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DISCIPLING MILITARY MALES AT FIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH OAK GROVE,
OAK GROVE, KENTUCKY

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DISCIPLING MILITARY MALES AT FIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH OAK GROVE,
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PREFACE

During the late summer months, 38 years ago, the Lord called me out of darkness into light. I responded to the gospel message that was preached that night during a revival service. I knew that my sins had separated me from God and that Jesus was the only person who could reconcile me back to God. Reflecting back on those years as an adult, I can clearly see that an important element was absent from the local church, discipleship.

I can still remember attending Sunday school as a child. I recall the Sunday school teacher trying to corral young teenage boys to teach us God's Word. I am grateful for faithful Sunday school teachers of the past, and those who currently accept such an important teaching ministry in the church. Sunday school provided me with a foundation to build upon.

For me personally, the foundation was laid; however, the deep spiritual growth never transpired. By the age of eighteen, I had drifted from the church into the world. Reflecting back, what if the church offered a process for discipleship? If the church was intentional in discipleship, would I have left the church for the attractions of the world? What if a man had personally mentored me through those crucial teen years (my father was absent)? Would that have kept me from straying off course in my Christian life? I will never know the answers to those questions. But I do know if the church had been deliberate in discipling those new to the faith, the chances are greater that I would not have chosen the ways of the world. That being said, the Lord has given me a desire to see a healthy discipleship process in the local church.

During the seminar phase of this degree program, I bounced back and forth between project ideas. The Lord, however, brought me back to the field of discipleship.

The more I studied and researched, the more I realized what little I knew about the process of discipleship. I possessed a general idea of the discipleship process and had been actively involved in discipling other men. Implementing a discipleship process, however, was at another level. This doctoral program pushed me and made me to be a more disciplined individual and a more mature disciple as well.

This doctoral degree could not have been possible without the invitation of Todd Gray. I can vividly remember Todd asking me to join him in the doctoral program. I replied, “No!” Todd was persistent, I finally agreed, and the journey began. I discovered that during each phase of the seminars, God used the professors, required reading, fellowship with fellow cohorts, and writing assignments to see me through some difficult times.

Others who deserve credit for assisting me in earning this degree would be Eddie Nation and Charles Frazier. Both men have proved to be extremely valuable and encouraging. I would also like to thank the congregation of Cerulean Baptist Church for allowing me to pursue my doctorate. Although I did not finish my doctorate where I began it, I will always be thankful for Cerulean Baptist Church for their love and encouragement. In particular, I would like to thank at Cerulean Baptist, Wilburn Wilson, a true modern day Barnabas. After I experienced some difficult times, Wilburn (known by all as Willie) encouraged me to finish what I had started. Thereafter accepting my new position at First Baptist Church Oak Grove, Wilburn wrote me a farewell letter, within which he wrote, “I hope your new position will allow you to complete your education, as I wanted you to finish while you were here, but under no circumstances should you withdraw.” God used those words, and others from Wilburn, to propel me through this program when I felt like withdrawing. Thank you, Wilburn Wilson.

I also would like to thank my mother, Marie Shepherd, who always knew that one day I would be a pastor. I am thankful for her prayers and support as well. I am also grateful to my high school English teacher, Mrs. Pat Miksch who offered her grammatical advice with my seminar papers. I am also grateful for the faculty at Southern Seminary.

Chuck Lawless will always be a source of motivation with the words, “press on!”

William Henard, my faculty supervisor, provided much needed feedback and advice. His counsel improved my writing skills and his suggestions caused me to think more deeper throughout my project.

Much gratefulness is extended to Guy Fredrick and his daughter-in-law, Betsy Fredrick. Their insight and skills as editors were needed and appreciated. The members of First Baptist Church Oak Grove are a constant source of encouragement to me and my family. What a privilege to serve alongside these soldiers as they serve our country. I also owe much appreciation to the participants of this project. My love and appreciation for them has grown as they willingly helped me to develop a discipleship process that meets the unique needs of military men.

Last, I need to thank my wife, Karen, and our son, Jon Everett Shepherd. Karen was always supportive and sacrificial through my Master of Divinity degree, and likewise through this doctoral degree. Karen is my true inspiration and would “push” me just at the right times. Thank you, Karen, for your beautiful spirit and love for our Savior, Jesus Christ. Jon Everett, my son, has sacrificed as well. Many times I was unable to spend quality time with him due to the time that is required of such an undertaking. My goal for him is that he is never too old to learn and that life is a never-ending educational process whether in or outside the classroom. He knows his dad is not the most intellectual student, but hopefully he sees the value in perseverance. Thank you my son, Jon Everett.

Ultimately, I thank God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit for seeing me through this project. Humans have encouraged me throughout, but the Trinity has sustained me. I pray that the triune God has been glorified by my works and attitude. What a privilege it is to serve and represent Him.

Reed Winters Shepherd

Hopkinsville, Kentucky

May 2012

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop a discipleship strategy for male military members of First Baptist Church Oak Grove, Oak Grove, Kentucky.

Goals

This discipleship strategy for adult males sought to accomplish four goals. The first goal was to improve upon my own disciple-making skills. Particular focus was given in the following areas of spiritual disciplines: to be consistent in Scripture memorization, prayer, fasting, journaling, evangelism, and time management. Progress in these areas helped me to be a more mature disciple maker.

The second goal was to learn the spiritual maturity level of selected adult males. The spiritual maturity level was determined by one-on-one interviews with a focus group, questionnaires, and input from the senior pastor

The third goal was to discover barriers that inhibit effective disciple-making. Barriers that inhibit effective disciple-making was determined by researching the history of disciple-making at First Baptist Church Oak Grove (FBC).

The fourth goal was to develop a nine-week discipleship curriculum for adult males. This curriculum addressed the barriers and needs where men often struggle, such as what is a disciple, the problem of sin, temptation, sexual immorality, pornography, biblical manhood, prayer, evangelism, and how to have a quiet time.

Ministry Context

First Baptist Church Oak Grove is located in Oak Grove, Kentucky, in Christian

County. The campus of First Baptist Oak Grove is located on Thompsonville Lane, a major thoroughfare with a traffic volume of 7001 vehicles driving by the church campus each day.¹

According to the 2009 US Census, Oak Grove has a population of 9,205 residents.² Oak Grove, however, is located 2 miles from Clarksville, the fifth largest city in Tennessee, with a population exceeding 112,000.³ Due to the close proximity of Clarksville, the surrounding area is much more populous. A seven-mile area around the church boosts the population to over 70,000, with a projected population of 79,488 by 2013.⁴ According to the North American Mission Board Center for Missional Research,

A rapidly changing population may provide opportunities for evangelistic witness to persons experiencing transition in their lives. A rapidly growing congregation may outstrip the governmental and social infrastructure to meet its needs, creating ministry opportunities.⁵

Oak Grove is also adjacent to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Fort Campbell is a major United States Army Post. The current population of Fort Campbell is 30,000 soldiers, with 55,000 family members. Many retirees from Fort Campbell are making Oak Grove or Clarksville their home due to affordable housing, the low cost of living, and the quality of lifestyle. The membership of First Baptist Oak Grove is constantly changing. While the majority of the church is composed of active military, deployment

¹Center for Missional Research, “Know Your Community 489 Thompsonville Lane Oak Gove, KY 42262,” North American Mission Board [on-line]; accessed 5 March 2010; available from <http://www.missionalresearch.info>; Internet, 5.

²US Census Bureau American Fact Finder, “Oak Grove, KY” [on-line]; accessed 5 March 2010; available from <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFPopulation.html>; Internet.

³Clarksville, Tennessee, “Clarksville, Tennessee—17th Fastest Growing City in the USA,” (21 June 2006) [on-line]; accessed 2 April 2010; available from <http://clarksville.tn.us/news-html/2006/06/news0068.html>; Internet.

⁴Center for Missional Research, “Know Your Community,” 7.

⁵Ibid., 8.

forces a revolving door of membership. The instability of church membership poses several problems for the church. When a family is assimilated into the church and becomes active in the ministry, they are often deployed to Afghanistan or other locations stateside or around the world. First Baptist Oak Grove does not have the stability that most churches enjoy when it comes to traditional membership.

The membership is in a constant flux of change; however, this rapidly changing population base can be a catalyst to fulfill the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20. First Baptist Oak Grove, with effective discipline making, can be an incubator that produces disciples of Christ who are literally sent to all corners of the earth.

Originally called Oak Grove Chapel, First Baptist Oak Grove began as a mission of Olivet Baptist Church of Howell, Kentucky, in 1954. In the early 1950s, Olivet Baptist church was located 8 miles from the Oak Grove-Fort Campbell area and had a desire to reach the families in the Oak Grove mobile home parks. To help fulfill this dream, Olivet Baptist Church decided to have a special offering called the “community missions offering.” The offering of \$252.73 was used to purchase a used wooden camping-type trailer with a folding room on each side of the main room. The trailer was moved to a local mobile home park and could accommodate approximately forty people. The owner of the mobile home park provided free rent and electricity. The members of Olivet Baptist Church began to see their dream come to fruition as the first Sunday school class was held with thirteen children present. Fifty years have passed, and First Baptist Oak Grove is a flourishing congregation that ministers to civilian and non-civilian alike.

Oak Grove is not only a rapidly growing community, the population analysis of Oak Grove is young and the ethnicity is diverse. The median age of the community is 23.9 years.⁶ The Center for Missional Research also states, “Among younger adults, new

⁶City-Data.com, “42262 Zip Code Detailed Profile” [on-line]; accessed 12 March 2010; <http://www.city-data.com/zip/42262.html>; Internet.

congregations must be responsive to developmental needs such as selecting a mate, learning to live with a marriage partner, starting a family, rearing children, managing a household, and getting started in an occupation.”⁷ First Baptist Oak Grove is constantly evaluating and strategizing on how to address the needs of today’s younger generation.

When individuals think of a small town in Western Kentucky, they would normally think of a less diverse population in regards to ethnicity, which is normally true. Nevertheless, because of Fort Campbell, Oak Grove has as diversified an ethnicity as any major city in the United States. The population is comprised of 58.3 percent white, 25.5 percent black, 6.2 percent other, and 5 percent are of two or more races.⁸ Even though the Hispanic population does not rate on the 2000 Census, the estimation was thought to be 13.3 percent of the population in 2008 and 28 percent by 2013.⁹ Although not reflected on the census report, it is common to see ethnic groups such as Koreans, Asians, Germans, and Panamanians. It is also common to see restaurants that reflect these nationalities. The First Baptist Oak Grove family is a reflection of the Census report; it is a young, diverse, multi-racial congregation.

The household income of Oak Grove is just below the national average of \$51,546 per year.¹⁰ Unlike the nation, the city of Oak Grove has proven to be unaffected by the sluggish economy due to the presence of Fort Campbell. The military post has been expanding its infrastructure to accommodate further expansion of administrative and housing complexes. Concerning education, 10.3 percent of Oak Grove residents have earned a college degree, and 88.6 percent have completed high school.¹¹

⁷Ibid., 11.

⁸Ibid., 12.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., 18.

¹¹Ibid., 23.

Oak Grove has become diverse in its religious background due primarily to soldiers from Fort Campbell who bring with them a diverse religious background. It would not be uncommon to encounter those with backgrounds from Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism. In addition to Eastern religions, one is frequently meets individuals with Wiccan and New Age beliefs. This wide range of religions furthers the need for a strong discipleship program because many in the Oak Grove area do not know the distinction between a Southern Baptist and a Jehovah's Witness.

Growth for First Baptist Oak Grove has been strong during the past eight years. Sunday morning worship ranges from 325 to 375 individuals. Sunday school attendance averages 220. Most weeks the church is fortunate to have 5 to 8 first-time visitors. Since 2001, the church has added over 900 members, with nearly half of those being conversion growth. From 2001 and 2008, the church has baptized new members at a ratio of 15:1 resident members to baptisms. The Christian County Baptist Association comprises 46 churches. First Baptist is known to be an evangelistic church, regularly leading in baptisms.

Many of these members, however, do not stay for more than eighteen months. The short duration is partially due to the fact that some are not assimilated into Sunday school, but primarily because many of these new members are deployed to other areas within the United States and abroad. Although the turnover rate is high, a strong discipleship program can equip members who are deployed to be truly missional. On July 15, 2007, the church completed a new worship center. As of August 2010, the church is remodeling the education building and adding two new classrooms. Four more classrooms are planned for the future. The addition of new classrooms will enable all children's classrooms to be located on one wing and all adults to be located on a separate wing of the educational building. The church campus has four separate buildings, which brings the property value to just over two million dollars.

FBC has also been instrumental in starting three other congregations in the area.

These congregations consist of Hispanic, Korean, and English-speaking missions. Since Oak Grove is a growing city, the community could benefit from additional evangelical church plants. FBC has three full-time staff members, including a pastor, associate pastor and youth pastor. The church also has a part-time administrative person, part-time worship leader, and four volunteer receptionists who rotate Monday through Thursday. In the future, the church could also benefit from a part-time outreach leader. My title at First Baptist Church is Associate Pastor. My primary responsibilities include overseeing all education, teacher training, follow-up with first-time visitors, teaching a new members class, and pastoral care.

First Baptist Oak Grove is also in the vision stage of providing housing for those who are transient. A recent meeting with the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the North American Mission Board, suggested options for building housing on the church campus or contracting with a local hotel or apartment complex to provide temporary shelter for the homeless.

FBC has a positive image in the community and with City Hall. It is common for the local police department to refer the homeless and others in need to First Baptist for assistance. FBC is also known as a church that works well with denominational leaders in both Kentucky and Tennessee. Some of the older members of the church, however, still view their church as a church that has not made significant strides since its inception over fifty years ago. They point to the fact that the church always seems to struggle financially along with an unstable membership.

According to Carl Dudley and Sally A. Johnson in *Energizing the Congregation*, First Baptist Church Oak Grove would be described as a “survivor church.”¹² According to the authors, the survivor church

¹²Carl Dudley and Sally A. Johnson, *Energizing the Congregation* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 5.

loves to tell stories of the storms it has weathered. Often the congregation attracts and sustains people who take pride in their survival time and again. Survivor churches live on the edge, always on the verge of being overwhelmed by emergencies. They do not expect to conquer their problems, but they will not give in.¹³

The reason FBC is a reflection of the survivor church is its close proximity to a major military base. Since the church is 50 percent active military, there is always be a constant change in the membership. In regard to the older members concerns, the church does struggle in finances and in what seems to be statistically plateaued in worship and Sunday school attendance, despite 900 members joining in the past nine years.

FBC has experienced the hardships of the Vietnam War as well as Operation Desert Storm. Both these wars had a tremendous effect on the community and the church. Being a survivor church takes its toll on the members, particularly the elderly members. Although a survivor church may be difficult on members and staff, there is much reward as the church presses on to minister to the community and to one another.

An additional type of congregation that reflects First Baptist Oak Grove is a “pilgrim church.”¹⁴ Dudley and Johnson portray the pilgrim church as one that “dwells with its own people wherever they are, sustaining them as a community in their pilgrimage.”¹⁵ There are not many white-collar professionals outside the military at FBC. Concerning the pilgrim church, Dudley and Johnson also state, “They live a theology of pilgrimage that reaches out to help others who travel a similar journey. . . . The pilgrim church provides the focus of faith and culture for a particular people.”¹⁶As previously mentioned, FBC is predominately military. Most soldiers do not like to be assigned to duty at Fort Campbell due to the high deployment rate. Their length of stay may be 1 to 3 years. If one joins FBC, it usually happens within 2 or 3 visits. New

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., 4.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., 5.

members are encouraged to be active in Sunday school and find a place of ministry. Many members join because they were told of First Baptist Church Oak Grove through other military personnel stationed throughout the world, who were once members or currently members themselves.

The mission orientation at FBC would be described as “evangelistic orientation.”¹⁷ According to Roozen, McKinney, and Carroll, the church that focuses on evangelistic orientation is a church that is known to “stress personal witnessing to and sharing one’s faith with others, strong openness to the Holy Spirit, and conversion of everyone to the ‘one true faith.’”¹⁸ The authors further describe a church with an evangelistic orientation to “as believing that God has given them a message that must be shared with their friends and neighbors, and the message itself, the need to respond to God’s saving action in Jesus Christ, is at the center of congregational life.”¹⁹ This evangelistic culture is where FBC is set apart from many churches in the area. It is common to witness members of FBC going “door knocking” to share to good news about Jesus Christ. This evangelistic orientation is promoted and practiced by the senior pastor. Witnessing classes are also taught throughout the year to equip members to share their faith in Christ. As the church multiplies because of an evangelistic atmosphere, a vibrant discipleship program aids in assimilating new members into the church.

Since its inception, FBC has been conservative when it comes to theology. During New Member Orientation, individuals are educated on the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message. Also, the preaching and teaching reflects a conservative view of Scripture. It has been my experience as associate pastor that people respond positively when the Word

¹⁷David A. Roozen, William McKinney, and Jackson W. Carroll, *Varieties of Religious Presence* (New York: Pilgrim, 1984), 87.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., 217.

of God is accurately preached and when tough subjects are not avoided through the expository preaching of the senior pastor.

When it comes to tradition, the First Baptist Church Oak Grove probably emphasizes patriotic holidays more than a non-military church would. The church celebrates Memorial Day with a picnic and games for children and adults. The fourth of July is recognized by a special patriotic celebration. On these special days, a color guard carries the American and Christian flags to the front of the church. The church then recites the pledges followed by a series of patriotic songs. A patriotic theme is also expected in the message.

The worship style at FBC would be described as “revivalist,” according to Thom Rainer’s *Effective Evangelistic Churches*. Rainer defines the revivalist worship style as, “Mood: exuberant, celebrative, and informal. Music: organ, piano, and taped music, gospel hymns, contemporary songs, and anthems. Purpose: to save the lost and encourage believers to witness.”²⁰ First Baptist Church Oak Grove offers two morning worship services. The “Early Riser” 8:30 a.m. service is more traditional in flavor in regards to order of service and music. This service mainly attracts the senior adult segment of the church. The second service, offered at 11:00 a.m., is simply called Morning Worship. This service is more contemporary in the style of worship and music. This service attracts the younger segment of the church. It is common to see worshippers raise their hands during singing and applause rather than saying “amen” during preaching. Both services call for commitment to the message, and people regularly respond during the invitation.

My leadership style would be described as shepherd or coach. Prior to my current role as associate pastor, I was pastor for ten years at Cerulean Baptist church in

²⁰Thom Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 101.

Cerulean, Kentucky. Those ten years were formative in shaping me to be the leader I am today. My strengths would be preaching, teaching, and pastoral care. My desire has always been to equip God's saints to do ministry. I enjoy helping followers of Christ find their area of giftedness and plugging them into ministry. I am also gifted at identifying problems, then seeking a solution to those problems.

Rationale

When I was fourteen years old, I was at a revival listening to the evangelist part-time, while talking to my friends the rest of the time. When the invitation was given, however, God drew me to him on that warm summer night, and I became a child of His. For me and for so many others, going to church consisted of going to Sunday school, listening to the preacher, and then going home. I am sure my parents thought their "job" was done until next Sunday. I thought this habit was the norm. This "routine" was the only expectation that I knew. No one ever offered to walk beside to teach me the disciplines of the faith. In retrospect, many pitfalls in my life could have been avoided if a fellow believer had taken time to disciple me one-on-one. The reason this project was so personal to me was because I know firsthand the devastating effects when one is not taught beyond Sunday school.

In 2 Timothy 2:2, the Apostle Paul exhorts Timothy to "entrust faithful men who will be able to teach others also." This instruction was carried out in the early church but is lacking in many evangelical churches today. The command is simple, yet the desire to teach others is weak for many men today.

Although some adult males are engaged in disciple making, the majority of men are not being trained as disciple makers at FBC. The timing was right to implement such training because the vision for disciple making is continually being cast by the senior pastor. I believe when men, the spiritual leaders of the home and church, are engaged in disciple making, it becomes contagious within their own families as well as the church family.

Although Sunday school is crucial and is an effective assimilation tool in the church, men (and women) need a mature Christian to walk with them for an extended period of time. Because of the ethnic diversity of FBC, many men bring to the church a vast array of beliefs from Buddhism to Mormonism. The nine-week class helped establish new believers in their relationship with Christ. Currently, many men, although now believers in Jesus Christ, are anemic when it comes to the basics of Christianity and the spiritual disciplines. This one-on-one, disciple-making strategy will equip these young men for the work of the ministry, whether they are here at First Baptist Church Oak Grove or serving our country in the mountains of Afghanistan. As a result, not only does the church and these men's family lives benefit from intentional discipleship, but wherever they are sent to serve, the gospel will spread and the multiplication process will begin anew.

This project was beneficial in the following ways. The first of the four goals for this project was to improve my own disciple making skills. I am currently engaged in the personal disciple-making process. This project, however, allowed me to further strengthen my skills. Addressing these identified weaknesses shaped me into a more mature disciple maker.

When men are properly discipled in the spiritual disciplines, they are more aware of their biblical role in the home and church; hence, both home and church is healthier. Finally, God was glorified because men, the spiritual leaders of the home and church, were equipped to reproduce themselves, and, therefore, were a godly example to follow. For far too long, Christian men have neglected their roles in the home and church. This lack of spiritual leadership is due in part, I believe, to ignorance and laziness. This project, prayerfully, will be a catalyst to bring about healthy, lasting change in the life of men.

Definitions, Limitations and Delimitations

The purpose of this project was to develop a stratagem to disciple adult male

members to reproduce themselves as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. A “disciple” is a student who learns. In regard to this project, the terms “disciple,” “discipling,” and “disciple-making” were used interchangeably for one who learns. The term “disciple” in the Greek New Testament is *mathes*.²¹ Making a disciple is being able to walk beside someone so they may become a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. An “adult male” for the purpose of this project would be a male eighteen years or older. There will be no shortage of adult males with whom to work pertaining to this project.

This project was limited to fifteen weeks. The curriculum I developed for this project covered the following topics: what is a disciple, the problem of sin, temptation, sexual immorality, pornography, biblical manhood, prayer, evangelism, and how to have a quiet time. A delimitation of this project was this discipleship process was exclusive to adult males.

Research Methodology

The focus of this project was to educate, train, and implement a strategy to disciple adult males at the First Baptist Church Oak Grove, Kentucky. In keeping with the goals of this project, research focused upon: (1) measuring the knowledge of each participant in the area of personal discipleship; (2) determine the desire each participant has towards discipleship; and (3) determine the understanding each participant has in their responsibility in reproducing themselves as disciples.

The method used for evaluating the above areas was a questionnaire and a focus group. The questionnaire I utilized was a condensed version of the Discipleship Inventory (see Appendix 1) written by Brad Waggoner, and granted by his permission. These tools were employed in a pre-test and post-test format. These instruments should allow for a proper understanding and evaluation of the participants’ knowledge of

²¹Hans Weder, “Disciple, Discipleship,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:209.

discipleship and the importance of reproducing themselves as disciples. The post-seminar questionnaire was designed to give insight about the effectiveness of the seminar in achieving its goals.

The questionnaire allowed the participant to indicate their agreement or disagreement on a five-point Likert scale. The goal of the questionnaire was to reveal the time the participants spend in discipleship and their overall attitude concerning discipleship. The results of the questionnaire were evaluated statistically. The purpose of using the focus group was to evaluate the participants regarding discipleship and the effectiveness of this project.

The focus group consisted of adult male men who are recent believers, attend church once or twice per month, and attend church regularly, active and inactive within the church. These individual classes addressed the following topics: what is a disciple, the problem of sin, temptation, sexual immorality, pornography, biblical manhood, prayer, evangelism, and how to have a quiet time. When the nine classes were completed, I asked open-ended questions to reveal if there were any changes attitudes or behaviors towards discipleship.

As mentioned earlier, the first of my four goals was personal. I measured my personal goals by what these six items previously looked like in my life, and how I would like for them to look like by the conclusion of the project. Within this goal, I focused on Scripture memorization, fasting, journaling, evangelism, and time management.

I previously tried to memorize one verse of Scripture per week. My goal for this project was to memorize two Scriptures verses per week. I memorized Scripture from the Old Testament one week and the New Testament the following week. The second Scripture to memorize addressed topics such as character, integrity, pride, and selfishness.

My second personal goal was prayer. I previously pray for approximately thirty minutes in the morning following my morning devotions. My goal was to dedicate an additional thirty minutes in the afternoon to pray specifically for those who have not repented of their sins and trusted in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

My third personal goal of fasting was previously the weakest of my spiritual disciplines. I often fast when faced with personal issues. My goal was to be less self-centered and to fast over those who do not have a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as well for those who are struggling with major issues in their life.

I was also inconsistent when it came to journaling. There were times when I journal after my daily Bible reading plan. I more often find myself journaling in my “head” rather than recording my thoughts on paper. My goal was to journal my thoughts after reading my daily Bible reading plan.

Evangelism was a goal because of my good intentions but inconsistent sharing of Jesus Christ with others. There were times when I boldly shared the good news of Jesus three to four times per day. Unfortunately, I might go a full week without taking advantage of evangelistic opportunities. My goal, therefore, was to share the good news of the gospel at least once per day and to pass out three witnessing tracks per day.

My final personal goal was time management. Although my calendar was organized concerning appointments, I did not know how much time was being spent pertaining to my daily activities. I know I can be more efficient, have less stress, and spend more time with my family by tracking my time, just as I track my finances.

By accomplishing these personal goals, I knew I would also be a more mature disciple of Christ and help reproduce more mature disciples of Christ. I feel these personal goals helped compliment my three other goals for this project.

Conclusion

The First Baptist Church of Oak Grove, Kentucky was well suited for a one-on-one- discipleship project. Discipleship has been an important part of the church’s evangelistic efforts in recent years, establishing a strong biblical foundation for the membership. It seemed natural though, to customize a discipleship strategy particularly for military men to help fulfill the Great Commission.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES FOR
DEVELOPING A DISCIPLESHIP STRATEGY
FOR ADULT MALES

Chapter 1 laid the foundation for this project and established the need to develop a strategy to disciple military males at First Baptist Church Oak Grove. If discipleship among adult males is to take place at First Baptist Church Oak Grove, discipleship will require a biblical foundation on how God has used men to disciple other men in both the Old and New Testament. Scripture confirms that discipleship is to be a priority in the church and that organization is needed to have an effective discipleship ministry. “Discipleship” is a familiar word that echoes throughout many denominations and churches today. Discipleship, however, is not a priority among many Christians in the present day. It would not be fair to assign blame to a particular group of people for the demise of discipleship among God’s people. Many factors inhibit discipleship today. Apathy, lack of leadership, and programs versus a lifestyle all contribute to absence of discipleship among many of God’s people today. A disciple must “know” his teacher and “interact” with his teacher. Once a relationship is established between the teacher and learner, the discipleship process has a healthy foundation upon which to build. The following section will describe how the word “disciple” is used in the Bible.

Definition for Disciple

Avery Willis defines discipleship as “a personal, obedient relationship with Jesus Christ in which He transforms your character into Christlikeness; changes your

values into Kingdom values; and involves you in His mission in the home, the church, and the world.”¹

When describing discipleship, Chuck Lawless notes:

The word is a derivative of a verb meaning “to learn.” At the core of discipleship is learning from a teacher. A disciple was—and is—first a student. Yet, biblical discipleship is much broader than intellectual learning. Biblical discipleship is a lifestyle best described in Jesus’ words: ‘A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, *will be like his teacher*’ (Luke 6:40, emphasis added; see Matt 9:9; 19:21; Mark 1:17, 2:14, 8:34; Luke 5:27; John 1:43). A disciple is a committed follower who seeks to model his life after his teacher.²

According to Hans Weder, “. . . the Hebrew word for disciple is *talmidh*. A similar word that is used less frequently in the Old Testament is *limmudh*.”³ Bill Hull notes:

The terms *talmidh* and *limmudh* indicate a personal relationship as master teaches and trains a disciple. Samuel the priest had a large following as he instructed Saul to meet with a ‘procession of prophets’ in preparation for his kingship (1 Sam 10:5). Later kings would have special relationships with prophets: Isaiah with Hezekiah, Nathan with David, and Samuel with Saul.⁴

According to *The Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, “The term that was used most frequently to designate one of Jesus’ followers was ‘disciple.’”⁵ Weder adds, “The New Testament concept of ‘disciple’ is expressed through the word *mathetes*. In all there are 261 instances where a form of *mathetes* is used in the New Testament, and they are all found in the Gospels and Acts.”⁶

¹Avery T. Willis, *Master Life 1: The Disciples Cross* (Nashville: LifeWay, 1996), 5.

²Chuck Lawless, *Discipled Warriors: Growing Healthy Churches That Are Equipped for Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 44-45, emphasis original.

³Hans Weder, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), s.v. “disciple, discipleship.”

⁴Bill Hull, *The Complete Book on Discipleship* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2006), 58.

⁵Michael J. Wilkins, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), s.v. “disciple, discipleship.”

⁶Weder, s.v. “disciple, discipleship.”

As a believer in Jesus Christ, one should be committed to his teaching and model one's life after his. When one learns, he will be able to teach others the power of the gospel that brings about godly transformation in the lives of believers.

Discipleship Is to Be a Priority of the Church

Discipleship must be a priority of the local church. Once an individual accepts God's Son, Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, he commands them to be discipled. Jesus, the resurrected Savior, expressed this fact to his eleven disciples in Matthew 28:18-20:

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."⁷

In this well-known passage, Jesus instructs his disciples to reproduce themselves not by their might or by their name, but in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Jesus has the authority to instruct his followers to make disciples of all nations.

Douglas R. A. Hare says:

The Great Commission is prefaced with one of the most important Christological statements in the First Gospel: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.' This recalls the similar declaration of 11:27: 'All things have been handed over to me by my Father.' In the comments on that verse it was suggested that the subject there is Jesus' *revealing* authority, while in 28:18 his *ruling* authority is in mind.⁸

Jesus is preeminent and is the only person who conquered death and continues to live for all eternity. John Nolland says that "through resurrection, God has vindicated Jesus, who is now able to freshly affirm his authority."⁹ This authority is validated by God the Father and recognized by Jesus' followers and the church today, to be binding upon their lives.

⁷Unless otherwise noted all Scripture is from English Standard Version.

⁸Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1993), 333, emphasis original.

⁹John Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 35a (Dallas: Word, 1989), 266.

Once Jesus reaffirms his authority, he tells his disciples to reproduce themselves (make disciples) of all nations. R. T. France observes:

Jesus' final words in this gospel are often referred to as "the Great Commission," and scholars have pointed out how closely this scene resembles, in its overall sense and content if not in detail, the commissioning narratives which occur throughout the OT where God's often reluctant and inadequate servants are sent out to fulfill his purpose with the assurance of his empowering and his presence to go with them; such stories are told notably of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. Such stories mark the beginning, not the end, of that person's service, and that is how it is here for the disciples.¹⁰

The Scriptures are not vague when it comes to discipleship. The thread of discipleship can readily be traced from the Old Testament through the New Testament. Craig Bloomberg states that "to 'make disciples of all nations' does require many people to leave their homelands, but Jesus' main focus remains on the task of all believers to duplicate themselves wherever they may be."¹¹ Wherever the geographical location of believers in Jesus Christ may be, they should be reproducers of themselves.

Grant R. Osborne comments:

The task of the church is not just to evangelize but to disciple the world for Christ. A huge error has occurred over the last two hundred years in the missionary movement. Our task is, of course, to reach the world with the gospel message of salvation, but too many denominations and mission organizations have been content to give little more than salvation messages. The Great Commission makes it clear that this is not enough. Every single person who is won to Christ must be anchored in Christ and taught how to live for Christ in day-to-day decisions.¹²

The church today must return to the mandate of Jesus to make disciples. Many churches today are either content, do not know how to equip believers, or how to multiply themselves. As a result, the greatest power for change, the local church, is lying dormant because discipleship has been largely neglected. Lawless notes:

¹⁰R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 1109-10.

¹¹Craig L. Bloomberg, *Matthew*, New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 431.

¹²Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 1084.

Making disciples is also an equipping process rather than a program. Baptism is an initiation rite of discipleship, but the process of teaching and obeying is continual. A disciple is always in the process of becoming like Jesus. In some churches, though, disciplinemaking is a narrow training program with little focus or intention. Believers study randomly chosen, short-term courses, and those who complete the courses are ‘discipled.’ I affirm the validity of these short-term studies, but only within the context of an overall discipleship strategy addressing the totality of Christian living.”¹³

If churches are not careful, they may be deceived by thinking that if they offer certain courses, discipleship has occurred. Leory Eims laments:

Why are fruitful, dedicated, mature disciples so rare? The biggest reason is that all too often we have relied on programs or materials or some other things to do the job. The ministry is to be carried on by the people, not programs. It is to be carried out by someone and not by something. Disciples cannot be massed produced. We cannot drop people into a ‘program’ and see a disciple emerge at the end of the production line. It takes time to make disciples. It takes individual, personal attention.¹⁴

David Platt concurs when he writes:

If the Son of God thought it necessary to focus his life on a small group of men, we are fooling ourselves to think we can mass-produce disciples today. God’s design for taking the gospel to the world is a slow, intentional, simple process that involves every one of his people sacrificing every facet of their lives to multiply the life of Christ in others.¹⁵

Following making disciples, Jesus says that these disciples should be baptized.

Grant R. Osborne observes that:

Baptism is Christ’s mandate for the church in the new covenant community. Some Christian movements believe baptism is not for today. This is not heresy, but it is serious error. The apostles would have been aghast at any such suggestion. . . . Baptism does not save but is part of the salvation experience.¹⁶

Since believers are saved by grace alone, baptism is significant because it identifies them with Christ. Baptism signifies outwardly the transformation that has taken place inwardly.

R. T. France states:

Baptizing has been mentioned in this gospel only as the activity of John, though the gospel of John makes it clear that it was a characteristic also of Jesus’ ministry at

¹³Lawless, *Discipled Warriors*, 46-47.

¹⁴Leory Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 45-46.

¹⁵David Platt, *Radical* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010), 104.

