. Thus you may grow in grace, grow in simple, trusting faith.\(^4^3\)

Faith and commitment are both gifts of God and, for White, these work in close association for the development and maturity of the disciple. It is not merely an intellectual acceptance of the facts of the gospel that results in this maturity, but an experiential knowledge that is not possible without total surrender. This is the total


surrender of the will to God that embraces the entire life of the disciple in a change that cannot be mistaken:

A nominal faith in Christ, which accepts Him merely as the Saviour of the world, can never bring healing to the soul. The faith that is unto salvation is not a mere intellectual assent to the truth. . . . It is not enough to believe about Christ; we must believe in Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves. Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power.\(^{44}\)

White develops the process of maintaining this relationship with Christ by emphasizing choice and obedience on the part of the disciple while Christ does his work. She explains that abiding in Christ is choosing only the disposition of Christ, so that His interests are identified with yours. Abide in Him, to be and to do only what He wills. These are the conditions of discipleship.\(^{45}\)

**Discipleship Responsibility**

From the foregoing section, we may infer and conclude several things:

1. The experience of abiding in Jesus ranks as one of the important themes of Ellen White. She believes all our profession is rendered worthless without this.\(^{46}\) For her, this does not mean that a connection with Jesus will preclude one’s personal effort. There must be a vital union between Christ and his disciple where the life-giving presence of the Savior sees the demonstration of his character in the life of

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the disciple.\textsuperscript{47} He has a keen sense of his responsibilities as a true disciple and focuses on spiritual disciplines for stability, growth, and completeness as a learner/teacher.

2. Given the organic development of the person as a member of the body of Christ, church membership will always be defined and measured by Christ's personal call to discipleship.

The ensuing statements in this section will make it clear that this personal call manifests itself in the home first, then in wider society. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 serves the postmodern family with as much force as it did ancient Israel. It highlights a relationship with God that is intentionally introduced to and inculcated in the hearts and minds of succeeding generations and serves as the ideal way of preserving the truth from one generation to the next. Ellen White, as a firm believer in this model espoused in Deuteronomy, will be used to delineate its basic principles, as well as highlight discipleship principles, in general.

Her approach follows the time-tested principle established from the creation of the world when God created man in his own image and after his likeness—Adam and Eve, the first disciples (Gen 1:26, 27). Dwelling in the presence of God, man, by beholding, would become changed—mature—into the image of God (2 Cor 3:18). “He walked and talked with them. God taught them His lessons daily. The plan of life which God appointed for our first parents has lessons for us.”\textsuperscript{48}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{white1} Ellen G. White, \textit{The Ministry of Healing} (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1948), 261.
\end{thebibliography}

\textsuperscript{47}White, \textit{Sons and Daughters of God}, 288.

In the discipleship process, the home and church unite in securing future generations for the kingdom. The concept of paid clergy having the sole responsibility for the making of disciples has not only done damage to the biblical concept of discipleship and Christ’s teaching in particular, but it has also twisted our view of our God-given parental responsibility to make disciples of our children.

White argued that the command to the first parents to be “fruitful and multiply” is the responsibility to produce offspring not just of like physical attributes, but also of like character to themselves, as theirs are of God. She urged, “In becoming the parents of children, it devolves upon you to co-operate with the Lord in educating them in sound principles.”49 Thus the responsibility of God and that of parents are merged to form a corporation of heavenly and earthly parents in the nurture of the child.

Ellen White depicted the relationship of God to Adam and Eve as that of parents to their children. She stated, “They knew God as their beneficent Father, and in all things their will was conformed to the will of God. And God’s character was reflected in the character of Adam.”50 She covertly issued a striking warning for neglecting what, for her, is part and parcel of God’s plan for redeeming humanity. The seriousness of her tone cannot be mistaken in the following two quotes: (1) “Parents are to co-operate with God by bringing their children up in His love and fear. They cannot displease Him more than by neglecting to train their children aright. God has given them these children as a sacred trust, to educate for Him. In a sense they stand in the place of God to their children.”51


50Ibid., 26-27.

“May God pity the parents who do not teach their children by precept and by example the way of the Lord; for they will have a fearful account to give to the Judge of all the earth for their wicked neglect of duty to their children and to society.”

This captures a very core principle of the discipleship responsibility as articulated by Jesus in Matt 18:5-11.

There is no environment better for laying the foundation of discipleship than the home. The home is foundational to the influence of the church and is directly related to the success of its witness. We can clearly feel Ellen White’s passion as she counseled,

“If religion is to influence society, it must first influence the home circle. If children were trained to love and fear God at home, when they go forth into the world they would be prepared to train their own families for God, and thus the principles of truth would become implanted in society, and would exert a telling influence in the world. Religion should not be divorced from home education.”

In light of the foregoing, one may make certain assumptions regarding the state of society and the state of the church. In Chapter 3, I will explore the phenomenon of each generation being a reflection of the generation before it as a reaction and a response to the society they inherit. This will strengthen Ellen White’s urgent appeal for parents to be vigilant in their responsibility.

Pastors are implicated in the following warning: “There are many lessons in the Bible calculated to impress fathers and mothers with the sin of neglecting their duty to their children; and yet how silent are the voices of the teachers in Israel on these important


relational approach. “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” This sets the stage perfectly for advancing her position on the mutual responsibility shared between Christ and the disciple and how it works in the process of maturing the disciple. Discipleship is not just confined to a heart process as an invisible function, but is clearly visible in the day-to-day life of the disciple as the fruit bears proof of the depth of experience. Ellen White wrote, “If the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will bear witness to the fact.”

For Ellen White, the greatest proof of discipleship was not limited to one’s relationship or interaction with God; it is also demonstrated in his human relationships. She asserted that as we live in close fellowship with God, we will love one another in the same way Christ has loved us. This is the identifying mark and signal to the world that we are indeed disciples of Christ. The reason for this impact and its convincing power to the world is the fact of its being so contrary to our natural inclination. This would suggest an outside force at work within us. Ellen White put it this way, “When men are

54 White, “Parental Neglect,” 1.


bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence.”

Ellen White’s understanding of the prerequisite for service was that a life of sacrificial service to God is the ultimate indicator of a maturing disciple. This service, however, presumes a heart of genuine love for God and also translates into unconditional love for those Christ loves and died for. “The question that Christ had put to Peter was significant. He mentioned only one condition of discipleship and service. ‘Lovest thou Me?’ This is the essential qualification.”

A Sacrificial Relationship

There are many who have not grasped the true demands of accepting Christ. They fail to understand that Christ comes with a cross as an intricate part of the discipleship package. Ellen White stated that “the true Christian regards his stewardship as a sacred thing. He perseveringly studies the Word, and yields up his life to the service of Christ.”

She developed this thought further by emphasizing that a humble and giving spirit born out of a commitment to represent the sacrificial life of Christ is the greatest evidence of true discipleship. “Through a life of obedience and self-sacrifice we are to reveal the love of God for fallen man” Thus, the disciple of Christ will be willing to count all things as nothing for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ. There should be nothing

58Ibid., 815.
59Ellen G. White, Reflecting Christ (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1985), 287.
60Ellen G. White, “Lamps Without Oil,” Review and Herald, September 17, 1908, 8.
worth holding on to in exchange for Christ.

The Maturing Disciple

Maturing in Christ was a very important subject for Ellen White. This following extract from a letter to one of her helpers, Mary Steward, summarizes her passion to see the followers of Christ grow. The letter cited is purported to have assisted tremendously to give the helper a closer walk with the Lord:

You must learn in the school of Christ meekness and lowliness of heart, and be trained, disciplined, and educated for usefulness and for immortality. . . Let it not be said of you in the future, as it was of the Hebrew Christians, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that we teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Hebrews 5:12). You need good home religion. Bring all the pleasantness and sunlight into your home life, in every word, in every action. Use diligently all the gifts of heaven in precious light given of God, and put this light to a practical use. Then the Lord will make a larger display of His mercy and goodness. Achieve a destiny on earth worthy of heaven. 61

It is evident that for her, religion ought to permeate every aspect of one’s life and a knowledge of Christ is meant to impact and improve one’s relationship with others. Too much sermonizing can be a negative thing; what is far more beneficial is the equipping of disciples for exercising and sharing their faith. 62 Ellen White stated that those who would mature in Christ must look beyond self-interest and consider working for the salvation of others. This would advance the cause of God and have a sanctifying effect upon the individual, as well. 63 However, she cautioned that “it is not that you are to trust in what

63 Ibid., 207.
you can do, but what Christ can do with your efforts; and therefore the whole glory should redound to Jesus Christ, if you would meet with success.”

The Lordship of Christ

Though the point of the lordship of Christ in the life of the disciple has been implied before, it must be isolated and emphasized at this point; for Ellen White, it was a major defining point in the test of the disciple. For her, until the disciple is willing to absolutely and completely let God have the final say in every area of his or her life, he or she was not ready to have the full benefits afforded only to the totally committed.

She stated emphatically, “If we accept Christ as a Redeemer, we must accept Him as a Ruler. We cannot have the assurance and perfect confiding trust in Christ as our Savior until we acknowledge Him as our King and are obedient to His commandments.” This indicates a total abandonment of the previous life commitments in full surrender for the new agenda of Christ.

The following reference to Paul summarizes Ellen Whites concept of total surrender and the lordship of Christ in the life of the disciple:

A more hearty, persevering, energetic disciple of Jesus Christ than was Paul, has never been upon the earth. He counted all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. He had one aim before him, and that was, that from his lips should go forth the tidings of redemption to perishing souls, that they might be brought into acquaintance with the Redeemer of the world. His whole soul was wrapped up in Jesus, and in the light of truth received from the Source of all light.


Conclusion

Both the Bible and the writings of Ellen White clearly establish discipleship as foundational to the working of God in the saving of mankind. It exists not as a program to be implemented, but as a law to be discovered. Like all laws that proceed from God, it is rooted in the nature of His being. It gives insights into who God is and what he is about. If love is the nature of God, then discipleship without love is like a car without an engine. Love will make us sacrifice personal comfort and even pay the ultimate cost of giving our lives for the sake of the Gospel. Discipleship demands no less of us than this total commitment and self-sacrificing spirit. It summarizes the mission of Jesus. It summarizes the mission of the church, the body of Christ.

This chapter has sought to establish the biblical position that the privilege of discipleship is available to all. While Christ initiates the call to discipleship and makes provision for taking the disciple through to completion, the process is not independent of personal choice and demonstrated commitment. Within the delineation of discipleship is conveyed the central truth of God pursuing man in an effort to restore him. Thus, the privilege of being laborers together with God in achieving the grandest scheme of the universe since creation is extended to all persons accepting the call.
CHAPTER III

CURRENT LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The topic of discipleship has been explored, researched, examined, and reexamined. These treatments have resulted in an array of rich material and varied approaches, each purporting to capture biblical fundamentals while seeking to make its claims relevant and applicable to given situations and circumstances. Starting in the early 1960s, there has been a concerted effort to recast the way the discipleship process is done. The many attempts in response to felt needs have had mixed results, but have at least yielded many valuable lessons. These lessons can be helpful in pursuing a sustainable path of discipleship while at the same time capturing the freshness of modern insights gained through theological reflection, application, experimentation, and experience.

Renewed Interest in Discipleship

What are the driving forces behind this interest? Is it driven by social forces or by the cycles within the life of the church? How might God be speaking in all of this? The indicators are that this discipleship renaissance is in no way a passing fad. At its heart is the desire to experience God in a more meaningful way and to follow genuinely the discipleship mandate of Matt 28:19, 20. It is born out of a cultural shift within the church
and even beyond its walls, driven, in part, by a reaction to perceived notions of the
county’s ineffectiveness in reflecting the character of Christ and failure in achieving his
objectives for the building up of his kingdom.

Reggie McNeal made a compelling argument against churches where the
programs serve traditions or even the latest innovation or gimmick. He argued, instead,
for one that makes the gospel incarnational in its community as lives touch lives in
serving the existing needs through applying sound biblical principles—the missional
approach. He concluded, “A missional approach to church growth reflects a more
meaningful process that faces square on the challenge of helping people shape their path
for personal development.”¹ He delineated three major shifts that must be made: (1) from
internal to external focus, (2) from program development to people development, and (3)
from church-based to kingdom-based leadership.² He viewed the church-based and
kingdom-based approaches as two separate tracks, while Putman developed this thought
by presenting both ideas in what he calls the incarnational approach. He summarized that
“in many places in North America, attractional is still missional, but it must be combined
with incarnational ministry.”³

Toward the Image of God

By exploring man’s beginnings, we may be able to determine God’s intent for his

¹Reggie McNeal, Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church (San Francisco,
²Ibid., 42-43.
³Ed Stetzer and David Putman, Breaking the Missional Code (Nashville, TN: Broadman and
Holman, 2006), 65.
relationship with humanity, as well as man’s relationship with his fellowman. We will be able to define and establish a basis for testing and determining authentic discipleship.

God takes the initiative in man’s salvation and retains the responsibility for man’s nurture/discipleship even where human agencies are employed (Phil 2:13). This serves as a possible explanation of man’s constant yearning to experience something more than the mundane.

Man, by design, is intricately linked to God as a spiritual being. Gen 1:27 states, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” In defining the image of God, Morris stated that “the ‘image of God’ refers chiefly to the fact that man possesses personal, rational, and moral qualities and has a God-consciousness, making him totally distinct from the animals.”

Ellen White took this thought to an even higher level: “Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God.”

The use of the word counterpart is significant. The Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary defines counterpart as “one having the same function or characteristics as another.” God was, in reality, replicating his character and purpose in man. Ellen White further asserted that man, as he came form the hand of God, possessed “a will in harmony with the will of God, and affections that centered upon heaven.”

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5Ellen G. White, “Go Ye Into All the World,” Review and Herald, June 18, 1895, 1.


7Ellen G. White, “Keeping the Heart,” Youth’s Instructor, March 5, 1903, 1.
Sin has affected this natural relationship of perfect harmony between God and man. Since man’s nature was marred by sin, he would experience unrest as long as he remained in disharmony with his intended nature. To be in harmony with his intended nature, he must abide in Christ. Ellen White has captured the essence of the image of God in relation to discipleship by clarifying that “abiding in Christ is choosing only the disposition of Christ, so that His interests are identified with yours. Abide in Him, to be and to do only what He wills. These are the conditions of discipleship, and unless they are complied with, you can never find rest. Rest is in Christ; it cannot be as something apart from Him.”

When man sinned, his spiritual nature was not destroyed; it was only damaged. Ellen White completed the thought by saying, “Though now marred and dim through the influence of sin, traces of this inscription remain upon every soul.” Thus, in spite of man’s rebellious nature due to sin, he is still somewhat sensitive to his God relationship. God mercifully allows man to be able to respond to his grace. Gibbs and Bolger sought to establish God’s universal claim in stating that “Secularization, far from undermining religion . . . has created spiritual vacuum and a deep desire for integration.”

Even though humans, made in the image of God, are marred by sin, we are still capable of discovering truth, “but in practice man seldom, if ever, accomplishes this in an

8White, *Selected Messages*, 1:110.

9Ellen G. White, “The Lost Piece of Silver,” *Union Conference Record*, July 1, 1900, 1.

ultimate sense.”\textsuperscript{11} The person is never truly at ease even in a religious environment until he experiences a genuine relationship with Christ. Malphurs pointed to research in contemporary settings, indicating that “the majority of those who leave the churches feel a deep sense of commitment, but end up leaving out of a need to experience God at a deeper level, while the culture of their local church does not lend itself to this.”\textsuperscript{12}

At times, when this residual image of God in man seeks to find expression of the inevitable tension, it is misguided and ends up satisfying the longing in unsanctified ways. This was demonstrated in the experience of the Pharisees whose primary motivation was their quest for righteousness, but this quest, misguided, only led to legalism with a passion. Like the Pharisees, many modern examples provide evidence of attempted revivals that have gone askew. This explains, at least in part, the phenomenon of revival efforts that have not realized the commensurate reformation. Every failed or successful attempt at revival holds lessons that can be used as teaching points for future efforts.

Discipleship Movement

Defining the Movement

A brief look at the Discipleship Movement, as well as the Emergent Movement, is important for this study as possible sources for influencing certain developments in popular approaches to discipleship. These contrasting movements serve to evaluate clearly and to conclude not just what to do, but possibly what not to do in addressing the

\textsuperscript{11}Morris, \textit{The Young Earth}, 14.

\textsuperscript{12}Malphurs, \textit{Strategic Disciple Making}, 43.
present ills and pathologies of the church in light of discipleship.