¹⁶Osborne, *Matthew*, 1084.

least in the early days while John was still active (John 3:22-26; 4:1-3). It was against this background of John's practice that it would be understood, as an act of repentance and of identification with the purified and prepared people of God.¹⁷

Baptizing in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now takes on a richer, more complete meaning compared to John's baptism.

Jesus continues to explain to his disciples that following baptism, believers are to observe all that he commanded. Effective discipleship must not be void of teaching.

Grant R. Osborne rightly states:

Christian leaders will be judged (cf. Heb 13:17) by their faithfulness to the Word of God, i.e., by their desire to center at all times on what God has said in His Word and not on their own ideas. Moreover, Christian discipleship is ethical at the heart, at all times centered on Christian life and not just on right belief. Belief that is not lived out in every aspect of daily decisions is not true belief. It is heart and conduct, not just head knowledge.¹⁸

Additionally Osborne writes:

'Teaching' (διδασκοντεζ) is based on Jesus' own 'teaching' ministry (4:23; 5:2; 7:29; 9:35; 11:1; 13:54; 21:23; 22:16; 26:55), another key area of Matthean theology, and forms the *didaché*, the church's teaching ministry; since Jesus words endure forever.¹⁹

Teaching sets in motion the sanctification process. Without accurate teaching of God's Word, believers will remain as Paul says, infants in Christ (1 Cor 3:1.)

The early church, as well as believers today, can always have the assurance that Jesus will always be with them. When Jesus said, "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 8:20), it was a promise that gave comfort and reassurance to his disciples. That same promise is valid today for the disciple of Jesus Christ. Craig Bloomberg states:

The Great Commission is empowered by 'Jesus' promise to be spiritually present with his followers until the end of this age, that is, until his return, when he will once again be present bodily [although 'the end of the age' might be an idiom roughly equivalent to forever.]²⁰

¹⁷France, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 176.

¹⁸Osborne, *Matthew*, 1085.

¹⁹Ibid., 1081.

²⁰Bloomberg, *Matthew*, 433.

Without the certainty of Jesus' presence, the church would certainly fail in fulfilling the Great Commission. Osborne sums up the Great Commission when he writes:

The gospel ends with 'Emmanuel' with which it began. The Great Commission is thus framed by the omnipotence (v. 18) and omnipresence (v. 20b) of Christ. The theme partakes of the Shekinah glory of the OT and the divine comfort of Yahweh's presence among men (not just divine presence but divine assistance). So God's protection of his people throughout the ages is promised to the church."²¹

Wayne Grudem comments on the Great Commission:

The task of fulfilling the Great Commission includes therefore not only evangelism but also teaching. And the task of teaching all that Jesus commanded us is, in a broad sense, the task of teaching what the whole Bible says to us today. To effectively teach ourselves and to teach others what the whole Bible says, it is necessary to collect and summarize all the Scripture passages on a particular subject.²²

For effective discipleship to occur, the whole counsel of God needs to be taught in a systematic fashion. Grudem continues:

We can teach others most effectively if we can direct them to the most relevant passages and suggest an appropriate summary of the teachings of those passages. Then the person who questions us can inspect those passages quickly for himself or herself and learn much more rapidly what the teaching of the Bible is on a particular subject.²³

The church throughout the ages has had a monumental task to do. It is a charge that cannot be accomplished by human ingenuity or strength. The Great Commission was given by the resurrected Jesus who conquered death. Jesus is sovereign over all nations. Christians are to reach those nations by following his Great Commission.

New Testament Examples of Making Disciples

Although Jesus was a rabbi, he was distinct from other teachers of the day. Jesus associated publicly with women, which was taboo for other rabbis. Jesus socialized with sinners and tax collectors, which was also forbidden among the rabbi establishment. Jesus also chose to spend time with children, a paltry act viewed by other rabbis.

²¹Osborne, *Matthew*, 1082.

²²Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 27.

²³Ibid.

The greatest disparity though, between Jesus and the other rabbis, was the radical allegiance that Jesus required from his disciples. Jesus disciples could expect persecution, separation from loved ones, and martyrdom. To understand what it means to follow Jesus, his relationship with the disciples may be observed. The following examples show the high cost of being a disciple of the master teacher, Jesus Christ.

Jesus and Peter

John 21:15 records an intriguing conversation between Jesus and Peter.

Commentators differ on the statement by Jesus when he asked Peter, “Do you love me more than these?” Leon Morris says:

The question is a significant one, and it is accordingly prefixed by a serious form of address. Jesus asks, ‘Do you truly love me more than these?’ This last term is not defined, and the question might mean: ‘Do you love me more than these men love me?’ or ‘Do you love me more than you love these men?’ or ‘Do you love me more than you love these things?’ Against the first way of taking the words is the difficulty of thinking that Jesus would invite one of his followers to compare the strength of his love with that of the other disciples. Yet we must remember that Peter had explicitly professed a devotion to Jesus that exceeded that of the others in the apostolic band (Matt 26:33; Mark 14:29; John 13:37; 15:12-13). It may be that Jesus is asking Peter whether, in the light of what has since happened, he still thinks that his love for Christ exceeds that of all the others. Not many have taken the words to signify ‘Do you love me more than you love me more than you love these men?’ But this is possible. Peter had three times denied Jesus, so that his devotion to him must be held to be suspect. But he had remained with his fellows and had gone fishing with them. Where did his supreme affection lie? With his companions with whom he resorted, or with Jesus whom he denied?²⁴

Morris continues with another possible scenario by suggesting that Jesus was referring to Peter’s profession:

Taken this way, the question challenges Peter as to his whole future. Was this to be spent in the pursuit of fishing and the like? Or did he love Christ more than that? It is perhaps against this interpretation that in his reply Peter drops the comparison. There would be no point in this if it were his fishing that was in mind, but very much if people were involved. Perhaps there is most to be said for the first way of looking at the question. We are sometimes inclined to think that a question about Peter’s love was superfluous. But this is not the case. His actions had shown that Peter had not wanted a crucified Lord. But Jesus was crucified. How did Peter’s devotion

²⁴Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 767-68.

stand in light of this? Was he ready to love Jesus as he was, and not as Peter wished him to be? That was an important question. Peter must face it and answer it.²⁵

Concerning John 21:15, George R. Beasley-Murray asserts:

The opening phrase is an editorial link with the preceding paragraph. The one issue that Jesus must clarify with Peter is his relation to him after the debacle in the High Priest's court; the sole element of that relationship concerns Jesus' love, for without it all else is vain (1 Cor 13:1-3). The question, 'Do you love me more than these?' in the context must surely mean, '. . . more than your fellow disciples do?' (rather than, 'more than you love them,' or 'more than you love your fishing equipment').²⁶

Concerning Jesus contrasting Peter's love for his fellow disciples and his love for Jesus, Beasley-Murray continues, "It is not Jesus would distinguish the depth of Peter's love from that of the others, but that Peter had brashly asserted his loyalty to Jesus as more steadfast than theirs. . . . The question is whether he is prepared to make such a statement now."²⁷

Gerald L. Borchert believes that in John 21:15, Jesus was comparing Peter's love versus the disciples' love for Jesus. Borchert notes:

It was to this well-intentional but frail disciple that Jesus pointedly asked, 'Do you truly love me more than these?' The 'these' here must of necessity mean loving Jesus more than the other disciples did rather than focusing on Peter preferring Jesus to other people or to his general love of fishing. Peter obviously had had a high opinion of loyalty and probably had regarded himself as the model of love and respect for Jesus. But he had hardly lived up to his own view of his loyalty or in comparison to others. So Jesus confronted Peter's own high opinion of himself and in so doing made Peter face his own frailty head-on.²⁸

In light of the varying interpretations of what Jesus meant by "Do you love me more than these?" Jesus desires Peter to love him more than anything. After Jesus questions Peter's love for him three times, Peter answers in verse 17 by saying. "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus then instructs Peter with the task to "Feed my sheep."

²⁵Ibid., 768.

²⁶George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 36 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 405.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Gerald L. Borchert, *John*, New American Commentary, vol. 25b (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2002), 334.

For healthy discipling to occur in the church today, the “feeding” of God’s Word must take place. John Calvin states:

The word feed is metaphorically applied by Scripture to any kind of government; but as the present subject is the spiritual government of the Church, it is of importance to observe what are the parts of which the office of pastor or shepherd consist.²⁹

The pastor, who is under the authority of Jesus Christ, certainly has a responsibility to feed the congregation from the pulpit. Feeding, however, must also take place as one mature believer is able to teach another the precepts of God’s Word. George R. Beasley observes, “To his relief the Lord accepts his avowal, and indicates his reinstatement with the declaration, ‘Take care of my lambs;’ Peter’s love for his Lord is to be made manifest in his care for the Lord’s flock.”³⁰ Because individual discipling is demanding, selfless love will be necessary as the discipling maker sacrifices his time and resources in discipling others. Leon Morris states:

It is further worth noting that the one thing about which Jesus questioned Peter prior to commissioning him to tend the flock was love. This is the basic qualification for Christian service. Other qualities may be desirable, but love is completely indispensable (1 Cor 13:1-3).³¹

Devoid of love, discipling or any other ministry of the church will become a legalistic duty that is an absence of the love of Christ. R. V. G. Tasker comments:

Such love alone enables the disciple to keep Christ’s commandments and to remain loyal to Him, even though, as will be the case with Peter, he may discover as his life goes on, that love does not make life easy, but that duties become more exacting and personal freedom more restricted with advancing years; and even though his discipleship may lead him, as it led Simon Peter, to imprisonment and death.³²

Discipleship is costly, but love overcomes all hurdles as we seek to fulfill the commandments of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

²⁹John Calvin, *Commentary on The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996) 2: 289-90.

³⁰Beasley-Murray, *John*, 405.

³¹Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 772.

³²R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 230.

Paul Instructs Timothy

Timothy has arrived at the point in his life where Paul has the confidence to “entrust” him with the transmission of the gospel to other men who will be capable of teaching others.

While there is some speculation of who the “many witnesses” were (2 Tim 2:2), these individuals, along with Paul, could now testify that Timothy was able to effectively teach others the truth of the gospel. Although many commentators disagree on the identity of “the many witnesses,” I. Howard Marshall writes, “The significance is that there are many people who could give their attestation as to what Paul had actually said.”³³ Marshall continues:

The verb *παραθου* is repeated from 1 Tim 1:18 where Paul committed the ‘charge’ to Timothy. Now it is Timothy’s task to commit the *παραθηκη* to others. The true teaching is preserved and spread by passing it to responsible people who will preserve it unchanged. The choice of appropriate people is important. They must obviously be *πιστοι* in the sense of ‘reliable, trustworthy’ (1 Tim 1:12; Isa 8:2). The stress is on trustworthiness, not on ordination!³⁴

Paul had set the discipleship pattern to young Timothy; now Timothy was to reproduce this pattern in other faithful men who would also be able to teach others. Believers in Jesus Christ must disciple with the goal of them being able to reproduce themselves. Donald Guthrie notes:

The transmission of the Christian truth must never be left to chance, and it is clearly not committed fortuitously to every Christian, but only to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. Two qualifications are demanded: a loyalty to the church, i.e. a loyalty which has to be proved, and an aptitude to teach (1 Tim 3:2).³⁵

Discipleship must be intentional. The local church needs a continuous, systematic process in which believers are taught not just the oracles of God, but applying God’s Word to their lives.

³³I. Howard Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 725.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 726.

³⁵Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 14 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 156.

Many churches today are anemic when it comes to discipleship. This poses a danger that the Apostle Paul was trying to avoid in the early church. Philip H. Towner says:

The church leadership ranks were being depleted, and the itinerant Pauline mission was in danger of grinding to a halt. The command is therefore designed primarily to ensure the continuation of the churches' and the mission's ministry in Asia Minor. 'Entrusting' the gospel was not simply a matter of a tap on the shoulder; it would require Timothy to teach and model the faith (1:11-12; 3:10-17).³⁶

Just as Timothy had an enormous responsibility to transmit the gospel to others who would be faithful to do the same, the church likewise has a huge responsibility to pass on the gospel as well. Thomas C. Oden remarks:

The traditioning of the gospel must be very intentional transmitted to faithful representative ministers chosen with all care, who have demonstrated fidelity to the original kerygma and ability to teach it. There is good reason to resist the alarming notion that the gospel is always only one generation away from destruction. For it is God and not our own educational efforts who finally ensures the continuity of the Christian tradition. However, it is perilous to rest passively in that thought. Paul viewed it as an urgent matter to motivate Timothy to enable this orderly transmission. What Paul delivered to Timothy, Timothy must deliver to others of unforeseeable times and places. The deposit entrusted to Paul must be guarded and passed on to those who would ensure its accurate, uncorrupted transmission.³⁷

The attributes of a disciple maker must be a person of character, faithfulness, and the ability to accurately transmit the gospel to others who pose those same attributes. The church today will become a healthier, vibrant body of reproducing believers if 2 Timothy 2:2 would be followed.

Jesus and Discipleship

In Luke 14:25-27, Jesus challenges the large crowds that were following him. Jesus is clear that if one was truly a disciple of his, there would be a tremendous cost that one must pay. Personal sacrifice is the key component that separates those who casually

³⁶Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 490-91.

³⁷Thomas C. Oden, *First and Second Timothy and Titus*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1989), 162.

follow Christ versus those who are willing to lay down their lives for the one who gave his life for them. Darrell L. Bock comments on Luke 14:26:

This verse can also be compared to the next one. The preposition *προς* (*pros*) suggest coming 'to' Jesus; but this is no different than coming "after" (*οπισω*, *opiso*) him, as 14:27 expresses it. The conclusion of the two sayings is definitely the same, as the use of 'cannot be my disciple' at the end of both makes clear. If there is a slight difference in force, to come 'to' Jesus stresses entering into relationship, while coming 'after' Jesus refers to the pursuit of that relationship. But discipleship involves both a start and a journey, so the two ideas are intertwined.³⁸

Discipleship is a call to action. It is more than intellectually knowing what is demanded. A disciple of Jesus must act upon what he knows to be the truth about the Messiah. Bock also notes, "Following Jesus is to be the disciple's 'first love.' This pursuit is to have priority over any family member and one's own life, which means that other concerns are to take second place to following Jesus (Luke 8:19-21; 9:59-62; 12:4, 49-53; 16:13)."³⁹ Fred B. Craddock remarks:

Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem, but what is the nature of the journey? Is it a funeral procession? Apparently only Jesus has seriously faced the issue of death; the Twelve certainly have not yet grasped it. Is it a march? Very likely some think so, investing a good deal of emotion in imagining the projected clash: Galilee versus Jerusalem, peasants versus power, laity versus clergy, Jews versus Romans, Jesus versus the establishment. Is it a parade? Obviously this crowd thinks so, oblivious to any conflict, any price to pay, any cross to bear. The crowds swell; everybody loves a parade. What does Jesus have to say to hasty volunteers? In sum, his word is, Think about what you are doing and decide if you are willing to stay with me all the way⁴⁰

Identification with Jesus is costly. Jesus lays out the cost to oneself and family if they are ready to follow him and his mission. Jesus is bold in his statements and hence, those who decide to follow him must also be bold as they follow Jesus even to death if necessary. Joel B. Green writes:

Such persons are characterized, first, by their distancing themselves from the high culture value placed on their family network, otherwise paramount in the world of

³⁸Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1284.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 1285.

⁴⁰Fred B. Craddock, *Luke*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 181.

Luke. That is, in this context, ‘hate’ is not primarily an effective quality but a disavowal of primary allegiance to one’s kin.”⁴¹

Although our salvation is a free gift from our heavenly Father, the cost to follow His Son involves not only denying one’s self but one’s family as well. Once more, Green states:

Again, then, ‘hating’ one’s self should not be taken as a reference to an effective self-abhorrence, but as a call to set aside the relationships, the extended family of origin and inner circle of friends, by which one has previously made up one’s identity, not along ancestral lines or on the basis of one’s social status, but within the community oriented toward God’s purpose and characterized by faithfulness to the message of Jesus.⁴²

The word “hate” is a strong word that can evoke powerful emotions; hence, one should be careful in how Jesus uses this potent word. Robert H. Stein conveys:

Following Jesus ‘hating’ one’s family and even one’s life (Luke 14:26). Over the centuries this verse has caused great despair and confusion. Clearly Jesus, who summarized all God’s commandments as loving God and one’s neighbor (Luke 10:27-28), could not here be demanding blind, raging hatred of one’s family. The confusion is due to Jesus’ use of a Semitic idiom. To love one person more than another is described in OT language as ‘Loving one and hating another’ (Gen 29:30-31).⁴³

It is important for one to understand Jesus’ usage of the word “hate” to understand the true cost of discipleship. Stein continues:

Jesus does not solicit a hasty, emotional decision. Instead, he urges those who would follow him to think seriously, to ‘count the cost: (Luke 14:28; 9:57-62). Perseverance (Luke 8:15; 21:19) will result only after sober consideration of the cost of following Jesus.⁴⁴

Jesus Christ is to come before self, comfort, and family, even if the family opposes one’s decision to follow Christ. With self-denial comes a high price to pay. This price is costly, not only to the one who denies himself to follow Christ, but this price can be costly to those whom he loves. Total submission to Christ can require the ultimate sacrifice, one’s own death.

⁴¹Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on The New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 565.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, New American Commentary, vol. 24 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 396.

⁴⁴Ibid.

Old Testament Examples for Making Disciples

The following section will examine four Old Testament texts that describe the practical, relational, and instructional nature of discipleship: Jethro and Moses, Elijah and Elisha, Moses and Joshua, and wisdom. These one-on-one relationships and the desire to learn from those who are wiser, convey the importance of one-on-one disciple relationships.

Jethro and Moses

Over time, Moses found himself devoting his time, not just to being a military and political leader, but also Israel's judicial leader. Douglas K. Stuart says, "Clearly, if Moses was giving such a large proportion of his time to judging legal disputes, he could not do much else, at least on the days he served as judge, and this threatened his leadership of the nation in other ways."⁴⁵ If a leader is not careful, he will find himself taking on more responsibilities instead of delegating those responsibilities to others who are capable. Failure to delegate is not only a threat to the overloaded leader but also to those whom he is leading. Stuart continues by saying "that the judicial workload must have been too much for one man is shown by the incontrovertible fact that both Moses and the people who waited for justice could not conclude business in a reasonable time span."⁴⁶ In the end, both parties suffer because the leader is not training other leaders to share the responsibilities.

Jethro, Moses' father in law, evaluates his dilemma and recommends a solution. Walter C. Kaiser is correct when he says:

Jethro's solution to this lengthy process, which is wearing out both people and leader (v. 18), is to give Moses that portion of the work that involves a twofold office: (1) an advocate on behalf of the people (v.19), and (2) an interpreter on behalf of God to teach the people (v.20). Jethro warns that his plan can be executed

⁴⁵Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 2 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 415.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 416.

only if God pleased with this advice (vv. 19, 23).⁴⁷

Jethro addresses this problematic situation by suggesting that Moses' workload be delegated to others. John I. Durham comments:

The reason for this is that the requirements and instructions of both Moses and his chosen leaders are in one source, one in authority, one in direction, one in provenance. There is one difference, as specified in vv. 22 and 26, is that the problems the leaders are to deal with are 'routine' (קטן 'small,' vv 22 and 26); those Moses is to take are 'complex' (גדול 'big,' v 22) or 'difficult' (קשה 'hard,' v 26).⁴⁸

Jethro provides Moses with a plan, which will relieve the pressure from his son-in-law and the Israelite people. Terence E. Fretheim notes this win-win situation for Moses and the Israelites, "Jethro concludes by noting how this will not only serve Moses well but bring peace to a people who no longer have to stand in queues all day long."⁴⁹ Jethro brings order to the Moses' multi-tasking. Not only are others being equipped for the ministry, but they will now be able to equip others to carry out the work of the ministry. Durham concludes, "Moses is an intermediary in this process, and he is instructed to select with great care men who can assist him in this work, a task too heavy for any one man."⁵⁰

Elijah and Elisha

The prophet Elijah went from the victory on Mount Carmel, running from Jezebel, to asking the Lord to take his life. Elijah went from one spectrum of human emotions to the other. The ministry took its toll on Elijah and another chapter unfolds for him and his successor, Elisha. The story between Elijah and Elisha has remarkable resemblance with the New Testament teachings of Jesus. These similarities will be contrasted in later paragraphs. Iain W. Provan gives insight, however, to the strategies

⁴⁷Walter C. Kaiser, *Exodus*, in vol. 1 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 469.

⁴⁸John I Durham, *Exodus*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 3 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 251.

⁴⁹Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1991), 199.

⁵⁰Durham, *Exodus*, 252.

Elisha faced. He comments:

The chapter's opening scene raised the question: will Elijah get back on track as a result of his trip to Horeb? He has not shown evidence of being much affected by his experience. He has been disobedient and uncomprehending of God throughout (and thus exactly like Jonah). It is unsurprising, therefore, to discover at this juncture that his response to God's new command is less than wholehearted."⁵¹

The prophet Elijah is an example of how life and ministry can be lonely if someone is not walking beside you, advising you and encouraging you along the way.

Commenting on 1 Kings 19:19-21, Richard D. Patterson and Hermann J.

Austel rightly observe that "the number of oxen plowing signifies that Elisha comes from a family of some means. A surrender to ministry would mean counting the cost."⁵²

Ministry is costly both in terms of sacrifice of material possessions as well as possible separation from family. Ministry should never be taken lightly. Although one may not know what lies ahead, one does need to be prepared spiritual, mentally, and physically for the challenges that serving the Lord brings. Patterson and Austel continue to note:

Elijah took the same mantle which he had covered his face and threw it over Elisha as an act of investiture. Elisha responded without hesitation. Taking his leave of Elijah, Elisha returned home to enjoy a farewell meal with his family and friends. The meat was cooked over Elisha's own plowing equipment. Thus he had burned his past behind him. Henceforth he would serve God. Doing so, however, meant first learning more of him through being Elijah's assistant.⁵³

There is a reflection of Jesus and his disciples as far as Elisha leaving his possessions and family behind. Paul House notes:

Elisha says farewell to his family, then slaughters his oxen and burns his plow, which demonstrates the clear break between his old and new lives. Jesus reflects on this type of separation when he states, 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the service in the kingdom of God' (Luke 9:62).⁵⁴

⁵¹Iain W. Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 147.

⁵²Richard D. Patterson and Herman J. Austel, *1 and 2 Kings*, in vol. 3 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 784.

⁵³Patterson and Austel, *1 and 2 Kings*, 784.

⁵⁴Paul House, *1, 2 Kings*, New American Commentary, vol. 8 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1995), 225.

A disciple of Jesus Christ will make the sacrifice that is required to have a single-minded focus to serve the kingdom of God and not the world. In comparing Elisha to Jesus and his disciples, Simon J. DeVries says:

The best commentary on the Elisha call-story is Jesus' word recorded in Luke 9:61-62: 'Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home"' Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."⁵⁵

Jesus' call to discipleship must take precedence over all other relationships and material matter. DeVries continues:

Following God involves strenuous demands. Though a disciple of Christ, like a disciple of Elijah, must continue to live *in* this world, he can no longer be *of* it. There is only one direction for a disciple to go: forward—and that without misgivings and regrets. If he cannot make this commitment, it is better that he should stay home with his oxen.⁵⁶

Although being a disciple of Jesus can be challenging in this world, believers have examples, like Elisha in the Old Testament and the disciples of Jesus, showing that a disciple can make a difference for the kingdom while living in the world. Richard D. Nelson also notes:

Those committed to discipleship cannot have second thoughts. The disciple of Jesus must make the same ruthless break with the past that Elisha did in verse 21, putting forth one's hand 'against' (not 'to;' cf. the other N. T. uses of this expression) the plow (to burn it?) without looking back. Thus the Elisha episode can be seen as a call to a commitment which burns all bridges to other loyalties.⁵⁷

There truly is a "cost" to discipleship. One does not "tack" on discipleship on Sunday mornings. Discipleship is a lifestyle, a process that needs to be evident in a believer's life. Unbelievers should notice that Christians have spent time with Jesus (Acts 4:13), and believers should recognize that other believers have spent time with Jesus (Matt 3:8, Mark 4:20, Luke 8:15, John 15:8) by the fruit they bear.

⁵⁵Simon J. DeVries, *1 Kings*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 12 (Nashville Thomas Nelson, 2003), 239-40.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 240.

⁵⁷Richard Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1987), 128-29.

Moses and Joshua

Joshua comes on the stage of history as being the new leader who will escort the Israelites into the promise land. Moses announces before all of Israel that the mantle of leadership is being passed to his mentor, Joshua. It was imperative during this transition of leadership that the people whom Joshua would be leading would have confidence in him. It was also not only a tremendous responsibility for Joshua but a privilege. Joshua would now complete what was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the securing of the promise land. Moses knew that Joshua was ready to take the helm, but Moses also knew that Joshua would need encouragement in discouraging times. Moses exhorts his disciple to be strong and courageous, noting that the Lord will go before him and will always be with him.

Duane L. Christensen comments, “In the language of the Holy War, Joshua is commanded to ‘Be strong and courageous. Do not fear . . . for YHWH is your God; he is going with you.’”⁵⁸ It is imperative to note that, as important as this mentoring/discipling relationship between Moses and Joshua is, God is the one who leads; God is the one who will always be with us. Moses knew his time was limited. Moses taught Joshua what he needed to know as a military commander, but ultimately Joshua needed the presence and guidance of the Lord to be upon him. Not only did Joshua need to be reminded of the Lord’s guidance, but so did the people he was leading. Christensen notes that in verse 7:

the phrase ‘in the eyes of all Israel’ indicates that Joshua is singled out publicly as Israel’s leader. At the same time, the true leader of Israel is YHWH himself, as Gideon argued when he was asked to rule as king in Israel: ‘I will not rule over you. . . . The Lord will rule over you’ (Judg 8:23).⁵⁹

Ultimately, it is the presence of God that assures the confidence needed to carry out the plans that He has. Peter C. Craigie comments on verses 7 and 8,

Moses formally repeats the substances of his exhortation, this time addressing it

⁵⁸Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 6B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 760.

⁵⁹Ibid.

specifically to Joshua in the presence of the people. The formal and public words spoken to Joshua serve not only to encourage Joshua, but also to remind the people that the leadership was properly being assumed by him, with the full approval of God and of Moses, who was the incumbent of the office up to that time.⁶⁰

Joshua prepared for this moment by being disciplined by Moses. Because of the mentoring relationship that the people witnessed between Moses and Joshua, the Israelites had every reason to be confident in Joshua. He had been disciplined by Moses, and they knew that God would go before Joshua. He would never forsake him. Not to negate the importance of a discipleship relationship, but divine assistance is the source of ultimate strength and encouragement. Patrick D. Miller comments:

Within this form of commissioning one can find the rudiments of a theology and leadership and the appropriate elements for all occasions when persons are given responsibility over the community of faith. Courage and confidence before the difficult tasks ahead is the starting point. The commissioning of Joshua sets this encouragement as both an *assurance* and a *command*.⁶¹

Jesus Christ has called his believers to work until it comes to a conclusion. When that time approaches, will the fruit of that work be evident that others have been disciplined to carry on the Lord's work? Moses sets the example that time well spent discipling others will equip them to confidently lead where they have never gone before. Miller says it well when he states:

At the conclusion of his ministry, Jesus gave such a word of commission and assurance to the disciples, telling them not to be afraid, charging them to go into all the world, making disciples, baptizing, and teaching, and promising his eternal presence with them (Matt 28:16-20).⁶²

As the disciples heard this command from Jesus, it must have sounded daunting. Jesus disciplined these men for three years. They had witnessed his miracles and post resurrection appearance. Yet it was his presence, as with God's presence with Joshua, that gave them the confidence to fulfill the Great Commission.

⁶⁰Peter C. Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 370.

⁶¹Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 220, emphasis in original.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 221.

Wisdom

How people respond to God's Word is literally a matter of life and death. Eternity is in the balance whenever an unbeliever hears the Word of God proclaimed. Rejecting godly wisdom is rejecting God. Not only is one eternally separated from God in hell for rejecting His truth, but the believer remains in an immature state by rejecting godly wisdom. Leo G. Perdue observes of Proverbs 8:33:

This extended poem on Woman Wisdom intends to present the wisdom tradition as a metaphorical personification of a divine attribute, perhaps the key attribute from the viewpoint of the sages. This is the attribute that God uses in creating and providentially directing the world and its inhabitants. This divine Wisdom thus becomes the teacher who instructs the unlearned so that they may participate in the divine, life-giving power of creation.⁶³

Godly wisdom must be instrumental in the discipleship process. As one moves from the "unlearned" to "learning" and begins to absorb the elements of the Christian faith, they will come to understand the wisdom that emerges from the Christian disciplines. Therefore, since wisdom does not come automatically upon conversion, it will manifest itself as the discipleship process continues in one's life.

William D. Reyburn and Euan McG. Fry comment on Proverbs 8:33: "Hear is a plural command addressed to 'my sons.' Instruction renders the same word as used in 1:2. Hear instruction is equivalent to 'Obey my teaching' or Listen to what I teach you."⁶⁴ Once the Holy Spirit has brought someone from death to life, it is imperative that they receive godly wisdom from a mature, growing believer in Jesus Christ. Hearing the Word of God proclaimed is imperative, but a new believer must walk with a seasoned believer in order that a solid biblical foundation is established. As one comes to understand the promises of God's truth, one will gain spiritual wisdom. Roland E. Murphy comments:

In v. 33 there is the familiar connection of instruction (מוסר) and wisdom, perhaps an echo of 8:10, but also recalling the prologue (1:2) and the association of wisdom and instruction with fear of the Lord in 15:33. When Woman Wisdom makes use of

⁶³Leo G. Perdue, *Proverbs*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 2000), 146.

⁶⁴William D. Reyburn and Euan McG. Fry, *A Handbook on Proverbs* (New York: United Bible Societies, 2000), 197.

the phrase, it indicates instruction from the elders, but מוסר can also be the discipline from the Lord; cf. 3:11.⁶⁵

When a believer realizes what is at stake when it comes to wisdom and instruction, it should motivate him to absorb wisdom as a sponge absorbs water. As a believer seeks wisdom, his life will be a reflection of the truth that abides in him. The transmission of wisdom from a mature believer to a less mature believer is not only beneficial to the one receiving the wisdom, their family and church family reaps the benefits of wisdom as well.

Conclusion

In considering the biblical and theological principles concerning one-on-one discipleship, several truths need to be considered. Discipleship must be one of the priorities of the church. A disciple must be a learner. If the Great Commission commands Christians to “make disciples,” the church must have an organized process that grounds the new believer in the Word of God. Such organizational principles can be found in Jethro and Moses’s relationship. This type of organizational process allows more to be involved in ministry. Not only does the church need a process, but the person new to the Christian faith needs to understand that loyalty to Jesus is paramount above all other relationships. Jesus makes it clear in Luke 14:25-27 that following him will be costly.

Not only has there been shallow preaching and easy believeism in many churches today, tragically, many churches are also anemic when it comes to making disciples. Discipleship is messy because it strikes at the heart of our own selfishness and causes one to be actively involved in the life of others. David Platt notes:

Making disciples is not an easy process. It is trying. It is messy. It is slow, tedious, even painful at times. It is all these things because it is relational. Jesus has not given us an effortless step-by-step formula for impacting nations for his glory. He has given us people, and he has said, ‘Live for them. Love them, serve them, and lead them. Lead them to follow me, and lead them to lead others to follow me. In the process you will multiply the gospel to the ends of the earth.’⁶⁶

⁶⁵Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 54.

⁶⁶Platt, *Radical*, 93.

Discipleship is “costly” as Jesus stated in Luke 14:25-27. For the church to fulfill the mandate of the Great Commission concerning discipleship, a radical change must first take place within the heart of the believer. Self must die in order that selflessness can reign. When the sin of pride and selfishness is dealt with in the life of the believer, then one will be able to endure the high cost that is involved in discipling others.

It is time to return to the biblical and foundational principles of discipleship as a church. When the church revisits and applies the foundational truths of discipleship, the body of Christ will be healthier as individuals begin to multiply themselves. As individuals begin to reproduce themselves, the church will discharge the mandate given by Jesus in the Great Commission.

CHAPTER 3
PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE MALE DISCIPLESHIP

Introduction

Chapter 2 laid the biblical and theological foundation for discipleship in the Old and New Testament. Jesus' mandate to the church is to make disciples (Matt 28:19-20). Hence, discipleship is not just another "program" developed by man that has a beginning and an end. Discipleship is a lifelong, transformational process that requires commitment, time, resources and sacrifice from both the teacher and the learner. Slow but measurable change should be evident in the life of a disciple. Millard Erickson writes:

Sanctification is the continuing work of God in the life of a believer, making him or her actually holy. By 'holy' here is meant 'bearing an actual likeness to God's. Sanctification is a process by which one's moral condition is brought into conformity with one's legal status before God. It is a continuation of what was begun in regeneration, when a newness of life was conferred upon and instilled within the believer. In particular, sanctification is the Holy Spirit's applying to the believer the work done by Jesus Christ.¹

Wayne Grudem notes, "Even though the New Testament speaks about a definite beginning to sanctification, it also sees it as a process that continues throughout our Christian lives."² This "process," as described by Grudem, can be fulfilled through one-on-one discipleship relationship. It is worth noting that the sanctification process is not limited to one-on-one discipleship. Hearing the Word of God proclaimed, worship, fellowship, prayer, evangelism, Sunday School, and trials and suffering are all part of the sanctification process.

¹Millard Erikson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 980.

²Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 748.

This chapter will examine contemporary and non-contemporary models of discipleship, along with the reasons why discipleship is important. In addition, the best approach for discipling adult military men will also be discovered through personal interviews and para-church organizations that focus on discipling adult military males.

Contemporary Models of Discipleship

The following contemporary models will demonstrate varying approaches in disciple making. Although these discipling approaches are different, each is effective in fulfilling the Great Commission.