The exploding Charismatic movement of the 1960s gave rise to a number of independent churches and fellowships. One of the outcomes of this Charismatic renewal was the Discipleship Movement (sometimes called the Shepherding Movement), which would cast long shadows of influence well into the 80s and 90s.\(^{13}\) They followed on the heels of the personal discipleship movement, started by Dawson Trotman at the turn of the 20\(^{th}\) Century.\(^{14}\) The Shepherding Movement emphasized the need for “personal, one-on-one pastoral care.” This “personal care,” however, saw widespread abuse of domination and misuse of power.\(^{15}\) The theology that opened the way for this approach was based on interpretation of Psalm 110. “They believed that Christ would establish God’s rule to reign through his people on earth.”\(^{16}\) As the visible “alternate society” the church would set forth explicit norms for behavior and community life with a view to impacting society positively through its quality of living.\(^{17}\)

This movement was a response to the growing religious disquiet, but would later face its own demise by failing to let go of the modern worldview of authoritarianism. The elements of oversight and accountability were taken to extremes; and this backfired leaving the movement bleeding. Wagner’s attempts to explain, if not justify the


\(^{14}\) Dennis McCallum with Jessica Lowery, *Organic Disciplemaking: Mentoring Others Into Spiritual Maturity and Leadership* (Houston, TX: TOUCH Publications, 2006), 33.

\(^{15}\) Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 204.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 207.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 208.
movement, reflected the thinking of many who saw it as the answer to the spiritual ills of the time. In this apologetic statement, he concluded, “The Discipling Movement eventually imploded because of a misunderstanding of authority and submission, with some of its founding leaders publicly apologizing for the movement. Many of these leaders made their share of mistakes, but God nevertheless used them as significant forerunners.”¹⁸ This attempt at achieving a desirable end has valuable lessons of caution for our modern approaches.

**Weaknesses of the Movement**

Cole got to the heart of the issue by exposing one of the basic weaknesses of the worldview that gave birth to the Discipleship Movement. He stated, “Imbedded in modernism, Christianity had become mostly a rational belief system where personal feelings were not to be trusted.”¹⁹ The all-important pursuit was to discover the absolute truth. The postmodern mind, on the other hand, is more intrigued by mystery than with solutions. They revel in the path to discovery and the challenge of biblical faith is particularly attractive.²⁰ However, the reality of our present situation is that we are in a dynamic tension. Kimball insightfully pointed out that “because we are in transition, some people are born into a postmodern, post-Christian era who, in their local environment, grow up in modern atmosphere and soil. Many younger Christians growing

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²⁰Ibid., 39.
up in Christian homes are very modern, as their parents enforced modern values. In some areas of the country, many people are still not feeling the full impact of postmodernism and the younger people may still be very modern.”21 This means we might have to address the needs of several divergent views separately or find a new and creative way to address the tension in a single approach. This presents the opportunity for a defining moment in the gospel’s claim to be able to address the needs of all.

Emergent Churches and the Missional Lifestyle

The church is never isolated from cultural factors surrounding it. Divergent as well as converging world views and cultural shifts have affected and dramatically changed the religious landscape in the recent past and we would do well to consider a few of the more significant results.

Postmodern Worldview

The Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary defines postmodern as “of, relating to, or being a theory that involves a radical reappraisal of modern assumptions about culture, identity, history, or language.”22 This suggests an intentional parting with the previous modernist approaches in all areas of life. However, because the gospel is timeless and premeditates breaking all cultural and ethnic barriers, it can neither be modern nor postmodern; it must address both modern and postmodern individuals while bringing salvation to all (Rev 14: 6). We must also consider seriously the implications of


becoming “all things to all men” in order to save some (1 Cor 9:22). Some adaptation will be necessary in order to engage both sides of the conversation in a meaningful way. While not embracing all things, the approach is to glean the time tested values, which may prove helpful in addressing the needs of the congregation under consideration.

It is against this background that this section seeks to employ insights that are biblically sound from both modern and postmodern movements, as well as other approaches, as they are presented by the literature under review. This project neither endorses modern nor postmodern worldviews. They both have weaknesses. As Putman rightly stated, “It is important to note . . . that bringing a person to acceptance of Jesus as the way does not mean converting that person to a worldview; it means giving that person a new lens—which is the grace of God—through which to examine his or her existing worldview.”

Postmodernism and the Emergent Profile

The Emergent church movement came to the fore somewhere in the early to mid-1990s. Standing in contrast to the modern view of church where the focus was on one ‘clean model’ to imitate, there are hundreds and thousands of models of emerging churches. In spite of this, we can use the term emergent movement in a collective reference since “there are enough common themes, protests, and shared ideas.”

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This project does not intend to undertake a comprehensive study of the emergent church, but to reflect on the movement as a contemporary phenomenon embracing a number of approaches with implications for discipleship. The Emergent stance on missional living stares stonily at any position of the church that fails to espouse what they believe to be the full expression of the life of Christ. Cole observed that “the emerging world lacks some definition because it is more a reaction against the old worldview than a proactive solution. This reaction has some startlingly helpful analyses, however, and it has some inherent values that present great opportunity for the Good News of God’s kingdom.”26 Carson, however, felt that it was difficult to assert that the emergent church movement is a protest against modernism since neither modernism nor is postmodernism easy to define. He continued, “Even experts in intellectual history disagree on their definitions.”27

In light of this, it is far more productive to interact with the emergent discussion as a means to exploring answers. The emerging church movement, as the sharpest response to and critic of “what is not working” in the churches, provides the incentive for reexamining our approaches and reaching meaningful conclusions. In addition, the many nuances of its different proponent’s ‘conversation’ and the limitations of this study afford us only to extract some key elements of the movement to serve as a sounding board for building a discipleship strategy within the context of church.

26Cole, Church 3.0, 25.

27D. A. Carson, Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 25.
Relationships and Honesty

It is as challenging to define postmodernism as it is to define the Emergent Church, but there are some common threads holding together both Emergents and Postmodernists. These stand in contradistinction to their preceding generation. Any serious discussion of the postmodern culture must take into account that relationship is the overarching value of the postmodern mind.\textsuperscript{28} Cole stated that because of the high premium put on relationships, “lying about who you really are is the greatest sin because it leaves the entire relationship built on deception.”\textsuperscript{29} Hence postmodernists make every effort to ‘keep it real’.

Many critics of the movement like DeYoung and Cluck were quick to point out that taken to its logical conclusion, there is some contradiction here because ‘keeping it real’ implies speaking the truth and for this worldview, claims to absolute truth are held with high suspicion, as it would imply a destination.\textsuperscript{30} The popular justification among its proponents is that we are “becoming Christians, becoming church, becoming saved.”\textsuperscript{31} One can clearly see that this mindset would not be easily offended by imperfections but on the contrary, would feel insulted by deception about one’s imperfections. The rise in popularity of reality shows with “no morals to the stories” is evidence of this worldview.\textsuperscript{32} Viewers find appealing the fact that these are not actors;

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{28}Cole, \textit{Church 3.0}, 28.
    \item \textsuperscript{29}Ibid.
    \item \textsuperscript{30}DeYoung and Kluck, \textit{Why We Are Not Emergent}, 112-113.
    \item \textsuperscript{31}Ibid., 33.
    \item \textsuperscript{32}Cole, \textit{Church 3.0}, 32.
\end{itemize}
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they are ordinary people who have chosen to expose the truth about themselves and invite others to come and see. What are the implications? As Cole pointed out, for the postmodern mind, truth that is not lived out is “just a statement of fact, not faith.”33 One can readily see the positive implications for someone who has genuinely experienced conversion. This testimony as a witness would be compelling.

The statement and the life of the individual must peacefully occupy the same space. Beckett provided support by referencing Greek dualism, which puts sacred and secular in two separate realms. This, he contended, has dominated the church for centuries and has informed our theology and practice.34 Emergents reject this concept. They see life as a blended whole. Gibbs and Bolger argued, “When church is equated with a meeting that meets in a building at a particular time, it implicitly leads to a split between church life and the rest of life, thereby creating a sacred/secular divide.”35 At the heart of this research is the question, “How can we encourage and facilitate church members to follow Jesus daily?”

Experience or Proposition

Another important value is experience as opposed to proposition. Cole has provided some understanding into the rise of spiritualism. He insightfully observes that “the occult and witchcraft are on the rise because they offer a spiritual experience beyond


sitting in a pew and hearing about the spiritual world.”

While not to be recommended as a belief system, the value of blending belief and experience/practice can readily be grasped.

The implications are far reaching, as Frederick Copleston explained: “Without experience the proposition would not be enunciated; nor should we apprehend the meaning of the terms.” This thought is pregnant with ideas for discipleship, as it is true that at the heart of discipleship is learning by imitating actions as opposed to learning limited to memorizing information.

**Missional Lifestyle**

One of the attractive features of the Emergent Movement is the focus on evangelizing people who are usually “overlooked by the church, or at very least largely untouched by the church’s witness.” Church is predicated upon sacrificial love. In light of this, emerging church thinkers reject the mindset of investing major efforts on self-interests or inwardly focused ministries. Putman corroborated this core principle by commenting on Phil 2:4-8: “While we are constantly looking for how we can move up, get ahead, and break out in front of the pack, Jesus continued to surrender more and more of Himself until, ultimately, He gave up His own life.”

This translates into the lives of his followers as their having zeal to get outside of

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36Cole, Church 3.0, 33.


38Carson, Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church, 52.

39Putman, Breaking the Discipleship Code, 14.
themselves, touching the lives of others in meaningful ways, identifying with them in their pain and their joy. This, Putman believed, is the essence of what it means to experience the kingdom. In light of this thought, Gibbs and Bolger saw a ripple mode of expansion as “multiple circles of relationships lived out in the wider community.”

They saw the mission as God’s mission (which is to save the world) and we are given the privilege of participating with God. The goal is not for the church to determine where to take God, but to find out where God is working and join Him there. They further claimed, “Emerging churches create missional communities that follow the pattern set by Jesus.” Though this may at its surface be appealing, one should be cautioned that the emerging churches have carried this concept to conclusions that are unbiblical. Additionally, this blanket statement at best must be held suspect for several reasons:

1. While the process of the Emerging church has no destination, Jesus teaches a process that has a destination (Rom 12:1,2).

2. As DeYoung and Cluck pointed out, they confuse and “equate uncertainty with humility.”

3. Most importantly, “What is absent from the emergent understanding of the kingdom is the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is

40Putman, Breaking the Discipleship Code, 14.
41Gibbs and Bolger, Emerging Churches, 52.
42Ibid.
43Ibid., 59.
44DeYoung and Kluck, Why We Are Not Emergent, 39.
born again he cannot see the kingdom of God' (John 3:3). What’s missing is a call to conversion."  

As an outgrowth of postmodernism, the Emergent Movement is more a reaction to the times than it is rooted in the foundational discipleship principles of the Bible. Hull observed, “Christianity without discipleship causes the church to assimilate itself into the culture. And sadly, whenever the difference between the church’s and culture’s definition of morality ceases to exist, the church loses its power and authority.”  

However, in spite of the foregoing, Carson conceded that the postmodern mindset of the Emergent movement has strengths that we would do well to at least consider and reflect upon. He summarized them thus:

1. It has been very effective at exposing the weaknesses and pretentions of many strands of modernism.

2. It has encouraged us to think a little more about the role of metaphor. The countless ways personal experience shapes our judgment, the impress of culture on our thought forms, and the way these and other factors interact with one another.

3. It has been sensitive to the diversity of cultures in the world.

4. It has insistently demanded that the implications of finitude in all claims of human knowing be recognized.  

45DeYoung and Kluck, Why We Are Not Emergent, 188.


47Carson, Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church, 103-104.
Spiritual Formation

In any quest for spiritual vitality, a return to the Bible basics of spiritual formation is the answer. Understanding the proper role and function of the Holy Spirit in the life and development of the disciple is critical as an underpinning to any discussion on spiritual formation. However, the role of the person in his spiritual growth must also be underscored. Foster establishes the purpose of spiritual disciplines as “the total transformation of the person. They aim at replacing old destructive habits of thought with new life-giving habits.”48 Bonhoeffer concurred by adding that upon receiving the word of God, what matters over everything else is practical obedience which frees one up to truly become a child of God.49 This establishes a practical response, demonstrated in commitment and devotion as an outgrowth of the Holy Spirit initiative.

Foster picked up on Bonhoeffer’s emphasis on avoiding the trap of cheap grace and further outlines the path to spiritual growth by presenting the classical disciplines in three movements of the Spirit. The inward, the outward, and the corporate disciplines are presented as being achieved by “the total rulership of the Holy Spirit.”50 Putman agreed that “the spiritual fruit we bear reflects the work of the Spirit in us. . . . When the Holy Spirit works in us to cultivate this result, we will find we are living the life of a missional follower of Jesus.”51 He expanded on the idea later by highlighting a serious


49Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship, 74.

50Foster, Celebration of Discipline, 189.

51Putman, Breaking the Discipleship Code, 91.
misunderstanding regarding spiritual growth. He emphatically denounced dependency on clergy as the source of energy for spiritual growth. Russell Burrill echoed and developed this thought by making a convincing argument citing the Adventist shift from personal responsibility to clergy dependency:

Once Adventists adopted the dependency model and settled pastors over local churches, church growth ebbed. One of the most amazing developments in Adventism has been that the only parts of the world not showing significant church growth are those areas, such as North America, that have adopted the dependency model. Areas of the world that still operate on the model of early Adventism, where pastors have twenty or more churches and primarily function as evangelists, display the highest rate of church growth today.

The correlation between the dependency model and lack of growth warrants a serious look at revisiting the early Adventist model in light of the urgency of the Great Commission. The spiritual formation process is a lifelong process and is time-intensive. This need cannot be satisfied by a weekly church service where the emphasis is on the star performance of hired clergy.

The Great Commission

In the parting statements of Jesus just before his crucifixion, he expands on what following him would look like after his departure. He underscores love as the visible, uncontroverted identifying mark that would distinguish his disciples (John 13:35). The SDA Bible Commentary explains the mode of their loving as “literally, ‘keep on having love.’ Constant, fervent manifestations of love, rather than isolated, fitful outbursts of

\(^{52}\) Putman, *Breaking the Discipleship Code*, 95.

charitableness.” Putman articulates well the power of this dynamic. He states quite concisely yet profoundly, “When we love like Jesus, we are compelled to live like Jesus.” This moves the proposition of the gospel into the realm of credibility and renders it compelling.

When the disciples accepted the call to follow Jesus, there was initiated a process that would move them from bickering fishermen to a loving, cohesive, Spirit-articulated body proclaiming the gospel with life-changing potency. “And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed him” (Matt. 4:19, 20). The Adventist Bible Commentary highlights several points emerging from this text. First, there is no special appointment. Usually, without warning, it confronts, intrudes, and interrupts one’s normal activities. Second, it is Jesus who calls. Third, the call is always in the imperative, which allows only two possible responses: a positive or a negative response. Jesus refuses to negotiate (Luke 9:59–62). Finally, “the call summons us to walk with Jesus, abandoning whatever security we may have had.”

As Cole observed, any discipling strategy must be first and foremost the work of God. The Gospel Commission, therefore, rightly understood would mean: “The church is not sent on a mission by God; rather, God is on a mission and the church is called to join Him.”

55 Putman, Breaking the Discipleship Code, 22.
57 Cole, Church 3.0, 47.
The missional disciple does not perceive his calling as limited to programs of the organized church. His calling is comprehensive of everything he is and does. Cole, in quoting Alan Hirsch, stated, “A missional theology is not content with mission being a church-based work. Rather, it applies to the whole of life of every believer.” This means that, as opposed to the attractional or centripetal model as seen in the Old Testament, the missional Christian defines himself by the mission of God and is controlled by its mandate as he engages life itself. By extension, all his relationships reflect this consciousness.

Challenges to Establishing a Culture of Discipleship

There are various factors that militate against the effort to establish a culture of discipleship within the Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church. The major ones have been articulated well by several authors. I shall outline them while giving brief reflections upon the relevant literature with a view to expanding on them in Chapter 4.

In evaluating these challenges and the efforts to meet them, one must bear in mind that the core principle of the Great Commission of Matt 28: 19, 20 never changes nor is it bound by cultural changes. Verse 20 implies an uncompromised commitment to the pure teachings of Jesus.

Maturity as Qualification

Who should disciple others? The age-old question of qualification always poses a challenge to discipleship efforts. McCallum and Lowery exposed and answered a very popular misconception that is at the forefront of every crippled effort at establishing a

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58 Cole, *Church 3.0*, 47.
culture of discipleship. They noted that in the Bible, “the examples we have of disciplemakers are highly qualified, like Jesus, Timothy, and Paul. However, this does not prove that such high qualifications are necessary.” There were others less qualified, such as the twelve before they had advance training (Matthew 10). They stressed, “We have seen Christians only months or a year old in the Lord do good discipling work with new believers . . . We love to see believers take on a disciple as soon as they are able, because we know both the disciple and the discipler will do better as a result.” Longenecker identified five categories of disciples ranging from the crowds following Jesus to the inner circle of the twelve. Melbourne distinguished groups forming concentric circles of disciples around Jesus, ranging from the three who were closest to Jesus: Peter, James and John to the one hundred and twenty. Beyond that, a large number of followers who were less committed to discipleship. There is a tendency to limit discipleship activity to the twelve. However, there is no indication that any category, as observed by Longenecker, was restricted from bringing another to Christ.