First Baptist Woodstock

Allan Taylor, Minister of Education at First Baptist Church, Woodstock Georgia, writes in his book *The Six Core Values of Sunday School*, “The Sunday School is the church organized to do the work of the Great Commission.”³ He believes that the three tasks of Sunday School are “1. Reach *people* for Christ and church membership. 2. Teach *people* God’s Word. 3. Minister to *people’s* needs.”⁴ Taylor also believes that Sunday School is uniquely structured to reach people, teach people, and minister to people:

Task 1: Reach people. This is promoted during the ten minutes when the Outreach Leader shares a testimony, introduces new people attending the class because a class outreach team visited them, distributes visits and contacts to be made during the week, and receives reports from those who were given assignments the week before.

Task 2: Teach People. A lesson from God’s Word is presented by the teacher or assistant teacher that will instruct people in godly living. This time is extremely valuable. Because the Word of God disciplines people, Sunday School is the greatest discipleship training program a church has! We do not have the power or ability to change people, but the Word of God does. We need to be faithful to unleash its power every Lord’s day.

Task 3: Minister to People. Our Care Group time affords us the opportunity to touch people, to minister to them, to pray for them, and to lift them up.⁵

³Allan Taylor, *The Six Core Values of Sunday School* (Canton, GA: Riverstone, 2003), 14.

⁴Ibid., 16.

⁵Ibid., 134-35.

Discipleship not only occurs as God's Word is taught, discipleship also becomes practical as one reaches people for Christ and as believers minister to others. Therefore, discipleship should not only be technical (Jas 1:22) but also practical as we go forth with the gospel and serve others in the name of Christ.

One of the functions of the church is evangelism. Acts 2:47 explains, "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." The church not only heard God's Word but acted upon it. The early church took the Great Commission seriously "to go make disciples" (Matt 28:19). Concerning the three tasks of Sunday School, reaching, teaching, and ministering, Taylor laments that reaching people is the most important task:

Of the Six Core Values of Sunday School, reaching people has to be the most important one. Why? Because you don't assimilate people you don't reach; you don't involve people you don't reach; and you don't build strong, healthy relationships with people you don't reach. If you don't reach people, you can't even have Sunday School!⁶

Taylor continues:

Your evangelism strategy should never be divorced from your assimilation strategy! Evangelism and discipleship are not separate but two parts two parts to the same process. Therefore, to alienate your assimilation strategy from your evangelism strategy is to abort the Great Commission process in a person's life. Sunday School is uniquely structured to reach and assimilate.⁷

Thom S. Rainer, in *High Expectations*, concurs with Taylor in regards to evangelism and discipleship:

The pastors in the high-assimilation churches were evangelistic, but they desired to see more than converts to Christ. Their passion was to see 'fruit-bearing disciples' for Christ. While they rejoiced in every decision that was made, they were not satisfied until the new Christian was demonstrating clear evidence of his or her salvation. . . . Thus, because of pastoral leadership in the higher-assimilation churches, evangelism and discipleship were not polarized into distinct or separate categories. The process of evangelism continued without interruption into the process of discipleship.⁸

⁶Ibid., 29.

⁷Ibid., 34.

⁸Thom S. Rainer, *High Expectations* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 79-80.

The Sunday School structure used by First Baptist Church Woodstock allows each Sunday School member to be actively involved in fulfilling the Great Commission. The three tasks of reaching people, teaching people, and ministering to people unify Sunday School classes and allows each learner the opportunity to be involved in ministry. Additionally, a sense of ownership and high commitment level emerges when a Sunday School class works in tandem as the largest ministry within the church to fulfill the Great Commission.

Rainer again concurs with this strategy when he quotes a response from a pastor concerning Sunday School and discipleship in his book *Effective Evangelistic Churches*:

In many churches outside Southern Baptist circles, a small group renewal is taking place, and it's getting a lot of publicity. The idea of building community in a small group is a hot topic today. But we Southern Baptist need to realize that we have always had a community and disciple-making small group. It's called Sunday School. That is our small group. And I know I am biased, but I believe that Sunday School is the best small group approach yesterday or today!⁹

Sunday School provides a nurturing atmosphere where authentic relationships can be established overtime. Sunday School provides the “community” that many people are desiring today. The Sunday School, if provided the proper structure, can be a ministry that transforms a lethargic church into an energized church that fulfills the Great Commission.

Saddleback Church

Thom Rainer and his research team discovered that, “The second most frequently mentioned methodology for assimilation and discipleship was a new members’ class. We heard of classes that were completed in one afternoon to those that went for several months consecutively.”¹⁰ Membership classes have become increasingly popular when it comes to assimilation and discipleship. Part of this popularity can be contributed to Rick Warren’s *The Purpose-Driven Church*.

⁹Thom Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 177.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 178.

In another study in *Surprising Insights from The Unchurched*, Rainer notes:

Most of the leaders we interviewed were avid readers. Though books were not the most influential factor in their lives, they had a formative role in their leadership development. There is little doubt from our surveys and interviews that the book of greatest impact in recent years has been *The Purpose-Driven Church* by Rick Warren.¹¹

Chuck Lawless agrees with Rainer's findings pertaining to the influence of *The Purpose-Driven Church*.¹² Lawless writes, "Warren's congregation in California uses a four-class 'Life Development Process' to move persons towards spiritual maturity. This process is followed by all who seek membership at Saddleback church."¹³ Lawless describes Saddleback's assimilation process by stating what is taught in each class:

Class 101 is the membership class, which covers the plan of salvation; baptism and the Lord's Supper; the church's purpose, vision, faith, and value statements; the churches growth strategy; and the organizational structure. Class 201 focuses on developing spiritual disciplines, 301 on determining ministry placement, and 401 on learning to evangelize and do missions.¹⁴

Rick Warren writes:

We use the simple diagram of a baseball diamond to visually explain our education and assimilation process to our members. Each base represents a completed class and a deeper level of commitment. . . . As in baseball, no credit is given for runners left on base. We tell new members that our goal for them is to become 'Grand Slam Disciples.' We want them to complete all sixteen hours of basic training and to commit to the covenants explained at each base. There is a written covenant at each base that we expect people to sign and commit to before moving ahead. No member may proceed to the next base until he has committed to the requirements of each covenant.¹⁵

¹¹Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2001), 149.

¹²Chuck Lawless, *Membership Matters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 67.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., 68.

¹⁵Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 144-45.

This membership model allows for a comprehensive and systematic process of moving each member to the next phase of the assimilation stage. Lawless' research team revealed:

In our study, almost 31 percent of the churches used a 101 class as their membership class. Repeatedly our research team saw the kind of class outline found in Warren's *The Purpose Driven Church: Our Salvation (the plan of salvation); Our Statements (purpose, vision, faith, and values); Our Strategy (for growth); Our Structure (the church's organization)*.¹⁶

Rainer notes in *Breakout Churches*:

The influence of the Purpose Driven concept on many of the breakout churches is significant. But unlike the comparison churches, the breakout churches adopted the philosophy of the model instead of seeing its methodology as the answer to all churches' needs and problems.¹⁷

Rainer feels that "Warren has his devotees and his critics. But the Purpose Driven concept is a simplistic genius."¹⁸

Simple Church

There are a plethora of discipleship materials and programs offered to churches today. It is alluring to go with the latest "program" that seems to produce the best results. Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger write about returning to God's process for making disciples in their book entitled *Simple Church*. The concept behind their writing is a clear and simple road path that *Simple Church* is built upon; Clarity, Movement, Alignment, and Focus. Each of these four components to discipleship will be examined in the following paragraphs. According to Rainer and Geiger, "Ministry is done so that the body of Christ may be built up. The term Paul uses for 'build up' is the Greek word *oikodome*. It is a

¹⁶Lawless, *Membership Matters*, 68.

¹⁷Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 159.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 158.

construction term. It paints a picture of building a house. Constructing lives is the calling.”¹⁹

Clarity. If a house is going to provide a safe haven for the family from the perils of weather, the builder must be wise and experienced in the choice of materials and construction quality of the home. The same is true with the church today concerning discipleship. If the church is going to equip believers to become more like Jesus, then a strong and healthy discipleship process will be necessary. Someone has said, “Without a plan, we plan to fail.” Unfortunately, many churches today do not have a solid, purposeful plan when it comes to developing the body of Christ. A clear plan is crucial if the church is going to retain and disciple the people that God sends to them. Thom S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer discovered in their research in *Essential Church* that churches which had a clear plan in regards to discipleship have four characteristics in common:

1. They have *simplified* their structures so that a path of discipleship is clear.
2. They provide rich and *deep* biblical teachings.
3. They raised the level of *expectations* of the members of the church.
4. They are on a mission to *multiply* through evangelism and other outwardly focused ministries.²⁰

The common characteristics found by Rainer and Rainer indicate that churches can retain and disciple their members when leadership is provided and a clear and understandable structure is in place.

Aubrey Malphurs notes the importance of defining a proper assimilation process:

Assimilation refers to how people move from outside the life of the church into its life. If a person desires to connect with your church, how would he or she do so? What activities or relationship would he or she experience first, second, and so on? Would it first be a large-group worship service or a small group gathering? The answer reveals your assimilation process.²¹

¹⁹Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 110.

²⁰Thom S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer III, *Essential Church* (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 158.

²¹Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 204.

Defining how people will be assimilated into the culture of the church is crucial. People need a road map when it comes to how they will progress spiritually. A properly defined assimilation process should leave no ambiguity in the discipleship process.

Movement. Nothing happens without movement. Dreams remain dreams until action brings the dream to fruition. It takes momentum to break through inertia. This momentum is true not only in the physical world, but also in the spiritual realm. Gary L. McIntosh notes, “Inherent in discipleship is the idea of a process that moves from believing to bonding to maturing. Theologically and strategically, the order of process moves from going to baptizing to teaching.”²² The next stage in developing a healthy discipleship ministry according to Rainer and Geiger is movement:

Simple church leaders have designed their simple process with movement in mind. The ministry process moves people into greater levels of commitment—with ever-increasing levels of discipleship. The simple process moves people through the process of spiritual transformation.²³

As people begin to move from one level of discipleship to another excitement builds in their lives. Thus, they begin to look forward to the next phase of discipleship and how God will further transform them. This excitement not only brings about momentum and transformation in their lives but in the overall life of the church. The discipleship process, over time, begins to impact peoples’ lives, families, and culture.

Alignment. In order to obtain committed leadership, the *Simple Church* authors noted that alignment is the next step to the developing a healthy discipleship ministry. After gathering their research data, Rainer and Geiger write:

According to our research, there is a highly significant relationship between church vitality and alignment. . . . If you want to maximize everyone’s energy, you must

²²Gary L. McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 68.

²³Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church*, 139.

recruit on the process, offer accountability, implement the same process everywhere, unite leaders around the process, and ensure that new members fit.²⁴

Team work is vital to the ministry of the church. Even a well thought out discipleship process will fail if ministry staff and lay leaders are not clear about the process. An unclear discipleship process within leadership will send an unclear message to the church body. Working in unison among staff and volunteers was a key element to the success of the Billy Graham organization. Harold Myra and Marshall Shelley, co-authors of *The Leadership Secrets of Billy Graham* note:

The Team is a term that has always permeated the Graham organization. It refers to the inner circle, the vitality of which radiates out to the other key players and through the ranks. The team spirit extended to thousands of participants, even out to volunteers and local leaders who made the crusades happen in their hometowns. A counselor or coordinator, a team member or recruiter felt like a vital contributor, fully engaged, following the playbook, working in tandem with the players who were up front and leading the process.²⁵

When it came to how churches recruited leaders, Rainer and Geiger asked vibrant and comparison church leaders to evaluate their level of agreement with this statement, “We recruit and hire leaders who are committed to our process.”²⁶ From this question, Rainer and Geiger discovered, “Of the vibrant churches, 64 percent strongly agreed or agreed with the statement compared to 33 percent of the comparison churches.”²⁷ The results from this question indicate that people with the same vision move toward a common goal with unity and power. When everyone is on the same page, the staff and the church body work in tandem not in opposition to one another.

Focus. The last component in *Simple Church* for making disciples is focus. The authors assert, “While clarity, movement, and alignment are essential, they are

²⁴Ibid., 169.

²⁵Harold Myra and Marshall Shelley, *The Leadership Secrets of Billy Graham* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 45.

²⁶Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church*, 170.

²⁷Ibid.

meaningless without focus. *Focus is the commitment to abandon everything that falls outside of the simple ministry process.*”²⁸

The energy of the church needs to be harnessed to focus on what is essential to the church at its present state. To overcome a church diluted with the non-essentials, which diverts focus, the church will need to eliminate some ministries. Rainer and Geiger write:

Many churches are littered with clutter. Floundering programs and ministries are stored and piled on top of one another. It is hard for people to make their way through the process of spiritual transformation because of the distracting clutter.²⁹

Rainer and Rainer note in *Essential Church* that caution must also be used when eliminating ministries, “Focus does not mean that there has to be a mass elimination of programs and ministries.”³⁰ Focus requires the church to decide what ministries are important at the present time. Taking a hatchet to sacred ministries would not be wise or prudent. Surgical precision is required over time to allow the discipleship process to develop.

Transitioning a complex church or an ineffective church to a simple church structure requires prayer, planning, and patience. The benefits, however, far outweigh the struggles the church will endure. A simple process for disciple-making brings life transformation to the local body in addition to fulfilling the Great Commission.

Non-Contemporary Models of Discipleship

Much can be learned not only from current models of discipleship, but tested models from the past. Building upon former discipleship models allows today’s church to learn from effective models of the past. Much can be learned from the wisdom of others as they blazed the way for effective discipling in their era.

²⁸Ibid., 203, emphasis in original.

²⁹Ibid., 204.

³⁰Rainer and Rainer, *Essential Church*, 176.

Discipleship

Billie Hanks, Jr. and William A. Shell, editors of *Discipleship*, examine some of the most popular discipleship models of their time. One of those models include the work of Gary W. Kuhne, author of *Dynamics of Personal Follow-Up*: “Studies have shown that fewer than one percent of evangelical church members are involved in personal follow-up.”³¹ Follow-up was not only a concern over three decades ago when Kuhne made this comment, but unfortunately it remains a concern today. While God is still calling his children to salvation, many churches today are not engaged when it comes to follow-up with these new converts. The church has become complacent in the vital ministry in the follow-up process of making disciples. Perhaps a clear, working definition of follow-up would be helpful to churches today. Kuhne provides the following definition, “Personal follow-up is the assuming of a one-to-one relationship by a mature believer with a new Christian for the purpose of aiding the new Christian’s nurture and growth.”³² Even though this one-to-one relationship was written by Kuhn over thirty years ago, his definition of personal follow-up is still applicable to today’s church that is resolute about disciple making.

Proper follow-up and multiplication can produce powerful momentum in the discipleship process. When it relates to the development of disciples, Kuhne calculates:

In a six-year period, if you disciple only 6 people, you would have caused the eventual development of 64 disciples and the evangelistic conformation of 1,600 people per year. This is how the multiplication process works. If you continued the process for ten years, you would have personally discipled 10 people and witnessed to 50 a year—but you will have caused the development of 1,024 disciples and the annual confrontation of approximately 25,000 people with the gospel. This isn’t just mathematical juggling but the logical outgrowth of faithful working for the Lord.³³

One person really can make a monumental difference for the Kingdom of God.

³¹Billie Hanks, Jr. and William A. Shell, eds., *Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 107.

³²*Ibid.*, 112.

³³*Ibid.*, 120.

Faithfulness to the Great Commission and guidance of the Holy Spirit will demonstrate that the church cares about the people God has entrusted to them.

The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship

The next non-contemporary model that will be evaluated is the work of Robert E. Coleman entitled, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship*. Coleman describes eight stages that Jesus used in equipping his disciples: selection, association, consecration, impartation, demonstration, delegation, supervision, and reproduction.

Selection. Coleman notes that it only took a few willing men to follow Jesus to change the world:

It all started by Jesus calling a few men to follow him. This revealed immediately the direction his evangelistic strategy would take. His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men who the multitudes would follow. Remarkable as it may seem, Jesus started to gather these men before he ever organized an evangelistic campaign or even preached a sermon in public. Men were to be his method of winning the world to God.³⁴

Even though God created man and female equal (Rom 10:12; Gal 3:28), both genders have different roles and functions in the home and church. Hence, men should be the pacesetter when it relates to discipleship.

Association. Coleman notes the next stage of Jesus' method was association. He writes, "Having called his men, Jesus made a practice of being with them. This was the essence of his training program—just letting his disciples follow him."³⁵ One can read about discipleship which provides valuable instruction, but a mentoring relationship has a more powerful and lasting impact. David Platt agrees, "All he wanted was a few men who

³⁴Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship* (Peabody, MA: Prince, n.d.), 51.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 41.

would think as he did, love as he did, see as he did, teach as he did, and serve as he did.”³⁶

The personal presence of a teacher provides the learner the ability to emulate his teacher.

Consecration. According to Coleman, consecration is the next stage Jesus used with his disciples:

Jesus expected the men he was with to obey him. They were not required to be smart, but they had to be loyal. This became the distinguishing mark by which they were known. They were called his ‘disciples’ meaning that they were ‘learners’ or ‘pupils’ of the Master. It was not until much later that they started to be called ‘Christian’ (Acts 11:26), although it was inevitable, for in time obedient followers invariably take on the character of their teacher.³⁷

Chuck Lawless concurs with Coleman when he explains:

Those who obey the Great Commission make disciples through evangelism, leading to baptism and teaching that results in obedience. . . . Making disciples is also an equipping *process* rather than a program. Baptism is an initiation rite of discipleship, but the process of teaching and obeying is continual.³⁸

As time passed, the demands from Jesus became greater (Matt 16:24-26, 20:17-28; Mark 8:34-38, 10:32-45; Luke 9:23-25; John 12:25, 26; 13:1-20). Jesus demanded much, and obedience to his teaching validated that they were truly disciples of Christ (John 6:60-67).

Impartation. The fourth stage that Jesus took his disciples through according to Coleman is impartation of the Holy Spirit:

Up to this point he had always been with them. He had been their Comforter, their Teacher, their Guide. In fellowship with him the disciples had known courage and strength; with him that felt everything was possible; but their trouble was that Jesus was going back to heaven. Under these circumstances Jesus needed to explain to them how they would get along after he was gone.³⁹

The Holy Spirit continues to be our teacher and comforter today. Even with the best

³⁶David Platt, *Radical* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010), 88.

³⁷Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship*, 51.

³⁸Chuck Lawless, *Discipled Warriors* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 46-47, emphasis in original.

³⁹Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship*, 66.

process for discipleship in place, all is avail without the equipping and guiding of the Holy Spirit.

Demonstration. Coleman says the next element in Jesus' process with his disciples is demonstration:

All the disciples had to teach them was a teacher who practiced with them what he expected them to learn. Evangelism was lived before them in spirit and technique. Watching him, they learned what it was all about. He led them to recognize the need inherent in all classes of people, and the best methods of approaching them. . . . It wasn't outlined on the blackboard of a stuffy classroom nor written up in a "do it yourself" manual. His method was so real and practical that it just came naturally.⁴⁰

The disciple's lives were transformed because Jesus molded what a disciple would look like. This change, however, that occurred in the disciples did not stem from their own intellect or cleverness. It was quite the opposite. MacArthur correctly states:

The Twelve were like the rest of us; they were selected from the unworthy and the unqualified. They were, like Elijah, men 'with a nature like ours' (James 5:17). They did not rise to the highest usefulness because they were somehow *different* from us. Their transformation into vessels of honor was solely the work of the Potter.⁴¹

As the church makes disciples today, one needs to remember that God uses the weak to bring about greatness for his glory and not one's own grandeur.

Delegation. Next, Coleman says Jesus used delegation in the discipleship process:

But as Jesus was beginning his third general tour of Galilee (Mark 6:6; Matt 9:35), he doubtless realized that the time had come when his disciples could join him more directly in the work. They had seen enough at least to get started. They needed to put into practice what they had seen their Master do. So "he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth (Mark 6:7; cf., Matt. 10:5; Luke 9:1, 2).⁴²

⁴⁰Ibid., 74-75.

⁴¹John MacArthur, *Twelve Ordinary Men* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 11, emphasis in original.

⁴²Coleman, *The Master's Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship*, 80.

David Platt is in accord with Coleman when he says:

Whereas disinfecting Christians involves isolating them and teaching them to be good, discipling Christians involves propelling Christians into the world to risk their lives for the sake of others. Now the world is our focus, and we gauge success in the church not on the hundreds or thousands whom we can get into our buildings but on the hundreds or thousands who are leaving our buildings to take on the world with the disciples they are making.⁴³

When believers put into action what they have been trained to do, and those whom have disciplined do what they have been trained to do, discipleship becomes no longer a concept but a reality by fulfilling the Great Commission.

Supervision. Coleman writes that Jesus used supervision in the discipling process:

Jesus made it a point to meet with his disciples following their tours of service to hear their reports and to share with them the blessedness of his ministry in doing the same thing. . . . Accordingly, not long after the twelve were sent out, they gathered themselves 'together with Jesus' to tell 'what things they had done' (Mark 6:30; Luke 9:10).⁴⁴

Minus accountability, individuals and churches will naturally drift from their areas of responsibility and purpose.

Proper supervision over a project, a ministry, or church staff, allows for the actions or lack of actions to be evaluated. Problems can be addressed to assure that goals are being met. Resources can be provided to help individuals to be successful in their area of responsibility. Without supervision and accountability ministry drift and idleness will occur.

Reproduction. The last stage that Jesus took his disciples through according to Coleman is reproduction:

It all comes back to his disciples. They were the vanguard of his enveloping movement. 'Through their word' he expected others to believe in him (John 17:20), and these in turn to pass the word along to others, until in time the world might know

⁴³Platt, *Radical*, 105.

⁴⁴Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship*, 89.

who he was and what he came to do (John 17:21, 23). His whole evangelistic strategy—indeed, the fulfillment of his very purpose in coming into the world, dying on the cross, and raising from the grave—depended on the faithfulness of his chosen disciples to this task. It did not matter how small the group was to start with so long as they reproduced and taught their disciples to reproduce. . . . As simple as it may seem, this was the way the gospel would conquer. He had no other plan.⁴⁵

When disciples begin to multiply themselves, growth comes naturally. Gary L.

McIntosh comments:

The disciples were careful to teach all that Christ commanded them. The Book of Acts records not only the numerical and geographical growth of the church but also its spiritual growth. The inner life of the first church is carefully detailed in Acts 2:42-47. The believers' boldness in prayer (4:23-31) and the way they faced persecution (5:27-32; 7:59; 16:19-25) bear witness to their developing inner life. The actions of the disciples who had received Christ's Great Commission give evidence that they expected to see the church grow numerically, geographically, and spiritually.⁴⁶

Healthy churches will provide a discipleship process that enables individuals to fulfill the Great Commission. Jesus was intentional about teaching his disciples how to reproduce themselves. Strong and intentional leadership with guidance from the Holy Spirit will develop a discipleship process that equips believers to fulfill the Great Commission.

The Importance of Discipleship

When reading the Old or New Testament, it does not take long to discover that the military played a significant role. Gideon had his army of three hundred men (Jdg 7). Following the crucifixion, the centurion proclaimed that Jesus was an innocent man (Luke 23:47). Paul parallels the Christian life to that of a soldier (2 Tim 2:3-4). The apostle Paul exhorts the believer to put on the armor of God (Eph 6:10-17).

Believers in Jesus Christ will find themselves in a battle today as well. This battle is not necessarily with flesh and blood, but with the evil one (Eph 6:12). This spiritual warfare is why follow-up with a new believer is vital. Not following-up with a new believer and neglecting discipleship would be the equivalent of recruiting a soldier

⁴⁵Ibid., 99.

⁴⁶Gary L. McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 75.

and not preparing him or her for war. The United States military equips the enlisted soldiers with the best training and fire power. Why would our churches settle for any less when it comes to equipping the new believer for the spiritual battle that awaits them? When it pertains to equipping believers in Jesus Christ, Chuck Lawless notes:

No one would think of putting an untrained civilian at the controls of a state-of-the-art warplane, but we think nothing of sending troops into spiritual warfare without a proper understanding of God's arsenal to live victoriously. We are more of a threat to the church than to the Enemy. Healthy churches that win spiritual battles take the time to equip believers through teaching and mentoring. Discipled warriors know how to walk obediently and how to stand firmly against the Enemy.⁴⁷

The church today has become lethargic when it pertains to discipleship. If the church is ever going to defeat the evil of darkness and be obedient to the Great Commission, then the church must equip its members to take the gospel forward despite uncertain times. The United States Military should not be our example in training new converts, but they do exemplify steadfastness, focus, and intentionality when it comes to training soldiers for combat. The church must begin equipping disciples to face the battles that awaits them. Jesus tells his disciples that he is sending them out as sheep in the middle of wolves (Matt 10:16). Once his disciples had time to reflect on that comment, they must have been overcome with fear. David Platt writes:

The language of Matthew 10 envisions Jesus as a military commander sending soldiers out on a mission. He summoned his disciples, and then sent them out. In light of the needs before them and the danger around them, the disciples knew they were entering into battle.⁴⁸

In order for the church to produce discipled warriors, it must undergo a radical transformation in spirit and priorities. Moving someone from the ease of Christianity to equipping them to engage in spiritual warfare is no small task, but nevertheless, a task that must be undertaken. This spiritual battle is why discipleship is of utmost importance. In relation to the importance of discipleship, Thom Rainer discovered in his research:

⁴⁷Lawless, *Discipled Warriors*, 105.

⁴⁸Platt, *Radical*, 169.

Like most church leaders who have a heart for New Testament evangelism, the leaders of these 576 evangelistic churches struggle with the discipleship or assimilation of new believers and new members. We found this to be the most-discussed of all subjects we addressed in the study. In the hundreds of pages of comments we received, comments on discipleship and assimilation easily surpassed all others in number. Nearly one thousand comments about the topic were registered, many of them unsolicited.⁴⁹

The discipleship research recorded in *Effective Evangelistic Churches* reveals the hunger leaders have in regard to discipleship. There seems to be a desire for discipleship, but the how to is missing. Even with the best of intentions, without a strategic plan to move forward, the church will drift further into complacency while neglecting the Great Commission. Concerning strategic planning and complacency, Aubrey Malphurs writes, “Strategic planning requires a strategic point leader, a lead navigator . . . someone has to be in charge and responsible for the process, its day-to-day implementations and the ultimate outcome.”⁵⁰ Nothing moves forward and gathers momentum without leadership. Without proper leadership, discipleship will remain on the pages of the Bible and not lived out in daily lives. Hence, the result of ineffective leadership pertaining to discipleship will be complacency. To wake one up from the slumber of complacency Malphurs argues, “The way to address complacency is to create a sense of urgency. This is how leaders handled it in the Old Testament (Neh 2:17-18; Isa 55:6; Hosea 10:12) and in the New (Matt 3:2; 28:19-20; 2 Cor 5:14-6:2).”⁵¹ If a leader lacks a strategic plan and a sense of urgency to his or her approach, the status quo will remain the same and the church will remain disobedient to the Great Commission.

One could state many reasons pertaining to the importance of discipleship, however, the paramount reason is that discipleship lies at the core of the Great Commission given by Jesus (Matt 28:18-20). Chuck Lawless states, “Because ‘making disciples’ is the

⁴⁹Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches*, 170.

⁵⁰Malphurs, *Advance Strategic Planning*, 27.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 74.

central aspect of fulfilling the Great Commission, it stands to reason that Satan would want to scheme against churches that seek to produce disciples.”⁵² And scheme Satan does. Satan opposes everything from God. The Great Commission is the battle plan Jesus left with his disciples two thousand years ago and, of course, is still binding to the church today. Therefore, if Satan can cripple the work of the Great Commission, he knows he can lure the church into a sense of ease and comfort. In order to counter this attack, the believer must be instructed. Lawless continues, “Putting on the armor is about making disciples through teaching. The Ephesians believers needed to be taught to protect and arm themselves. Their spiritual battles were very real, and Paul wanted them to know how to defend themselves.”⁵³

Discipleship is warfare, and the enemy is Satan. Despite Satan and his tactics, with strong leadership, a sense of urgency, a systematic process, and faithful believers empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Great Commission will move forward despite Satan and his strategy. Ultimately, discipleship is important because the Great Commission is important. One cannot divorce discipleship from the Great Commission. Doing so would remove the object of the Great Commission, disciples. By neglecting “disciples,” the church has nothing to “make.”

The Best Approach to Disciple Military Men

The church that ministers to a military community can learn valuable lessons from para-church ministries. The following ministries provide insight into assimilating a military culture into the church.

Campus Crusade Military Ministry

Military Ministry is a division of Campus Crusade for Christ International. The

⁵²Lawless, *Disciplined Warriors*, 50.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 55.

Military Ministry's mission statement is "To Win, Build and Send in the power of the Holy Spirit and to establish movements of spiritual multiplication in the world wide military community."⁵⁴ The Military ministry uses a concept called "Six Pillars" as their strategic objectives to minister to military personnel:

Pillar 1-Spiritually nurture enlisted U.S. military members throughout their military careers. Pillar 2-Build Christian military leaders and influence our nation for Christ as a result. Pillar 3-Provide Christ-centered solutions for military families under stress and those suffering from the destructive effects of combat trauma. Pillar 4-Arm troops in harm's way with spiritual resources. Provide Bibles and devotional materials to chaplains and directly to troops, veterans, and families. Pillar 5-Wage Christian outreach, discipleship and training on the Internet to military members across the world. Pillar 6-Train, equip and support indigenous military leaders as they build Christian ministries in their own nations.⁵⁵

The strategic "Six Pillars" are helping military personnel fulfill the Great Commission. Retired Major General, US Army, Robert F. Dees and Executive Director of Campus Crusade Military Ministry comments:

Jesus deeply loved and respected military people and their families. He commended the Roman Centurion for his great faith, saying 'I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.' (NASB) The apostle Paul had similar high regard for military people and participated in world changing ministry while chained to his Roman guards. We also highlight the military as a strategic 'sending' organization, key influencers of society, moral standard bearers, selfless servants of their nation, and guardians of religious freedoms.⁵⁶

The Military Ministry is strategic in meeting the unique needs of soldiers and their families, but they are just as strategic in their mission to fulfill the Great Commission.

Navigators

The Navigators ministry began in the 1930s when Dawson Trotman wanted to teach men based on 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things you have heard me say in the presence

⁵⁴Military Ministry, "About" [on-line]; accessed 18 July 2011; available from <http://www.militaryministry.org/about/>; Internet.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Military Ministry, "Church Guide to Ministering for the Military" [on-line]; accessed 6 August 2011; available from <http://www.militaryministry.org/wp-content/uploads/2007nov-church-guide.pdf>; Internet.

of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” Trotman believed with patience that Paul’s instruction to Timothy would produce mature disciples throughout the United States military. Today, the Navigators continue to be a reflection of their founder. Trotman’s passion to disciple one-to-one is not limited to U.S. military personnel, but it also includes college campuses, inner cities, the market place, and neighborhoods around the world.

An interview with Victor Padilla was conducted to gain further insight into discipling adult military men (see Appendix 5). Victor noted that in order to emulate someone, one must spend substantial time with that individual. The goal, according to Victor, is for a mature believer to spend time not only studying the Scriptures together, but to spend time together throughout the week. This time spent between the discipler and the disciple, according to Victor, allows for the disciple to observe how his mentor responds to everyday stress and problem solving, especially in the family environment. Victor agreed that the Navigators struggle like many churches in discipling adult males. He also notes that deployments were the main obstacle in discipling military men. This interview provided a personal insight to the challenges that the mentor and the disciple face during the disciple making process.⁵⁷

Disciplemakers International

Disciplemakers International, founded in 1992, is the discipleship ministry of Military Ministry; a division of Campus Crusade for Christ International. Disciplemakers International provides specialized training material for churches or individuals. The goal of Disciplemakers International is to fulfill the biblical mandate found in the Great Commission by preparing believers to become disciple makers. Disciplemakers International comments on one-on-one discipling on their website:

⁵⁷Victor Padilla, Mission Staff with the Navigators, interview by author, Oak Grove, KY, 13 July 2011.

The church in America has become expert at ministering in the large group context. We also enjoy great effectiveness when it comes to small-group settings. But the one-on-one ministry dynamic is almost non-existent. And yet this personal, intimate context is the best place to deal with the personal, intimate issues that paralyze a person and keep him or her from growing on to maturity. What's more, there is no better environment for effective, high-retention teaching than in a tutoring-mentoring-apprenticing relationship.⁵⁸

To help aid the disciple maker in this one-on-one approach, DiscipleMakers International offers many resources. The Personal Disciplemaking Mini-Tool Kit assesses where a believer is pertaining to their spiritual life. The questions are designed to help aid the disciple maker to better acquainted with his disciple. The Personal Disciplemaking Seminar is a DVD training series in a 24 week curriculum designed to teach the believer how to make disciples. A further resource is *Personal Disciplemaking* by Christopher B. Adsit. The books' first eight chapters focus on giving practical help in the disciplemaking process. The following twelve chapters focus on initial follow-up of a new believer. The final section is helpful in designing a process for a lifetime of discipleship, using the Personal Disciplemaking Kit. An additional resource from DiscipleMakers International is the *DiscipleMakers Encyclopedia*. This encyclopedia is a resource manual for the disciple maker. These manuals consist of Bible studies, articles, assurance of salvation, and information on how to pray with others.

DiscipleMakers International is also actively involved in providing resources for soldiers who suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The desire of DiscipleMakers International is to aid churches in helping soldiers returning from war to deal with the emotional trauma associated with combat. The church that reaches the military community is a natural fit to reach soldiers who have been affected by PTSD.

Focus on the Family

Focus on the Family is a global Christian ministry that strengthens the family.

⁵⁸DiscipleMakers International, "What Does Disciplemaking Look Like?" [on-line]; accessed 25 July 2011; available from www.disciplemakersinternational.org/aboutus/dmaking.htm; Internet.