I concur with McCallum and Lowery that the work of disciple making is never left up solely to humans. Malphurs stated, “First, and the most important of those responsible for making disciples, is God.” Philippians 2:13 declares, “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” This establishes that

59 McCallum with Lowery, Organic Disciplemaking, 45.
60 Ibid., 46.
62 Melbourne, Called to Discipleship, 63.
63 Malphurs, Strategic Disciple Making, 37.
God is the initiator and the finisher of our salvation. Paul, in 1 Cor 3:7-9, convincingly established that we are acting the part of being co-laborers with God: “So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.”

Wrongly understood, the work of discipling can assume fearsome proportions. As a result, it is often cast as the job of the professionally trained clergy. Melbourne stated, “Jesus called those whom He wanted as disciples. This implies, as we have seen, that the initiative for discipleship resides with Him. He extends the call, the Spirit prompts acceptance, and people respond as they choose. This means we must be available to serve wherever God assigns us.”64 The call to be a disciple/discipler, therefore, is the prerogative of God while responding to the call or readiness to act resides with the individual.

**Overcoming Sin as Qualification**

The great faith-building testimonies of some can often eclipse others, invoking feelings of spiritual inferiority. Thus, in a state of feeling inferior, they often shy away from commitments for fear of being exposed by failure of any kind, or worse, experience some monumental embarrassment. The fear of spiritual failure is often simplified as stubbornness to surrender. Putman’s insightful observation should be noted:

For a man who comes to accept Jesus following years of addiction, there are years of recovery ahead of him as he replaces the crutch of substance abuse with the buttresses

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64Melbourne, *Called to Discipleship*, 63.
of Jesus. The same is true for someone coming from a different religious worldview. It often takes years for Jesus to clean out the house of competing ideologies and behaviors.65

Many have argued that one must have long experience in the mastery over sin before he can be considered for full involvement in the discipleship process—even to the ultimate stage of discipling others. This is a very critical issue and must be addressed in light of the far-reaching implications for the discipling process.

Ellen White rightly extolled the virtues of having proper processes in place for the nurture and equipping of the convert. She confirmed her point by referencing the disciples of Jesus. “When the disciples came forth from the Saviour’s training, they were no longer ignorant and uncultured. They had become like Him in mind and character, and men took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.”66 This statement, however, does not discredit early involvement and must be coupled with other insights such as the following:

The Samaritan woman who talked with Jesus at Jacob’s well had no sooner found the Saviour than she brought others to Him. She proved herself a more effective missionary than His own disciples. . . . Their thoughts were fixed upon a great work to be done in the future. . . . Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. No sooner does he come to know the Saviour than he desires to make others acquainted with Him. The saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart.67

McCallum and Lowery harmonized well with Ellen White’s recommendation to initiate new believers immediately by arguing convincingly from personal experience. In reflection upon his past, McCallum recalled, “Most people had no idea how immature I

65Putman, Breaking the Discipleship Code, 64.


was when I won my first disciple. As a year-old Christian, my knowledge level was dirt low. I still had not completely broken away from some very bad sin habits that had controlled my life as a non-Christian."68 One only needs to take a cursory look at the twelve disciples of Jesus to corroborate the above statement.

Comfort Zones

Many established churches tend to fall into the “fortress mentality” mode. Church for them is simply a haven of rest from life’s challenges where one can retreat behind safe walls. Some individuals are paralyzed by fear at the thought of mingling with their community. Putman emphatically maintained that to be missional means “getting outside ourselves and into their world, their lives, their minds, and their search.”69 McNeal was acutely aware of the challenge that this poses to many and emphasizes the difficulty of trying to make the paradigm shift to becoming missional. He summarized this challenge by stating that “helping people grow and develop is hard work.”70

Any treatment of the issue of the comfort zone of members must include a discussion on the cost of discipleship. The SDA Bible Commentary states, “The ‘cost’ of discipleship is the complete and permanent renunciation of personal ambitions and of worldly interests.”71 Central to the inertia phenomenon is the deterrent of having to consider the true cost of discipleship. Even Jesus had to admit that the cost could be a

68 McCallum with Lowery, Organic Disciplemaking, 46.
69 Putman, Breaking the Discipleship Code, 63.
70 McNeal, Missional Renaissance, 11.
major issue (Matt 10:15-28). Collinson brought sobering attention to this challenge by stressing that “few were prepared for the level of commitment required.” This radical shift from self to Christ has far reaching implications for the mission of God’s people and the level of commitment that is acceptable to him.

Lack of Acceptance

By definition, a disciple is one who has experienced total acceptance and is called upon to give as he has received. Stetzer and Putman emphasized, “Christianity is about what God did for man through Christ in order to give us unconditional approval and acceptance.” They explore the meaning of discipleship and summarize with this brief but discerning description of what a disciple looks like: it is “living like Jesus lived, loving like Jesus loved, and leaving what Jesus left behind.” Key to the process of integrating an individual into a community of faith is to let him feel acceptance and a sense of belonging before he will feel inclined to accept. The individual must feel that the new environment to which he is invited is safe and accepting.

Unconditional acceptance of all people is the distinguishing mark of a true disciple of Christ (John 13:35; Matt 5:43-48). Anything short of this is the ultimate threat to the Great Commission and, by extension, a death threat to the church, for at the core of the Gospel is its proclamation to not just all people, but to all kinds of people.

73Stetzer and Putman, Breaking the Missional Code, 131.
74Ibid., 127.
The Subculture of the Group

Our subculture fosters a consumer spirit where the members feel the church exist primarily for them. David Putman advanced that “for too long our churches have been for members only . . . God has called us to go and tell; He also has called us to invite others to come and see.”75 This lack of openness to others affects even new converts to the extent that they experience the futility of trying to penetrate the walls of long established cliques. Melbourne cited the example of Jesus in his non-partial treatment of all kinds (including the publicans) and shows that he even had “table fellowship with them which was tabooed.”76 Jesus showed that one’s discipleship obligation does not stop with merely not hating someone; it involves having fellowship with, as well.

Accession Emphasized over Assimilation

Pastors have learned to respond and pay attention to the things that are traditionally inspected. These are bodies, budgets, and buildings. Sometimes the pressure to improve and expand that which can be quantified results in the neglect of the all-important unseen responsibility.

Barna asked a very penetrating question that is unsettling by its implications: “What would happen for God’s kingdom if we did not consider our job complete when people confess their sins and say a prayer inviting Jesus to be their Redeemer, but would use their new commitments to Christ as a launching pad for a lifelong quest to become individuals who are completely sold out—emotionally, intellectually, physically, 

76 Melbourne, *Called to Discipleship*, 121.
spiritually—to the Son of God?" This demands a response. If an equal amount of effort were devoted to nurture we would see more mature disciples. Research done by Barna indicates that “discipleship . . . occurs when there is an intentional and strategic thrust to facilitate spiritual maturity.”

**Lack of Clear Goals**

The biblical definition of a disciple outlines goals and expectations. These goals will provide motivation and afford the opportunity for assessing progress. Failure to establish reasonable goals is at the root of many frustrated disciples.

Barna felt that the failure is on the part of the church. He pointed to data indicating that nine out often church members surveyed indicated that “if their church helped them to identify specific spiritual-growth goals to pursue, they would at least listen to the advice and follow parts, if not all, of it.” Malphurs argued that every church should have “a simple, clear pathway for making disciples.” This pathway should be effectively communicated and the expectations clearly defined.

The clear danger exists of becoming legalistic in having a checklist approach to one’s spiritual walk. Barna pointed out the danger of not communicating and understanding what is the expected outcome. He warned, “Lacking a clear notion of what we’re trying to become as believers, we often settle for something less than the biblical

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78 Ibid., 31.

79 Ibid., 47.

standard— and certainly less than what we are capable of becoming.”

Lack of Mentorship/Accountability

Research, according to Barna, shows that mentorship/modeling though exemplified by Christ is under-utilized, if used at all in many churches. Collinson looked at the method of Jesus against contemporary approaches and argues convincingly that “Jesus also taught by modeling in his own life the qualities he sought to inculcate.”

The accountability factor, as a necessary factor in discipleship, helps to ensure that goals are pursued and required tasks are completed. If done right, it also provides reassurance in times of discouragement.

Small Groups and Mentoring

Joel Comiskey defined a small group or a cell group as “a group of people (4-15), who meet regularly for the purpose of spiritual edification and evangelistic outreach (with the goal of multiplication), who are committed to participate in the functions of the local church.” The optimal number is presented as eight.

Reexamining the Small Groups Model

Small groups have become the wave of the past forty years but can be traced in modern times to the Pietists on the European continent and Dissenters in Britain who

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81 Barna, Growing True Disciples, 89.
82 Ibid., 92.
83 Collinson, Making Disciples, 50.
84 Joel Comiskey, How to Lead a Great Cell Group Meeting (Houston, TX: Touch Publications, 2001), 13.
revived the “house church” around the 1600s. This concept has always been the staple of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from its early beginnings, whether informally through common interest or formally through the Sabbath School classes. However, Schwarz was quick to point out that it has not had the successes seen in the third world within Adventism. While many will extol the virtues of the small groups concept, there is a need for re-examination of this concept with a view to establishing its overall impact on the discipleship process. While not dismissing small groups, Barna disagreed that they were indispensable to the process of discipleship. The basis of his disagreement is summarized in the following:

A majority of those who say they are involved in some type of discipleship activity, for instance, contend that because they are involved in a small group, they are on track. Unfortunately, our research shows that most small groups do well with fellowship but falter when it comes to facilitating transformation. Even the teaching delivered in most small groups has little enduring influence in the lives of group participants. Few believers, regardless of the route they select to generate growth, have goals—and most of the goals that have been set are either vague or elementary.

It appears that the sense of satisfaction that many small group participants experience is derived largely from the fellowship it offers. While this is a legitimate aspect of discipleship, it somewhat falls short of addressing other vital goals and expectations of the discipleship process.

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87Barna, Growing True Disciples, 54-55.
Establishing a Mentorship Model

McNeal has pointed out that “study after study continues to reveal that active church members do not reflect a different value set than the culture at large. In addition, they are beset by the same lifestyle ills of non-participants.”88 This suggests that there has to be more than just keeping the member busy. Their developmental age as Christians lags far behind their numerical age. This serious problem must be addressed.

Stetzer and Putman outlined a five-part process: searching, believing, belonging, becoming, and serving. They described an organic overlapping process where intentionality is integral, rather than the more unnatural linear, step-by-step approach.89 With this approach, the discipler invests himself in the disciple, thus enabling him to love like Jesus loved—that is the ultimate goal of the process. Jesus discipled through sharing his vision, modeling his way of life, encouraging, and enabling others to follow him.90 Cole agreed with Stetzer and Putman by stating it succinctly: “I believe our churches will be much healthier once we are no longer concerned only with decisions to accept Christ but rather with the process of becoming like Him.”91

Conclusion

The current literature on discipleship reflects the thoughts and ideas through research and experience that have been collected over decades. The challenge of

88 McNeal, Missional Renaissance, 10.
89 Stetzer and Putman, Breaking the Missional Code, 29.
90 Ibid., 35-36.
91 Cole, Church 3.0, 41.
application and execution may prove daunting against the background of the multiplicity of approaches. However, when carefully selected using the biblical data as a control and in relation to its value to discipleship in the context of this project, the task becomes more meaningful and the selection process more directed.

As each person as a disciple, seeks to contextualize the concept of discipleship as exemplified by Christ, it becomes evident that his worldview and the specific needs of his situation weigh heavily on the way s/he interprets and applies the biblical data. However, as ones worldview puts the spotlight on one’s values, and whereas one’s values control one’s choices; it becomes possible to determine the direction of life and the level of commitment by whether or not one’s worldview aligns with or is subjected to what Jesus taught and lived.

This review informs the Dunamis project in several ways: (1) it provides a basis in the Creation Story for establishing God’s ideal, and explains the reason for the intensity of God’s love in pursuing man, (2) it has exposed different models of discipleship with their pros and cons which helps in guiding the adaptation of a model for this project, (3) it outlines emerging trends and suggested possible pitfalls to avoid as new and creative approaches are explored, and (4) it highlights the time-tested and proven value of commitment to a life of practicing spiritual disciplines. The life of Jesus was one of power and influence achieved through service and sacrifice. As he called men and women to a life of discipleship, his life exemplified everything he preached. Thus, the investment of his life was far reaching in changing the life of those even beyond his immediate audience.
CHAPTER IV

DUNAMIS AND THE DISCIPLESHIP STRATEGY

General Background

Introduction

This chapter provides a brief survey of the background to the Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church in order to establish a context for initiating the strategy process. The implementation process will also be delineated for its implications for growing disciples within this church community. The brief contextual information will reveal pushes and pulls, which have implications for slowed growth.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the Dunamis Seventh-day Adventist Church is situated in one of the largest boroughs in one of the largest cities in the United States. The church comes with all the social dynamics of a thickly populated city. It has not only experienced the usual changes brought about by sociological factors, but has undergone some ecclesiastical and spiritual changes demanding special attention.

Burrell noted that a high percentage of churches will begin to plateau by their fifteenth birthday.¹ It will be observed that Dunamis was started in 1989 as a group and was organized as a church in 1999. Unlike the norm described by Burrell, it showed clear

signs of plateau in 2001 at the young age of 12 years.

The significant societal changes over the relatively recent past generations have posed important challenges to the church and the way it responds to the call to discipleship. These general societal changes, coupled with serious conflicts with leadership within this relatively young congregation, saw most of those in leadership leaving to form a new and separate congregation. In what was significantly the largest interfaith study of congregational life ever conducted in the United States, Roozen found in a 2008 survey that of the more serious conflicts a church may experience, conflicts in leadership has the greatest likelihood of producing serious negative consequences—the most serious consequence being member loss.²

Dunamis experienced this. The membership that remained after the split saw ensuing years of struggle to reestablish the spirit of unity among the remnant and to galvanize energy around the essentials of spiritual growth and kingdom-building. Compounding the problem was the growing sense that the different generations represented within the church were also growing apart. The youth constantly referred to the vibrancy and conference-wide reputation of excellence they enjoyed prior to the fissure and wondered out loud how they might regain their past reputation. The older members felt that present youth trends were too disturbing for them to accommodate. A happy medium was needed.

In a ten-year study, Dudley found that Adventist youth are desperately seeking love, acceptance, and spiritual depth. They are less than happy with the way things are

within the church generally. The majority of those who leave the church do not do so because of doctrinal disagreement, but rather, the confusion and tension that result from the inconsistency between what the older members say and what they do. Youth place a high degree of credibility on relationships and action, and reject pretense, referring to it as hypocrisy.³

At times, there was clear evidence that the groups loved each other, but did not understand each other. Traditional appeals failed to excite the passion of the membership and move them to action. The challenge of this project, therefore, is to apply the principles of discipleship, within this context, to meet the needs of a church struggling to regain its spiritual passion. Bonhoeffer insightfully observed that any approach attempting to achieve authentic Christianity must see the inclusion of discipleship at its core. He stated, “Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.”⁴

Influenced by this suggestion, a discipleship approach was, therefore, chosen as the key motivating factor.

The accession to attrition ratio served as a clear indication of spiritual sluggishness, at best. Figure 1 compares the percentage increase in membership in the areas of baptism, profession of faith, and letters of transfer experienced by the greater New York Conference and the Dunamis church for the period 2002 to 2006. Prior to my arrival at the church, the comparison shows the Dunamis church to be experiencing a significant lag behind the average percentage increase in membership as experienced by

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the Greater New York Conference on a whole. During this period, the church focused its energy on improving the physical structure of the sanctuary while it struggled to manage the increasing conflicts. This also proved to be a source of diversion from the missional focus of the church.

Prior to my arrival the Conference assigned Dr. Alanzo Smith, Family Life Director of the said Conference and expert in conflict resolution, to the church. He spent significant time with the congregation seeking to resolve some of the major conflicts and bringing stability to the church and achieving a platform upon which a meaningful strategy for discipleship could be built. I succeeded him.

The ensuing years were not free of conflicts. There were constant distractions stemming from an insufficiently healed past. The first two years of my tenure saw a ten percent decline in membership as adjustments were made and confidences were gained.
When I first perceived the decline, I panicked. Even though it drove me to my knees, I could not help feeling personally responsible. As a consequence, I got extremely busy. There was much activity, but little measurable advancement. It was particularly challenging after reading Eugene Peterson’s posture on the busy pastor:

But the word busy is the symptom not of commitment but of betrayal. It is not devotion but defection. The adjective busy set as a modifier to pastor should sound to our ears like adulterous to characterize a wife or embezzling to describe a banker. It is an outrageous scandal, a blasphemous affront.5

What followed was some serious self-assessment, frequent consultation with my mentor, Dr. Alanso Smith, a commitment to move only as God spoke to me through his word, and a more engaging spirit in my communication with the members. Figure 2 shows significant turnaround in percentage increase in the same areas as in the previous figure. Whereas the church experienced a 7 percent total increase in membership from 2002 to 2006; there was a 44 percent total increase in membership from 2007 to 2011.