Focus on the Family provides invaluable resources to help military families through turbulent times that often accompany those who serve our country. Focus on the Family offers several resources to strengthen the military family including, *Faith Deployed: Daily Encouragement for Military Wives* by Jocelyn Green, *God Strong: The Military Wife's Survival Guide* by Sara Horn, *Heroes at Home: Help and Hope for America's Military Families* by Ellie Kay, and *Spouses also Serve* by Tiffany Booher. The nature of the military brings additional stress to military couples, however, when deployment occurs, this stress multiplies for both the spouse and their children. Deployments take a toll on the military family and the church family as well (Rom 12:15). Although the US military prepares the family for deployment, the church can play a supportive role and minister to them. Spouses and their children should look to their church for biblical counseling and support during and after deployment. During a deployment, the wife may have questions concerning her deployed husband such as, "How is my husband supposed to lead when he's on the other side of the world?" "How do I just 'submit' to my husband when he returns after a year?" "What effect will this have on my children when their father is not around to provide leadership?" Pertaining to leadership and submission in the home, the church needs to be equipped to assist in the "transition" time once the deployed husband has returned home. If proper counseling and instruction are not provided before and after deployment, the chances of the marriage to fracture become greater. This counseling should not be limited to church members only, but available to the non-churched in the community as well.

Focus on the family also offers Focus Online Communities that provide discussion forums which connects military families going through similar issues. Additionally, Focus on the Family offers personal counseling to military families and support through videos and a vast resource center that is committed to strengthening the family.

Websites that Address Transient Communities

The church which finds themselves ministering to a fluent community much be prepared mentally for the challenges that lay before them. The church must be equipped in order to reach and equip the transient community. The following websites address the transient culture.

Catherinelakebaptist.com. Brian Mann posted the following comment in their blog:

We live in a military community, and if that isn't transient, nothing is? . . . If there is anything I have understood in ministry, it is take care of what you have been given as if you will always be there. This mentality must be built in any transient area, otherwise people will treat the church like they are renting rather than taking ownership.⁵⁹

Proper stewardship of the people that God allows the church to minister to shows that transient people are just as important as any group. The challenge is great to minister to a community that is transient. However, God is faithful to provide resources to minister to a transient population.

Theresurgence.com. Eric Mason, pastor of Epiphany Fellowship in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, writes in regards to a transient community:

1. The importance of patience. Rushing people to a place in their lives they have never faced never works. Just because you hit a great home run in preaching and teaching a few times doesn't mean people get it. People are becoming more process-oriented and need a place to work through worldview-transforming information with God's people.

2. Commitment to community formation. Community formation is more than just throwing people into 'small groups' or 'missional communities.' It takes the Holy Spirit to knit people to other disciples. Being positionally connected to the body through the gospel does not make a person functionally connected to God's people. It is the beginning and an empowering mechanism of true and practical knitting. People have to want to be with one another (2 Corinthians 6:11-13).

⁵⁹Catherine Lake Baptist Church, "Ministering in a Transient Community" [on-line]; accessed 21 July 2011; available from catherinelakebaptist.com/?p=5451; Internet.

3. Help people face what they are running from. Stability is scary to many of us, although we know we need it. Slowing down helps us face places in our soul where Jesus' functional rule has not yet conquered. Running only postpones the inevitable.

4. Dealing with natural and spiritual maturity equally. Although all things in our life should be viewed through a spiritual lens, it is helpful to work through some distinctions. Emotional, volitional, intellectual, geographical, financial, sexual, and relational health is a must to help people grow in Jesus. While not a comprehensive list, these are the greatest obstacles that impede people from stability. Ephesians 4:15 calls us to grow up in all respects—a phenomenal challenge for transient people. When they are challenged in a way that is compelling and gospel-centered, they feel encouraged to face what they are fighting.

5. Recognizing that people ultimately belong to God. Some people will remain for a season. Our goal must be to do as much as we can to love them and engage them in the season when Jesus has allowed them to cross our paths. God ultimately is sovereign over people's life span and direction. Living by faith calls us to commit ourselves to see God use people's instability to show us how fragile we are and our need to repent and believe the gospel in uncharted areas of our lives.⁶⁰

Ministering in a military environment or any transient community requires a strategic plan that displays love and concern to the transient individual, regardless of the time they spend with the church. A church ministering to a transient population must take advantage of the short window of opportunity to disciple and minister to the people God sends them. The church that is transitory by its culture has a great advantage in fulfilling the Great Commission. The equipping church in a military culture can make disciples who will literally take the gospel to all ends of the earth. Even though the word "stability" is not heard around a church that regularly cycles through members, "responsibility" to carry the gospel wherever one goes should be an expected of transient members that have been disciplined to reproduce themselves.

Centrevillepres.com. J. Robin (Rob) Bromhead, senior pastor of Centreville Presbyterian Church notes on the churches web page:

Another important priority at CPC is disciple-making. One of the primary ways the Lord has lead us in doing this is through what we call the Growth Group Ministry. Each group consists of fifteen-twenty adults who meet weekly in a home for 6-8 week intervals. This ministry provides something very unique to transient Northern

⁶⁰Resurgence, "Ministering in Transient Populations" [on-line]; accessed 21 July 2011; available from <http://theresurgence.com/2011/01/31/ministering-in-transient-populations>; Internet. Emphasis original.

Virginia—a network of deeper friendships. So many of us can relate to an individual who described his situation this way: ‘I’ve moved so many times in my life that neither my place of birth nor my present community defines me.’ Growth Groups provide a time of genuine fellowship through worship, the study of a particular Bible truth, prayer support for each other, and opportunities to serve those who have needs within the church or in the larger community of Centerville.⁶¹

Small groups at Centerville Presbyterian Church provide a way to establish a sense of community in a transient society. Spending time together in Growth Groups is one way to explore God’s Word and to provide mutual accountability. Ministering to their community also helps the small group from becoming inwardly focused. Whether the discipleship process occurs in a small group setting or one-on-one, the goal must be to reproduce oneself. A disciplining relationship will not only produce mature biblical behavior and attitude, but can also help build strong relational bonds and provide for emotional security in an individual that has been marked by a transient lifestyle.

Disciplemakingintl.org. DMI (disciple-making international) webpage states:

The purpose of DMI is to awaken a passion for the Glory of God in all nations by encouraging and equipping Christians and churches to accomplish the Great Commission. We carry out this purpose by producing and providing multi-lingual biblical resources aimed at fueling the Great Commission. Most of our resources are from David Platt, who serves as one of the pastors of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, AL.⁶²

The easy route for many churches in transient communities would be to simply not focus on that segment of the population. Their rationale may be to minister and disciple those who will have a permanent presence in the church. Such thinking, however, would be unbiblical and unloving (Matt 25:35-36). On the DMI blog page, one entry states:

Persecution comes in many forms! Sometimes it is an overt attack, which happens among European Roma or gypsies, and sometimes it is the more subtle refusal to provide medical care or basic rights given to other citizens in the country. . . . Historically they are migrant people and most Europeans would like to see them continue to travel out of their current town or village. Yet God is calling the Roma

⁶¹Centerville Presbyterian Church, “Welcome” [on-line]; accessed 21 July 2011; available from http://www.centervillepres.com/pages/page.asp?page_id=79417; Internet.

⁶²Disciple-Making International, “About” [on-line]; accessed 21 July 2011; available from www.disciplemakingintl.org/about/; Internet.

to Himself. International Mission Board (IMB) workers have seen hundreds come to faith over the past 15 years and scores of new churches have been planted in 8-10 countries. Though many Roma believers are young in their faith, they have a heart to reach their near and distant relatives scattered throughout Europe. More than 125 have participated in summer missions program where they moved to another city in their country, or a nearby country, and helped strengthen the work of evangelism and discipleship among the Roma. . . . Some church planters may complain because, by nature, the Roma are transient, but IMB workers are rejoicing at new groups started by traveling Roma in places like the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, and England. They may be denied basic services where they live but they will not be denied the gospel. Roma believes are seeing to that.⁶³

Although the Roma and the United States Military do not share many common interests, they do have some similarities. First, both groups know the difficulties that constant migration brings. The stress on their families, uncertainty about the future, and the sadness of leaving new friends, all add to the toil of lacking a sense of permanency. The Roma's received the gospel because missionaries from the International Mission Board cared to reach a people group that had been neglected by others. Effective discipleship is evident from the Roma's desire to bring the gospel to their relatives in addition to their church planting success. Likewise, any church desiring to reach a transient community must be intentional and strategic to bring the gospel to such a people group. Just as the Roma's were shown love through International Mission Board missionaries, the church must exhibit love to a people group that is overlooked by many churches. Ministering to a neglected people group is where the motive of the church is put to the test. It is easier to reach those who bring a sense of permanence to the church body. For the church to reach those who lack stability and roots, however, this truly reflects the love of Christ despite someone's background. A church committed to a transient society truly is a center to train and equip the believer to carry the gospel wherever they may travel.

Conclusion

Jesus said in the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19-

⁶³Disciple-Making International, "Roma," Secret Church Blog [on-line]; accessed 21 July 2011; available from www.disciplemakingintl.org/secertchurch/blog?p=74; Internet.

20). Many churches have found it difficult to disciple people in their local body, much less to disciple people of all nations. The church with military members is uniquely positioned to fulfill this command. Although any church can be engaged in sending mission teams to help disciple all nations, the military church can equip men to literally carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to unreached people groups. A word of caution is necessary here. The United States government is doing the sending with a military mission, not the church. God does use the deployment of military men, however, to further His Kingdom. Once the soldier is established at his duty station, the Lord will provide opportunities for the soldier to share the gospel with that people group. Many lives have been transformed by the gospel through military men and further lives will be impacted because of faithful men serving our country, but ultimately serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The discipleship training project of the First Baptist Church Oak Grove, Oak Grove, Kentucky, began August 31, 2011. The project lasted fifteen consecutive weeks, concluding on December 14, 2011. The project consisted two weeks of preparation, a nine-week discipleship class, two weeks of practical application, and two weeks of final analysis of those participating in the project and focus group.

Two-Week Preparation

With the input of the senior pastor, fourteen participants were recruited to partake in a nine-week class that uniquely addressed the needs of military men. Of the men that were asked, two replied they could not commit because of upcoming deployments. The following sections provide details of discipling military men at First Baptist Church Oak Grove.

Pre-Project Questionnaire

The goal of the pre-project questionnaire was to discover the attitudes and barriers of discipleship concerning adult men of First Baptist Church Oak Grove. A total of fourteen men were asked to give information about themselves. The scope of the questionnaire was to quantify the knowledge of the participants concerning discipleship, determine the desire of the participants towards discipleship, determine the participants' responsibility in reproducing themselves as a disciple, and to discover the participants' biblical literacy. Attendees were asked to give the last four digits of their social security number as a means to distinguish between the questionnaire for comparison purposes.

The questionnaire used was a personal assessment tool developed by Brad Waggoner (see Appendix 1).

The results of the questionnaire exposed areas in which the participants struggled spiritually (see Appendix 4). The participants were asked various questions that pertained to discipleship, such as frequency of Bible study, accountability to other Christians, denying self, prayer, sexual immorality, and Sunday School and small group attendance. Thus, based on the results of the questionnaire, the topics for the nine-week class included: what is a disciple, the problem of sin, temptation, sexual immorality, pornography, biblical manhood, prayer, evangelism, and how to have a quiet time. The same questionnaire was completed at the end of the project to determine if opinions and behaviors had changed since the beginning of the project. The pre-project questionnaire was given on September 8, 2011.

Focus Group Pre-Project Questionnaire

The focus group, consisting of seven men, was selected from the fourteen men who participated in the project. The focus group was given the following questions:

1. Describe your involvement in the church
2. Do you find it easy or difficult to discover the ministries the church has to offer?
3. Do you feel the church has a plan to assimilate new members into the church?
4. Do you feel the sermon is sufficient for your spiritual growth each week
5. Is Sunday School important for you and your family ? If not, why?
6. What does church membership mean to you?
7. What prohibits you from being more involved in your church?
8. How could the church leadership help you be more involved in your church?
9. Would you be willing for a mature male Christian to help teach you and apply the Bible to your life? If no, why?
10. If you answered yes to question nine, how much time per week could you commit for another male to help teach you and apply the Bible to your life?

The answers given by the focus group helped determine the participant's attitudes towards discipleship and involvement in church. The pre-project focus group questionnaire was given on September 8, 2011.

Weekly Class Sessions

Once the information from the pre-project questionnaire was gathered and assimilated, I had the information needed to determine the subject matters to be taught during the nine-week class. Each participant agreed to meet on Tuesday nights from 7:00-8:30 p.m. To keep attendance at a maximum, I texted each participant the night before to remind them of our meeting. The class was also instructed to reply back if they were unable to attend. Since a soldier's schedule is erratic, these reminders helped the soldier to attend the majority of the classes. For those who missed, make-up classes were held Sunday afternoons at 3:45 pm.

Week 1

Our first class began on September 20, 2011. From the results of the questionnaire, most participants did not have a biblical understanding of what being a disciple entailed. The title of this lesson was "What is a Disciple?" The purpose of the first class, therefore, was to instruct the participants on what a disciple was and the importance of discipleship. Key texts from chapter 2 of this project were used such as Matthew 28:19-20 and 2 Timothy 2:2. Old Testament texts including Exodus 18:13, 1 Kings 19:19-21, and Deuteronomy 31:7-8 were discussed concerning discipleship and mentoring. Attention was given to the biblical mandate to reproduce oneself as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Further emphasis was given in that biblical discipleship is more than intellectual learning (Luke 6:40, Matt 9:9; 19:21; Mark 1:17, 2:14, 8:34; Luke 5:27, John 1:43).

Waylon Moore addresses the topic of discipleship:

You can begin spiritually multiplying yourself today, and start a dynamic process which could reach beyond your generation and into the next century. This would be

your part in accomplishing Christ's Great Commission to go into all the world and make disciples (see Matthew 28:18-20).¹

Hence, those in attendance were encouraged to see discipleship not as merely intellectual knowledge, but as a way of life.

As the session closed, the class was instructed that Satan was a foe to be reckoned with and to be prepared for his schemes (2 Cor 11:14; Eph 6:10-17). Concerning spiritual warfare, Chuck Lawless notes, "Churches that fail to teach believers send them unarmed into the spiritual battle. They commit 'spiritual child abuse' by allowing baby Christians to flounder in the war."² The group was aware of the schemes from Satan that could derail them from fulfilling their commitment to this project.

Considering it was our first meeting, the participants were engaged and participated when asked to do so. This initial class laid the foundation for the remaining eight sessions. We closed with prayer and were dismissed.

Week 2

The second group meeting was held on September 27, 2011. Although all who participated indicated they had a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, I felt it was necessary to have a class on salvation. The title of this lesson was, "Our Problem, Rebellion." Paul admonishes us all to examine our faith (2 Cor 13:5). This lesson explored the fall of man (Gen 3) and therefore, we all suffer the consequences of Adam (Rom 5:12). All but two of the participants were active military. Thus, they were familiar with the possible death that accompanied their profession. Most of the class had served in Iraq or Afghanistan. They had witnessed death first hand. Hence, when spiritual death was explained, the class could easily relate. This fact was evident by the questions and conversations that emerged from physical death (Heb 9:27) to how Jesus reconciled us to

¹Waylon B. Moore, *Multiplying Disciples The New Testament Method for Church Growth* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1981), 15.

²Chuck Lawless, *Discipled Warriors* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 57.

God (1 Pet 3:18). Emphasis was also placed on works righteousness to make sure that we are not saved by our own merit but by grace through faith (Eph 2:8).

In addition to works righteousness, the lesson concluded with the belief that mere intellect in Jesus will not save anyone (Jas 2:19). All were in agreement that people must repent of their sins and trust in Jesus to save them from their sins (Mark 1:14-15). Intercommunication took place not solely with me and the group, but within the group as well. Even though this group had never been disciplined, and in addition to the fact that many had been believers for a few years or less, they indicated a reasonable grasp of salvific issues.

Eternal security concluded this session by looking closely at 1 John 5:13. I sensed that some perhaps doubted their salvation in the past. I had private conversations with these individuals at a later date to counsel with them. This session closed with prayer and thanksgiving for the free gift of salvation.

Week 3

According to the questionnaire, the participants indicated that temptation was an ongoing issue in their life. October 4, 2011, began our third class entitled “Strategies of the Enemy.” This lesson investigated how Satan tempts one to cross the “sin line.” Some biblical examples were used: Jacob lying to gain the family blessing (Gen 27:30-41), David drawn to the beauty of Bathsheba, (2 Sam 11:1-5), and Ananias and Sapphira pretending to give financially when they had not. In regards to the above examples, these individuals did not stop when sin looked inviting. The lesson stressed that Satan focuses on making sin look inviting rather than focusing on the long-term consequences of sin. The group was given a time of discussion and gave examples from their own lives how Satan had deceived them. Approximately half the class responded with compelling testimonies to Satan parading as an angel of light as they fell for his schemes. Again, many of these men were in their early to mid-twenties and new to the Christian faith. Their testimonies were fresh and powerful as they openly shared how they had fallen prey to

the evil one. It was evident that this was an edifying time for all (Prov 27:17).

The lesson also addressed the strategy of lies that Satan employs. The story of Genesis 3:1-4 explained how Satan approached Eve in the Garden with a lie, and Satan has continued his lies ever since. The class discussed some lies that Satan would have us believe: Jesus was just a good moral teacher, the Bible does not have final authority in my life, all religions lead to heaven, and a loving God would not send anyone to hell. A single soldier commented on how his colleagues in the barracks often mocked him for believing in the narrowness of Christianity and the exclusivity of Jesus Christ. Another soldier made the comment how military chaplains, who are evangelical, are instructed by their superiors to be cautious how they approach biblical counseling. With the recent retraction by the United States Government of “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy, military chaplains can now perform gay marriages where same sex marriage is legal.

Since the group was constituted of primarily young believers, it was stressed that Satan desires to use defeat and discouragement in the life of a believer. Matthew 28:19-20 was used as an example. Satan’s desire is to dismay and deprecate believers from fulfilling The Great Commission. Satan’s strategy is to quiescent the Christian from engaging in discipleship through evangelization. Lawless outlines this idea well as he discusses the Great Commission and spiritual warfare:

Are we teaching our members theologically? Are we challenging them to know God and who they are in Christ? Is their foundation solid?

Do our members know the purposes of the church? Are we training them to fulfill those purposes individually and corporately?

Do our members show their Christian faith in all areas of their lives—in their personal walk, in their home, in the church, and in their work place? Are we teaching them to live out their faith in all of these areas?

Are our members committed to reaching the world for Christ?

In general, are we producing disciples through evangelism that results in baptisms and teaching that leads to obedience?³

³Ibid., 49.

Lawless also adds:

Do you see Satan's strategy? Young, excited, but untaught, converts under spiritual attack become defeated believers. They ultimately remain weak believers—even when they become leaders in our churches. Undisciplined leaders don't produce disciplined warriors.⁴

When the church fails to equip the new believer to fulfill the Great Commission, the church adversely prepares them to be defeated by Satan. An unclear strategy leaves the believer without any weapons to fight against the onslaught of Satan and his demons.

Participants were encouraged to take advantage of witness training classes that First Baptist Church Oak Grove offers in order to help fulfill the Great Commission. A correlation was made between how the Army trains the soldier well to fight the enemy, and how discipleship helps train the soldier to fight their biggest foe, Satan. This session concluded with discussion and prayer.

Week 4

Week 4 began on October 11, 2011, and examined the topic of "Strategies for Fighting Sexual Temptations." This topic proved to be of great value, as much interaction took place. First, it was recognized that sexuality was a gift from God. The class examined Genesis 2:24-25, Proverbs 5:18-20, and 1 Corinthians 7:35. Once the foundation was laid that sex is a gift from God to be used within the confines of marriage, the negative use of sex was examined. It was stressed that biblical restrictions were meant for our protection, and not to deny something good. Biblical texts used were Exodus 20:14, 1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2, and 1 Thessalonians 4:3. As with any sector of society, the United States military is no exception when it comes to lust. With female soldiers deploying and serving close at hand with male soldiers, the issue of lust is alluring as noted by the soldiers who participated in this project. The foundational verse used for this particular topic was Matthew 5:27-29, where Jesus addresses that if a person looks at a woman with lust, that

⁴Ibid., 51.

individual has committed adultery with her in his heart. The group was encouraged to develop a biblical worldview that encourages that all we do is to bring glory to God (1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17).

Next, the parallel was made between Christ and his love for the church and the way husbands should love their wives (Eph 5:21-32). This contrast between Christ and the church and their marriages proved to be an eye opener. The participants had never heard (or remembered) this correlation before. I could sense that this struck a nerve in how they should treat their wives. Although not much discussion took place, it was evident by their expressions that many had failed in loving their wives as Christ loves the church.

To further help the group in fighting sexual temptation, I shared a verse that personally helps me by letting one's mind dwell on pure thoughts, not thoughts that can lead our minds astray into darkness (Phil 4:8). This verse also seemed to connect with the group in the battle against sexual temptation. After discussion, we closed with prayer and were dismissed.

Week 5

Week 5 began on October 18, 2011 and seemed to be a natural transition from the previous week's lesson on "Strategies for Fighting Sexual Temptations," as the topic of pornography was introduced. After the staggering statistics of pornography were explained, the widespread access and presence of pornography was reviewed. All were in agreement of how pervasive pornography has become in our society. A few within the group volunteered their exposure of pornography in the past and admitted the problem pornography has become within the military. As noted in week 4, it was stressed that fantasizing about sexual immorality was not permissible but forbidden by Jesus himself (Matt 5:28.) The group was encouraged to recognize that envisioning immoral images was a sinful act that needed to be avoided.

As with any destructive pattern in life, the group was encouraged to begin making steps to overcome destructive behavior. One soldier commented that soldiers with

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) often turn to pornography. He was not saying that their actions were permissible, but actuality. Those who suffer with PTSD will often turn to destructive behavior to cope with the stresses of war.

Another comment was how accessible pornography was now due to technological advances. Another participant commented that a person does not even have to have a computer to view pornography. He noted that just walking through the mall and viewing certain storefronts were pornographic in nature.

Finding an accountability partner was discussed to help wage war against pornography. The group was not as talkative on this subject as previous topics. I could sense there was some uneasiness as the subject of pornography was explored. It was easy to see that this subject had struck at the heart of this group of soldiers. They were attentive and recognized how destructive pornography can be on their marriages, families, at work, and more importantly, their relationships with God. After a prayer, the class was dismissed.

Week 6

Week 6 began on October 25, 2011, and examined the issue of biblical manhood. The title of lesson 6 was, "Biblical Manhood." Genesis 1:26-28 was used as the primary text in addressing the crucial topic of biblical manhood. Three main issues were gleaned from this text. The first was that God created human beings. We, however, live in a world where humanity is in rebellion against his creator. Instead of glorifying God, people glorify themselves. Second, the participants were taught from Genesis 1:26-28 that humans are created in His image. Humans are the only one out of all creation that is created in His image. Even though we are made in His image, man has disfigured that image. Third, Genesis 1:26-28, states that God created us male and female. At this point, the group was directed to Genesis 2:24 where Moses says that a man and his wife become one flesh. The group soon discovered, however, how this male and female relationship was soon marred. Genesis 3:12 was used as the proof text that flawed not only marriages, but all

creation. As a result of Genesis 3:12, in Genesis 3:16 God pronounced a curse on fallen man and woman. The above mentioned verses in Genesis helped the group to “connect” the dots. They were now more clearly able to see why and how sin has such a calamitous effect upon all creation.

The group was now instructed that, even before sin entered the world, that God had created Adam to be the spiritual leader and Eve was created to be a partner with her husband who supports and honors his leadership role. Both male and female made in the image of God and equal in their personhood but distinct in their manhood and womanhood.

This topic of biblical manhood I feel was a bothersome subject for most of the participants. With lengthy deployments, it is difficult for some wives to see their husbands as the leader with his continued absence. All the responsibilities of managing order and leadership in the home then resided with the wife. Likewise, when the husband returns from deployment, there was a “disconnect” that hampers the wife from defaulting back to supporting and honoring her husband as the spiritual leader. For some couples who are more spiritually mature, the transition is relatively smooth. For others, however, it seems to be an ongoing pursuit. This group of soldiers were encouraged to maintain a healthy relationship with their spouses (Eph 5:25; 1 Pet 3:7) and to educate their children of how distinct home life will be like during deployments. The participants were also encouraged to use video technology, if available, to conduct weekly family devotions and prayer times as a family.

Week 7

Week 7 began on November 1, 2011, and addressed the issue of prayer. This session dealt more specifically with the fettered prayers of the husband. This lesson was entitled, “Husbands are Your Prayers Hindered?” Pressures and stress go hand in hand with any profession. The military perhaps carries a greater encumbrance than most occupations. The biggest obscenity would be the lengthy deployments and the ever lingering thoughts of a deployed spouse not returning home alive. Oftentimes, the husband

will release this stress on his spouse. With that in mind, I chose to use 1 Peter 3:7 as the primary text in addressing this issue. It was stressed that God desires for us to live a lifestyle that does not hinder our prayers. I then asked the question, “If you do not want your prayers to be hindered, in what ways must you live with your spouse?” The following responses were recorded on a white board: to be understanding, kind, not rough, be polite, respectable, to brag on her in public, and to tell her that you love her. They all were in accord that if they do not treat their wives in this manner, their prayers would be hindered. It was apparent that these soldiers were lacking in their prayer lives by their responses as well as by the results of the questionnaire. The soldier is like any other Christian that thinks, “I’m too busy to pray, or I’ll pray later.” The class agreed to take Peter’s teaching seriously. All were in accord that changes needed to be made in their homes and also with other soldiers with whom they work with, and it all begins with prayer. We thanked God for our time together and the privilege that we have to communicate with him and him with us, through the avenue of prayer.

Week 8

Week 8 began on November 8, 2011, with the topic of personal evangelism. The lesson, entitled “The Importance of Evangelism,” stressed that although witness training is beneficial and necessary, evangelism should be seen as a lifestyle rather than a program that has a beginning and end. Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8 were used as the primary verses. Many in the group feared the word evangelism. FBC offers several evangelism training events throughout the year, although, none in the group had participated in such training. The group was encouraged to overcome their anxiety by enlisting in an upcoming training event that will be taught by the pastor in January 2012. All were in agreement that they would feel more equipped to declare the gospel if they attended training events throughout the year.

The goal of this lesson was not to provide evangelism training, since the church offers numerous events each year. The goal was to emphasize the biblical mandate to

evangelize. The group learned that evangelism is not just for those with the gift of evangelism, but rather all believers should share the reason for the hope that is within them (1 Pet 3:15). Sharing the good news should be an overflow of the heart (Luke 6:45). All were in agreement that they should be sharing the gospel message with others. Fear was the main reason given that prohibited them from proclaiming Christ with others. The soldiers discussed how Christianity was often mocked and disparagement took place throughout the ranks of the military. According to some soldiers, they reported that chaplains had to be tolerant of all religions and had to use caution in praying in Jesus' name.

This lesson referred back to lesson 2, "Our Problem, Rebellion," where all of humanity is under the curse of Genesis 3. It was stressed that just as someone had shared the good news with them, they should desire to share the good news with others. The gospel is the only remedy that can save a person from his or her rebellious state and set that person free from the curse of sin. Some in the group expressed that, not only was fear an inhibitor in sharing the gospel, but apathy was also an enemy. I shared some personal evangelism stories and that I still struggle with fear, but that the Lord helps me to be courageous and move against my fears (Josh 1:9). Once again, an appeal was made for the group to enlist in the upcoming evangelism training class. We closed in prayer and dismissed.

Week 9

November 15, 2011, concluded the nine-week class with "How to Have a Quiet Time." This lesson was instrumental in helping the group overcome obstacles that adult men face each day. Knowing how to have a quiet time would fortify their relationship with God and equip them to face the onslaught of the Enemy. The first item discussed was to the group was that it was imperative to the group that they meet with God, if possible, the same time each day (Mark 1:35). A consistent quiet time can be a challenge to military men because of their schedule, especially if they are new to the army. All agreed that meeting

on a consistent basis would be a discipline that they would have to develop.

Next, the group was instructed to confess any known sin before they begin their quiet time (1 John 1:9). Acknowledgement of sin would enable them to come before a Holy God ready to commune with him and him with them. After the lessons on sexual temptations, pornography, biblical manhood, and a hindered prayer life, the group was in agreement that confession and repentance would need to take precedence in their lives. Although all participants were believers, the group had a shallow understanding of many biblical topics. What little knowledge the participants did have, there was little or no application of the Scriptures in their lives.

Next the participants were encouraged to read the Gospel of John or Mark until they grasped the disciplines of a quiet time. Since the army is known for its obsessive use of acrostics, I chose to use an acrostic by Wayne Corderio that is easy to retain, SOAP: S = Scripture, O = Observation, A = Application, P = Prayer⁵

After the acrostic was explained, each participant was handed a sheet of paper with a verse and the acrostic. The group was given 15 minutes to do their quiet time exercise. This group had heard of quiet time before, but most had never been instructed on how to have one. Having such an exercise was enjoyable to observe as some were “thinking” out loud. They now understood that with a simple format, they could have a quiet time anywhere or time. The participants were also told that this format was only a suggestion, and they may want to develop their own or use another format. The point being though, they now have something simple to remember to begin a daily quiet time with the Lord.

Other practical suggestions given: (1) choose a time that works best for you. If mornings are not an option, then commit to meet regularly with God sometime during the day. (2) Start by praising God through adoration and thanksgiving. (3) Begin by choosing

⁵Wayne Cordeiro, *The Divine Mentor* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany, 2007), 102.

a short passage, preferably in the gospels, John or Mark. (3) Keep a journal and record your thoughts. (4) Pray for others and for yourself.

Role Play

Role play was introduced on November 22 and 29, 2011. This activity was borrowed from *Operation Multiplication* by Billie Hanks, Jr. and Randy Craig. The role playing exercise enabled the participants to experience what it would be like to be the disciple and the discipler.⁶ Once the participants were paired together, they were ready for this role playing activity. During this role playing time, the group chose any topic from the nine-week study, such as biblical manhood, how to have a quiet time, sexual immorality, what is a disciple, and prayer. The following week the roles were reversed. Those who had been the discipler were now the disciple. Some participants felt awkward as they were playing the role of the discipler, which is understandable. All participants seemed more relaxed as they played the role of the disciple. This exercise, as noted by the participants, was a bit uneasy especially for the discipler role but constructive in knowing what to expect in the discipleship process.

I was pleased with the group participation in this role playing scenario. Overall, they seemed to enjoy themselves in this exercise. Role playing provided the was an opportunity to apply what they would hopefully continue in the future.

My conclusion from class time was that the participants had a better understanding of what a disciple was and how the discipleship process works. The group also understood that they have a biblical mandate to be a reproducing disciple. The subject

⁶Billie Hanks, Jr. and Randy Craig, *Operation Multiplication* (Saldo, TX: International Evangelism Association, 2004). This book is directed toward individual discipling and I have used it effectively in the past to train other men to reproduce themselves. The role play scenarios used in *Operation Multiplication* are helpful in orientating a believer in the context of one-on-one disciple making.

matters determined by the questionnaire deemed profitable in addressing pertinent issues that military men face.

Post-Project Questionnaire

The purpose of the post-project questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was to identify any changes in attitudes pertaining to discipleship. The post-project questionnaire was administered on November 15, 2011. The group was asked to return the questionnaire by November 22, 2011.

Focus Group

On December 6, 2011, I met with the focus group. The focus group consisted of seven men selected from the fourteen project participants. On November 29, 2011, each member of the focus group was given results from the pre-and post-project questionnaires along with the below post-project questionnaire. Having the results from the questionnaire allowed the focus group one week to evaluate and reflect upon the results.

I met with the focus group with the intention of determining the effectiveness of the project and to receive feedback from the participants. After receiving feedback from the focus group, valuable information was gleaned.

The focus group was given the following post-project questionnaire:

1. What are some barriers that hinder Christian military men from being disciplined?
2. How long should a discipleship class last for a military man?
3. How long should each session last? Example, 30 minutes, one hour, one and a half hour.
4. Do you feel soldiers would prefer one-on-one discipleship or a small group setting?
5. In your opinion, what is the major difference between discipling adult military men compared to civilian men?
6. What are some unique challenges that Christian military men face that civilian men do not?
7. What additional topics could be taught to military men that we did not cover in our nine-week class?

Conclusion

Over the fifteen weeks, a discipleship project was implemented at First Baptist Church, Oak Grove, Kentucky. Fourteen participants were recruited and led through a nine-week class. The topics for the class were determined by the pre-project questionnaire. At the end of the nine-week class, participants had the opportunity to role play being a disciple and discipler.

The focus group proved to be a valuable group of men that provided information to gauge the effectiveness of this project as well as to encourage one another. The focus group also proved to be an encouragement to myself as well. Throughout the course of this project, many suggestions were offered by the participants, the focus group, and the senior pastor. Some of these suggestions may be used in future projects in regard to discipleship and in additional educational ministries in the church. Chapter 5 discusses in detail the methods for possible improvements in future discipleship classes and strategies for discipling military men.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Honest and objective evaluation, although not necessarily comfortable to accept, is essential for improvement to transpire in ones area of ministry. Aubrey Malphurs writes:

Inviting and accepting critique are difficult, but the result can and must be learning that leads to improvement. We must ask ourselves how we can get better. Obtaining objective feedback from someone who is more experienced and qualified in our area of ministry is invaluable for those who desire to be the best at what they do for the Savior.¹

This project is evaluated in light of its stated purpose and goals. The strengths and weaknesses, along with what I would do differently are also summarized. In addition, how I would approach this project differently, and theological and personal reflection will conclude chapter 5. The evaluation of this project will help in the implementation of future projects for FBC.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of the project was to develop a discipleship strategy for male military members of First Baptist Church Oak Grove, Kentucky. In order to ascertain what the participants knew about discipleship and biblical literacy, a pre-and post-project questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was given during the project. In addition to the questionnaire, a focus group was selected to help measure the effectiveness of the project, and to give greater insight into discipling military men. Data from the questionnaires were analyzed to gain further insight on the barriers to discipleship. Furthermore, the data

¹Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 300.

will allow for the implementation of future strategies and curriculum development.