Toward Establishing a Structure

Assuming from the given situation that the process of developing a discipleship strategy for the Dunamis church would not see dramatic results over a short period, we placed greater emphasis on carefully crafting a path to follow. The steps involved were carefully linked with tried and proven principles. Some of these steps were applied following a prescribed sequence, while others were initiated or introduced as recommendations to be applied over time. Through informal discussions, sermons, and prayer meetings, the soil was softened for the sowing as I worked on developing the strategy through research, listening, and prayer. In addition, the Personal Ministries time in the worship service was shared between the Personal Ministries Director and myself. I seized this opportunity for what I called “The Pastor’s Sound Bite.” This period was used to share nuggets I gleaned as I researched my Dissertation.

Reggie McNeal suggested that “leaders delude themselves if they think that
victory comes without conflict.” This was true for the Dunamis Church. When I was assigned to the church in 2006, I found that I needed time to reestablish confidence in leadership due to some residual paranoia from previous conflicts. There were periods of minor conflicts, but by the time this project came to a focus in 2011, significant progress was made and a spirit of embracing the strategy for meaningful discipleship started to take root.

**Casting the Vision**

At its best, planning is built around a vision. One major hurdle at the outset was to bring together the various thoughts into a single vision as to what should constitute the mission, vision, major goals, and objectives of the church. This had to be approached carefully as I felt that assuming too firm a position in any direction could easily polarize the congregation and weaken the recent positive achievements. Therefore, a more paced approach was assumed, giving time for individuals to grow as the Holy Spirit opened to their consciousness the vision of God. Rainer noted that leaders who have made significant strides in realigning their church to the missional vision typically did so “more slowly and with discernment.”

Having established the mode of moving forward, the next task is to get the people to see and own the vision. Mallory observed that the vision for any church must be rooted

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in Scripture, and only becomes reality when some person begins to see it.9 It is the conviction that God is working that fuels the passion to achieve great things for God. In light of this, the first consideration was to determine and define who we are and what God is seeking to accomplish with and through us as individuals and as a community. Dallas and Barna summarized the task this way: “Perhaps the two most important jobs of a leader that I would have are, number one, setting and casting a vision that sets the sights of the people in the organization on a tangible goal that is palpable, energizing, and exciting.”10

**Spiritual Formation**

It was observed that the majority of the members had mastered the art of executing certain church functions but with very little commitment to core Christian values. As the right approach for addressing the needs was considered, two main concerns presented themselves at the outset—sustainability and scope. We read and shared the definition of McKnight, which stated, “Christian spiritual formation is generally understood to be the process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others. It is inspired by the Holy Spirit and grounded in Scripture.”11 This suggested to us that the task was more than establishing just a new program. It demanded the establishment of a new culture.

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We asked ourselves how many individuals it would be practical to work with. Should we have a pilot group? Considering the nature of the congregation, we felt that any approach had to be long-term and as open and inclusive as is practical. The researcher opted for working with as many as were open to the project and made themselves available.

Understanding the need for committing ourselves to the Lord for the success of our plans as outlined in Prov 16:3 (NIV), we decided to consult the Lord before proceeding. We decided the church would embark on a seven-day fast. During these seven days, the focus was simply to ask God to make the church receptive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The fast started on Thursday and concluded on Wednesday evening. The testimonies that ensued from even some skeptics within the congregation led to a commitment to have a similar fast at least twice each year. It was also agreed that along with the corporate experience, fasting at the personal level would be practiced as a part of the spiritual disciplines.\textsuperscript{12}

**Elders Retreat**

The pastor and elders held a retreat the weekend following the fast to discuss more thoroughly details of moving the church forward. Considerable time was spent answering the following: (1) What is the shared vision for the church? (2) What are the broad outlines of the discipleship strategy? (3) What will be the established guiding principles for the execution of the strategy?

Several key insights were drawn from our discussions regarding leadership and

\textsuperscript{12}See appendix for outline of seven-day fast.
relationships as these affect discipleship. The discussions highlighted that we were weakest in our influence and relationship with the community. The elders realized that they served the community as well as the church. There was an overwhelming sense that, in order to reach out to the community, there had to be revival and reformation among the membership, starting with the leadership. Breen pointed out that a church reflects the dimensional strengths of its leadership. So if, as a church leader, you lack balance or you attend to one discipline more than another, it is likely your church will be out of balance as well.\(^\text{13}\)

The elders’ task, therefore, is threefold: (1) seeking a renewed focus on relationship with God through personally experiencing revival, (2) intentionally working to establish meaningful relationships with each other; and (3) understanding one’s spiritual gifts and appreciating the gifts of each other in order to function better as a team.

We agreed that time would be reserved in the monthly elders’ meeting to advance these considerations and pursue the discovery of their spiritual gifts by utilizing Connections, which is a kit for helping members not only discover their spiritual gifts, but also providing helpful structures to guide them into meaningful places of service where they may be fruitful and fulfilled.\(^\text{14}\) Upon completion, the elders would guide the members through the process of discovering their gifts by utilizing the same kit. The weekend concluded on a note of high enthusiasm with a view to sharing the vision at the board level for approval and further recommendations.

\(^{13}\)Breen, *Building a Discipling Culture*, 1030-1031.

We agreed that the questions answered and the conclusions drawn would be explored at a deeper level and help set the main agenda for the business of the church. It was clear that as we advanced this vision, we must establish and demonstrate God’s high ideals in His blueprint for His church in our planning, strategizing, and execution. “Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached.”\(^\text{15}\)

The Board

After the Elders’ retreat, there was an extended board meeting to incorporate all levels of leadership in the planning. At this meeting, the pastor proposed, as one of his ideas, inviting a group from the Natural Church Development team to conduct a study of the health of the church (as a basis for helping the church establish a culture of evangelism).\(^\text{16}\) The board accepted the idea, but felt that we should first invite a representative to meet with the board and help create a better understanding of what this process would entail. This suggestion was accepted and another meeting was planned for this to happen.

After the meeting with the representative, it was felt that the needs of the church might not be best met by their intervention. The whole proposal was debated, prayed for, and struggled with. The board was eventually not convinced that a Natural Church Development team was necessary as a way forward. They felt the Bible had all the principles we needed. Therefore, if we spent more time with the Bible and applied the


\(^{16}\)See Appendix for more info on Natural Church Development.
insights gleaned by the spiritual leaders, the church would make progress. In addition to the Board’s comments, feedback was randomly collected from other members of the church regarding how effective the church has been in discipleship and outreach activities, in particular.

**Bible Reading**

The Elders decided to develop the idea of Bible reading and make it more central for the spiritual growth of the church. It was agreed that every effort would be made to steer clear of unnecessary controversy and focus on understanding the Bible at a deeper level and making life applications for spiritual growth. We immediately committed to a regular and systematic Bible Class program that would convene every Sabbath afternoon. The elders would prepare themselves to lead the Bible Class sessions. In addition to this, the church decided to follow a Bible reading plan to read the entire Bible in one year.17

Hawkins and Parkinson advanced Bible study as a primary ingredient for spiritual revival by stating, “The Bible is the most powerful catalyst for spiritual growth.”18 Waggner concurred and took it a step further by stating that not only is Bible reading a stimulus to growth, but it is also the number one factor, or characteristic, most correlated to the highest maturity scores.19 With this in mind, Bible study would prove one of the key underpinnings of the entire process in our moving forward. This strategy is borne out

17See appendix for Bible reading plan.


in the revivals of Israel. A remarkable example is the great revival and reformation under
Josiah. It was driven by the king gathering Israel for the rediscovery of the will of God in
the reading of the word of God (2 Chron 34:30).

Advancing the Process

After spending time communicating the way forward with the entire church
membership and motivating them, launching this next phase of the process was easier
than previously anticipated. I believe this was so because by this time many questions
had been satisfactorily answered; there was a more positive attitude concerning the
purposes of the church and a sense of the possible benefits to be derived.

This phase was initiated by a formal announcement of and an invitation to attend
the “Following Jesus Seminar,” stating time and place of the meetings. This was printed
on 8½ x 5½ paper and inserted in the Sabbath program bulletin. This announcement was
also personally reinforced during the Divine Hour. The renewed interest in personal
Bible reading and the structuring of the Bible Class paid dividends as Bible principles
were reinforced in a fresh and meaningful way. The elders were challenged to find and
highlight discipleship principles of relationship, teaching and maturity while conducting
their Bible classes. Each elder was given a copy of Called to Discipleship by Dr. Bertram
Melbourne and committed to reading it on a regular basis. This exercise proved helpful
as a backdrop to my own sermon and seminar series.

20See Appendix for announcement.
21Melbourne, Called to Discipleship.
Survey

Prior to the sermon series and the seminar series, a survey was conducted to help extract the core values of the congregation. This information was vital in determining their spiritual strengths, needed growth areas, and how these could be used to inform their discipleship-building efforts. A snapshot of what these respondents did in the past month was also captured through another brief survey one week before the end of the series. This was done in order to cause serious reflection on what a disciple looks like as opposed to self-perception. This had its intended effect as it provided meaningful discussion and heart-searching in our last seminar session.

Each time the survey forms were handed out, the respondents were instructed to keep their information private, as anonymity was important. The results from the surveys were collated and analyzed and served to inform the formulation of the recommendations in Chapter 5. Both the sermon and the seminar series extracted principles from the books reviewed for this project. These principles served as support for the biblical underpinning in order to advance the stated objectives.

Sermon Series

The sermon series consisted of five sermons presented over five consecutive weeks in the regular Sabbath service. The sermons focused on the following areas: (1) Defining discipleship as it emphasizes relationship, (2) Jesus’ taking a personal interest in the success of the disciple, (3) the disciple’s identity in Christ, (4) Jesus using salt to demonstrate the nature and responsibility of the disciple, and (5) the cost of discipleship. The main objective of the sermons was to inspire and motivate, while the seminar series was designed for deepening the discipleship principles through interaction as the learning
process took place. See Appendix for sermon outlines.

**Seminar Series**

I conducted the seminar series, which followed on the Sabbath afternoon of the last sermon and convened for four ensuing Sabbath afternoons and one Sabbath morning. The title of the series was “Following Jesus.” This seminar series was designed to address the fundamental need for understanding discipleship at the personal level.

The seminars addressed the following areas: (1) Getting to the heart of discipleship, (2) the Process of maturing, (3) a disciple and his impact on his community, (4) the Emergent trend and its influence on today’s disciple, and (5) the disciple and teaching. These five areas are further expanded below:

1. **Getting to the heart of discipleship.** The definition of discipleship was carefully delineated and the question of what a disciple looks like was addressed and fully discussed. The life of Jesus was highlighted as the model and a brief sampling of the church’s experience in the book of Acts served to paint the picture of what a disciple should look like. It became clear to the participants that nothing short of the passion and commitment of the New Testament church would serve to justify the claims of being a true disciple.

2. **The process of maturing.** The experience of the disciple was tracked from his or her initial call to the point of maturity. Clarity was brought to the distinction between time and quality as factors of maturity. Ephesians 4:8-24 was used as the reinforcement throughout this session with other relevant passages playing a supporting role. We spent time reflecting on these passages and exploring the question “What does growth look like?” We were
challenged to look at practical ways to give ourselves the growth advantage. The ultimate goal of maturity is to be like Jesus (Rom 8:29). This maturity in Jesus is evident by his kind of love exhibited in us (John 13:35). This is only achieved by abiding in Jesus (John 15:5).

3. A disciple and his impact on his community. Session three looked closely at the commands and promises of Jesus to his disciples with regard to the Great Commission. We explored the meaning of the word “missional” against the biblical story of the incarnation of Jesus and looked at its implications for the Dunamis church. It was felt that radical changes had to be made in vision and programming. This was a particularly inspiring session.

4. The Emergent trend and its influence on today’s disciple. Key elements of postmodernism and the Emergent Movement were superimposed on some recent developments and conversations within the Dunamis church. The recent discussion centers on the growing sense of an ever-expanding generation gap and authentic Seventh-day Adventism. This particular session was done to show the dynamics of how we are influenced by cultural shifts and how we may learn from each other while maintaining our biblical grounding. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 was examined for possible principles to aid in this endeavor. We considered that the gospel is timeless and premeditates breaking all cultural, generational and ethnic barriers; it can neither be modern nor postmodern, but it must address both the modern and the postmodern while bringing salvation to all.
5. The disciple and teaching. The importance of teaching as integral to the process of discipling and baptizing was highlighted in this session. The correlation between the maturing disciple and maturing in knowledge was carefully looked at from Heb 5:12, 2 Pet 3:18, and other relevant passages. Every disciple-maker is, by definition, a teacher. The teaching method will be commensurate to the person’s God-given style and abilities. We also looked at the edification motif of the body of Christ concept within the context of spiritual gifts as a form of teaching.

6. A guest presenter was brought in to specifically address the area of how the disciple translates the gospel into the language of the community.

**Concerns for Outreach**

It was felt that we needed to look more specifically at the art of outreach. For this, Dr. G. Earle Knight, a church growth and evangelism specialist, was brought in to do a seminar on galvanizing the church for outreach. This seminar looked at the nuts and bolts of organizing the church for specifically taking the gospel to the community. It addressed the concerns of accession and attrition. A major portion of the session was spent on the concerns of Matt 18 and Luke 15 as they relate to the lost sheep.

**Effectiveness of the Strategy**

Each week, there was a brief elders’ huddle for accountability and clarity regarding their role in leading the church in the direction of discipleship. Each month, at our elders’ meeting, time was reserved for pursuing the discovery of their spiritual gifts. They learned useful tips that would prove helpful, as they would serve as an
augmentation to the pastor’s effort in helping the membership at large to discover their spiritual gifts. This was a meaningful exercise, which saw the greater portion of the elders completing the spiritual gifts inventory in a timely manner.

The iFollow Discipleship Curriculum was discussed as the ideal tool to help with the details of helping the church to stay on the discipleship course. This curriculum gives a choice of 100 milestones to choose from. It provides material for a wide variety of discipleship pursuits within the life of the church, from small groups resources to sermon outlines.

A weekly family prayer meeting was established. An outline highlighting discipleship principles was prepared based on the book *Adventist Home* by Ellen G. White. Families met weekly to study and discuss these principles. They were encouraged to find creative ways to incorporate the principles of Deut 6: 4-9 as they sought to immerse themselves in a discipleship experience as a family. Many families reported that they were having family worship for the first time. It was further decided to have more mature members join the less mature ones for Friday evening vesper services.

Each elder assumed charge for intentionally discipling at least one individual and report each week at the elders’ huddle. Hull believes that the most strategic move in helping new disciples is to partner them with healthy disciples who can walk with them closely through the first year and remain with them for the rest of their lives.\(^{22}\) The goal is to pour one’s life into the life of another in a natural and organic way in order to help him

or her grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ. This would serve as a means of mentoring, as well.

A challenge was given to incorporate into the planning of the church only those programs that would fulfill the mission of the church. Planning was approached from a strategic point of view by taking into account the overall vision for the church and by including only those specific goals and objectives that would fulfill the vision. Out of this approach grew a more outwardly focused programming. The outward focus brought many new converts to the church. Though the church was still experiencing some residual effects from the past, there was a renewed sense of purpose and mission.

**Conclusion**

This process was an exciting journey filled with some unexpected turns with surprising results. The reaction to the Natural Church Development intervention was not anticipated. It became clear very early that not all the anticipated elements would come to fruition based on the dynamic nature of the human element. We experienced changes in the leadership team due to the usual biennial election of church officers. This proved a minor distraction as adjustments were made and the fallouts, that sometimes happen, were addressed. There was also some concern for not being able to fully implement the spiritual gifts focus as a part of the overall strategy. Certain anticipated outcomes were not realized because of not being able implement some of these aspects of the strategy.

In spite of the minor distractions, the project essentially followed the intended path. The course established by the implementation of the discipleship strategy has positioned the Dunamis church to experience significant spiritual benefits. The church has already experienced a positive change in its membership growth by changing the
approach to discipleship. The full benefits of following this track will only be realized in years to come as the church stays the course. The overall reception, participation, and support of the membership was commendable. Many individuals made every effort to make a contribution to fulfill the goals established. I will expand on this experience and highlight the lessons learned from this journey in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER V

EVALUATION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

In this chapter the project will be evaluated on the basis of its outcomes. The lessons learned will be highlighted and recommendations for future implementation will be given, taking into account the lessons learned. The conclusions drawn from this project will serve for reflection, caution, and stimulus for future research in the area of discipleship. They will also serve the Dunamis Church membership as a roadmap for pursuing their quest for a better relationship with Jesus and as a strategy guide in seeking to formulate and implement similar projects.

Outcomes

Spiritual Formation

The main spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting and Bible reading proved effective as parts of the whole effort to create a heightened awareness of the presence of God in the life of the church and for the members to develop the practice of communing with God. Of particular importance was the demonstrated high level of interest in Bible study that was generated, especially among the younger membership of the church.

Prayer and Fasting

The Prayer Meeting topic was announced each Sabbath and a head count taken
each prayer meeting night. The attendance increased from an average of 13 to an average of 45 over a two-month period. A few nights saw over 60 members, as well as some visitors in attendance. Testimonies of how God worked powerfully after requests were prayed for in prayer meeting served to inspire confidence and boost attendance.

The seven-day fasts followed a basic outline of special things for which to pray. The fasts commenced on the Thursday after a special midweek prayer meeting. This meeting, in addition to its usual focus on prayer, was used to give special instructions for the fast. Participants were encouraged to consume only fruit juices or fruits and to avoid television, newspapers or, as far as possible, anything that could serve as a distraction. For each fast, the church identified one great need of the church—isolating its various aspects and praying for these over the seven days.

The fast would end on the following week’s prayer meeting night with a celebration of God’s blessings. Testimonies reflected not just spiritual blessings, but individuals testified to health benefits as well. Some even changed their eating habits and started practicing a more healthful diet.

Emphasis on Bible Reading

The Bible reading was pivotal and served as a catalyst in the entire process. It was established from the outset that everything we did must have a biblical basis. This meant slowing down certain aspects of the project to create understanding from the Bible. A vibrant Bible class conducted mainly by the elders became a staple ingredient of Sabbath afternoons. Of particular interest was the initiative of the youth to implement a Bible year quiz feature in the regular Adventist Youth Society programs, which kept them on target with the Bible year plan and helped to keep the interest alive.
As the Sabbath afternoons Bible classes sparked interest, it was felt that the more mature disciples needed a separate Bible class where they could take a deeper look at Scripture. It was felt that the pastor should lead this study and spare no information. The first three classes were charged with energy as we began with a study of Bible ancestry and a brief look at proper biblical hermeneutics. The excitement generated from these classes caused word to get around and led to almost everyone wanting to join this class. It was difficult to maintain exclusivity; therefore, the class content was adjusted to facilitate less mature disciples and later, merged with the regular class with the pastor teaching some subjects.

Some individuals felt blessed while others felt they received very little new information. While a search for deeper understanding was encouraged, endless debating was not entertained. This was done in a deliberate effort to keep an inquisitive but non-confrontational approach to the Bible study. This led to some frustration on the part of persons who wanted it to be otherwise. They believed confrontation is the best way to test and expose truth.

**Sermon Series and Seminar Series**

The sermons and seminar presentations were mostly well received by the membership. The number of those who participated in the seminar was more than expected. There was an average attendance of over one hundred members. However, Part 4 of the seminar series, which deals with the Emergent trends, as well as a reflection on extracts from the 2004 Valuegenesis report, generated considerable discussion and expressed discontent. It was hard for many members to accept that, to a large degree, the actions of the younger generation are a direct response to perceived and experienced
shortcomings of the previous generation. They were particularly disturbed by the implications for the survival of “authentic Adventism.”

In the next section, the results from the survey that was conducted at the beginning and at the end of the sermon series and the seminar series will be evaluated in order to assess the impact of these presentations on attitudes and perceptions regarding the disciple’s responsibility.

Evaluation

While it is difficult to measure spirituality, there are certain observable signs that lead to the conclusion that the overall impact of the project was meaningful to the Dunamis membership. The spiritual maturity of a disciple encompasses every area of life. Two surveys were conducted to assess some key indicators of spiritual maturity. A look at the results of the surveys conducted will assist in evaluating changes that occurred in attitude and perception regarding their discipleship maturity after the sermon series and the seminar series. It must be pointed out that the empirical value of these surveys is dependent on the honesty of the respondents.

The Survey

There are many useful instruments that have been developed for measuring and charting the growth and maturity of the disciple. I have chosen the iFollow Discipleship Road Map. This instrument is based on the Valuegenesis research sponsored by the Office of Education, North American Division of the General Conference. It serves the purpose of providing information that is helpful in determining possible approaches in the discipling process based on the level of the disciples’ indicated maturity.
The first survey was administered prior to the preaching series and the seminar series conducted at the Dunamis church. One preliminary meeting was held before any series was conducted. The agenda for that meeting was to have feedback and allow for questions to be asked. Toward the close of the meeting the iFollow Discipleship Road Map Survey was handed out. Of those who were in attendance for this brief overview and questions, 79 adults took the survey. The chart in Figure 5 below shows that 60 percent of the respondents indicated either above average or exceptional faith. This category, according to the iFollow Discipleship Road Map Survey, would describe persons with a mature discipleship lifestyle who consistently practice spiritual disciplines both at the personal and the corporate level. This would normally mean a spiritually strong church with many members actively engaged in disciple-making.

**Figure 5.** Faith maturity comparison.
Whereas in the first survey that was conducted before both the sermon series and the seminar series, the respondents indicated a high degree of spirituality, when asked what their discipleship actually looked like over a one-month period, their response was much more conservative.

The second survey consisted of four important questions. It must be pointed out that some individuals did not answer all questions, even though they were instructed to answer all questions. These questions were chosen to see a snapshot of what their discipleship looked like in practice. The time chosen (right after the series) was intended to provide a platform for the conversation on how they were influenced by the series and to determine what changes had occurred, if any. The four discipleship lifestyle practices that were tested and the resulting responses are indicated in Figure 6 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide a snapshot of your past month as a disciple, by answering the following:</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I met with other Christian for all of the following worship, teaching, prayer and fellowship.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I spent considerably more time reading the Bible than I did the newspaper, watching TV or surfing the internet.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I studied from the Bible with others.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I built some new relationships with non-Christians.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Snapshot of discipleship lifestyle.
On the question of spiritual nurture, the table shows that of the 85 persons who answered question one, forty met with other Christians for worship, teaching, prayer, and fellowship. On the question of how one prioritizes activities, the table indicates that of seventy-seven who answered question two, 39 spent more time reading the Bible than time spent reading newspapers, watching TV or surfing the internet. In the area of teaching as a part of discipling, of the 75 who answered question three, 31 studied with others from the Bible. In the area of discipling through relationships, of the 75 who answered question four, 33 built new relationships with non-Christians. While no single question served to determine an opinion on the participants’ level of spirituality or discipleship commitment, the overall results were considered.

Though these figures indicate that 46 percent perceived themselves to have the lifestyle of an above average to exceptional disciple, the result indicates a lower perception of their discipleship maturity when compared to the first survey. However, these lower figures are still high when compared with the national average of nineteen percent having a biblical worldview, according to a survey conducted by the Barna Institute. The lowered scores could be indicative of the learning that took place during the seminars that exposed false assumption and delusions that might have been cherished.

Lessons Learned

During this project, I became acutely aware of the value of spending time in the presence of God, but of almost equal importance was my learning the value of spending

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time with God’s people. This was brought into sharp focus as I implemented this project. One group worthy of note is the core leaders of the church. I have found that it pays dividends to invest time in the core leadership. This reaching out to core leadership must recognize and involve more of the youth population of the church. This group was overlooked many times when considering matters of leadership.

I regret that with the cruel crunch of demanding schedules, more time was not invested in this area. This investment must be genuine in a process that is established by Jesus to be organic and natural. This is especially crucial, as the church today must plan for the church of the future. Therefore, the youth must be included at all levels. This must first be addressed in the homes, as far as is practical.

The words of Mark are more than instructive: “And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach . . .” (Mark 3:14, emphasis added). My personal conviction is that the “being with him” principle is not just physical proximity, but to be of the same mind—solidarity. Implied in the master-pupil relationship is the pursuit of the pupil being one with the master. Jesus often speaks of the unity of the disciples as crucial to their very survival (John 17:21). This speaks to the entire body of believers, regardless of age, gender, or origin. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that leadership should be the example of unity and take the initiative in helping the other members to experience unity with God and man.

In seeking to implement some of the changes, there were board members who opposed them. They expressed a preference to having things remain as they were. This impeded progress in some aspects of the project: some things that were not achieved could have been achieved, but we were able to have enough agreement on some major
things due to the help of a united Board of Elders. They were also helpful in assessing the readiness of the membership. They had intimate knowledge of the members’ idiosyncrasies, having worked side-by-side with them through the years. The cooperation of the board got better as time progressed as many of the reasons for their fears were addressed.

On November 6-7, 2007, as a precursor to setting the stage for planting the seeds for making some changes, the pastor and elders attended Innovative Impact in Baltimore, Maryland. This is an annual conference “deliberately geared for pastors and the key members of their church leadership teams to share and grow together over two days sitting under some of the most insightful leaders in the ‘frontline’ church today.” This was a great investment as the renewed zeal generated from the conference served as an energizing force by the time the Dunamis project came to a focus.

The elders were able to reference several principles from this conference that they felt could be of help to the church. They spent time considering the way forward in adapting for Dunamis some of the principles and techniques learned and the challenge of implementing them in the life of the church. I have proven how helpful it can be to have the leadership team exposed to the same conferences I am exposed to and having them reading the same books I am reading. This helps pastor and members to speak the same language and have the same point of reference.

Given time, I would have invested more in exposing other key leaders to best practices of other churches through conferences like Innovative Impact. I am still

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convinced the church would benefit greatly from pursuing the Natural Church Development assessment program. This would give invaluable understanding of present challenges and potential dangers through a program that has been time-tested and proven.

Discipleship is not done in a vacuum. By definition, discipleship reaches out to everyone around. This concept challenges the disciple to be aware of the community in which s/he lives. Knowing and understanding the demographic of the community is of paramount importance. East Brooklyn is a very diverse community. Chapter 1 highlights this diversity. Though made up of people of predominantly Caribbean origin, there are people from diverse backgrounds that need to be reached by the gospel. While the homogenous factor clearly plays out in the Dunamis church, it is a serious departure from the gospel to ignore people from other ethnic and racial backgrounds (Matt 24:14; Rev 14:6). Future strategies could explore a diversity model for discipleship in the East Brooklyn area. This would pay rich dividends for kingdom-building.

If outreach and discipleship ministries are going to be successful the church has to integrate intentionally with the life of the community to infiltrate the lives of the people. The insight of White cannot be overlooked. She stated, “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”

I intimated earlier that the church needed to involve the youth more intentionally. I made the case in Chapters 2 and 3 that discipleship needs to happen as a natural parental

3White, The Ministry of Healing (1942), 143.
responsibility following every developmental stage of the child. The principles of discipleship are applicable at any stage of development and do not discriminate regardless of age (1 Tim 4:12). Often, the involvement of the young is incidental rather than intentional. They are incorporated many times after protest or are tacked on as a token to prove inclusion, but are not taken seriously enough.

From 2002 to the time of writing, six of the church’s youth have become pastors who are now serving with distinction in various Conferences. Many have also gone on to take up leading roles within the life of the church. They have testified that apart from sensing God’s call, their motivation can be traced to the “glory days” when, in its infancy, the vibrancy of Dunamis was a force to be reckoned with. Our younger members are able to bring new life and perspective to the conversation.

The missional mandate was not a concept that this congregation had embraced. There is still demonstrated a leaning toward being “attractional.” It will take a paradigm shift and a sustained approach to make a difference that will be long-lasting. The church will need to own this new approach and sense its importance to the simple, but profound question, “Are we following the Lord’s plan for making disciples?”

Among the most notable challenges to implementing the project were (1) the varying levels of acceptance to the introduction of something they were not familiar with and (2) the perceived usefulness for achieving what they deemed important for the life of the church. At first, they saw this project largely as either just something the pastor needed to do for the benefit of his education or just another novelty program that would

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4 The “attractional” church versus the “missional” church is briefly discussed in Chapter 3.
prove time-consuming with few real benefits to show for the effort.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

In spite of the challenges the church faces, building up the Kingdom of God defines the church and its reason for being. This means having meaningful relationships and fulfilling the Great Commission for which the church is divinely ordained.

In the course of my research, it became very evident that discipleship is best appreciated within the context of family. Many biblical references point to the family while employing discipleship descriptions. Though several references were made to this in the previous chapters, the scope of this project did not allow for a full treatment of this particular approach to discipleship. I would recommend that this area be more fully researched and the results be evaluated for possible benefits especially for the Dunamis membership. The generational divide manifested among the membership indicates the need for this.

Given the history of the church, more study needs to be given to the long-term effects of schisms within the general body of believers and how this affects the discipleship agenda of the Bible. There could possibly be a study into the whole aspect of forgiveness as an integral part of a discipleship strategy and the notion of growth through healing.

The church has demonstrated a great resistance to change. There is more need for understanding the biblical foundation for change in order to be relevant while still being authentic. The world has undergone significant changes over the relatively recent past generations. Our church has become more complex with the passing of time. Meanings
have changed drastically. The insightful statement of Crabb puts the situation into perspective:

In a culture so thoroughly devoted to life now, and in a church drenched with teaching on self-improvement and building happier lives, we can't easily develop a passion for something other than our immediate satisfaction. The historic church, in its role as embassy of a foreign kingdom, taught that the chief end of people is to glorify God and enjoy him forever; the modern church too often teaches that the chief end of God is to gratify people.\(^5\)

This brings pressure to bear upon the methods and approaches of the past. These dynamics have greatly affected the human response. While there is a need to reevaluate and revise constantly to meet the present demands, the timeless principles of discipleship are foundational to all the church’s needs for growth and nurture.

The importance of prayer and Bible study cannot be overemphasized. From the first conversations about starting this project, it was clear that achieving the cooperation of the leaders would necessitate a clear, authoritative, common point of reference. The Bible proved to be this common ground. The project could not have gotten off the ground without this anchor. This was a blessing in disguise as the process helped me to be more careful and intentional in not taking any biblical principle for granted.

I resonate with the conclusion of McGavran that “two principal preconditions of revival or evangelical awakening are prayer and feeding on God’s Word.”\(^6\) Any future efforts to advance this spiritual community and achieve the goals and objectives of a discipleship strategy must be bathed in prayer and Bible study.

The corollary of what he postulates will be to establish a solid foundation of

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biblical values as a basis for why we are pursuing the things we are seeking to accomplish. This impinges upon the discussion of changing the culture of a church. Though a full treatment of this subject is outside the scope of this project a brief comment is more than warranted. A Barna Institute report of March 6, 2009 states, “Overall, the current research revealed that only 9% of all American adults have a biblical worldview. . . . even among born again Christians, less than one out of every five (19%) had such an outlook on life.” Herein lies the challenge: to live like Christ, we need to have the mind of Christ. Therefore, if Christ is the model, a biblical worldview is indispensable to any serious approach to discipleship. Kimball pointed to the challenge of achieving a viable church within a postmodern culture. He noted that focusing on core values is not the main issue. “It is about leaders first becoming disciples of Jesus with prayerful, missional hearts that are broken for the emerging culture. All the rest will flow from this, not the other way around.”

This takes time with God in personal heart-searching and total surrender. It is, therefore, important to take enough time to make sure your membership understands and commits to this approach. In this project, it is felt that even with the valiant attempt that was made, we would do well to have spent more time in prayer and Bible study, both at the corporate and at the personal level. There was a sense in our effort to do outreach that the emphasis was on achieving converts rather than disciples. It might be helpful to rewire the thinking from making converts to a pure focus on making disciples. Constant

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7The Barna Group, “Barna Survey Examines Changes in Worldview Among Christians over the Past 13 Years.”

8Kimball, The Emerging Church, 248.
reminders had to be given to make sure the motivation was biblical in our reaching the lost.

The project has sought to address the issue of a church that was largely failing to experience the meaning of discipleship at the personal level. This was at the root of other challenges they faced. The Dunamis Church has spent time exploring the question of what constitutes true disciple-making. The church has prayed earnestly over this matter. They understand that disciple-making is more than adding new members to the church. The church has realized that the answer to most of its ills and pathologies, as for many other churches, lies in appreciating this fact and making the necessary application.