Pre-and Post-Project Questionnaire

The pre-and post-project questionnaire was given to the fourteen participants. Of the fourteen participants, 10 were 20-29 years of age, and 4 were 30-39 years of age. When asked how long each had been a Christian, 4 indicated less than a year, 7 indicated 1 to 5 years, 2 replied to 10 years and 1 replied 16+ years.

The participants were asked thirty-six questions in regards to discipleship and biblical literacy. The pre-and post-questionnaire was given to see if any attitudes and behavior changes occurred from the fifteen-week project. The research methodology used was a five-point Likert scale. Observation revealed that some changes occurred.

One question asked the participants was, "I avoid situations in which I might be tempted in the area of sexual immorality." Of the pre-project responses, none reported "never true," 7.1 percent "rarely true," 42.9 percent indicated "sometimes true," 28.6 percent said "often true," and 7.1 percent responded almost "always true." The post-project questionnaire by comparison revealed that none reported "never true," 7.1 percent "rarely true," 50 percent "sometimes true," 35.7 percent reported "often true," and 7.1 percent "almost always true."

A further question asked was, "I read and study the Bible in an effort to know God better." Of the pre-project responses, 28.6 percent indicated "never true," 21.4 percent reported "rarely true," 35.7 percent "sometimes true," 14.2 percent "often true," and none "almost always true." The post-project responses showed none "never true," 28.6 indicated "rarely true," while 50 percent responded "sometimes true," 21.4 percent indicated "often true," and none "almost always true."

An additional question asked was, "How often do you set aside time for prayer?" The pre-project response revealed 42.8 percent "never true," 14.2 percent "seldom true," 21.4 percent "sometimes true," 14.2 percent "often true" and 7.1 percent responded "regularly true." Post-Project response, none "never true," 28.5 percent

“seldom true,” 35.7 percent “sometimes true,” 21.4 percent said “often true,” while 14.2 percent responded “regularly true.”

Some responses to doctrinal questions included, “there is a literal place called hell.” One hundred percent indicated on both pre-and post-project responses, “always true.” Another question asked, “it was necessary for Jesus to die to make salvation possible.” Pre-and post-project responses indicated 100 percent “almost always true.”

Focus Group Pre-Project Questionnaire

Prior to implementing the discipleship project, I selected seven individuals from the original group of fourteen men. This group was to give greater insight and depth into discipling military men. The ages ranged from mid-twenties to mid-thirties. A vast degree of spiritual maturity levels were composed in this group. I desired to gain insight from the most to the least mature in order to have a comprehensive insight into discipling military men (see Appendix 2). The information accumulated by the focus group was important as I sought to understand the barriers to discipling military men. In the ensuing paragraphs, I will briefly describe the group’s responses to each question.

Describe your involvement in the church. Most of the participants equated attendance with involvement. Others commented that they would like to be involved but are hesitant to do so.

Do you find it easy or difficult to discover the ministries the church has to offer? The majority of the group stated they found it easy to discover the ministries of the church. Two individuals said it was “relatively easy.”

Do you feel the church has a plan to assimilate new members into the church? The group was unanimous that the church had a clear plan to incorporate members into the church.

Do you feel the sermon is sufficient for your spiritual growth each week?

This question provided interesting answers. Although the majority recorded that the sermon was not enough for their spiritual growth, several stated that the sermon was sufficient enough for their spiritual growth. Answers included, “very much so,” “great sermons,” “look forward to sermons and fellowship.” Several participants responded “yes.” They may have misread the question, or they actually believed the sermon was enough spiritual nourishment for the week.

Is Sunday School important for you and your family? If not, why?

Many responded by saying “yes” to the importance of Sunday School. Some reported, however, that Sunday School was important, but stated that “laziness,” or “selfishness with their time” prohibited them from attending Sunday School. Also, some indicated that their “wives and children attended but they were reluctant due to the fear of being called upon or to pray or to read.”

What does church membership mean to you?

The majority indicated family and fellowship. Three did not answer, while one stated he “never understood the significance of church membership.”

What prohibits you from being more involved in your church?

Response to this question indicated that time issues and selfishness were the dominant excuses.

How could the church leadership help you be more involved in your

church? Replies to this question were that church leadership was helpful and encouraging to involve the membership for service.

Would you be willing for a mature male Christian to help teach you and

apply the Bible to your life? If no, why? The group was consensual to allow another mature male to disciple them. Reasons included, “sure,” “absolutely,” and “always room for improvement.”

If you answered “yes” to the above question, how much time per week could you commit for another male to teach you and apply the Bible to your life? The larger part of the group responded that a “one hour commitment” would be feasible for them. Only one indicated “thirty minutes,” while one indicated “one and a half hours.”

Focus Group Post-Project Questionnaire

Near the completion of the project, on December 6, 2011, I met with the focus group once again. The purpose of this meeting was to review the results of the pre-and post-questionnaire, discuss the interview that I conducted with Victor Padilla of the Navigators (see Appendix 5), and to review the focus group post-project questionnaire (see Appendix 3). This meeting also allowed for feedback from the focus group to determine the effectiveness of the project. The questionnaire consisted of ten questions to gather further information and gain additional insight to discipling military men.

Strength of the project. The majority of the focus group answered that the fellowship of men coming together and discussing mutual difficulties provided the greatest help. The group also stated that they were “comfortable with one another in discussing issues they were currently facing.” Others commented that they “did not feel alienated with their issues, as they heard other men share common struggles,” while others commented they “liked the intentionality of meeting each week.”

Weakness of the project. Some within the group commented that a group setting “did not allow them the opportunity to be as open with their comments or feelings.” These participants indicated a “one-on-one approach would be better suited for their personality.” A few commented that meeting “in a home would provide a more relaxed atmosphere” (meetings took place in the worship center). Others felt that “some lessons were rushed through due to time constraints,” while some indicated “Tuesday nights were not conducive to their schedule.” Suggestions were for future such teaching to be “held on Sunday afternoons.”

How has your attitude towards discipleship changed because of this project? The majority of the group stated that the project “brought a greater awareness of discipleship and its importance into their lives.” Others indicated that “apathy had been an issue, but now were ready to push on towards personal discipleship and setting the example for their family.”

What did you learn most from this project? Several commented that there was a “greater sense of the magnitude of sin in their lives, as well as the negative consequences sin brings.” Others commented that “obedience to the commands of Scripture and the challenge to be a godly husband were realized.” Some felt “more comfortable in allowing another male to disciple them.” Most said that they are “more aware that Sunday School and worship were not adequate in meeting all their spiritual needs.”

What were you uncomfortable with pertaining to this project? Several responded by saying that they “realized that sin affects their relationship with others.” Others commented “examining their weakness was uncomfortable.” Several from the group said “the lessons on sexual immorality and a hindered prayer life made them uncomfortable.”

Do you feel closer to God from participating in this project? The answer to this question was a unanimous “yes,” while several commented that because of this project, there was a “greater closeness to their family.”

Because of your participation in this project, do you have a greater understanding of the biblical role of fatherhood? Comments ranged from “my family has noticed a difference,” to “I was challenged to be a more biblical father and husband.” Others noted they are “striving to be more loving and understanding towards their family and fellow soldiers they worked with.”

Is personal holiness a greater priority for you now? All affirmed “yes,” but still had much progress to make.

Do you feel more equipped to help military men biblical principles? The group as a whole agreed that “the project has prepared them to relate better and help men who struggle with similar issues.” One group member commented that “he would reduce his golf time in order to help other military men with their struggles.”

Do you feel more prepared to face adversity at home and at work? The majority of the group answered “yes,” while one answered no more “woe is me attitude, I can overcome all obstacles with the help of the Lord and the support of family and friends.”

Focus Group Evaluation

After discussion of the above questions, we had an open discussion forum concerning barriers to discipleship, time frame of a discipleship class, one-on-one versus small group classes, distinguishing factors between discipling military men compared to civilian men and additional topics not covered in this project.

The focus group proved astute when discussing barriers to discipling military men. There was a consensus among them that pride was a determining factor that prohibited military men from seeking discipleship. A willingness to admit one’s weakness, and to be vulnerable would go against all a soldier is taught. After all, the Army’s motto is “Army Strong.” One group member noted that soldiers are instructed to use their “Technical Manual” in their field of expertise to find answers to particular questions in lieu of asking someone who knows the answer. Hence, the group felt many Christian military men, especially new believers, are intimidated to ask questions in a discipleship environment.

An additional barrier discussed was the schedule of military personnel. Most soldiers work twelve hours a day. While these work hours are common in the civilian work workforce, the military schedule is abnormal. The group noted that many Christian

soldiers are hesitant to commit to discipleship and service to the local church because, even though their schedule is posted, it rarely stays the same. One group member noted that many soldiers do not immediately remove their uniform once off duty because the expectations are great that they will receive a call to return to their duty stations.

A further barrier to discipling military men revealed by the group was peer pressure. To build camaraderie, especially for the soldier living in the barracks, one must “fit in.” If a soldier is reluctant to adhere to the customs and culture of the barracks, he or she is seen as not in “the circle.”

The final barrier discussed among the group was perception. Many soldiers have tattoos. New believers, according to the group, are hesitant to come to church because of what people might think or say because of their tattoos. The group believed that if tattooed soldiers could overcome this perception, it would provide the soldier an opportunity to be discipled.

When addressing the time frame of a discipleship class, all were in agreement that initially a three-to four-week class would be advantageous. Once relationships were established, the group suggested beginning another class or possibly transition into a six-to eight-week class depending upon the one being discipled. An initial six-to eight-week class, according to the group, would be too overwhelming for an immature believer. The group also suggested that the class not exceed one and a half hours.

When discussing whether discipleship should occur in a one-on-one or a small group climate, there were mixed opinions. After discussing the interview from Navigator personnel Victor Padilla (see Appendix 5), which promotes one-on-one discipleship, the group noted the advantages and disadvantages to both approaches. Some group members said it depended on where a believer was spiritually that would determine a one-on-one approach or small group setting. Others commented that a one-on-one atmosphere would allow for more accountability and openness. Others agreed that a small group setting would allow for soldiers to put up more defenses. The group believed factors such as the

personality of the soldier, maturity level, how many would be in a small group, and location would determine the best approach to discipleship. All that being said, I felt the group, overall, thought one-on-one approach would be more effective.

When asked about the difference between discipling military men and civilian men, bonding was the consistent answer. The group believed that because of the nature of their job, military men have a common bond that forms quicker as related to civilian life. The group agreed this bond was a positive factor. Once relationships are established, the trust factor allows for a greater opportunity to approach a soldier about discipleship.

The question regarding the unique challenges Christian military men face that civilian men do not face was revealing. One group member commented that if a person serves in the infantry (combat) where no women are allowed (except in a support role), there are no confines when it comes to profanity and impudent attitudes. All agreed that it is easy for the Christian soldier, especially a new believer, to adhere to that bumptious mind-set. Another group member noted that, during a deployment non-believers will make the statement to a Christian who is a non-smoker that they (the Christian) will “smoke the deployment.” The group explained that to “smoke the deployment” meant that before the deployment was over, the smokers would have the non-smokers smoking tobacco. One soldier in the group noted that when his Hummer was hit by an IED (Improvised Explosive Device) one impertinent soldier used that frightening experience to pressure him to smoke. Another group member commented that when his Hummer was struck by an IED, he used a curse word and was immediately called out by a non-believer of his use of profanity. The group agreed that Christian military men are scrutinized by non-believers and by the disparagement that they can never maintain their faith and Christian conduct particularly during times of combat.

The group suggested that some additional topics not covered during the project that could be beneficial included: how to understand the Bible, how to read the Bible for all its worth, the supremacy of Christ, how to defend the faith, the lineage of Jesus, and

the lingering guilt that soldiers have after combat.

The discussion of the focus group deemed to be insightful, informative, and engaging as the group shared openly and freely to the questions that were posed to them. The feedback from the focus group will be beneficial in preparing future discipleship material and strategies to reaching military men.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

A specific plan of action, in the form of goal setting, was taken to accomplish this project. The goals for this project were clear, concise, and measurable.

Goal 1: Personal Goals

In keeping with the first of my four goals for this project are my personal goals. My six personal goals included Scripture memorization, prayer, fasting, journaling, evangelism, and time management.

Memorizing Scripture has always been a desire of mine, however, I have never had a systematic plan for memorizing Scripture. Inconsistency has been a weakness as well. As I reflected upon my project, the military men who agreed to participate in this project had to be consistent in order to reap the benefits of the nine-week class. I determined that I also would be consistent to hide God's Word in my heart. I used "Fighter Verse,"² from Desiring God Ministries to help accomplish this goal. This Scripture memorization program allows for a systematic method to memorize Scripture. "Fighter Verse" also allows the flexibility to memorize the verse of the week or to choose a topic of interest and the verse that corresponds to that topic. This structure allowed Scripture memorization to be fun and challenging. During this project, my Scripture memorization has improved along with the benefits of mediating upon the assigned verse each week.

²Desiring God Ministries, "Fighter Verses" [on-line]; accessed 2 September 2011; available from <http://www.fighterverses.com/memory-resources/why-memorize/desiring-god/>; Internet.

My second personal goal for a more disciplined prayer life was accomplished through this project. There was seldom a day that would pass that I would not pray for the Lord to help me with my project. I would pray for direction, clarity, and the military men who participated in this project. After some time though, I found myself praying more for my project and less on other needs. After about the fifth week of the project, I began praying about other important issues facing my life, and Kingdom issues. I also elicited other Christians to pray with me not just concerning this project, but other issues as well. I have also varied my prayer time and place to help maintain the freshness of prayer. More than any of my personal goals, this one has been a delight and the most rewarding.

Much like Scripture memorization, fasting has been irregular in my spiritual life. For this project, however, it was my desire to fast not only from food but also from all forms of media. Each week, I would fast from a particular meal and media entertainment. This practice was initially difficult, but this discipline allowed me to stay focused on the task at hand as well as to be disciplined. This fasting proved to be the first time in my spiritual life that I prescinded in some form for fifteen weeks. This discipline was a reminder that I do not need to consume all the meals and media that I have become accustomed to in my life.

I often read of the benefits of journaling; however, I have never practiced this discipline with any consistency. My goal was to journal everyday throughout my fifteen-week project. I began well but did not finish well. As I found myself meeting personal deadlines, journaling became less of a priority. I would find myself rationalizing that I could be spending journaling time on my project. This journaling will need to be a goal that I continue to work on.

During my fifteen-week project, evangelism was to become a consistent discipline in my life. My goal was to share my faith once a day and distribute three witnessing tracks per day. Although personal evangelism was a worthy goal, I fell short of meeting this goal. There would be days that I would have three or four witness

opportunities. Then there would be days with no opportunities, or I would not take advantage of those given opportunities. The same held true with passing out three evangelistic booklets per day. There would be times where I would distribute five booklets per day, then other days none. Even though I was not consistent, I was more aware of personal evangelism due to this goal. Therefore, even though the goal was not achieved, I feel like my evangelism awareness was heightened.

Time management was my final personal goal. This goal allowed me to be disciplined in meeting my personal deadlines as well as the seminary's deadlines pertaining to this project. Initially, my goal was to work on my project on my day off, Friday. As time passed, however, I realized I could not complete this project on time by committing one day a week to such an undertaking. So Tuesday and Thursday nights, along with Fridays, became my primary study time. With time management came the discipline to saying no to many activities that would prohibit me from meeting my deadlines. This goal of time management not only proved to be beneficial, but valuable in other areas of my life such as my responsibilities at church and at home. Blocking out time and committing to a set schedule improved all areas of my life.

These goals, although not all met, helped me to grow spiritually throughout this project. These six personal goals, Scripture memorization, prayer, fasting, journaling, evangelism, and time management, helped to provide the framework and foundation, not only for this project, but for everyday life and to help in future project planning.

Goal 2: Evaluate the Spiritual Maturity of Participants

The second goal was to learn the spiritual maturity level of selected adult males. This was determined by the pre-and post-project questionnaire, through the focus group, input from the senior pastor, and spending one-on-one time with the class participants. The pre-project questionnaire proved that many of the participants had no concept of discipleship and marginal in their biblical understanding. The participants

primarily attended Sunday School or worship, with little activity outside these venues. The participants were all Christians, although, the majority of the group had never been disciplined. The focus group was also a similar reflection of what the pre-project questionnaire confirmed which was that most participants had a shallow understanding of the function of the church, the importance of Sunday School and small groups, as well as an anemic prayer life and sexual immorality.

The senior pastor was also helpful in providing background information such as the participants church history, feelings towards the church, and past attendance and participation. The information obtained from the pastor was not personal or confidential, but general knowledge about the habits and attitudes of the participants.

The spiritual maturity level was also determined by an ongoing process throughout the fifteen-week project. I met with eleven of the fourteen participants one-on-one. Gauging the participant's maturity level was accomplished through lunch, meeting in their homes, and Sunday afternoons at church. The informal setting allowed for more personal time as opposed to a classroom setting. The one-on-one time provided a more relaxed atmosphere and personal sharing time. Not only did this time allow me to help gauge their spirituality, but also allowed for an authentic friendships to be formed.

Goal 3: Discovering Barriers to Disciplemaking

My third goal was to discover barriers that inhibit effective disciple-making at First Baptist Church Oak Grove. After consulting with the senior pastor, it was discovered that Wednesday night small group classes were the primary means in which discipleship occurred. Within the past few years, however, the church implemented a more intentional discipleship strategy using *Operation Multiplication*.³ Although

³Billie Hanks, Jr., and Randy Craig, *Operation Multiplication* (Saldo, TX: International Evangelism Association, 2004).

excellent material, the format of the study is not conducive to many military men. Some military men would begin the study but would not finish. This problem was acknowledged by the focus group—a lengthy study is intimidating to military men, especially with their anomalous schedule.

The Wednesday night small group setting works well for military wives, but not as well for their military husbands. The variance between men and women pertaining to Wednesday night small groups was also discovered by the focus group. Some military men opted for the Wednesday night worship service rather than join a small group. Overall, the focus group concurred that discipleship can take place in a small group setting or one-on-one. The focus group, though, believed that a one-on-one environment would allow for more openness to share burdens and struggles. A short term one-on-one class of four weeks dealing with one topic, according to the focus group, would help establish a better retention rate and rapport. Then if the soldier is committed and faithful and his schedule allows, a longer term class could be employed.

Goal 4: Develop a Discipleship Training Curriculum

The fourth goal was to develop a nine-week discipleship training curriculum. The topics for the nine-week class was decided by the results from the pre-project questionnaire (see Appendix 1). The topics chosen to comprise the nine-week class were: what is a disciple, sin, strategies of the enemy, strategies for fighting sexual temptation, pornography, biblical manhood, prayer, evangelism and how to have a quiet time.

Strengths of the Project

This project had several strengths. First, the project brought an awareness of discipleship among the participants. Although many in the group had heard the term discipleship, few had experienced this biblical command. Most of the participants conveyed an eagerness and attentiveness during the class meetings. This enthusiastic devotion was displayed by their regular attendance. One group member attended all class

sessions. Eight of the 14 participants attended 85 percent of the time. Three of the 14 participants had a 75 percent attendance rate, while 1 participant attended 60 percent and 1 attended 50 percent of the class meetings. There were also make-up classes available on Sunday afternoons for those who missed the previous Tuesday night class. Few attended the make-up class.

An additional strength was the reports that I heard from some of the participants' spouses. These spouses were eager that their husbands were asked to be a part of this project. There would be times during the project that a spouse would comment how much her husband enjoyed the class time and the discussion that would follow. Another comment from a spouse was that her husband only participated because he felt obligated, but as the weeks progressed, she commented how much her husband enjoyed the topics and fellowship with soldiers outside the confines of a military community.

A further strength was the talk that was generated among the group with their peers at work. Some participants would talk at work about the project in which they were participating. Feedback from the group was positive that they could recruit military men for a future class. The group also showed interest in any forthcoming classes after the completion of the project.

The post-project questionnaire indicated that progress was made in the areas of sexual immorality, Bible reading, and prayer (see Appendix 4). This progress was encouraging since many in the group were weak in these areas. These subject matters of sexual immorality, daily Bible reading, and prayer were discussed openly and in further detail when I met with the participant's one-on-one. Dormancy was slowly being replaced by sanctification in some of these soldiers' lives. The group as a whole felt more equipped biblically to face the challenge at home, as well as the battlefield.

Weaknesses of the Project

During the nine weeks of teaching, I realized what I already knew, but did not

plan for, that not all people learn the same way. The military, though not limited to a lectionary style, uses this format as the primary teaching method for a classroom environment. Although I used multi-media for some sessions, my teaching style could have been more varied. I also could have had the pastor or a seasoned disciplemaker to present a section of teaching to bring variety and new dynamics to the class. Additionally, more multi-media could have been employed. This group of young military men is used to virtual training, especially when being trained as gunners without leaving the ground for the CH-47 Chinook and the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters.

An additional weakness was the location of the weekly classes. I chose to meet in the Worship Center. The participants sat where the choir does. Although not a typical choir loft, the setting was perhaps a bit too formal. The participants could not view each other well, which I am sure prohibited some interaction. I chose the Worship Center because of the multi-media that was available. The alternative location on the church campus was the youth department, which has multi-media capabilities but not the atmosphere I desired. In retrospect, perhaps a home would have provided a more relaxed atmosphere or a Sunday School classroom.

Although the questionnaire I used by Brad Waggoner was beneficial in providing the information I needed (see Appendix 1), I believe in the future, I am now prepared to develop a customized questionnaire specifically targeting military men. I would also solicit the advice in developing a customized questionnaire from military chaplains, input from soldiers, and their superiors. In retrospect, I feel using someone else's questionnaire was like preaching someone else's sermon. A custom questionnaire would have been more personal and provided greater insight into such a unique group such as the military.

After reviewing the post-project questionnaire, the length of each class could be reduced from one and a half hours to one hour. Most of the participants noted they would prefer a one hour class. Although there were no vocal complaints from the group

members concerning the time, a one hour class may be more sensitive to the soldier's 12 hour work day. Many soldiers would come directly from work to class on Tuesday night. The two individuals, who missed half or nearly half on the classes, attribute their absence to a conflict in schedules.

What Would I Do Differently

If I were to repeat this project, I would have done a few things differently. I would have prepared a bound curriculum guide for the participants, I would have consulted with other churches located near other military installations, and I would have employed two unrelated focus groups.

During the nine-week class, I prepared an outline for the group for each teaching session. In retrospect, I would have developed a notebook or a booklet that contained an outline of all nine lessons. A booklet or notebook format would have demonstrated a more professional appearance, and each lesson would have been catalogued for the participants for future reference.

An additional aspect that I would have done differently pertains to the research of churches that minister to a transitory congregation (see chap. 2). The information I discovered from churches that minister to a fleeting congregation was informative, but not profitable for this project. I would take a different approach by researching churches located at other military installations such as, Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, North Carolina, Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas, and Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia. I would contact either the pastor, missions pastor, or small group pastor, with the intent of determining how their military churches disciple a transient congregation. This approach would have been instrumental and judicious in assessing how to disciple such a unique group of believers.

The selection of the pre-project focus group I would have done differently. I would have used two distinct focus groups. Although 7 of the 14 participants comprised the pre-and post-focus group for this project, I would have chosen an independent, pre-

project focus group prior to implementation of my project. The pre-project focus group would consist of evangelical military chaplains. These chaplains could have provided further spiritual insight for the life a soldier, his needs, and the toils of the military vocation. I would still have used the seven from the group as my post-focus group. This group after all, knows more about their current struggles. It provides a more precise measurement of the project because they were the project.

Theological Reflections

Throughout this project, three theological reflections often immersed. First, Jesus is the example of discipleship. Jesus states in Matthew 4:19, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” “Follow” and “make” should be the words that fuel the reproduction process of discipling. How this discipling process unfolds varies from church to church. Some churches are intentional when it comes to their discipling strategy; other churches are anemic when it comes to the words of Jesus, follow and make (Matt 4:19). Without an intentional discipleship process, inertia, in regards to discipleship, will be the common denominator in many churches.

The second reflection was the issue of the maturity level of the participants. This group of young men professed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, but were callow in their faith. In contrast, these men were much like the early disciples who were likewise immature in their faith. The disciples lacked the understanding of Jesus’ teaching (Matt 13:36; 16:6-11; John 16:16-20). The disciples were not initially mature in their faith (Matt 8:23-26) and the disciples also lacked courage (John 20:19). In addition, the disciples were full of pride and selfish ambition (Mark 10:35-40). Despite the disciple’s deficiency, they were able to gradually mature in their understanding of Jesus and his mission. The sanctification process was slow, but nevertheless, powerful. Likewise, this young group of men were inadequate in their knowledge and understanding of biblical discipleship. In time, however, the participants manifested growth. It was not rapid improvement, but a steady expansion in some areas of their weakness. The participants

took away, not only more biblical knowledge concerning the importance of biblical discipleship, but they now understand that, apart from Christ, they are doomed to be fruitless disciples (John 15:5).

The third reflection throughout this project pertained to the sovereignty of God. No matter the amount of my preparation time for the classes, regardless of any teaching skill I may possess, it was fascinating to watch a group of men young of age, and likewise in faith, respond to the Word of God. Throughout this project, God revealed his faithfulness to me and, I would believe as well, to the participants. To complete this project was an exercise in faith, patience, and endurance. Scripture reveals that God was faithful to Abraham, Moses, David, Gideon, the Apostles, and others. Reading about the faithfulness of biblical characters is enriching and edifying, but experiencing God's faithfulness throughout this project was encouraging and reassuring to my own faith. As the writer of Hebrews notes, "Without faith, it is impossible to please God" (Heb 11:6).

I learned that God's church at First Baptist Church Oak Grove is an exceptional and unique body of believers. This project was supported by the pastor and the leadership of the church. The church recognizes the value of discipling military men. With the enormous amount of military men who pass through FBC, the church has the potential to literally send out an equipped army for Christ to the all nations.

Personal Reflections

The apostle Paul notes in Philippians, "The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:5b-7). Throughout this project, there were times that anxiety and fear were problematic. Anxiety and fear, however, were also the factors that propelled me to depend upon the Lord for peace and steadfastness. This project was not only an exercise in academia but for my soul as well. I am stronger spiritually and mentally because of this degree program.

I am also more mature because of my six personal goals of Scripture memorization, prayer, fasting, journaling, evangelism, and time management. Although not all these goals were accomplished, these goals did help to advance my maturity level. These goals, along with this degree program, have made me to be a more steadfast and resolute individual.

I also learned the discipline required to complete such a massive undertaking. Saying “no” to others and activities when I wanted to say “yes” enabled me to complete this project. The discipline that was required to complete this program has been extended to other areas of my life such as self-control, patience, and steadfastness. This project sparked additional ideas that can be implemented on a smaller scale. Some future projects that could be birthed from this one are: small groups, small group training, moving attenders and members into Sunday School, and an apprentice program.

Conclusion

After reflection, I believe the project accomplished its purpose and goals. The purpose of the project was to develop a discipleship strategy for military men. This strategy was aided by the use of the pre-project questionnaires and pre-project focus group to analyze the data to determine the pertinent topics with which military men struggled. The discipleship strategy prior to this project was to recruit men and pair them with a more mature male. The time commitment was one and a half hours per week for approximately fifteen weeks, covering a vast array of topics.

This project also discovered that military men, at least initially, would prefer a class time of one hour per week, four weeks in duration, with the focus on one particular topic. Once that disciple has shown maturity and faithfulness, then an extended study could be employed. Additionally, this project has determined that a military soldier should be given the option of a small group setting along with the one-on-one method of discipleship.

The project was a learning process for me. I know have a much clearer

understanding of how to reach, teach, and minister to military men. This project defined barriers to discipling military men and provided a strategy to reach and retain more military men in the future. This project is evidence that men who are immature in their faith can and do want to grow, providing there is a process that takes them from where they are, and to where God would have them to be. As FBC hones the discipleship process, the more effective the church will be in fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20).

APPENDIX 1

PRE-PROJECT AND POST-PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to provide general information about your perception of the purpose and function of discipleship so that at the end of the study, a comparison can be made. This research is being conducted by Reed W. Shepherd as part of a Doctor of Ministry program. In this research, you will provide your opinion about basic assumptions about discipleship. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

General Information

1. What is your age?
Less than 20 20-29 30-39 40-59 60+
2. How long have you been a Christian?
Less than 1 year 1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16+ years
3. How long have you been a member of your church?
Less than 1 year 1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16+ years

How true are each of the following statements to you? Choose from these responses

- 1=never true
- 2=rarely true
- 3=sometimes true
- 4=often true
- 5=almost always true

4. I accept the constructive criticism and correction of other Christians.
1 2 3 4 5
5. I avoid situations in which I might be tempted in the area of sexual immorality.
1 2 3 4 5
6. I regularly study the Bible on my own.
1 2 3 4 5
7. Because God has forgiven me, I typically respond with a forgiving attitude when I am wronged by others.
1 2 3 4 5

8. I regularly study the Bible to learn more about God and His ways.
1 2 3 4 5
9. When I became aware that I have offended someone, I go to this person to admit and correct my wrongdoing.
1 2 3 4 5
10. I seek to attend discipleship classes or Bible studies for the purpose of learning and becoming more equipped to serve God and others.
1 2 3 4 5
11. A Christian should consider himself/herself accountable to other Christians.
1 2 3 4 5
12. A Christian must learn to deny himself/herself in order to serve Christ.
1 2 3 4 5
13. There is a literal place called hell.
1 2 3 4 5
14. The Bible is the authoritative source for truth and wisdom for daily living
1 2 3 4 5
15. It was necessary for Jesus to die to make salvation possible.
1 2 3 4 5
16. Salvation is available by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone, without any merit from personal works.
1 2 3 4 5
17. I regularly meet with at least one other Christian for the purpose of helping him/her grow spiritually.
1 2 3 4 5
18. Through prayer I seek to discern the will of God for my life.
1 2 3 4 5
19. I am generally the same person in public as I am in private.
1 2 3 4 5
20. I am somewhat hesitant to let others know that I am a Christian.
1 2 3 4 5
21. I consistently read and study the Bible in an effort to know God better.
1 2 3 4 5
22. I pray for the salvation of friends and acquaintances who are not professing Christians.
1 2 3 4 5
23. I have developed significant relationships with fellow church members.
1 2 3 4 5

24. I am aware of setting aside personal desires or wants in order to please God and follow him.
1 2 3 4 5
25. I consistently give financially to God's purposes even when I am not sure I have enough money.
1 2 3 4 5

Please record your answers by circling the answer for each question.

26. How often would you say that you share some idea or principle out of the Bible with others?
Never Seldom Sometimes Often Regularly
27. How often do you share with someone how to become a Christian?
Never Seldom Sometimes Often Regularly
28. How often do you set aside time for prayer?
Never Seldom Sometimes Often Regularly
29. How often do you make decisions to obey or follow God with an awareness that your choosing His way may be costly to you in some way?
Never Seldom Sometimes Often Regularly
30. How often do you invite an unchurched person to attend a church service or some other church program such as Sunday school, Bible study or an outreach event?
Never Seldom Sometimes Often Regularly
31. How often do you attend worship services at your church?
1 or 2 per year 3-5 per year monthly 2-3 per month monthly
32. How often do you attend Sunday school or a Bible study?
1 or 2 per year 3-5 per year monthly 2-3 per month monthly
33. How often do you memorize Scripture?
Seldom Sometimes 1 per week 2-3 per week Daily
34. How often do you read the Bible?
Seldom Sometimes Monthly Weekly Daily
35. How often do you fast? (set aside eating to spend time in prayer)
Never 1 or 2 per year Not quite monthly Monthly More than once per month
36. What percent of your income do you give to your local church and other Christian causes?
1-2% 3-5% 6-8% 9-10% 11%+

APPENDIX 2

FOCUS GROUP PRE-PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to provide general information about your perception of the purpose and function of discipleship so that at the end of the study, a comparison can be made. This research is being conducted by Reed W. Shepherd as part of a Doctor of Ministry program. In this research, you will provide your opinion about basic assumptions about discipleship. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

1. Describe your involvement in the church.
2. Did you find it easy or difficult to discover the ministries the church has to offer?
3. Do you feel the church has a plan to assimilate new members into the church?
4. Do you feel that the sermon is sufficient for your spiritual growth each week?
5. Is Sunday School important for you and your family? If not, why?
6. What does church membership mean to you?
7. What prohibits you from being more involved in your church?
8. How could the church leadership help you be more involved in your church?
9. Would you be willing for a mature male Christian to help teach you and apply the Bible to your life? If no, why?
10. If you answered yes to question nine, how much time per week could you commit for another male to help teach you and apply the Bible to your life?
(a) 30 minutes (b) 45 minutes (c) 60 minutes (d) 90 minutes

APPENDIX 3

FOCUS GROUP POST-PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to provide general information about your perception of the purpose and function of discipleship so that at the end of the study, a comparison can be made. This research is being conducted by Reed W. Shepherd as part of a Doctor of Ministry program. In this research, you will provide your opinion about basic assumptions about discipleship. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

1. What were the strengths of the project?
2. What were the weaknesses of the project?
3. What attitudes in regard to discipleship were changed due to the project?
4. What did you learn most from this project?
5. What were you most uncomfortable with pertaining to the project?
6. Do you feel you have a closer relationship with God from participating in the project?
7. Do you have a greater understanding of the importance of the biblical father in the home?
8. Is personal holiness a greater priority for you now?
9. Do you feel more equipped to help teach another male biblical principles?
10. Do you feel better prepared to face adversity in the home and workplace?