Through the discipleship strategy, the church has become acutely aware of the crucial role of consistent Bible study and a constant prayer life as underpinnings to a meaningful life as a disciple of Jesus Christ. At the leadership level, there is a commitment to this and a resolve to lead the church by these guiding principles. There is also a clearer understanding of the Gospel Commission and a focus on disciple-making as opposed to a focus on mere membership. Discipleship is the process by which one, having met Christ, becomes like him. The disciple follows a path of growing to maturity through faith and intentional equipping and helps others to become like Christ. This is not a program or an event; this is the Christian walk.
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect honestly on the following statements:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am concerned that our country is not doing enough to help the poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died on a cross and rose again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My faith shapes how I think and act each and every day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I help others with their religious questions and struggles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. In my free time, I help people who have problems or needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. My faith helps me know right from wrong.</td>
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<td>7. I do things to help protect the environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I devote time each day to reading and studying the Bible.</td>
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<td>9. Every day I see evidence that God is active in the world.</td>
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<td>10. I take excellent care of my physical health.</td>
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<td>11. I am active in efforts to promote social justice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. I seek out opportunities to help me grow spiritually.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. I take time daily for periods of prayer or meditation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. I am active in efforts to promote world peace.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. I accept people whose beliefs are different from mine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. As I grow older, my understanding of God changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I give significant portions of time and money to help other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I speak out for equality for women and minorities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never true</th>
<th>Rarely true</th>
<th>True once in a while</th>
<th>Sometimes true</th>
<th>Often true</th>
<th>Almost always true</th>
<th>Always true</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Add the total number of items marked in each column on this page:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>20. I feel God’s presence in my relationships with other people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. My life is filled with meaning and purpose.</td>
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<td>22. I am confident that I can overcome any problem or crisis not matter how serious.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. I care a great deal about reducing poverty in this country and throughout the world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. I try to apply my faith to political and social issues.</td>
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<td>25. My life is committed to Jesus Christ.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. I talk with other people about my faith.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. I go out of my way to show love to people I meet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. I have a real sense that God is guiding me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. I like to worship and pray with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30. I think Christians must be about the business of creating international understanding and harmony.</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. I am spiritually moved by the beauty of God’s creation.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Add the total number of items marked in each column in this section (20-31):</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32. I tend to be critical of other people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>33. I have a hard time accepting myself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>34. I feel overwhelmed by all the responsibilities and obligations I have.</td>
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<tr>
<td>35. I do not understand how a living God can allow so much pain and suffering in the world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>36. I believe that I must obey God’s rules and commandments in order to be saved.</td>
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<tr>
<td>37. My life is filled with stress and anxiety.</td>
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<tr>
<td>38. Religion has nothing to do with politics.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Add the total number of items marked in each column in this section (32-38):</strong></td>
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### Your Score Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals from the first page:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totals from Questions 20-31:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Add the two rows together:</td>
<td>x1=</td>
<td>x2=</td>
<td>x3=</td>
<td>x4=</td>
<td>x5=</td>
<td>x6=</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals from Questions 32-38:</th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x7=</td>
<td>x6=</td>
<td>x5=</td>
<td>x4=</td>
<td>x3=</td>
<td>x2=</td>
<td>x1=</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add all of the raw scores together for one total figure: __________

The range of possible scores is 38 to 266.

If your score is 38 to 84, you are just beginning to work toward a mature faith.

If your score is 85 to 130, you are making some progress toward mature faith.

If your score is 131 to 175, you have an average level of faith development among Christians in North America.

If your score is 176 to 220, you have an above-average level of faith development. Yet discipleship is for all eternity.

If your score is over 220, you have an exceptional level of faith maturity. Yet discipleship is for all eternity.

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This instrument is based on the Valuegenesis research sponsored by the Office of Education, North American Division of the General Conference. (See Valuegenesis Report 1 by Peter L. Benson and Michael J. Donahue [1990]. Minneapolis/Silver Spring: Search Institute and NAD Office of Education.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
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<td>Ecclesiastes 5-8</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes 9-12</td>
<td>Song of Sol. 1-8</td>
<td>Song of Sol. 7-14</td>
<td>Song of Sol. 15-21</td>
<td>Song of Sol. 16-21</td>
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### Read through the Bible in 1 Year!

Congratulations! You have finished one of the great accomplishments that any believer in Christ can strive for: reading through the Bible in one year! Please tell us on your communication card that you’ve finished – it’s one of the ways we can see how we’re helping the church to grow.
SEVEN-DAY FAST

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE FAST

Prayer and Fasting - A Definition
Prayer and fasting is defined as voluntarily going without food in order to focus on prayer and fellowship with God. Prayer and fasting often go hand in hand, but this is not always the case. You can pray without fasting, and fast without prayer. It is when these two activities are combined and dedicated to God's glory that they reach their full effectiveness. Having a dedicated time of prayer and fasting is not a way of manipulating God into doing what you desire. Rather, it is simply forcing yourself to focus and rely on God for the strength, provision, and wisdom you need.

Prayer and Fasting - What the Bible Says
The Old Testament law specifically required prayer and fasting for only one occasion, which was the Day of Atonement. This custom became known as "the day of fasting" (Jeremiah 36:6) or "the Fast" (Acts 27:9). Moses fasted during the 40 days and 40 nights he was on Mount Sinai receiving the law from God (Exodus 34:28). King Jehoshaphat called for a fast in all Israel when they were about to be attacked by the Moabites and Ammonites (2 Chronicles 20:3). In response to Jonah's preaching, the men of Nineveh fasted and put on sackcloth (Jonah 3:5). Prayer and fasting was often done in times of distress or trouble. David fasted when he learned that Saul and Jonathan had been killed (2 Samuel 1:12). Nehemiah had a time of prayer and fasting upon learning that Jerusalem was still in ruins (Nehemiah 1:4). Darius, the king of Persia, fasted all night after he was forced to put Daniel in the den of lions (Daniel 6:18).

Prayer and fasting also occurs in the New Testament. Anna "worshipped night and day, fasting and praying" at the Temple (Luke 2:37). John the Baptist taught his disciples to fast (Mark 2:18). Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights before His temptation by Satan (Matthew 4:2). The church of Antioch fasted (Acts 13:2) and sent Paul and Barnabas off on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:3). Paul and Barnabas spent time in prayer and fasting for the appointment of elders in the churches (Acts 14:23).

Prayer and Fasting - Required or Recommended?
The Word of God does not specifically command believers to spend time in prayer and fasting. At the same time, prayer and fasting is definitely something we should be doing. Far too often, though, the focus of prayer and fasting is on abstaining from food. Instead, the purpose of Christian fasting should be to take our eyes off the things of this world and focus our thoughts on God. Fasting should always be limited to a set time because not eating for extended periods can be damaging to the body. Fasting is not a method of punishing our bodies and it is not be used as a "dieting method" either. We are not to spend time in prayer and fasting in order to lose weight, but rather to gain a deeper fellowship with God.
By taking our eyes off the things of this world through prayer and biblical fasting, we can focus better on Christ. Matthew 6:16-18 declares, "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Prayer and Fasting - What Does it Accomplish?
Spending time in prayer and fasting is not automatically effective in accomplishing the desires of those who fast. Fasting or no fasting, God only promises to answer our prayers when we ask according to His will. 1 John 5:14-15 tells us, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him." In the prophet Isaiah's time, the people grumbled that they had fasted, yet God did not answer in the way they wanted (Isaiah 58:3-4). Isaiah responded by proclaiming that the external show of fasting and prayer, without the proper heart attitude, was futile (Isaiah 58:5-9).

How can you know if you are praying and fasting according to God's will? Are you praying and fasting for things that honor and glorify God? Does the Bible clearly reveal that it is God's will for you? If we are asking for something that is not honoring to God or not God's will for our lives, God will not give what we ask for, whether we fast or not. How can we know God's will? God promises to give us wisdom when we ask. James 1:5 tells us, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

FOCUS FOR EACH DAY

Sabbath – Establishing our need (at church)
The afternoon will used to:
1. Discuss our needs and establish the reason for the fast that will start on Sunday.
2. Share counsels and cautions regarding this juice fast from the medical persons on hand.
3. Establish accountability partners to encourage one another.
4. Start exploring the subject of “Meeting the conditions for answered prayers.

Meeting the conditions for answered prayers—Honesty, surrender, forgiving others, faith, and asking.
**Sun-- Biblical Prayer**
We have the examples of the patriarchs of old -- of Abraham, who talked with God as with a friend, of Moses who did likewise, of Daniel and his three friends, as well as the various prophets. But closer to our time, we find the example of Jesus Christ Himself (Mark 1:35, Luke 6:12).

How did Jesus pray? Did He sit in a special place and/or position to "center" His spirit? Did He repeat a word such as "God" or "Father" to banish all conscious thought? Did He sit quietly, focusing on His breath, and waiting for the Father to speak?

**Mon-- The Lord’s Prayer**
The study of the Lord’s Prayer reveal that it is better understood as the disciples’ prayer. They asked to be taught how to pray. Consider this prayer and discuss its import for your life. (Matthew 6:9-13)

**Tue-- Effective prayer**
James writes, "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." (James 5:16 NKJV) It isn't the number of prayers, or the number of people praying, nor the form of the prayer, nor the promises claimed -- but a right relationship with God that determines the effectiveness of prayer.

Ellen White explains: "Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.

**Wed & Thur-- Summary of biblical communication with God**
We have the privilege of talking with God as with a close friend. God makes His will known to us by various means:
1) Speaking to us through the written Word interpreted to us through the Holy Spirit. (John 16:13)
2) Through direct impressions of the Holy Spirit (always in harmony with the written Word.)
3) Through the circumstances of life
4) Through nature. (Romans 1)

"God speaks to us through His providential workings and through the influence of His Spirit upon the heart. In our circumstances and surroundings, in the changes daily taking place around us, we may find precious lessons if our hearts are but open to discern them. The psalmist, tracing the work of God's providence, says, "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." Psalm 33:5; 107:43."
Fri—Dependence upon Christ’s righteousness

Hebrews 12:14
Until we recognize our own state of bankruptcy before a holy God we cannot truly lean upon His Righteousness, without which no man will see the Lord. We would instead come into his presence as the Pharisee, proud, bragging of his kept laws, righteous deeds, his right to gain the Father’s favor. We need to see ourselves as destitute, and totally depraved, without the righteousness of Christ. We have nothing of which to boast. We, are as the rich church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:14-22. We need to see ourselves as God sees us. ”Lukewarm ...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. “

Sabbath—Testimonies and Prayer Sessions (at church)

JUICE FAST

Ellen White Counsel
Now and onward till the close of time the people of God should be more earnest, more wide-awake, not trusting in their own wisdom, but in the wisdom of their Leader. They should set aside days for fasting and prayer. Entire abstinence from food may not be required, but they should eat sparingly of the most simple food.

All the fasting in the world will not take the place of simple trust in the word of God. "Ask," He says, "and ye shall receive." ... You are not called upon to fast forty days. The Lord bore that fast for you in the wilderness of temptation. There would be no virtue in such a fast; but there is virtue in the blood of Christ.

The spirit of true fasting and prayer is the spirit which yields mind, heart, and will to God. {CD 189.2}

Begin your fasting by:
1. setting your objectives
2. making your commitment
3. preparing yourself spiritually
4. preparing yourself physically
5. putting yourself on a schedule
6. ending your fast gradually
7. having faith by expecting results

These categories of people should exercise extreme caution and seek medical advice or even medical supervision.
Fasting requires reasonable precautions. People who are taking prescription medication or have chronic ailments must consult their doctor first. People with diabetes and high blood pressure should not fast without professional supervision.

People with no medical conditions or physical ailments can stop all medications including natural herbs. Limit your activities, including exercise, during the fast.

- **Pregnant or nursing women or children shouldn't try a juice fast.**
- People with diabetes, low blood sugar, eating disorders, kidney disease, liver disease, malnutrition, addictions, underweight, anemia, impaired immune function, infection, nutritional deficiency, low blood pressure, ulcerative colitis, cancer, terminal illness, epilepsy, or other chronic conditions shouldn't try a juice fast or should do so only under strict medical supervision.
- Diabetics should have the blood sugar taken before daily fast. If below 120, do not skip meals. Only use juice mixed with water (PREFERABLY WATER ONLY); if above 120, do not skip one meal only, with supervision. (USE WATER ONLY). Please follow the doctor’s orders.
- People with high blood pressure and also diabetes should not stop taking their medications, unless instructed by the doctor.
- People shouldn't try a juice fast before or after surgical procedures.
- A juice fasting can reduce blood proteins and change the way prescription drugs react in the body. People taking prescription medications should consult a health professional skilled in detoxification before trying a juice fast, and should never discontinue or reduce their medications on their own.

It's important to consult a qualified health professional before trying a juice fast.

**Possible Side Effects of a Juice Fast**

Common temporary side effects of a juice fast include headaches, tiredness, hypoglycemia, constipation, acne, increased body odor, and bad breath.

Other side effects of a juice fast can include fainting, dizziness, low blood pressure, weight loss, hunger, vomiting, diarrhea, and kidney problems. **If these side effects occur, there is a worsening of symptoms, or new symptoms appear, the fast should be discontinued and it should prompt an immediate visit to a qualified health professional.**

Another possible side effect of a juice fast is diarrhea, which can lead to dehydration and electrolyte loss.
Grapefruit juice should not be used during a juice fast, especially by people taking certain prescription drugs. A compound in grapefruit can change the way certain prescription drugs are metabolized in the body. Recent evidence suggests that pomegranate juice may also have the same effect.

What Does a Typical Juice Fast Involve?

- Seven or more days before the fast, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, sugar, dairy, wheat, animal meat, fish, and eggs are typically reduced or eliminated from the diet. This preparation diet often consists mainly of organic fruits, vegetables, and beans.

- Between 32 and 64 ounces of juice is usually recommended per day during the fast. The juice is sipped throughout the day. Typical fruits and vegetables include celery, carrot, kale, cabbage, apple, pineapple, cranberry, spinach, beet, and greens. Citrus fruits are often avoided.

- Approximately 6 glasses of room temperature or warm filtered water is often recommended in addition to the juice.

- Organic fruits and vegetables are usually recommended. If organic produce isn't available, practitioners suggest peeling the skin off fruits and vegetables or washing vegetables with a non-toxic produce cleaner, usually available at health food stores.

- Freshly juiced fruits and vegetables are preferred, but if unavailable, practitioners suggest buying it from the health food store or juice bar as fresh as possible.

- Green vegetables and sprouts contain the pigment chlorophyll, which juice proponents believe are especially beneficial during a juice fast.

- A combination of fruits and vegetables is recommended.

- Variations on the strict juice fast include eating one meal a day in addition to the juice.

- Certain fruits and vegetables and their parts should not be juiced, such as the pits of peaches, apricots, cherries, and other fruits, apple seeds, citrus peels, carrot and rhubarb tops, tough skins (such as kiwi, pineapple, mangoes), and bananas and avocados.

An alternate approach is suggested by Dr. Julio C. Ruibal, Nutritionist, Pastor and specialist in fasting and prayer: Either approaches work well if followed carefully.

1. Freshly squeezed or blended juices diluted in 50% distilled water. If juice is acid (e.g. oranges, tomatoes), use before 8 a.m.
2. 10:30 a.m. -- use fresh vegetable juices made from lettuce, celery and carrots in three equal parts.
3. 2:30 p.m. – herbal tea with a drop of honey or maple syrup.
4. 6 p.m. - 8p.m. broth made with no salt, boiling potatoes, carrots and celery.

ONLY DRINK THE BROTH.
People doing total juice fast will experience less hunger pains, have more energy and will be more motivated to continue, but beware of cleansing. Be prepared for frequent trips to the bathroom. Best juices for fasting include watermelon, lemon, grapes, apple, cabbage, beets, carrots, celery, or leafy green vegetables. Mix acid juices with water to avoid burning in your stomach.

**END YOUR FAST GRADUALLY!** While still using juices, add a raw salad for the first day, then baked or boiled potatoes with no butter or seasoning. On the second or third day, add steamed vegetables. After which you can begin to introduce your normal diet. However, start with small meals.

The Health Ministries Department members will be available for support and questions during this period. Have your blood pressure taken the Sabbath before starting the fast and also after the fast.
APPENDIX C

ANNOUNCEMENT
DISCIPLESHIP STRATEGY STUDY

All those who are interested in being more effective disciples of Christ are invited to attend a seminar on Discipleship. This seminar is part of a research study on

DEVELOPING A DISCIPLESHIP STRATEGY FOR THE DUNAMIS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

As part of this seminar you may participate in a survey, which will help in determining the faith maturity of the adult population of this church
DISCIPLESHIP SERMON SERIES OUTLINES

SERMON 1
JESUS GUARANTEES US HIS PRAYER/SUCCESS

Prayer is our greatest ally in our efforts to live for God. As a part of his plan to save man Jesus did not just teach his disciples how to pray, he prayed for them. I am convinced that the secret to our overcoming sin begins with Jesus praying for us. When we know the value of prayer, we will not just desire him to pray for us but we will covet that prayer.

A. CHALLENGES OF THE KINGDOM

1. Challenges of commitment
   Some of you are facing challenges with commitments you have made before.
   2. How do I find strength to follow through on my commitment to God?
   3. I see Satan laughing as we struggle beneath the weight.

B. LUKE 22:31-34

1. Prayer is mandatory. 1 Samuel 12:23
2. Prayer is challenging. Matthew 5:44. To just be considered his children ... there are challenging demands. If he requires us to make such sacrifices, imagine how far must he be willing to go ... 
3. Prayer is effective. James 5:16: "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." Compare a righteous man to the man of righteousness!


1. Satan “DESIRED” means “asked permission” in Greek.
2. Satan is seeking permission to sift you.
3. Jesus is the way of escape. 1 Corinthians 10:13
   We see this with Peter and the disciples in verse 31 and in the OT with Job!

When Satan approached God, God asked have you considered my servant Job? Satan retorted, "Does Job worship you for no reason? Have you not put a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side . . . . ? In other words, “God, you know your fence of protection around job is impenetrable.”

He was here betraying that he is an opportunist, watching and waiting to spot one area of vulnerability.

D. HOW DOES JESUS PROTECT US FROM SATAN’S DETERMINED ILLS?

1. Luke 22:32 [READ] ... I have prayed
   a. Intercession- to assail with exigent petitions, entreat God for His favor on behalf of another.
   b. Verse 32 states “I have prayed” (the Greek tense indicate completed action – not future).
   c. “that thy faith fail not;” The focus of Satan's attack is to destroy our faith.
Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 131. "Satan trembles and flees before the weakest soul who finds refuge in that mighty name [of Jesus]."

**E. WE HAVE ASSURANCE IN JESUS.**

1. Jesus was confident of Peter's restoration, because he knew there was power in his intercession.
2. If Satan's watches us carefully with an eye for our vulnerabilities, Jesus watches us even more carefully with an eye for our protection.
3. Psalm 139:16 (NLT) "You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed."
4. Romans 8:26 (NKJV) "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

[COL 156.1] ... the same compassion that reached out to rescue Peter is extended to every soul who has fallen under temptation. It is Satan's special device to lead man into sin, and then leave him, helpless and trembling, fearing to seek for pardon. But why should we fear ... Every provision has been made for our infirmities, every encouragement offered us to come to Christ.

Romans 8:37-39 "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

**SERMON 2**

**A WORK ESTABLISHED AND GUARANTEED**

What's the real program of God's people? How do you know when you have achieved success? Success for God is doing what God asks you to do.

When you become what you were meant to be, you will do what you were meant to do.

**A. THE DISCIPLESHIP MANDATE**

1. Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20
   a. The basis of this mandate is the authority of Jesus.
   b. Verse 18, "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth!"
   c. This authority denotes absolute power! This is intended to directly bear upon the 2nd half of verse 20, "and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

2. Daniel 7:13-14
   a. Daniel saw Jesus in his established power. Daniel declares, "And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom . . . ."
   b. He saw that this power would never end. "His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed."
B. THE SOURCE AND SUBSTANCE OF THE AUTHORITY

1. Matthew 1:22-23
   a. God with us.
   b. Born of a human.

   a. Not a representation, but fully God clothed in humanity.
   b. Possessing the same power as in the beginning.

Matthew begins with the declaration that this is God with us. Matthew closes with the declaration that all power is his.

C. GODS POWER NECESSARY ARSENAL

1. The challenge to God’s Kingdom
   a. The keys to the kingdom.
   b. The gates of hell.
3. Transaction completed with a lifetime warranty (Matthew 28).

D. WHAT DOES THE MANDATE MEAN

1. Background and context. The participle in Matthew 28:19, “having gone” is used in the imperative sense (command).
2. The main verb is “make disciples.” Everything that follows involves or constitutes the disciple making process. Baptizing and teaching will follow as natural outcomes of discipling.

To understand what Jesus means we must go to the life of Jesus to see how he made disciples. The gospel was never meant to be theorized; it was meant to be lived. When you see somebody walk with God you know how to walk with God.

Adventist Home page 31. “We are required to be living epistles known and read of all men. This position involves fearful responsibilities. One well-ordered, well-disciplined family tells more in behalf of Christianity than all the sermons that can be preached . . . The neighborhood in which they live is helped, for in it they have become enriched for time and for eternity. The whole family is engaged in the service of the Master; and by their godly example, others are inspired to be faithful and true to God in dealing with His flock, His beautiful flock.”

E. MAKING IT HAPPEN

1. The home as a base for discipleship. Deuteronomy 6:4-9
2. Learning by observing is a key component in discipleship.
3. Giving correct information is only the start.
4. The church like the family must be intentional and must have a structure for the disciple making process to take place. People need to see us walk with God to understand how to walk with God.
F. GO MAKE DISCIPLES!

1. Pour your life into someone’s life. Invest your time, money and whatever it takes, in order to fulfill the mandate…just make disciples.
2. People need access to your life. Discipleship can’t be done at a distance. What we expect others to be, we must first become.
3. But the problem is you can’t model for others what you personally are not experiencing.
   b. John 13:35. Love is the underpinning which establishes the authenticates the experience. EVIDENCE!

God has given us the guarantee. It has no expiry dates. We can know if we are having the real experience or not. Therefore, we must ask ourselves why do we not see a greater demonstration of the promised power? Has God failed or have we missed the intent of his words?

SERMON 3
THE DISCIPLE: THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT

A. CASE FOR SALT

1. Cattle will walk for miles to get to a salt lick; WITHOUT IT they die.
2. Our bodies crave salt. WITHOUT IT WE DIE.

“Electrolytes are ionized salts (or minerals) found in body fluids and the blood stream. When dissolved in water, they can conduct an electric current.” The whole body is a bioelectric organism. Dr. Bernard Jensen states, “All cellular structures become alive through electrolytic activity.” Life begins with salt!

B. A CASE FOR DISCIPLES

1. Jesus compares his disciples to salt. If we get it right there will be a universal craving for us.
   People are craving better relationships. Without this life giving force the world dies.
2. As a result of God sensing man’s need he declares, “Go make disciples!”

People are baptized into fellowship…church.
There is more to it than telling people to do right. It starts with treating the neighbor right (right relationship). As salt makes food taste better, disciples make relationships better.

C. THE USE OF SALT IN BIBLE TIMES

1. Preservative. Meat could be kept longer, & more safely.
2. Medicine. When babies were born in ancient Judaea, they were often rubbed with salt. It was believed this would help purify them and keep them healthy.
3. Salary. Romans paid their soldiers an allowance of salt called a salarium - hence our word salary, today.
4. Spiritual application. It was a symbol of the preservation and permanence of the covenant between God and man (Numbers 18:19).
D. GOD ILLUSTRATES THE APPLICATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. 2 KINGS 2:19-22.
2. The land was heart-stopping beautiful . . . Trees, gardens, and much activity— but no actual fruitfulness.
3. The problem—the water was bad. It made fertile women barren and inflicted the healthy with disease. The fruit from the trees would be falling before they were mature. The cattle would be miscarrying. Everything was unproductive as a result.
4. The land was fertile, but good water was needed for drinking and for watering the crops.
5. In verse 20 Elisha said, "Get me a new jar and put some salt in it." So they got it. In verse 21 he went out to the spring and threw the salt in. Then he said, "This is what the LORD says, 'I have purified this water. It will no longer cause death or fail to produce crops." 22 The water has been pure to this very day, just as Elisha prophesied.
6. Could a little jar of salt do such a thorough and permanent job?
7. The secret is in verse 21. It emphatically states, "This is what the LORD says, 'I have purified this water.'" God did!
8. God did such a good job that the city of Jericho is now a beautiful oasis in the desert.

E. THE APPEAL

God is seeking to make this world a better place by his transforming grace. Like a little salt in a jar, God can use you to make where you live a better place.

Jesus says, "you are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13)

Again in Colossians 4:6 Paul says, "let your conversations be seasoned with salt"

Remember, salt heals and preserves.

Elisha went to the source (the heart of the problem), he applied the salt and God performed the miracle. It is still a heart problem today! Jesus is still the solution.

2 Corinthians 5:17. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." Verse 20 says to those experiencing this change, "we are now ambassadors for Christ".

"YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH!"

SERMON 4

IDENTITY CRISIS

A. IDENTITY AND NATURE

1. "What do you do naturally?" Your actions are born out of your nature and serve as the best ID you will ever have.
2. Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.
3. 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
B. FINDING OUR TRUE IDENTIT Y AND PURPOSE

1. Gen 1:1 “In the beginning God created . . .
2. Col 1:16 (MSG) “everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him.
3. Prov 19:21 (NLT) You can make many plans, but the Lord’s purpose will prevail. We may choose not to follow God’s blueprint, but his purpose for our lives will never change. We are made for God and his purpose: God was not made for our purpose.
4. Our attitude usually is to use God to supply our needs. But, we were made to be used by God for his own divine purpose.

C. OUR PURPOSE THROUGH THE BODY OF CHRIST

1. The church is the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:27 “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.
2. 1 Corinthians 12:18, “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”
3. Regardless of our station in life, God has a purpose in the body/church for each of us.

— Alvin Toffler
“The manifestations of [identity] crisis are bizarre. Its victims hurl themselves into group therapy, mysticism, or sexual games. They itch for change but are terrified by it. They urgently wish to leave their present existence and leap somehow to a new life – to become what they are not.”

Hence we accept a reality of church that is neither real nor true.

4. What is the nature of our calling? 1 Peter 1:23 (Phillips) “we are not just mortals now but sons of God; the live, permanent word of the living God has given us his own indestructible heredity” Our calling therefore is a holy calling.
5. We have a nature and a personality that is similar to God’s, who we are precedes what we do. Nature comes before actions.

D. ACTIONS FOLLOW NATURE

1. 1 Corinthians 12:28 suggests roles that are fulfilled through the gifts of the Spirit. Now, these roles can be temporary (1:3:8 but whether [there be] prophesies, they shall fail; whether [there be] tongues, they shall cease; whether [there be] knowledge, it shall vanish away). . . .

But who you are never changes.
As a member of the body of Christ ministry is your right and your privilege. Ministry is therefore the work of the laos (people of God).

2. As every member of the human body has a function, so every member of the body of Christ has a work to do. “To everyone work has been allotted and no one can be a substitute for another.” —Christian Service, p. 10.

Spectator Christianity ultimately becomes critical, sterile, and unproductive.

3. We then, who are servants, only receive the Master’s resources for the Master’s assigned task, not our own agendas.
4. 2 Corinthians 5:17, 20. Christ makes the difference. The difference is dramatic and powerful in its effects. Verse 20 makes it clear that the change is not some sentimental experience. The change makes us representatives of Christ. Like ambassadors we are entrusted with representing Christ in a foreign land.

CONCLUSION AND APPEAL
In March of 1912, the then General Conference President A.G. Daniells, in an address to a ministerial institute in Los Angeles, California, made this assessment:

“We have not settled our ministers over churches as pastors to any large extent. In some of the very large churches we have elected pastors, but as a rule we have held ourselves ready for field service, evangelistic work and our brethren and sisters have held themselves ready to maintain their church services and carry forward their church work without settled pastors. And I hope this will never cease to be the order of affairs in this denomination; for when we cease our forward movement work and begin to settle over our churches, to stay by them, and do their thinking and their praying and their work that is to be done, then our churches will begin to weaken, and to lose their life and spirit, and become paralyzed and fossilized and our work will be on a retreat.”

EVANGELISM 381. 3,4

E. We are called to be disciples and not mere church members.
   1. We must become servants of one another and of the world.
   2. We must equip ourselves in ministry to be ultimately effective in service
   3. We must first have a clear vision of who we are and who we were meant to be.
   4. Finally, we must act and act NOW! If not NOW then when?

SERMON 5
COUNT THE COST

There are some of us who have not sat down to count the cost of discipleship!

In spite of the clear word of God some are still a little confused as to what to expect from a commitment to Jesus. They have not stopped to ask God what this commitment means

A. COUNT THE COST

   1. The key thought for today is contained in Luke 14:34, 35.
   2. However to understand the context we must read Luke 14: 25 – 31.

B. “HATE MOTHER AND FATHER . . .”

Verse 26 does not denote “hate” in the usual sense of the word. Here, “to hate,” should be understood simply as a typical Oriental hyperbole meaning “to love less”. This fact stands forth clearly in the parallel passage where Jesus says, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:37).
C. COMMITMENT WITHOUT CALCULATION

1. Verse 25. They proposed to follow Jesus.
2. Jesus wanted it to be abundantly clear that there are expectations.
3. Jesus wanted it to be clear that as much as they wanted something out of following him, he too wanted something out of their following him.

D. THE UNCOMMITTED COMPLAINS

1. Illustration. Listen to these complaints & suggestions from visitors to a mountain climbing and camping facility:
2. The coyotes made too much noise last night and kept me awake. Please eradicate these annoying animals.
3. A small deer came into my camp and stole my jar of pickles. Is there a way I can get reimbursed? Please call.
4. Escalators would help on steep uphill sections.
5. A MacDonald’s would be nice at the trailhead.
6. Too many rocks in the mountains.
   Citation: Mike Neifert, Light and Life (February 1997), p. 27.

There is no question that these comments and complaints indicate a lack of understanding with regards to what it takes to stay in a “wilderness area.”

E. TRIVIAL CHRISTIAN COMPLAINTS

1. Some complain that people don’t like them
2. Some complain that gossip
3. Hypocrites
4. Hard seats etc.

We feel self justified in our complaints while the record bears witness of martyrs.

F. CHRISTIANS MAY COMPLAIN BUT DISCIPLES DON’T.

3. Peter in 1Peter 6:14, “If you suffer as a Christian do not be ashamed, Glorify God”.

Used in a political context to denote a member of the Christ party. They didn’t give themselves that name.

G. DISCIPLE

1. The name that Jesus gave his followers was, disciple – a devoted follower. A disciple studied the master to duplicate his every behavior. (KEY)
2. It was a reasonable expectation then that Jesus left us -- as his disciples -- to continue doing what he did.
3. Jesus spent his life sacrificially building up the Kingdom of God.
4. Jesus gave up his life in the process of building this kingdom.
5. If we are true Disciples of Christ, therefore, he expects us to make Kingdom building our number one . . .

Luke
14:33 *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all* that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.
14:34 Salt [is] good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? [We would get back to explaining this salt]
14:35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; [but] men cast it out. **He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.**

**Appeal**
This has nothing whatever to do with gaining or earning admission to the Kingdom. It is a question of the new nature one receives when he decides to follow Christ.

This shouldn't be strange to you. You have read in LUKE 14:33 “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” It is not just to follow him in the sense of walking after him. But follow in the sense of doing what he does.

This is either the truth from the mouth of one who cannot lie or it is to be rejected with the rest of the Bible. I believe it is just as true as John 3:16. I don't know about you, but I have to cry like Paul today: "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

One who refuses to pursue the call to discipleship in the manner that God requires is as useful as salt-less salt! Luke 14:34 “It is neither fit for the soil, nor for the dung heap; it is thrown out”.

**Discipleship** is not determined on the basis of signing off on doctrinal positions, but by following Jesus.
**SEMINAR SERIES**  
**PRESENTATION 1**

Getting to the Heart of Discipleship

**FOLLOWING JESUS**

- This abiding or continuing in His Word requires that the disciple be continually fed, which, according to Ephesians 4:11-16, the ministry's purpose is to help perfect the saints “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

  * John 8:31, 32

- There is need for the everyday maintenance of discipline in one's life or death will result.
- This discipline is demonstrated in the study of the word, prayer, and service to God and fellow man.

  * John 8:31, 32

- In verse 32, truth and freedom go hand in hand, but truth will produce freedom only if it is internalized. This is why there must be a disciplined investment of time and energy by those who have truth.

  * John 8:31, 32

**WRITE YOUR PERSONAL DEFINITION OF THE WORD “DISCIPLE”**.

**Definition**

The process whereby one becomes a complete and competent follower of Jesus Christ.

“Transformation” is a key concept in discipleship.
The intensity conveyed by the word "disciple" is important for us to associate with Ancient Greek ἑλωτός, "emulator, zealous admirer, ardent follower".

Motivating Factor

* What is your motivation for wanting to be a disciple?
* Is your vision of your mission the same as Christ?

What does passion look like?

* Passion will endure worship services that may not meet its exact specifications because the focus is on God, not selves.
* Passion will attend activities at times that are not convenient because the most important thing is to experience God's presence.
* Passion will sacrifice more hard-earned money for the purposes of ministry because he/she recognizes that we are stewards, not owners.
* Passion will gladly share faith because they simply cannot contain their excitement about the privilege of relating to God.

What would happen for God's kingdom if we did not consider our job complete when people confess their sins, but would use their new commitments to Christ as a launching pad for a lifelong quest to become individuals who are completely sold out to the Son of God?

Ten Determining Questions

* Are you certain that your eternal salvation has been determined by your confession of sins and your acceptance of Christ's gift of forgiveness?
* Do you consistently obey Jesus' teachings?
* Do you always love other people in practical ways?
* Have you put the attractions and distractions of this world in their proper place and focused on knowing, loving, and serving God?
* Do you carry the burdens of following Jesus with joy?
SUCCESS... can be a bad word!

How we define success can either hinder or promote true growth.

SUCCESS... changing the paradigm!

- Congregants who worship not just on Sabbaths but every day of the week—not just in the sanctuary but wherever they are.
- Constant efforts by the laity to discover new insights into their faith and to convert that into personal application.
- Complete submission to the Holy Spirit in both decision making and behavior.

**SUCCESS**

Jesus is seeking people who are absolutely serious about becoming new creations in Him.

“Transformation” is a key concept in discipleship.

SUCCESS... changing the paradigm!

- Hearts that are sensitive to sin and wounded every time they do something that offends God.
- Individuals who joyfully share their resources—time, money, skills, information, relationships, possessions—with those in need.
- A deep commitment to building a lasting and life-changing community among those who profess Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

SUCCESS... changing the paradigm!

- Engagement in “organic evangelism”—the process of sharing one’s faith in Christ in very natural and unforced ways, based on relationships with the recipients of the information and supported by lifestyle modeling.
- Programs that are directly linked to the mission of Christ.
SUCCESS
... changing the paradigm!

* People who live differently from the norm because of their faith, leading lives that conform to the dictates of Scripture without cutting corners or trying to interpret biblical passages for personal comfort or advantage

* A church body that projects (and lives up to) an image of being loving, caring, focused, and clear-minded in its pursuit of the ways of God

SUCCESS
... changing the paradigm!