APPENDIX 4

PRE- PROJECT AND POST-PROJECT
QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

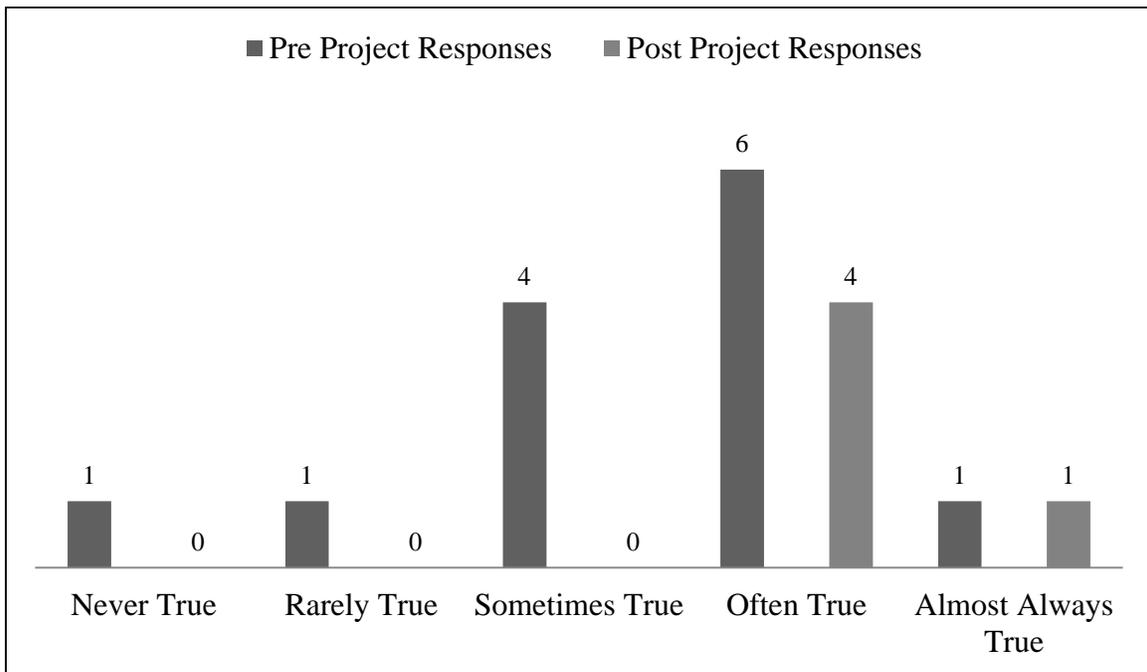


Figure A1. I accept the constructive criticism and correction of other Christians

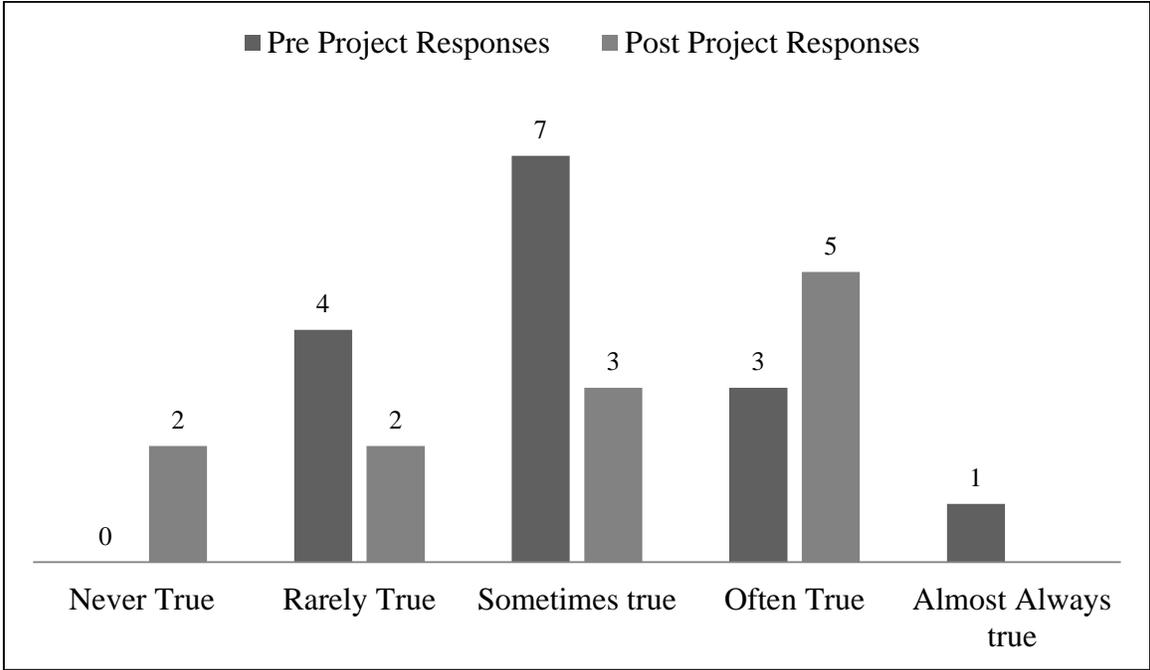


Figure A2. I avoid situations in which I might be tempted in the area of sexual immorality

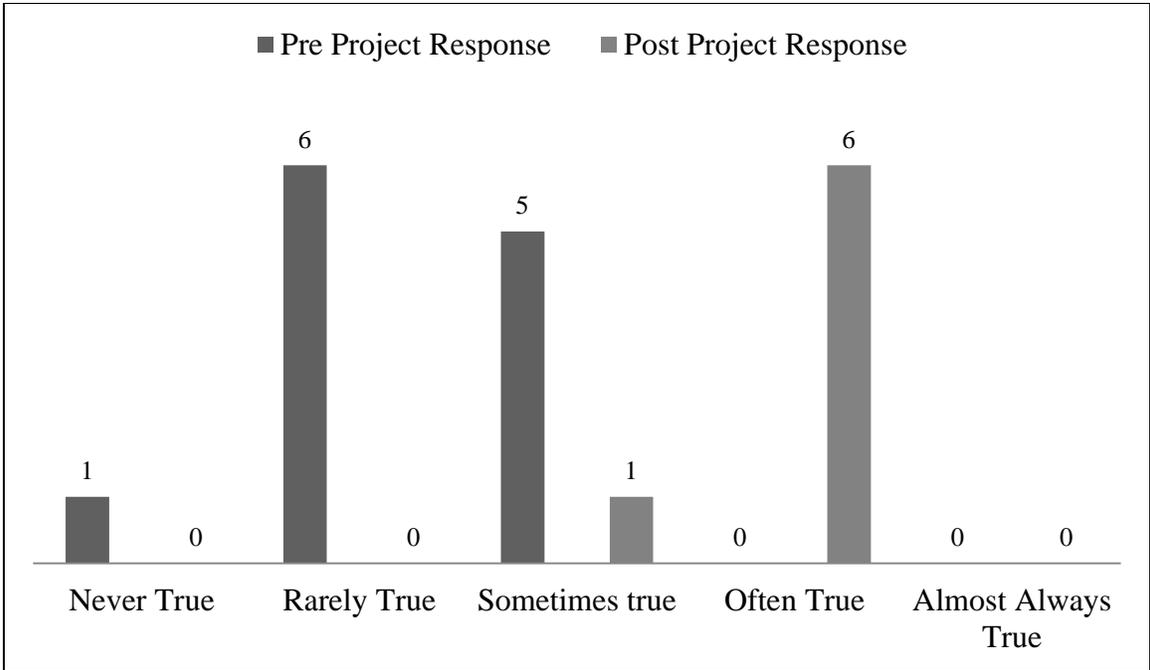


Figure A3. I regularly study the Bible on my own

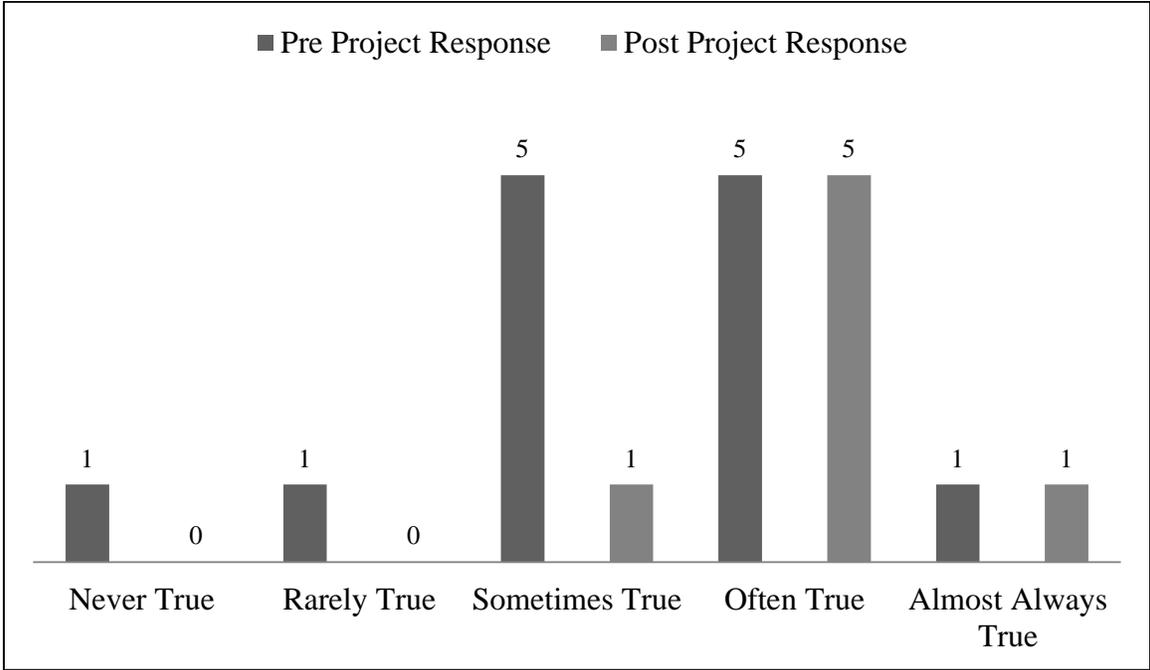


Figure A4. Because God has forgiven me, I typically respond with a forgiving attitude when I am wronged by others

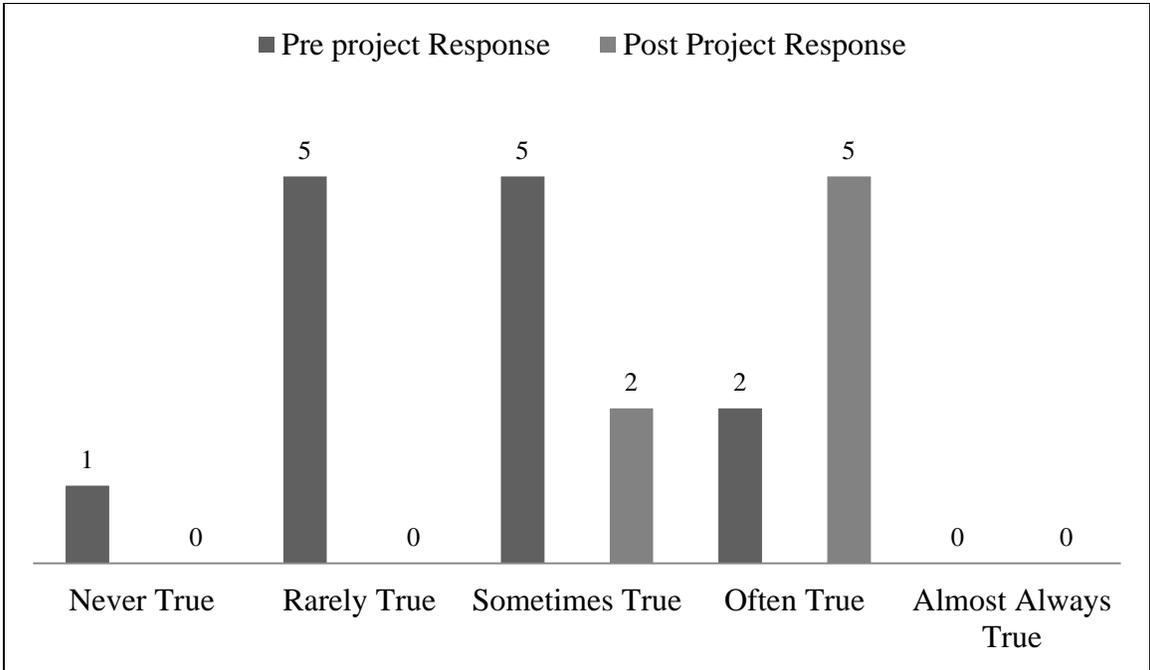


Figure A5. I regularly study the Bible to learn more about God and His ways

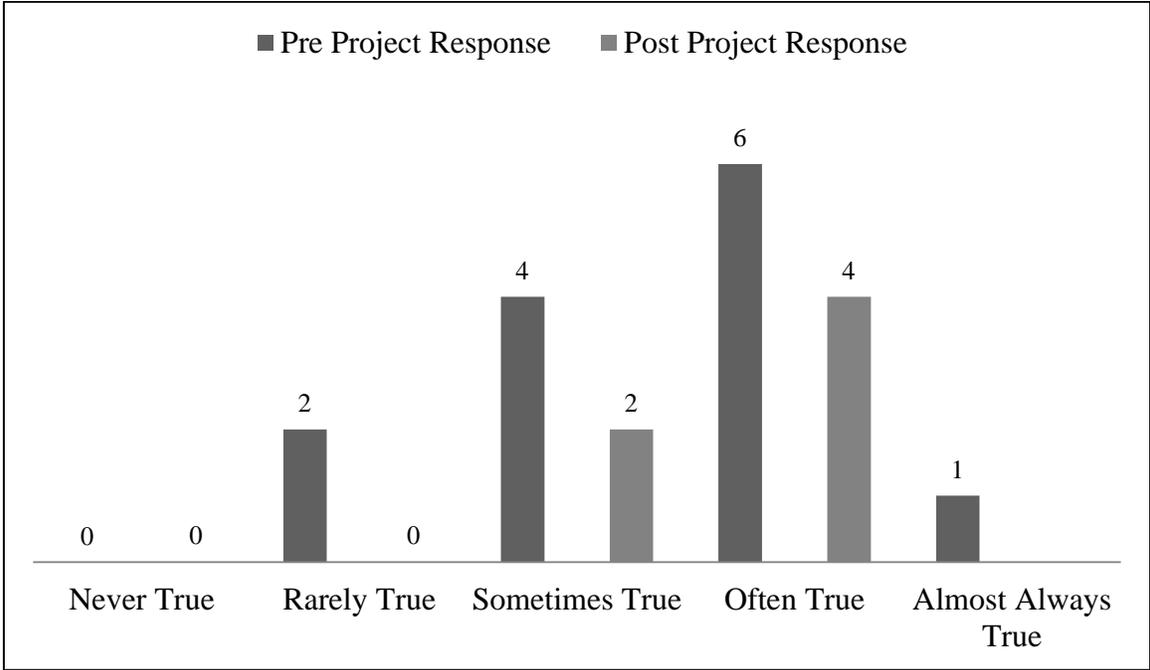


Figure A6. When I become aware that I have offended someone, I go to that person to admit and correct my wrongdoing

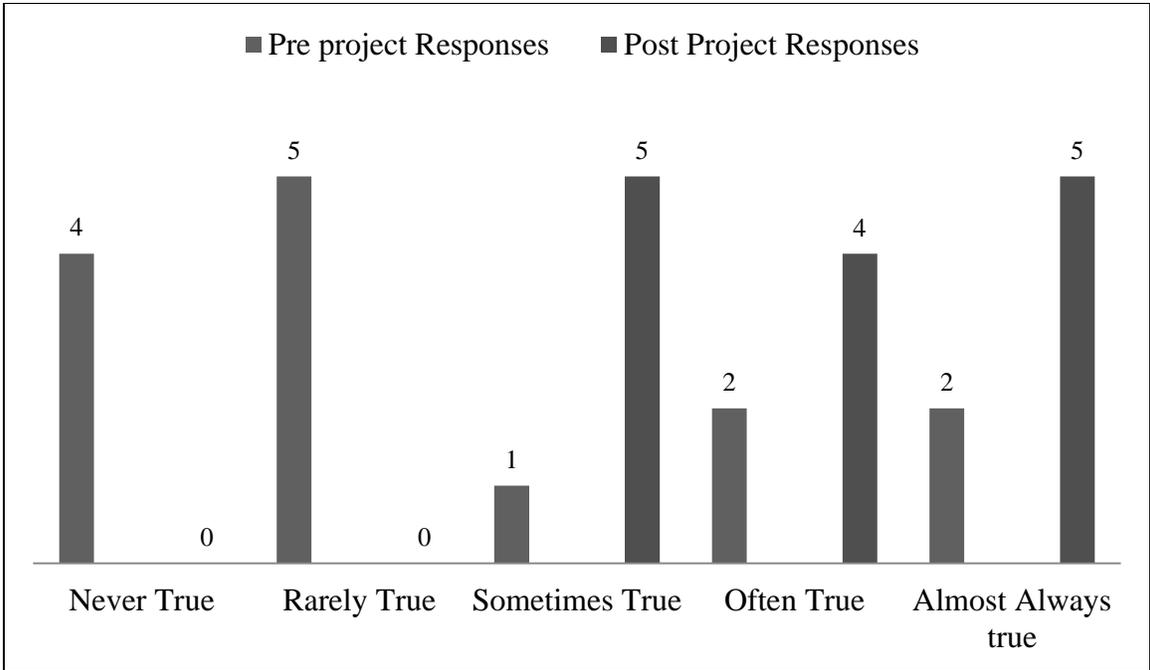


Figure A7. I seek to attend discipleship classes or Bible studies for the purpose of learning and becoming more equipped to serve God and others

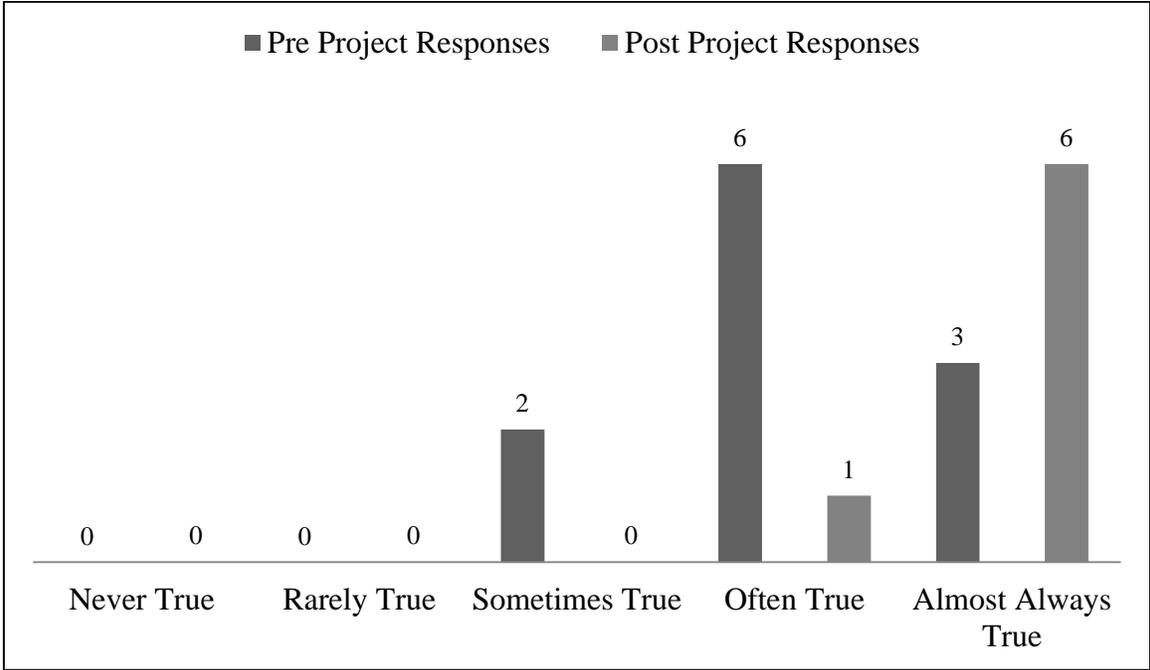


Figure A8. A Christian should consider himself/herself accountable to other Christians

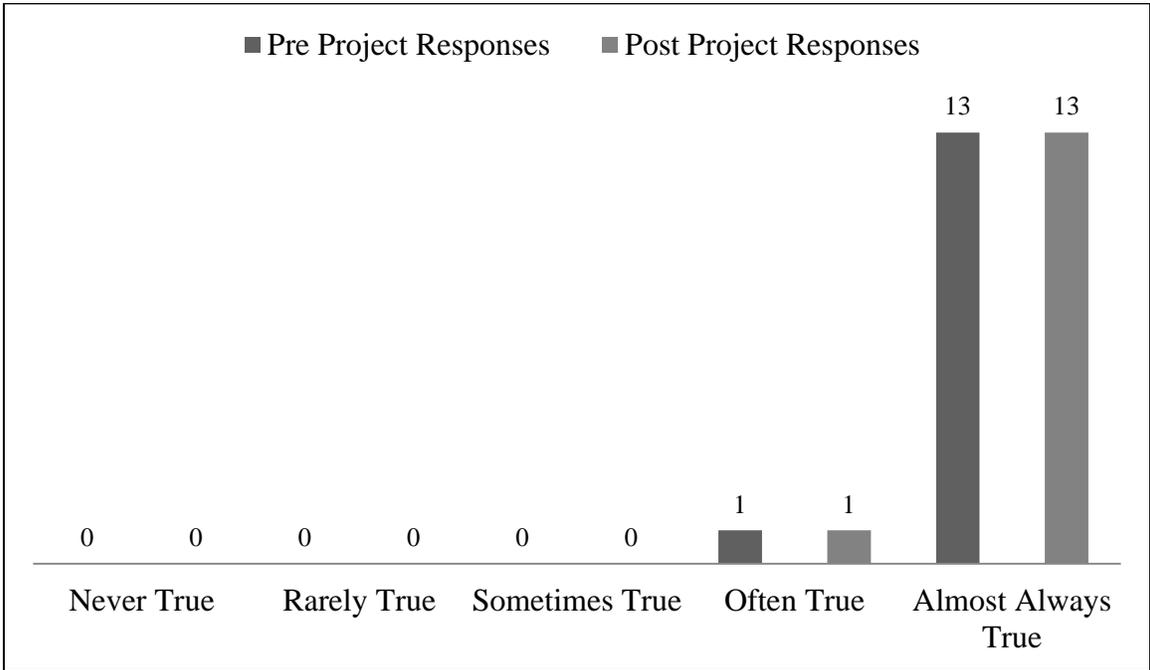


Figure A9. There is a literal place called hell

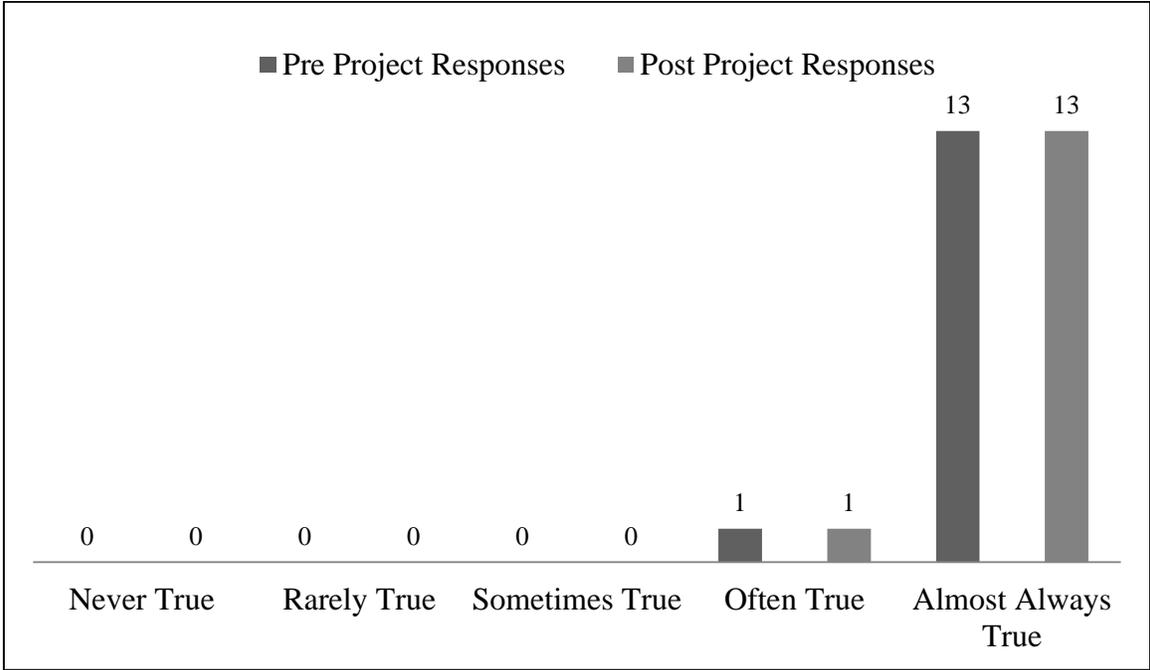


Figure A10. The Bible is the authoritative source for truth and wisdom for daily living

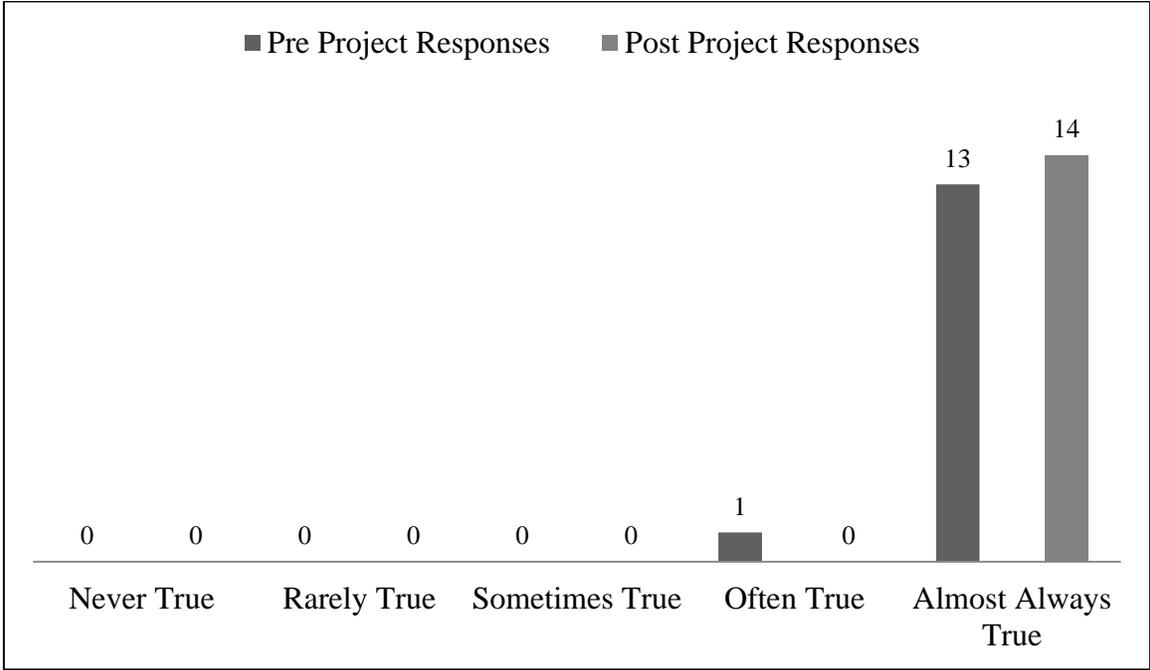


Figure A11. It was necessary for Jesus to die to make salvation possible

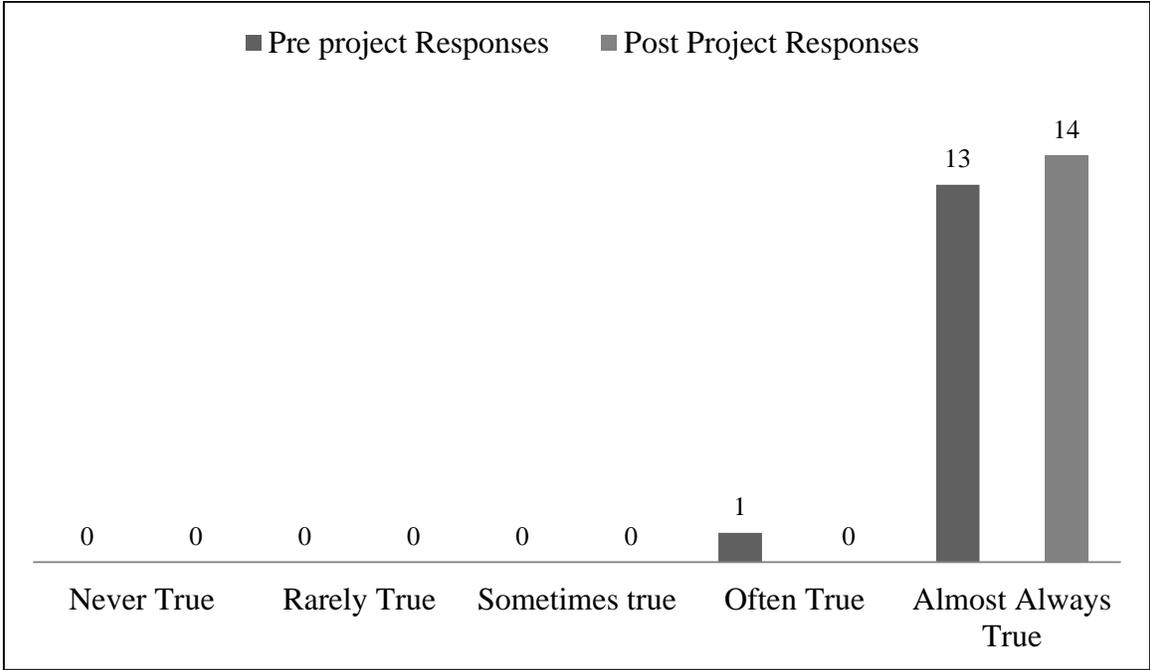


Figure A12. Salvation is available by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone, without any merit from personal works

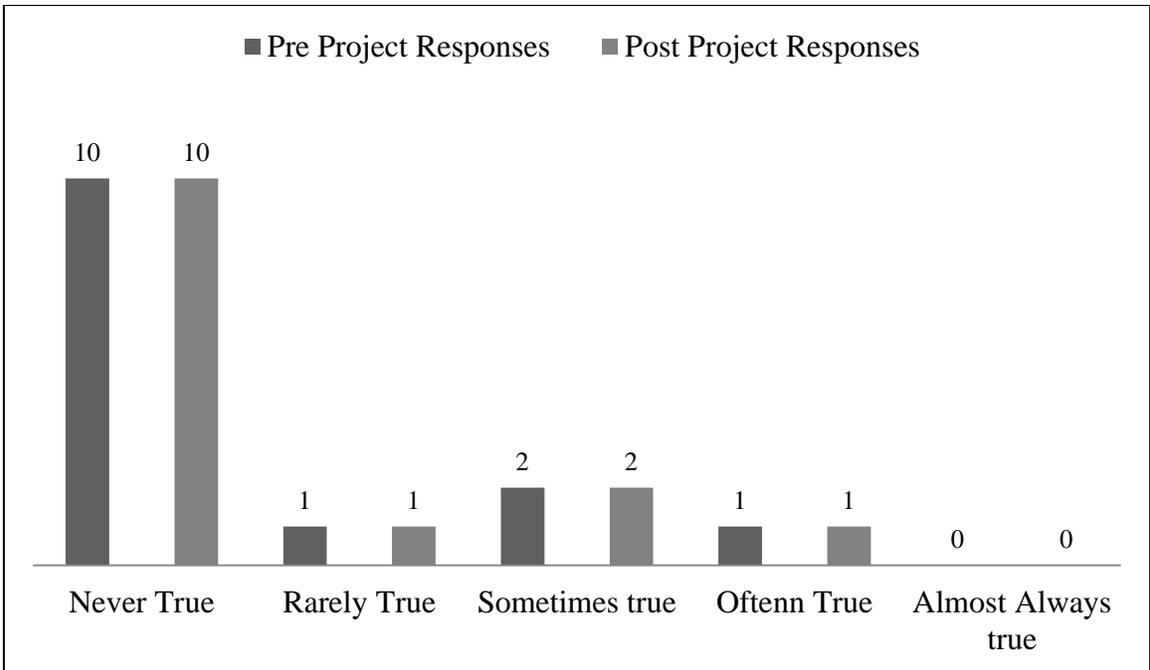


Figure 13. I meet regularly with at least one other Christian for the purpose of helping him/her grow spirituality