* Individuals who are continually linked to God through prayer and meditation, as if they were “online twenty-four hours a day with the ultimate spiritual power

* Believers who take the initiative to use their gifts, skills, and training for the benefit of their church without having to be coaxed into serving

SUCCESS
... changing the paradigm!

* Why would these outcomes constitute “success”?
* Because these are the indicators of true disciples and not mere church members

SUCCESS
... changing the paradigm!

* Shift from program-driven ministry to people-driven ministry

* Change from emphasis on building consensus to building character

* De-emphasize recalling Bible stories; emphasize applying biblical principles

* Move from concern about quantity (people, programs, square footage, dollars) to concern about quality (commitment, wisdom, relationships, values, lifestyle)

Change the input: change the outcome

* Retool ministry efforts from being unrelated and haphazard to being intentional and strategic

* Replace ministry designed to convey knowledge with efforts intended to facilitate the whole person

* Alter people’s focus from feel-good activities to absolute commitment to personal growth, ministry, and authenticity in their faith

Acts 2:42-47

Ignite people’s passion for God and get out of their way.

SIMPLE SOLUTION
Christian Contradiction

Three of every five adult Christians we surveyed told us they want to have a deep commitment to the Christian faith, but they are not involved in any intentional effort to grow spiritually.

~ George Barna ~

What is the Single Most Important Thing You Would Like to Accomplish in Your Life?

* 29% -- being a good parent, raising good kids, having happy kids
* 20% -- spiritual condition; having faith, going to heaven, doing God's will, evangellting others, raising my kids to be Christians
* 80% -- had no goals even remotely related to their religious profession

Most believers are satisfied to engage in a process (church) without regard for the product (Jesus living).

UNTIL NEXT WEEK

2 Cor 11:23-28

SINGLE PROBLEM

All of them underscore one problem: a lack of passion to be godly.

Trusting entirely in Jesus is not necessarily easy, but it is crucial to our salvation. So how do we get to the place where we trust entirely in Jesus?
Our Greatest Work

The greatest work that can be done in our world is to glorify God by living the character of Christ.
~ Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 439 ~

Maturing - Part 2

FOLLOWING JESUS

Christian Contradiction

Three of every five adult Christians we surveyed told us they want to have a deep commitment to the Christian faith, but they are not involved in any intentional effort to grow spiritually.
~ George Barna ~

Review

What Is the Single Most Important Thing You Would Like to Accomplish in Your Life?

* 29% -- being a good parent, raising good kids, having happy kids
* 20% -- spiritual condition; having faith, going to heaven, doing God's will, evangelizing others, raising my kids to be Christians
* 10% -- had no gods even remotely related to their religious profession

2 Cor 11:23-28

SINGLE PROBLEM

All of them underscore one problem: a lack of passion to be godly.
Most believers are satisfied to engage in a process (church) with little regard for the end product (Jesus living).

**Definition**

The process whereby one becomes a complete and competent follower of Jesus Christ.

**Disciple (Discipleship)**

The intensity conveyed by the word is important for us to associate with Ancient Greek ἡ λαμπρότης “emulator, zealous admirer, ardent follower”

A DISCIPLE IS A PASSIONATE FOLLOWER

The biggest mistake a church can make is to focus on membership to the neglect of discipleship

The process of discipleship must start before membership

Reveal Study: 2007

We are not making disciples!
Lifeway Study: 2008

- Major Study: 2500 people
- Same conclusion: We are not making disciples!

God’s Process

- The call to be a disciple is the prerogative of God while responding to the call or readiness to act resides with the individual.
- A disciple makes other disciples as naturally as he breathes.

We quickly learned that a church engaged in effective discipleship is a church that will grow steadily and solidly.

~ George Barna ~

Ephesians 4:8-16

“...perfecting of the saints” (Gr. θεατρισμοῦ).
1. setting a broken limb or putting a joint back into place” (Barclay).
2. Mark 1:19 “mending their nets.”
3. Gal. 6:1 of “restoring” a fallen brother.

Ephesians 4:8-16

The Pattern

- Whether it is in mending or restoring, the objective of this process is to achieve wholeness that matches the blueprint. Jesus Christ

NINE COMPONENTS OF DISCIPLESHIP

- Passion
- Dept
- Maturity
- Practice
- Process
- Interactive
- Multifaceted
- Lifelong
- Christlike

Ephesians 4:8-16
the ministry’s purpose is to help perfect the saints "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Conversion & Maturity
- Conversion alone doesn’t produce disciples.
- Without an intentional process much fruit is lost.

Age & Maturity
- A spiritually 20-year-old Christian is often a 20-year-old baby.
- Biggest church complaint: They don’t feed me.
- Heb 5:12 “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles . . . And are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.”

Involvement & Maturity

Growing in Christ
- Luke 15
- The relationship between vine and branch
- The productiveness factor
- The access factor
- The power factor

“For from the very beginning God decided that those who came to Him... should become like His Son...”

Romans 8:29 (LB)
..."We are not meant to remain as children...but grow up in every way in Christ...."

Ephesians 4:14-15 (PH)

..."that you may become mature Christians and may fulfill God's will for you."

Colossians 4:12b (PH)

Group Discussion

Discuss the foregoing passages and give practical suggestion for a stagnant church seeking to grow spiritually.

Information & Maturity

- Preaching alone
- Bible study alone
- II Tim 3:7, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."
- Great Commission: "Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Programs & Maturity

- Offering programs is not the issue.
- Churches provide a broad menu of programs, events, and other experiences.
- But, the connection between these programs and demands of discipleship is usually unclear.

It's a problem of bridging the gap between theory and practice.
The journey across is life changing.
Average Church Member

* Have never prayed sincerely: 25%
* Have never meaningfully read their Bible: 35%
* Have never given to missions: 60%
* Have never served in church: 75%
* Have never invited anyone to church: 85%
* Have never brought anyone to Christ: 95%

Immature Churches

* Ephesians 4:14
* What grows a church?
* Transformed Lives

Disciple (Discipleship)

Definition

The **process** whereby one becomes a **complete** and **competent** follower of Jesus Christ.

What are we doing wrong?

* "If I understand them correctly, they are trying to turn atheists into missionaries and that is one hell of a deal."  
  - Business Student - Harvard Business School

Ignite people’s passion for God and get out of their way.

**S I M P L E  S O L U T I O N**

Jesus is seeking people who are absolutely serious about becoming new creations in Him.
Review

The discipline of discipleship is demonstrated in the study of the word, prayer, and service to God and fellow man.

Who is a Disciple?

Who is a Disciple?

Who is a Disciple?

Disciple/Power

★ Matthew 28:8-20 provides the discipleship mandate.
★ It defines the process and establishes the basis for action.
★ It highlights human/divine partnership in the building up of the kingdom

★ Matthew 28:18-20

★ This partnership has guarantee.
★ Daniel 7:13-14 ...His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away.
★ Matthew’s last promise to the disciple (28:20), echoes its first promise (1:22-23).
Matthew 16 – “the gates of hell shall not prevail”.
Matthew 28 – He now completes this transaction with a lifetime warranty—the presence and power of the all-powerful!

Therefore Make Disciples

* The main verb is “Make disciples.”
* “Baptizing them”, and “teaching them” are subordinate, therefore they will follow naturally.

Matthew 28:18-20

How are Disciples Made?

Disciples are made by following. The gospel was never meant to be theorized; it was meant to be lived. Disciples grow like babies: nature provides them with ability and parents provide them with the example.

Mark 3:14

How are Disciples Made?

We are required to be living epistles known and read of all men. This position involves fearful responsibilities.

– Adventist Home page 31.3 –

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

“Missional”

* Living in a way that engages others with the gospel message.
* The gospel is intended to be transmitted from life to life.
* People need to see someone walk with God to understand how to walk with God.
* Belief that is life transforming must come to the surface.

Discipleship Replication

To learn something really well, we must find someone with real “and” and have that person teach us how to do what he or she does.

1 Corinthians 11:1
Discipleship Replication

★ Love
★ Forgiveness
★ Devotion
★ Service

Christian virtues are best learnt when seen

Discipleship Replication

★ When the disciples of Jesus asked him how to pray he did not give them another sermon on prayer; he prayed.
★ We have mastered the art of telling people “how to”. Jesus showed them.
★ Showing is investment of time; it is the way you pour your life into another life in order to make a difference.
★ Discipleship can’t be done at a distance.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

PEOPLE KNOW WHEN THEY SEE!

John 13:35

The reason why [we] are thus weak and easily led away by temptation, is that [we] do not imitate the life of Christ.

(11. July 14, 1892 par. 1)

~Elen White~

Key Concept “Abide in me”

★ When Christ ascended he moved the disciples from the “Come and be with Me” stage into the “Remain in Me” phase of training (John 15:4,5).
★ Acts 2:42 “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Breakout Discussion: What does “Abide in me” look like in the discipleship process?
**Review**

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
PEOPLE KNOW WHEN THEY SEE!

*John 13:35*

**Emergent Trends & Discipleship - Part 4**

**FOLLOWING JESUS**

*Withered branch*
*"I have chosen you."
*Purpose*
*Go and bring*
*Receive*

*John 15:6,16*

"Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God." Ellen G. White

~Ellen G. White~
Review and Herald, June 18, 1895
"Go Ye Into All the World," par. 2

**Church Cultural Shift**

It is born out of a cultural shift within the church and even beyond its walls, driven by a reaction to perceived ineffectiveness, on the part of the church, in reflecting the character of Christ.
Emerging Conversation

Emergent stance on missional living states strongly at the traditional mission-minded position of the church, and rejects anything short of what they believe to be the full expression of the life of Christ.

Barna indicates that the majority of those who leave the churches are, “deeply committed believers who leave their churches because they want more of God but are not getting it in their local church.”

~Barna Institute research~

“We compared the beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviors of believers and non-believers. We concluded that non-Christians to understand Christianity since few born again individuals model a biblical faith . . .”

“. . . “If we hope to make a significant difference in the lives of individuals and in the nation’s culture, then we must increase our intentionality, our intensity and improve”

~George Barna~
Growing True Disciples p. 13

Where has this generation come from?

* There’s nothing new about the generation gap— it’s as old as the Bible.
* The big game changer is: the church hasn’t passed on the torch.
* A recognition of generational differences can do much to remove misunderstanding and resolve conflict.

~Dr. William G. Johnson~
Editor for the Adventist Review since 1982-2006. Ellen G. White Estate board of trustees member

Discipling a Generation!
6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:
7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.
9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Parents are Disciplers
Gods program is the only sure way of countering the effects of globalization and assimilation, which intentionally or unintentionally challenges the parental role of passing on virtues.

Leadership & Lordship
It's a terrible time to lead the church. Yes, the Seventh-day Adventist Church... the spirit of the age, infiltrating the church, would make leadership well-nigh impossible.

We need to be aware of the times and the spirit of the times. We need discernment to take what is good and to reject what is bad.

~Dr. William G. Johnson~
Editor for the Adventist Review since 1982-2006
Ellen G. White Estate board of trustees member

Leadership & Lordship
We make high profession—we claim to be Adventists. A people who expect and long for Jesus to return. But so often how we live denies what we say.

Ellen White had it right: “A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work” (SM 1:121).

~Dr. William G. Johnson~
Editor for the Adventist Review since 1982-2006
Ellen G. White Estate board of trustees member

Timeless Gospel
Because the gospel is timeless and premeditates breaking all cultural, generational and ethnic barriers, it can neither be modern nor postmodern, but it must address both the modern and the postmodern while bringing salvation to all
(Revelation 14: 6)
The “Be Real” Generation

“When we love like Jesus, we are compelled to live like Jesus.” This moves the proposition of the gospel into the realm of credibility and renders it compelling.

—David Putman—
Breaking the Discipleship Code, 22.

John 13:35

God’s Mission

The mission is God’s mission (which is to save the world) and we are given the privilege of participating with God.

The goal is not for the church to determine where to take God, but to find out where God is working and join Him there. — Matthew 28:19, 20

1. Usually without warning it confronts, intrudes, and interrupts one’s normal activities.

2. It is Jesus who calls.

3. The call is always in the imperative, which allows only two possible responses: a positive or a negative response. Jesus refuses to negotiate (Luke 9:59–62).

4. “The call summons us to walk with Jesus, abandoning whatever security we may have had.”

—Handbook of Discipleship—
vol. 12, 682.

Matthew 28:19, 20

Making it happen!

“Discipleship does not happen simply because a church exists. It occurs when there is an intentional and strategic thrust to facilitate spiritual maturity”

—George Barna, Growing True Disciples (p 29)

Breakout

1. What, if any, were the discipleship principles in the Garden of Eden?

2. What elements of discipleship can be found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, and how do you think they could answer the postmodern versus modern dilemma?
Review

Power over sin/death!

If the wages (consequence) of sin is death, then it is logical to conclude that he who is released from the power of sin is released from the power of death.

Teaching! – Part 5

FOLLOWING JESUS

* Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;
* And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Hebrews 2:14.15

What is the key of v 19?

* Luke 11:52 Knowledge of truth...
* Hosea 4:6: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.”

Matthew 16:18
**The Discipleship Process**

- Become (Disciple)
- Produce (Discipling)
- Do (Teach)

**Teaching**

- Teaching – discipling
- Baptizing – sign of a commitment
- Teaching – instructing

Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God by a miracle. No sooner does he come to know the Saviour than he desires to make others acquainted with Him. - The Ministry of Healing: 102 -

**Disciple as Teacher**

- Hebrews 5:12: For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

**BREAKOUT DISCUSSION:**

- When is a disciple mature enough to disciple others?
- Discuss indoctrination versus learning by observation.
- Discuss accession versus assimilation.
- How does lack of information affect growth?

**Making it happen!**

"Discipleship does not happen simply because a church exists. It occurs when there is an intentional and strategic thrust to facilitate spiritual maturity."

~ George Barna, Growing True Disciples (p 29) ~
Discipleship and Edifying

God has designed that the same principle of sharing your life with someone to bring them to Christ would serve to strengthen one another within the body of Christ.

Disciple—Gifted

* 1 Cor. 12: 7, 11, 18; Eph. 2:10
* God does not give gifts which he does not “call” the recipient to use, nor does He call someone to do something for Him without supplying that person with the necessary gifts to do it.

The Structure Based Church

Organizational Structure Determined
Plan for Ministry in Place
People put in appropriate leadership slots

The Gifts Based Church

Gifts matched to needs
Articulate shared vision for ministry
Design appropriate systems for effective ministry

Made For A Mission

* “[Father] in the same way you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world.” John 17:18 (MSG)
* “Life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about God's mighty kindness and love.” Acts 20:24 (NET)
One Thing

- Matthew 28
- Mark 16
- Luke 24
- John 20
- Acts 1:8
- All indicate the church's #1 job...
- Make Disciples
APPENDIX E

NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT
The Essence of NCD

Natural Church Development (NCD) is all about releasing the potential that God has already implanted in our lives. Based on research in more than 70,000 churches on all six continents, NCD describes universal principles that are applicable regardless of culture or spiritual style.

First.

NCD focuses on increasing the quality of a church rather than on numerical growth goals. This emphasis on church health has proven to be the key to ongoing growth and multiplication.

Second.

The center of NCD is the all by itself principle that can be observed in healthy churches around the globe. All NCD principles are answers to the question: How can this God-given growth potential be released?

Third.

On all levels of church life, NCD encourages creativity, authenticity, and diversity. Rather than selling a specific church model, NCD helps Christians and churches to discover and develop their individuality.

Fourth.

NCD assists believers in rediscovering central Biblical concepts and relating them to their everyday lives. This is expressed by the Trinitarian Compass which is the heart of all NCD tools.

Fifth.

It works. Churches that have done three or more NCD Surveys, have increased their average growth rate by 51% between the first and the third survey. We plant, we water. God gives the increase.


______. “Go Ye Into All the World.” *Review and Herald*, June 18, 1895, 1.

______. “Keeping the Heart.” *Youth’s Instructor*, March 5, 1903, 1.

______. “Lamps Without Oil.” *Review and Herald*, September 17, 1908, 8.


______. “The Lost Piece of Silver.” *Union Conference Record*, July 1, 1900, 1.


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VITA
VITA

Donnieval C. Walker
Born: December 25, 1963

Academic Overview

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY
Andrews University Theological Seminary
CANDIDATE (2012)
Berrien Springs, Michigan

MASTERS OF ARTS IN THEOLOGY
Andrews University Theological Seminary
YEARS ATTENDED (1994-1997)
Berrien Springs, Michigan

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN THEOLOGY
Northern Caribbean University
YEARS ATTENDED (1981-1985)
Mandeville, Jamaica

Professional Experience

PASTOR
Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
YEARS EMPLOYED (2006-PRESENT)
Manhasset, New York

MINISTERIAL SECRETARY
Bermuda Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
YEARS EMPLOYED (2001-2006)
Bermuda

PASTOR
West Jamaica Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
YEARS EMPLOYED (1986-2000)
Montego Bay, Jamaica