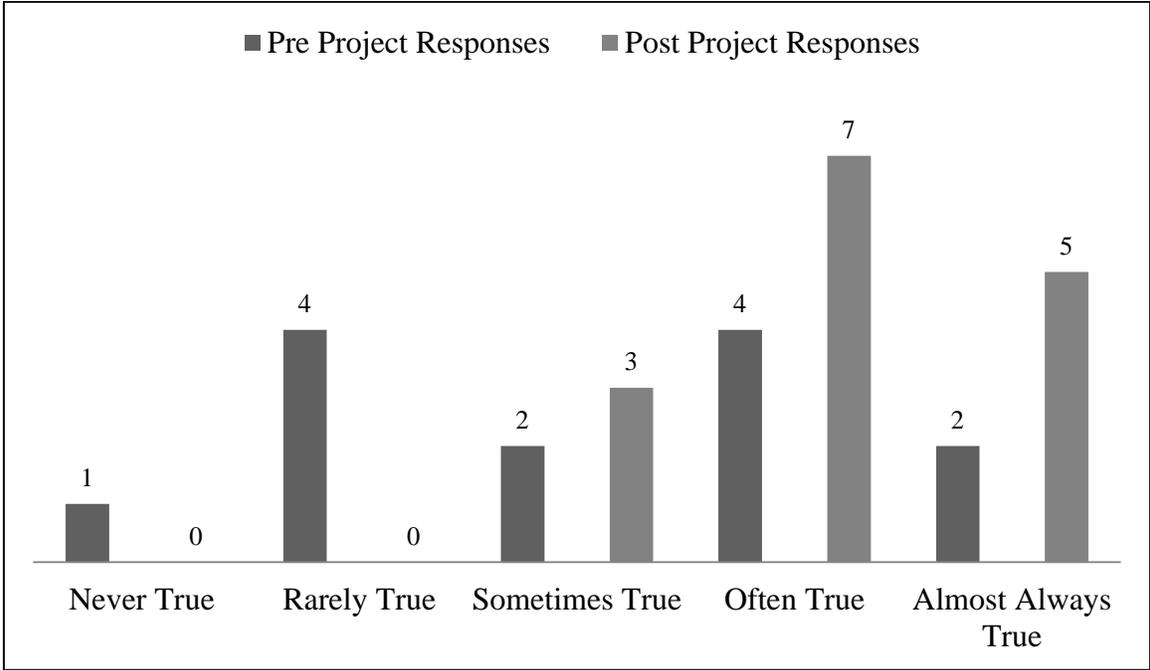


Figure A14. Through prayer I seek to discern the will of God for my life

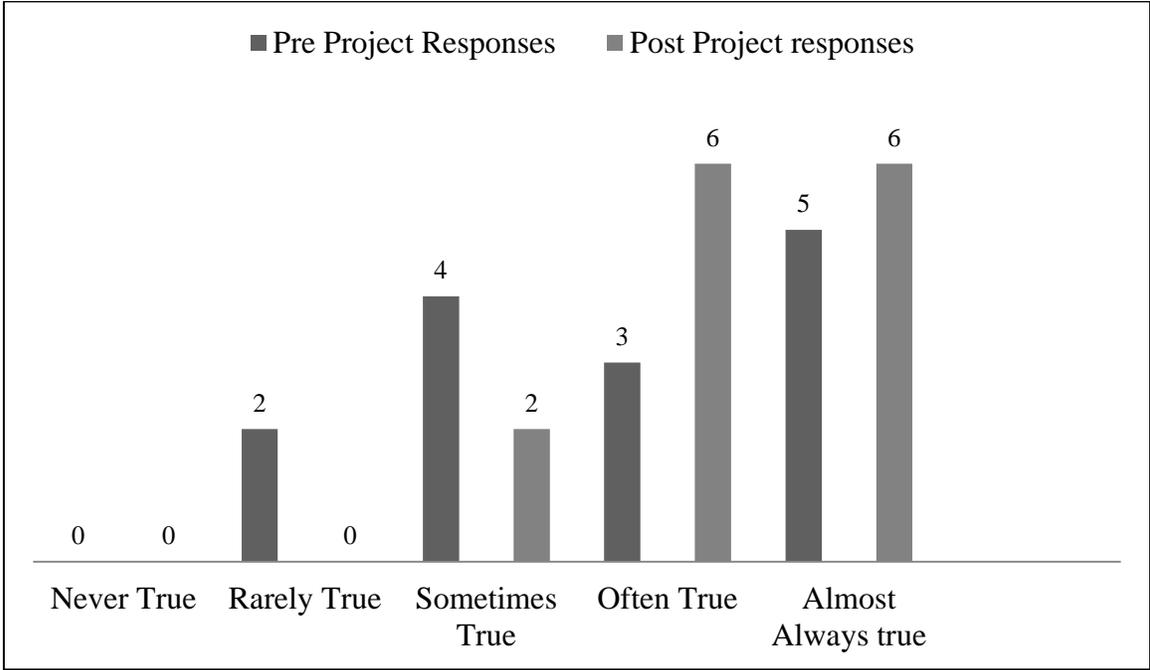


Figure A15. I am generally the same person in public as I am in private

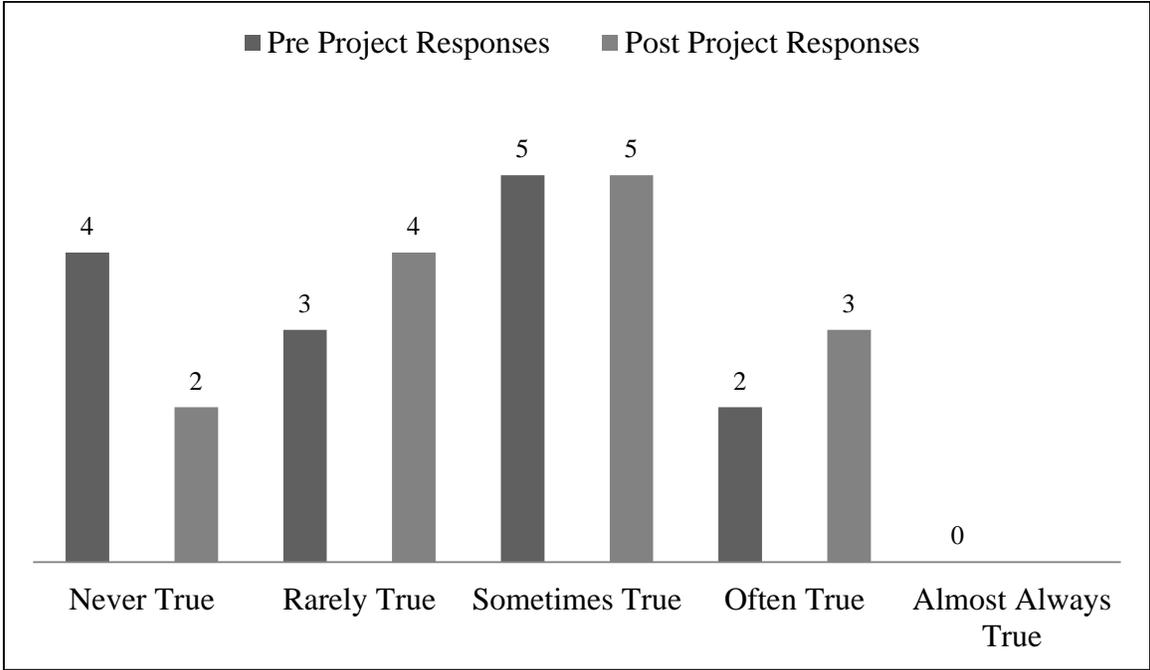


Figure A16. I am somewhat hesitant to let others know that I am a Christian

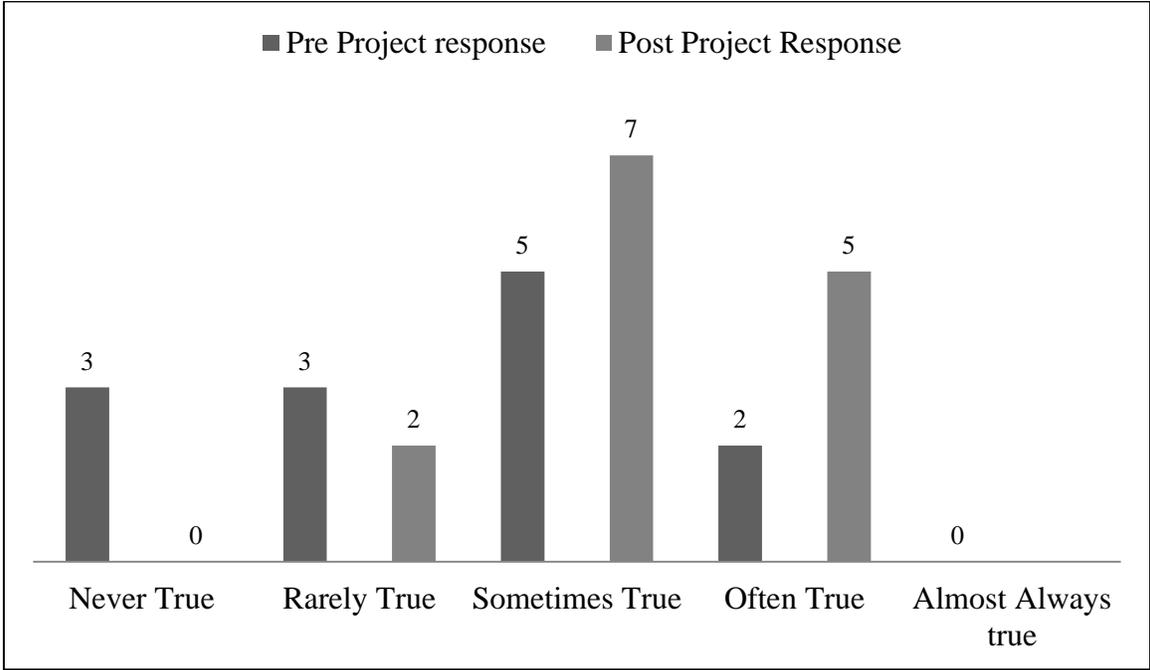


Figure A17. I consistently read and study the Bible in an effort to know God better

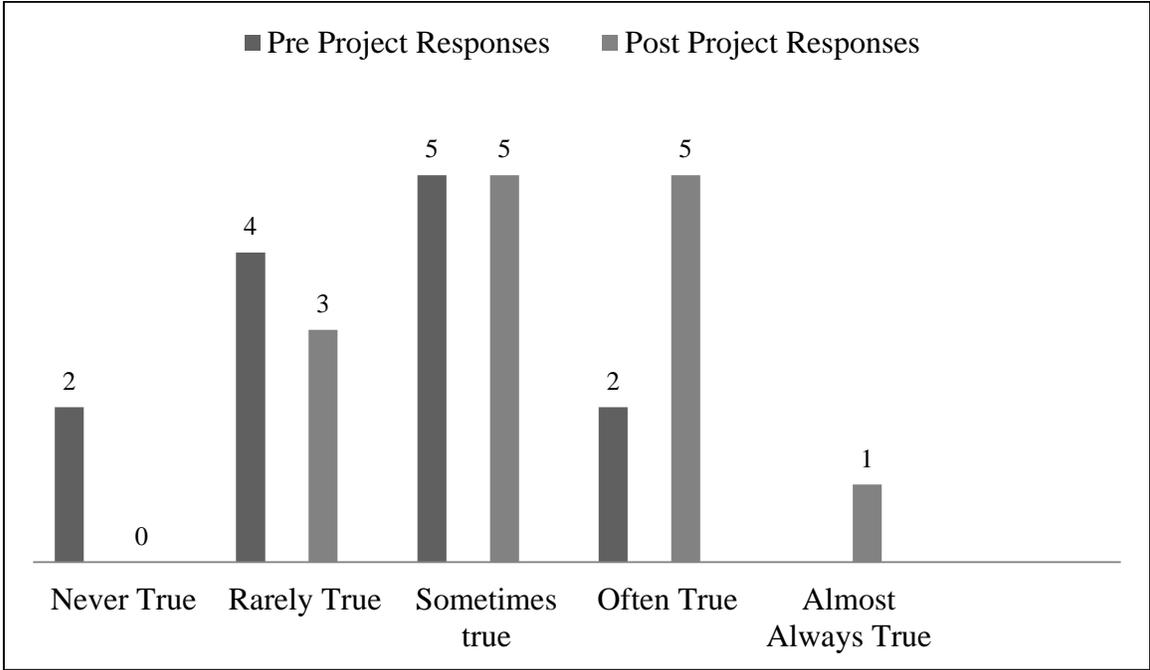


Figure A18. I pray for the salvation of friends and acquaintances who are not professing Christians

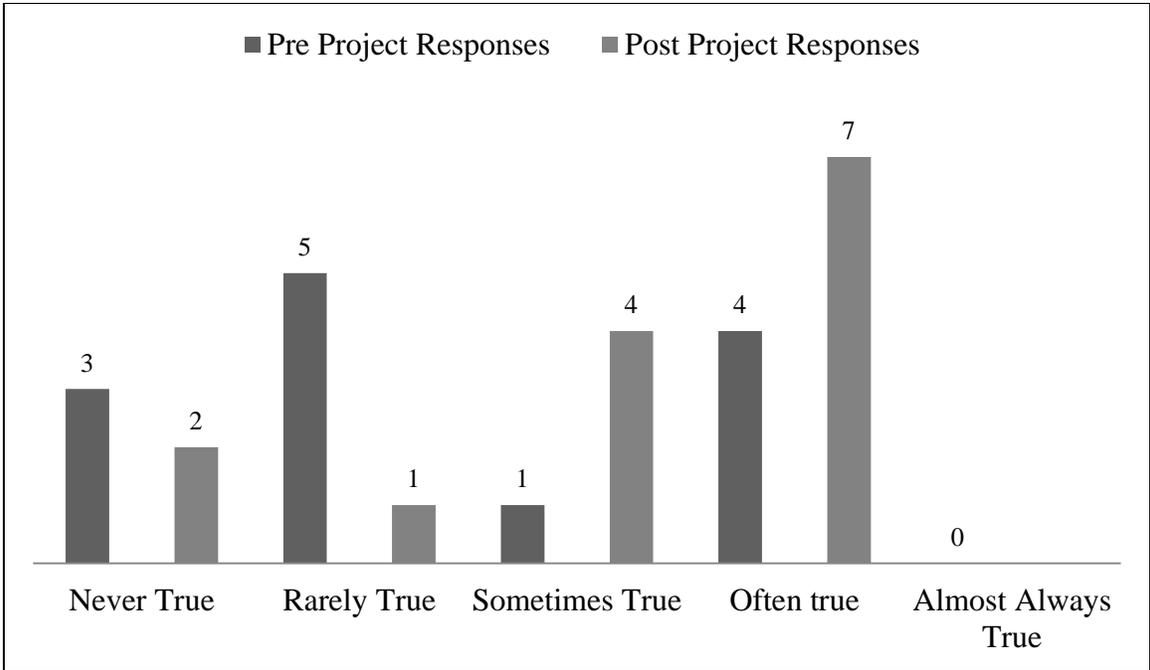


Figure A19. I have developed significant relationships with fellow church members

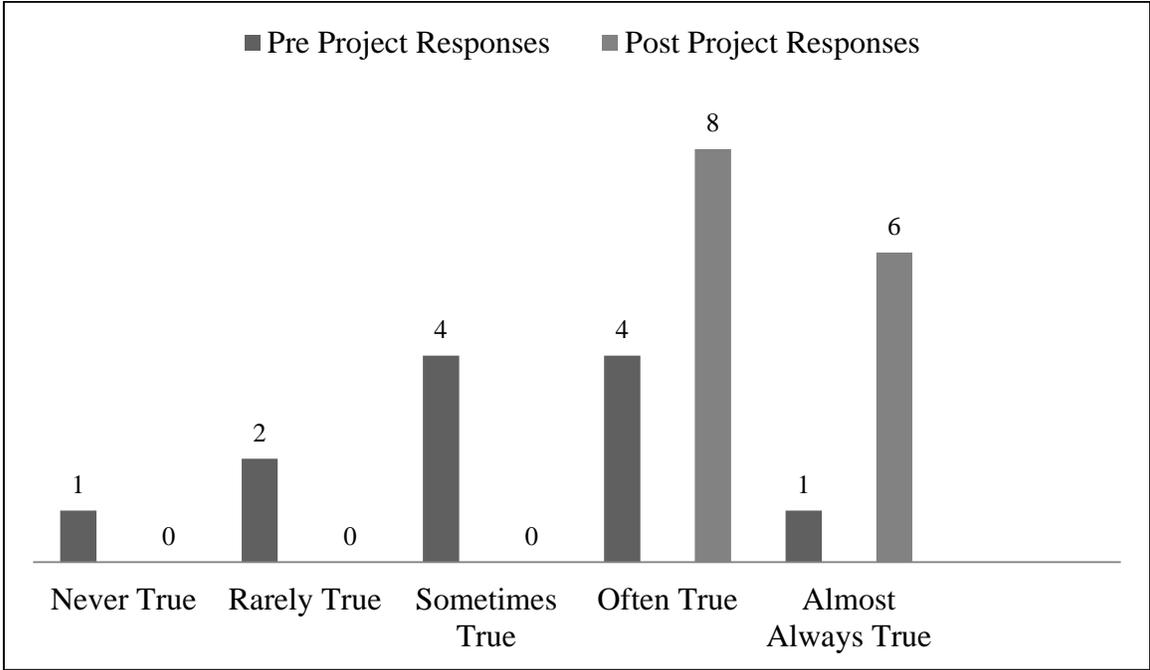


Figure A20. I am aware of setting aside personal desires or wants in order to please God and follow him

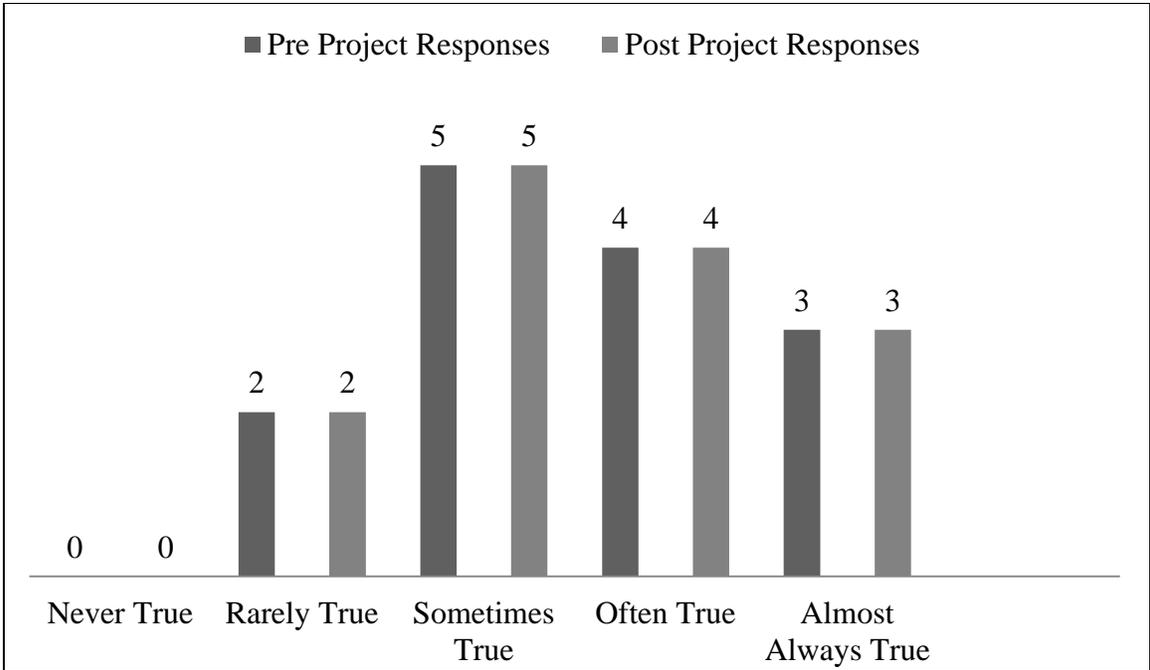


Figure A21. I consistently give financially to God's purposes even when I am not sure I have enough

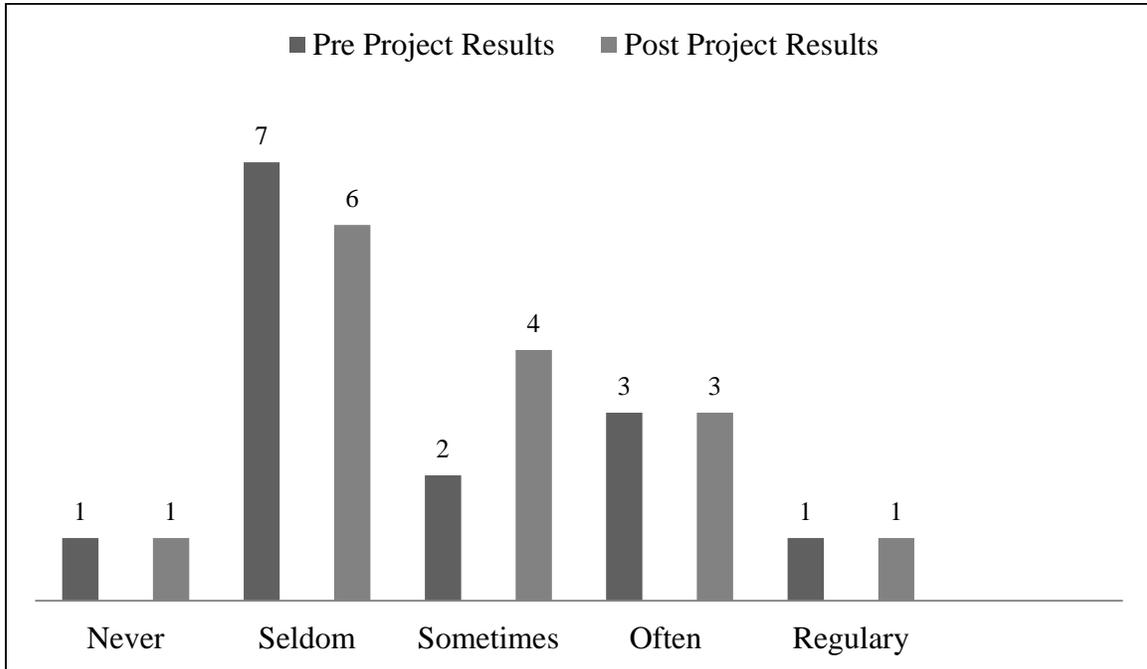


Figure A22. How often would you say that you share some idea or principle out of the Bible with others

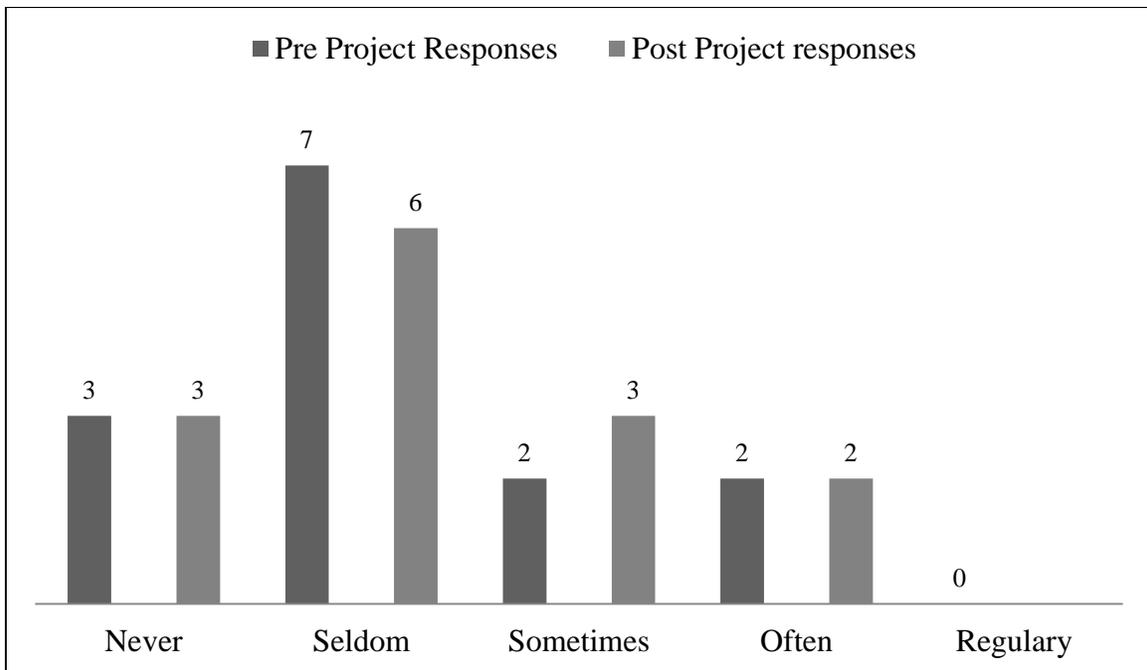


Figure A23. How often do you share with someone how to become a Christian

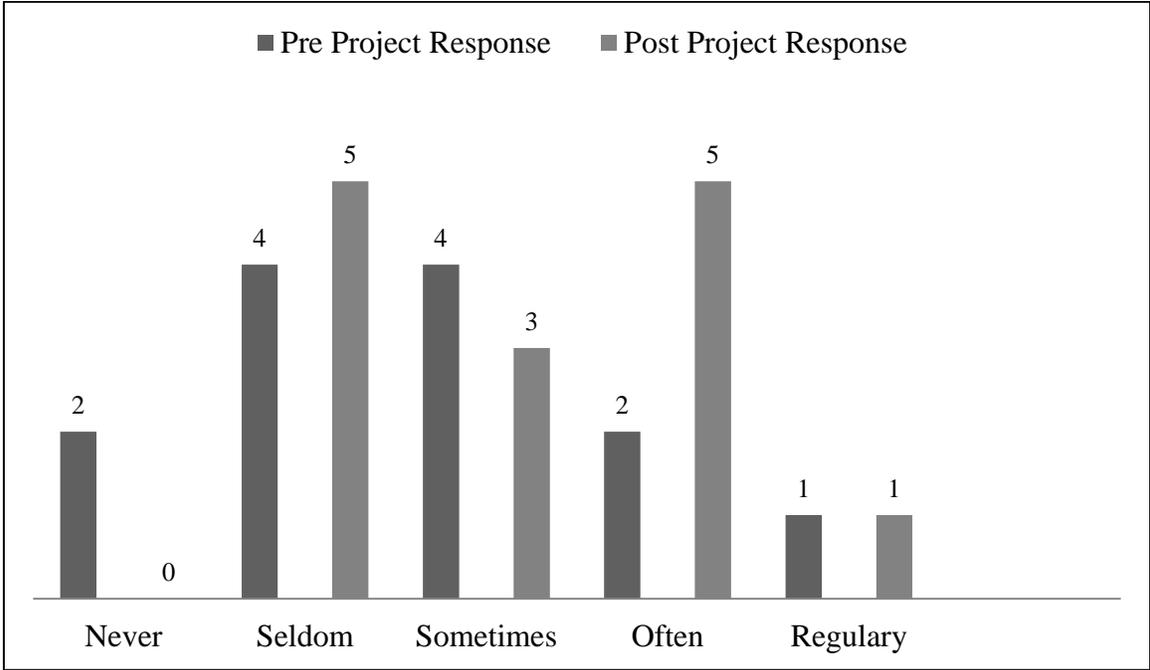


Figure A24. How often do you set aside time for prayer

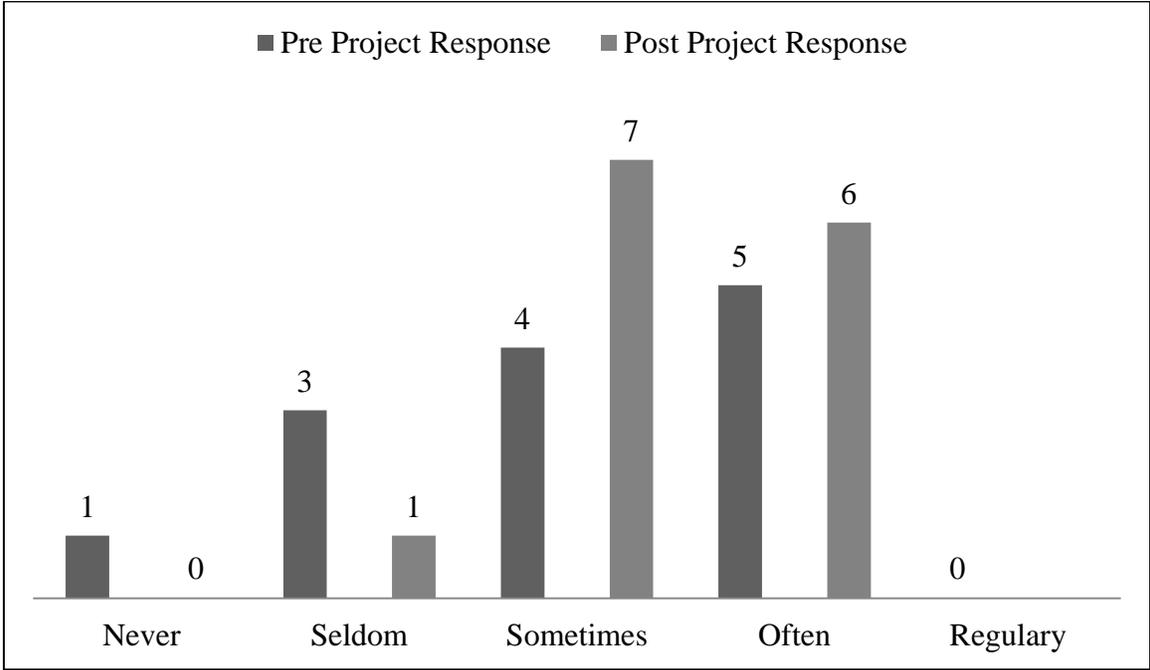


Figure A25. How often do you make decisions to obey or follow God with an awareness that your choosing His way may be costly to you in some way

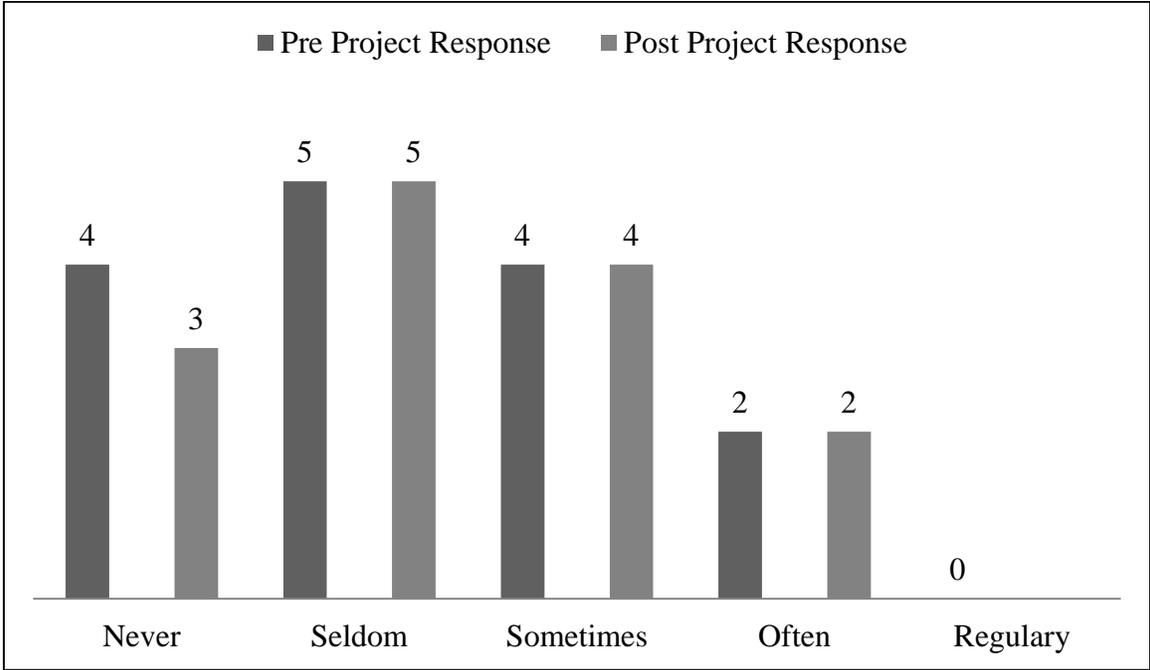


Figure A26. How often do you invite an unchurched person to attend a church service or some other church program such as Sunday school, Bible study or an outreach event

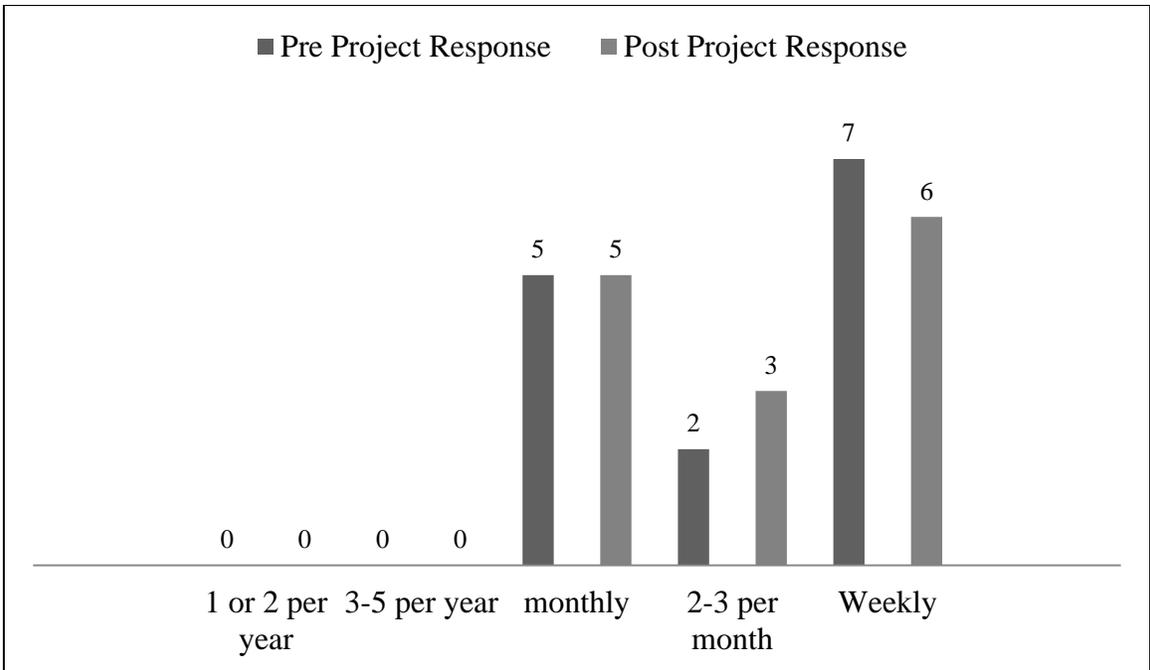


Figure A27. How often do you attend worship service at your church

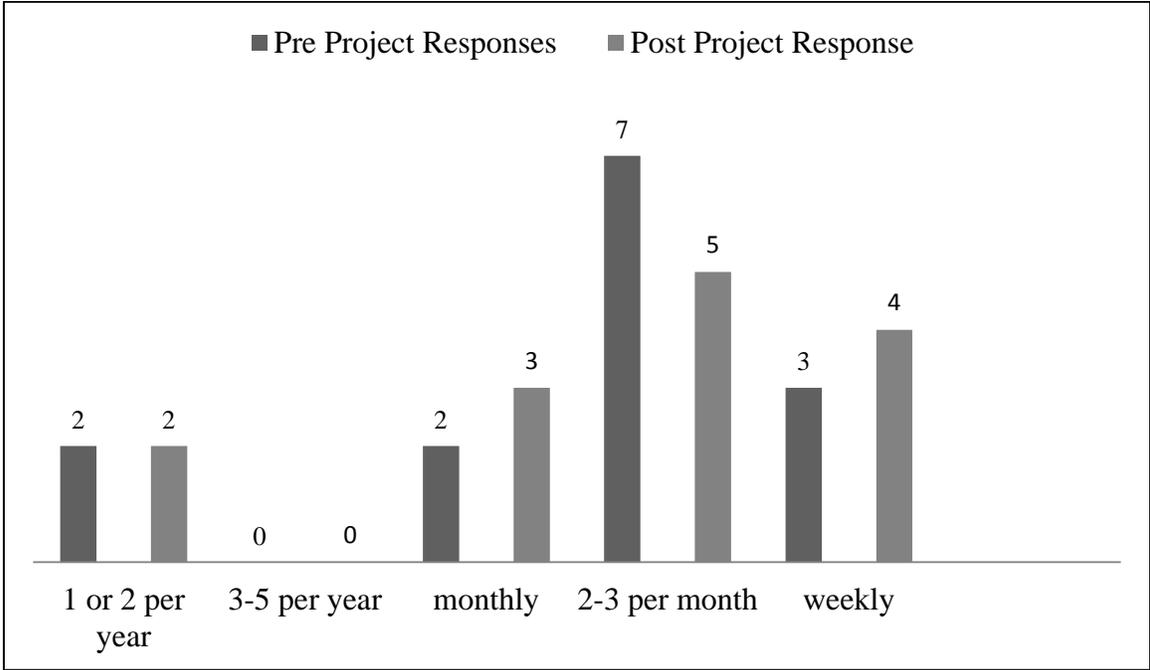


Figure A28. How often do you attend Sunday school or a Bible study

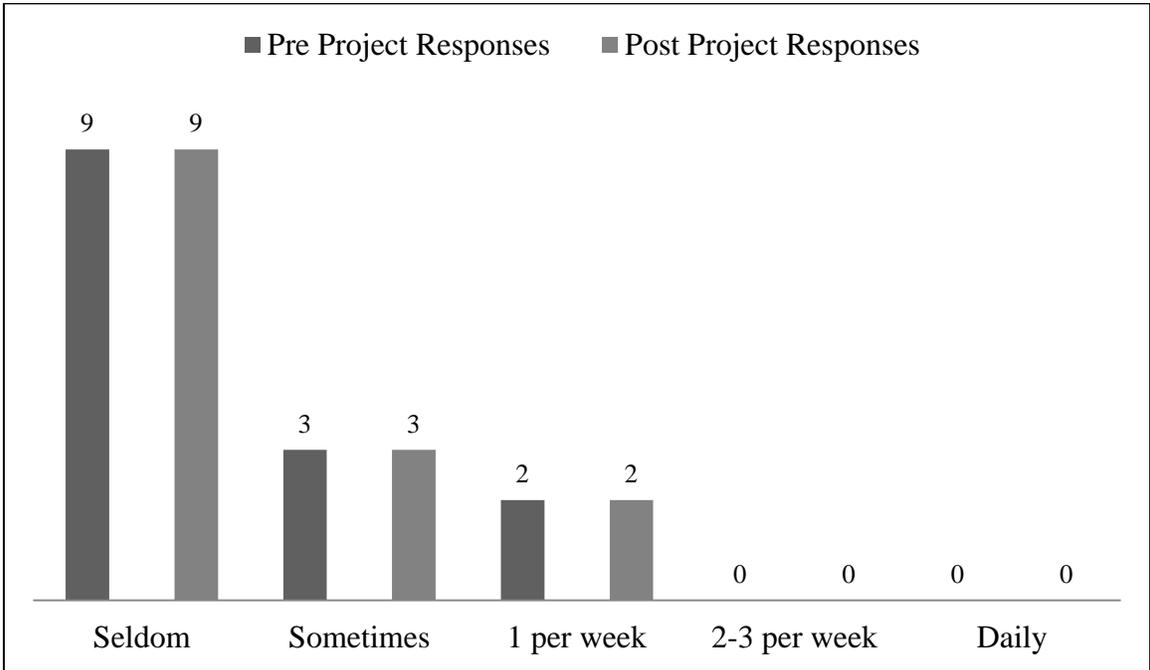


Figure A29. How often do you memorize Scripture

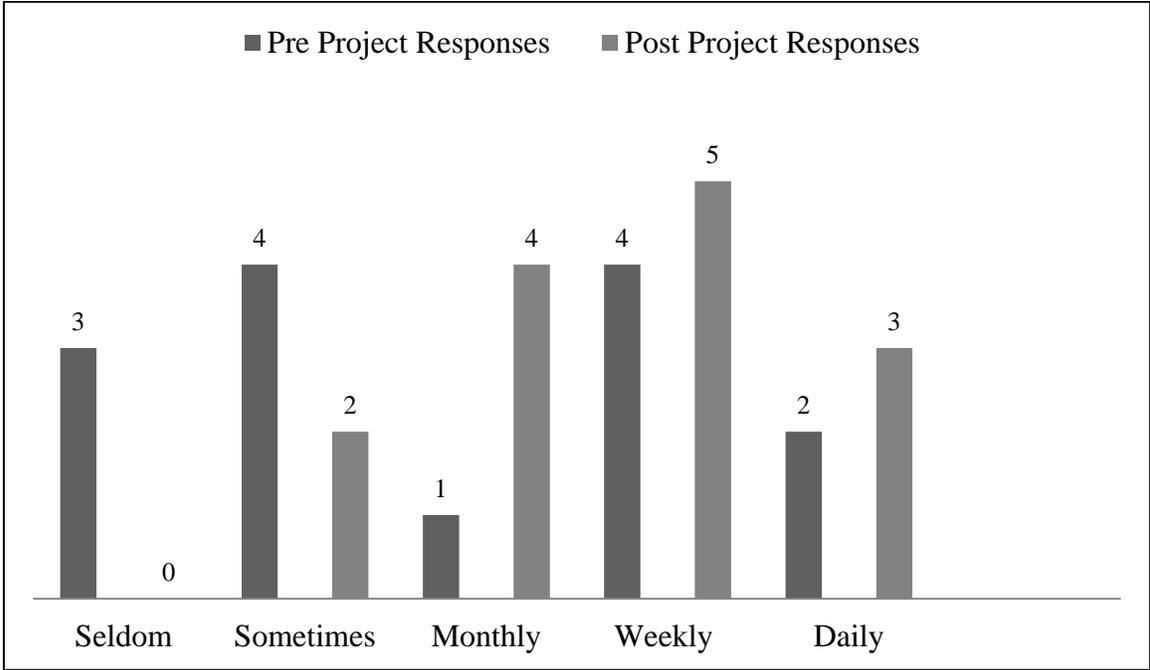


Figure A30. How often do you read the Bible

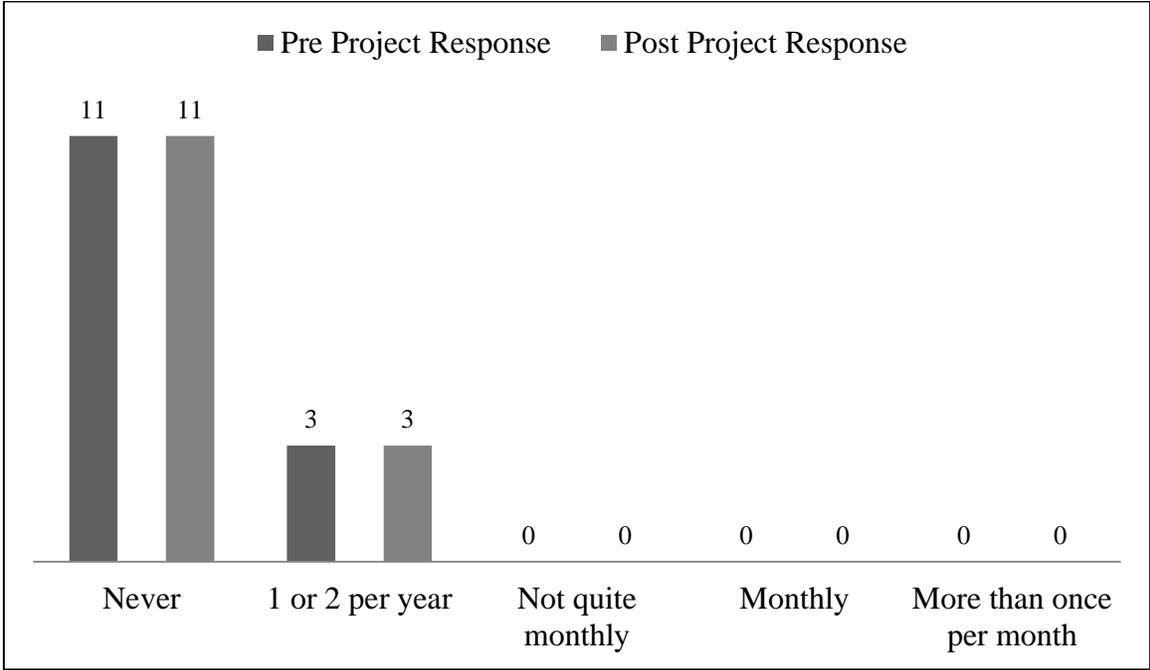


Figure A31. How often do you fast (set aside eating to spend time in prayer)

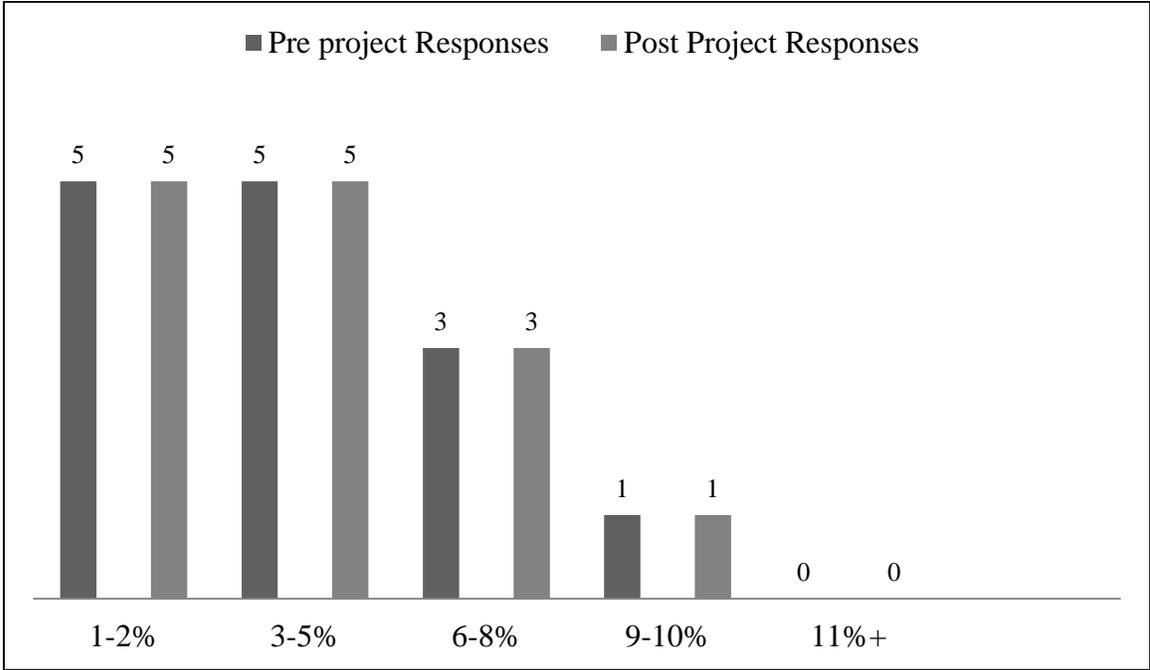


Figure A32. What percentage of your income do you give to your local church and other Christian causes

APPENDIX 5

PERSONAL INTERVIEW WITH PADILLA PADILLA OF THE NAVIGATORS

**July 13, 2011
1:20 P.M.**

REED: What is the goal of Navigators?

PADILLA: 2 Timothy 2:2: “Things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust also to reliable men, who will be qualified to teach each other”. Spiritual generations, where one person is helping another person, will not be just wanting to be helped and receiving the help, but to have the desire to reach out and help another person with the intent of that person helping yet another person.

SHEPHERD: Could you tell us about yourself and about your role in Navigators?

PADILLA: Right now, I am Missions Staff with the Navigators. That is where I am laboring and doing the work and raising support. I was saved by Jesus; God used a guy who was being trained by a Navigator to demonstrate what it meant to be a Christian to me. He never asked me about a prayer; he just started showing me what the Word says and what a Christian looked like, and God grabbed a hold of my heart through that method. After seeing that was what these guys were doing I wanted to figure out how to do the same thing as I follow Jesus.

SHEPHERD: What did a first-century disciple look like?

PADILLA: Dusty. Looking at the Hebraic understanding that the person did not just want to know what the individual knew but to be whom the individual was. So, if it is Jesus as our Rabbi, then we do not want to just know what He says to do but to be like Him in everything we do, whether it be with people by ourselves in our house or with families, in our workplace, or in any element in our lives, we want to be what Jesus would have been.

SHEPHERD: How does a first-century disciple compare to the disciples of Jesus today?

PADILLA: I would say there is a proverbial dust that kicks up on them. You see certain tendencies that carry over from person-to-person. I can go in different circles and with older gentlemen whom I know well, and I can go into other circles (where there are people whom) he specifically individually disciplined; because of that there are certain mannerisms and ways where he [*the person who was disciplined?*] is trying to be like him [*the one who disciplined?*] as he is following Christ, and there is that little “pick-up” there, so you kind of see some of that.

SHEPHERD: In your experience with the Navigators, what are some common issues with soldiers that you have experienced?

PADILLA: A lot of times there is a poor foundation. Unfortunately there are a lot of guys out there who grew up in a church and they think because they said a prayer and because they grew up in a church and their Momma was a Christian and their Daddy is a Christian and that is all they have known in being a Christian--they get the idea that they are a Christian. When I ask them to define that, their responses are all the same; "I trusted Jesus and let Him into my heart to be the Master and Ruler of my life." The following question is, "How has He been the Ruler and Master? How is He leading you?" (Their response is,) "Well, what do you mean?" This is an indicator that he is not. It is their flesh that is continuing to lead them. I am not questioning their salvation or if they are or are not saved; I am questioning, "Is He Lord of your life or not?" If He is your Savior but not your Lord that does not communicate what Scripture says. I would say that is a common issue with guys whom I come across. There is also the semantics that, when I say "fellowship" they think we are just going to hang out and talk about sports. That is what they think, but when I say "fellowship" I say, "Well, let's open up the Word and break spiritual bread; let's see what Jesus is saying; let's see what God's saying through His Word and challenge each other, encourage, admonish, and edify and all these elements with the Word; that is, to me, fellowship. Working through those things...and guys pick up after a little bit, "Oh, he does not mean that."

SHEPHERD: Could you give us an overview of how the Navigators disciple military men?

PADILLA: It is a life-on-life thing; building the rapport and the relationship sometimes comes because of the experience of, I guess, the Navigator (or the person helping the other person). We have a lot of guys in other units who come to us for some training and they go back into their units and start trying to implement this training with the guys in their units. There is a common bond that they carry with them; right now as an ex-soldier I do not have that; I have the "ex-" part but I am no longer a soldier, so I am growing my beard to make sure that is understandable. I am not a soldier anymore but I understand what that is like and I think that is how it happens...life-on-life through experiences and one man at a time.

SHEPHERD: What would you say would be some of the challenges Navigators face in discipling military men?

PADILLA: Again, that would be the foundations that are set. There is a lot of callousness in their hearts because of people and circumstances in which they have found themselves. It is hard to overcome some objections that are ingrained in people, so we rely heavily on the Spirit to do that. We just show them what the Bible says and challenge them to figure it out for themselves. A lot of guys will say, "Well, I don't go to church because of hypocrites." My response has been, "So, you can identify a hypocrite." (They say,) "Oh, yah; they sit and they smile and they do all these things, and then during the week I see them in their jobs and they are just like everybody else." (I say,) "So you know what a hypocrite is; you know what the real thing is supposed to look like..." They are like, "Well, yah." (I say,) "So, what are you? You know what it is but you're not doing it. You're hiding behind somebody else who's claiming they're doing it but not doing it. Why are you not stepping up and showing a lead?" To a soldier that strikes a chord, and we all want to be leaders. So, those are the challenges, just the background of their understanding and getting through those things. Then we are also looking at PTSD and multiple deployments and not knowing how to manage their homes or having

relationships with their wives and children, and (our goal is to) help them to see past what they are doing with their work. These are some of the obstacles and challenges.

SHEPHERD: With your Navigators experience and discipling the military what advice would you give a pastor on how to disciple military men?

PADILLA: Through the military, the guys go through programs a lot. Everything they do is a program; it is a set of systems. They start, they get a training schedule and they know how to stick to it and how to get by just doing the very minimum; so it gets tricky because some guys thrive off that and some guys will just eat that up and that is what they want; other guys are like, “Hey, okay. Well, I can step into this program and do what I see is supposed to be expected of me and get by.” My advice is to build and determine between the individual to discern what it is that this guy needs and sometimes [without?] just asking them right out, “What is it that you're really looking for?” We can do this, or we can do something a little bit different, which would be a more life-on-life approach (Ex: “Hey come to my house. Come spend time with me and my family. Come watch how I meet with other men. Come watch how I do all these different things that I do and you see if there is something different that you see. You see if there is something that I am doing that is attractive to you, as far as, ‘I want to be more like that guy because he seems happier... (Or he seems this or that)’.” Then, it is the Spirit drawing him and then he will chase the Spirit through you. Our job is to introduce that to him, to the individual. In a program, you are limited and there is extra work that has to be done in order to achieve that goal. For our Thursday night Bible study in the Navigators on post, we use a curriculum designed for discipleship. That is, one Thursday night we will spend about an hour and half in a small group of guys or girls; in there, we are hitting some key, maybe theological and maybe just informational, pieces. For the other 6 days out of the week, we are on the phone or texting, “Hey, come over for dinner. Let's talk. Let's hang out.” We are getting personal time with these men and then they see our lives. They see that what we teach on Thursday nights is not just information; they are the keys to life; they are the keys to understanding what it means to be a Christian. By seeing it lived out, the modeling of it is essential, and that is what we see Jesus doing. He had His 12 disciples and they were with Him. They would be searching for Him, and He wanted to get away to get some time alone with God, but other than that, they were with Him. I guess that is a whole lump of parts of advice.

SHEPHERD: In working with the Navigators what has been more effective, one-on-one discipleship or discipleship in a group setting? In addition, what are the advantages and disadvantages to both approaches?

PADILLA: The most effective is the one-on-one. There is a purpose for the group setting, which is to model for the one-on-one. (Ex: If I have “John Knight,” whom I am discipling, and I have a Sunday School class that I teach, I am going to have John come with me to my Sunday School class so he can see how I teach. If I have a meeting one-on-one with the guy then he is going to come to me and watch how I do that. If I give a message at a chapel...) There is a guy who is going to come with me to this other thing in August that I am going to, so he can see how I communicate ever so delicately the Gospel of Christ to the group to whom I am speaking. As far as one-on-one, the group has its purpose but the one that is most effective is one-on-one. It is like, if you take one water bottle of yourself and you take another water bottle and pour directly into that water bottle; the majority of the water is going to get into the other bottle. However, if I take 5 bottles of water and group them together and take my one water bottle and try to hover over them and pour pieces into stuff there is a lot that is going to fall out; some are going to get more than others but all of them are not going to get that much; there is not going to be a lot

transferred. That is what we lose when we do the group as our focus. If our focus is the individual and we utilize that, they are getting fed and they are getting attention; they are getting enough of what they want. The guys who really want discipleship are going to inch a little bit closer and say, “How is that

guy doing that?” For me, the one-on-one has been the most effective. The advantages of one-on-one, again, is that more content is passed on. The disadvantage is that it costs you your life; it costs you so much to have some “dude” in your home when you are arguing with your wife. It costs face, pride...so I will argue with my wife; if we are upset, we are upset in front of whoever is there. I have to discipline my kids and I do it with people seeing how I am doing it. That is the cost, so it is (lack of) privacy but yet everything I have belongs to the Lord; everything that I steward belongs to the Lord. It is not really mine; it is just mine to manage and to steward properly, so if God wants to train another man by having him watch me I have to be willing to pay that price. The advantage to the group setting is you can communicate to more people at once; the disadvantage is that they are not going to catch most of what you just said.

SHEPHERD: What are some of the issues with which military men struggle?

PADILLA: A lot of things that I see have been fear, parity, and control, which they are all in there; it is a big brave of stuff, those three. That is just military men; I am not even talking about Christian military men. That is the nut of it right there, fear, parity, and control.

SHEPHERD: In your experience with the Navigators and discipling military men, do you find that they *are* reproducing themselves?

PADILLA: Yes and no; I see guys who are trying to... a motive kicks in at this point. This is kind of where I am sticky on things because I see different elements, but I will see a guy who has another guy whom he is helping. The guy becomes just like him and he reproduces himself, flaws and all. There is a fault in that because I do not see that I am supposed to be making more PADILLAs out there; I make more PADILLAs with my wife; through reproduction, we make more little babies like me. Now out there spiritually I am trying to be the spouse, the Bride of Christ, to make more of Him, so if they see more of me than Christ then there is a problem; so yes, I see it happening. Then there are those who introduce him to the Rabbi, Jesus, which is where the true reproduction occurs; it is a spiritual reproduction, rather than a personal reproduction or “building my own kingdom” sort-of thing. Does that make sense? It is kind of one of those things that is a little bit difficult to communicate.

SHEPHERD: How do you cast the vision to men to disciple others?

PADILLA: I use this illustration called “The Big Dipper.” In the Big Dipper--You have seen the Big Dipper in the sky, right? You have the 1st star, then the 2 on the bottom, and then the 1 up top.

The 1st star we call “followup.” If somebody comes to Christ or if somebody is responsive to anything that we have shared then we spend more time with them.

The 2nd star represents what we call the “hand illustration.” If they are going to respond to whatever it is that they have seen or I have said then I am going to start teaching them how to get a good grip on the Word--hearing, reading, studying,

memorizing, meditating... If they respond to that then I will lead them into doing what we call the “wheel illustration.”

The “wheel illustration.” How do you take Christ and have him the center of your life? We focus on the Word, prayer, witnessing, and fellowship; how do we do these things and live them out? All of those 3 points are all about the individual, which is natural and normal. When our parents raise us they raise just us, maybe with our siblings but there is part of it that is just about us growing up and it is all about me, and that seems to be natural.

Then there is the next star that makes the box, the spoon of the Big Dipper; I call it the “D2.” The “D1” is where the wheel is, but in between those 2 is the great wall of self. You have to leave yourself on this side of the wall because it is not about you. If I am following Christ He says to love God, love people with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and my neighbor as myself. He says to, *“Go out into the world and make disciples of all nations teaching them to obey everything I have commanded, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, teaching them everything I have commanded; surely I am with you always until the very end of the age. [Paraphrased]”* These are things that were commissioned and commanded to do. You cannot be in the way. It cannot be about you. This is how I would cast vision to share: “Hey look, bro, it has been all about you during this time and that is fine. I have loved and cherished this time with you, but have you seen the need to reach out? What about those other guys out there? You know different things now.” I challenge them about what they have experienced, the things I know about their life that they have said. (They would say,) “Wow, PADILLA, I have really appreciated this time.” (I would say,) “Well, why do you think I am doing this? I am up here because I was lost and I saw you were lost. God gave my heart to you to try to help you through this process. Now you are at a point where you know these things.” I will challenge them, an intentional challenge, and I will use that illustration to do so. Again, throughout the time of getting to know me they will hear and see different things and different people and understand that is what my life has been all about.

SHEPHERD: How can a church and Navigators work together to disciple adult men in the military?

PADILLA: It would just have to be an understanding relationship. There has to be trust, ministry philosophy has to be understood, there would have to be a feeling that they are not trying to undercut, and there would have to be respect for each person's views in order for that to work. So far, our experience has been that we have been working just fine. I came to the pastor and he knows what I am about, what I do; I try to reach out and help other men and help them grow so they can reach out and help other men grow. I came into the church and used it as a fishing pole, and I started teaching a Sunday School finding a (healthy) guy who is hungry, who wants to move and grow. I focus there and try to help them. I think we serve the church in different ways like that teaching and with support and all of that stuff.

SHEPHERD: How do you overcome the objection of a soldier who says, “I just do not have the time to be discipled”?

PADILLA: I usually do not. I do not hear them say I do not have the time; I hear them say, “I really do not want to do that,” and so I let it be. In Sunday School class we had the guy who said, “It is not about time management; it is about priority management.” That guy's priority is not that. I continue to love him and I continue to challenge and encourage him with what he is willing to do. I do not believe that I need to try to push people in any certain direction; the Spirit will do that. I just lay it out there, and if the Spirit tells me,

“Push him harder,” I push him harder; I kick him; I will kick him. I guess there is that discernment in there; I just watch and listen, and when he starts complaining to me about different things in his life I am like, “Well, why are you complaining?” I offered you a way to try to figure this out and you would rather not, so what are you complaining to me for?” It makes them really think about what they are choosing and how they are never going to get out of that cycle until they do something different.

SHEPHERD: At First Baptist Church of Oak Grove, women are usually more responsive to discipleship than men. Do you see this at Fort Campbell or on other military posts?

PADILLA: It is dependent on the environment that is fostered. So far, that is what I have seen. Right now, there seems to be--Even since Billy Graham's day when he would do the message on commitment, which was just after Jim Elliott and the others were killed in South America; in his message he said, “Why is the mission field filled with women when it ought to be filled with men?” so it was the same issue in his day. It just comes down to reaching out to the men in the way that they will receive it.

SHEPHERD: How do the Navigators connect with military men?

PADILLA: A lot of times with parallel experience, or they will see something in the individual that they want to have in their life. I think understanding their culture helps as well. A friend of mine was a student here at Austin Peay and was on a baseball scholarship and doing really great in line for a great career. Well, God got a hold of his life and called him over into the military work. The guy never had been in the military and never had been around a military environment. This guy started to take all of the military regulations and read through all of

them so he could understand the indoctrination through which a soldier goes; he took the basic training manuals and studied them so that he understood all of the lingo and understood what someone said in acronym; he knew what they were talking about. It was not just to be able to do that but so that he could understand where they were coming from and then ask questions that were relevant to what it is with that they have dealt. I think that is key and I see a lot of that; I am actually reading Air Force manuals right now to try to get an understanding of the Air Force world for where we are getting ready to move to.

SHEPHERD: What would you say are some of the obstacles to discipling military men?

PADILLA: I want to say up front it would be deployment; however, what we are finding is that if we get some time with a guy before deployment we create an environment and he sees a certain environment where, “Wow, that's kind of neat but not for me.” He is deployed and God runs him through the desert and runs him through the ringer; he goes through all kinds of issues and has problems here and there; he sees different things that he sees with different missions he goes on, and God stirs them; we are seeing that God stirs them a lot. They come back and say, “Hey, I'm ready now. I want to know what it means to follow Jesus, (like for real).” At first with deployment it was like, “Oh no, they are going to be gone,” but we are finding that it is actually having a stronger impact for creating a desire to do something. When they come back and if they show up, we sit down right away with them individually, “What's happening? How are you doing? What's going on?” They lay out what they are looking for; “Okay, well let's go.” We do not delay; we do not waste time. We go at it addressing helping them walk through how (to handle things) with their wives, with their children... A lot of us have a lot of combat

experience so we can say, “Bro, I know what it feels like.” If we do not, we get time with another guy who has more similar sort-of experience and encourage that relationship to grow in that area while we still influence other areas to help him.

SHEPHERD: How does Navigators promote discipleship as a process and not as a program?

PADILLA: Everything is geared--like I said, we do this on Thursday nights and we have the topical memory system, so that has been cued in as the program of the Navigators. However, those who have been discipled by a Navigator know that it is so much more than that; it is just passed on one life at a time.

SHEPHERD: What are some failures you or Navigators have experienced in discipling military men?

PADILLA: At first, for me, I felt like anything that went wrong was because I did something wrong. I am not perfect; I am called to be holy like He is holy but I strive such a long way away and I fall short. At first, I would feel like it was my fault that a person did not respond or that a person was going and doing really well and then decided that he did not want to do this anymore. Now I have come to realize that there really are no failures. I have come across guys into whom I have invested 3 to 4 months and just spent a lot of time with them, and then they would say, “Bro, I am good; I am going to go ahead and chase after this girl and just do what I want to do.” (I would say,) “Okay, have fun, man. If you ever need anything I am here.” Three years down the road I will get an E-mail, “Hey, are you still helping people? Can we talk?” They come back; or they find themselves somewhere else and somebody else will be able to help them lay a foundation; they go sow their wild oats; God brings them and restores them back to Himself. (Ex: [The] prostitute went and whored herself out; Hosea had to go back and buy her for 15 pieces of silver and restore her to her place as his wife.) That is God's business; my business is to be obedient and to love men and to help them to grow any way God lets me. I will make mistakes; that is a given, but I cannot let that take me out of the race because Satan will definitely try to do that to make me feel inferior and inadequate, that I am horrible and I do not know the right things to say, and that I cannot help this or that guy... I can only do what God empowers me to. That is kind of where that has turned out for me.

SHEPHERD: How have you witnessed the discipleship process work in other churches?

PADILLA: I have not. Most churches I have stepped into, there were no discipleship things going on. I would ask the pastor, “Can I start a men's group?” so I could see who wanted to be discipled; I began to share that with them. Several pastors would say, “No, we're good. We do not need that here.” Every once in awhile there would be a pastor who would say, “You know, I do not really have experience or knowledge of that. I know about it, but I have never been through the process. Go ahead and come do it and I would like to just watch and see what you are doing.” Those have been the responses and then it starts.

SHEPHERD: In your opinion, then, what do you think quenches discipleship in churches?

PADILLA: I would say that we might go after the wrong things at the wrong time. Helping a guy to do a quiet time is great, but if we try to hit him up with that on the jump, we may have missed the boat; we may have missed the point. Again, I am a relational guy, so I will look at somebody and, “So what's going on in your heart? What is

happening?” That is what I am reading; that is what I am looking for. As I start to see, “I am having a really hard time dealing with my boss.” (I will say,) “Well, tell me about that,” and that is where I focus. I try to help him have a different attitude on how. I share verses with him without giving the reference; “I heard this thing and it says something like this, *'Cast all your anxieties on Him who cares for you'*.” I will just use these verses (in their words); I will try to use them in sentences as much as possible so he does not pick up that they are verses because as soon as he does this wall goes up, so I help him there. When he sees that he has

been helped, then it triggers some more. (He says,) “How did you experience that? How did you come to figure that out?” (I will say,) “Well, you really want to know?” (He says,) “Yah.” (I say,) “You sure? I do not know. I think you might not like where I have to show you.” (He says,) “Dude, I really want to know.” (I say,) “I learned it in the Bible. I have a quite time every day, and actually what we talked about this day I read out of my Bible that morning.” (He says,) “Really?” I say, “Yah.” Then it goes from there. That is just one sort of a situation that I had that cord, but not hitting the right thing; if we try to fix a broken arm when his leg is broken we are going to do more harm than good. I think that at church when we have a program that is set...if we have a program that can be fluid and move on a case-by-case basis, because everybody is in a different place and comes from a different place, and with dealing with a military environment, we have a hodgepodge of everywhere and everything here; so if you try to hit them with one angle a lot of times people feel like they are being boxed-in and packaged and a lot of people jump out of that in a heartbeat. I think that answers (that question).

PADILLA: I was just thinking about all of these questions and what would I do if I were in leadership here at the church. My prayers would be focused not so much on successfully discipling the church, but for God's will be done. For me personally, when I focus on those sorts of things, when I do not see the results I get discouraged and I think that I have a part, as far as a control, in that. However, that is really up to God.

The second thing I would do concerning the life groups that you have; I would encourage more home groups, because what I have experienced in life groups, and this is with my whole time in churches and not just here, that there is an element where you come together and there is a certain routine, which does not get peoples' lives (intertwined). However, when you take a leader, such as Vance, and say, “Would you be interested in having a smaller group in your home to lead them through whatever curriculum you want--a book of the Bible? I do not want you to spend any money; just open up a book in the Bible. Teach them how to use a concordance and dictionary, and even commentaries and then see how the commentaries differ so we have to figure out what we see as what God is saying.” Do this in the context of somebody's home in a smaller group and bring about 3 to 4 families and couples in, and through that process there will be another guy who will just kind-of surface as, “Hey, when I cannot do this would you mind leading for me?” or “Could we move this to your house?” Work through that, and then eventually you have to split that group and start recruiting and bringing more people in and split that. I think that would be a good thing to do, the cell group idea. You know the concepts, so... You have a lot of participants coming (in) on the things from what I have seen, I think that a majority (but) not all of them; [?so I would not say these things,?] because it feeds a lot of people and it does work for a lot of people, but to give an option of a home group from key people to do that; even experiment with 1 or 2, maybe, and see what happens. That is something that came to mind that I wanted to share, as I was praying and preparing for our time together.

END

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ABSTRACT

DISCIPLING MILITARY MALES AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OAK GROVE, OAK GROVE, KENTUCKY

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012
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This project seeks to develop a discipleship strategy for military male members of First Baptist Church Oak Grove, Oak Grove, Kentucky. Chapter 1 describes a proposal for discipling military males, including goals, church and community context, and the rationale for the project. Chapter 2 examines the biblical and theological principles of discipleship. Discipleship is established as a priority of the church and Old and New Testament models are given. Chapter 3 explores the contemporary and non-contemporary models of discipleship and their effectiveness. The importance of discipleship is examined, along with discovering how para-church organization disciple military men. Chapter 4 unfolds the details of the actual implementation of the discipleship project. Research instruments were utilized and barriers were defined to develop a process for discipleship. Chapter 5 reviews the effectiveness of the project. The data is analyzed and the goals and process is evaluated for strengths and weaknesses.

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