

## **ABSTRACT**

### **DISCIPLING WITH PURPOSE: BEST PRACTICES IN LIGHT OF GOD'S TELOS FOR DISCIPLESHIP**

By

Leighton St. Aubin McFarlane

The Word of God reminds us of the provision that God has made for those whose lives have been transformed by the Grace of God. 2 Peter 1:3 says, “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and for godliness ...” (NIV). Even though God has so resourced the church for the equipping of his people for works of service, so that they may be built up until they “... become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph.4:11-13), many churches, including the Western Jamaica District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church, continues to experience significant loss of membership. The paradigm shift that has taken place in culture seems to have made faith in God redundant these days and has not made any easier the context within which contemporary disciples must live out their faith and the church must fulfill its mission and mandate.

The purpose of this project therefore was to identify best practices for discipling new members in the Western District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in Jamaica in order to reverse the tendency for new members to leave the church soon after joining.

An empirical study guided by the following four research questions was undertaken: 1. In the opinion of church leaders and members of the churches in the district, what aspects of the church’s ministry contribute to the discipling of members in

the church? 2. In the opinion of church leaders and members of the churches in the district, what current or missing aspects of the church's ministry contribute to the exit of members from the church? 3. In the opinion of members who have left the churches in the district, what current or missing aspects of the church's ministry contribute to the exit of members from the church? 4. What are best practices and strategies moving forward for the discipling of members in the churches in the district? A qualitative research design data was gathered from the unique perspective of three key groups of participants: pastors, laity (present members), and those who have left the church (former members).

Four instruments were used to collect data: questionnaires, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The study found that ours is a rich heritage of intentional discipleship albeit a lost and forgotten one. The study also found an inconsistency of the practice of discipleship in the district, a disconnect between the church's understanding and its practice of discipleship, the absence of a formal discipleship program, all of which are symptomatic of a deeper issue – an absent discipleship culture to be contributing factors to the exit of members from the church. The study further found that the church environment is a major deciding factor as to whether members stay or leave the church.

The results suggest that programs and activities intentionally designed to establish believers in their faith holds the potential of significantly reducing turnover rates. The results further suggest any approach to discipleship taken by West Jamaica District must take seriously an incarnational/relational approach where life rubs off on life, where iron sharpens iron.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

**DISCIPLING WITH PURPOSE:**

**BEST PRACTICES IN LIGHT OF GOD'S TELOS FOR DISCIPLESHIP**

presented by

Leighton St. Aubin McFarlane

has been accepted towards fulfillment

of the requirements for the

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY degree at

Asbury Theological Seminary

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**DISCIPLING WITH PURPOSE:  
BEST PRACTICES IN LIGHT OF GOD'S TELOS FOR DISCIPLESHIP**

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of  
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by

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May 2021

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer; saying, ‘thus far has the LORD has helped us’” (1 Sam.7:12). Like Samuel, I too have cause to erect an Ebenezer. I too have cause to erect in this acknowledgement such a monument to God in admitting that none of this would have been possible without Him and in thanking Him for the grace He has so lavished on me. God be thanked, for had He not favored me with this opportunity of being the recipient of this Beeson International Leadership Scholarship through Asbury Theological Seminary and supplied His sustaining grace at every turn on this journey, I would not have reached this milestone.

I want to thank my family, especially my wife Guia and my two sons Leighton Jr. and Adiel for their love, patience, understanding, overwhelming support, and selfless sacrifice. Even though they have faithfully served as my personal cheerleaders and encouragers, (“for the glory of the empire” Guia would say, or LJ’s “go dada go,”) having to do without a husband or a father at times as I pushed to complete this dissertation could not have been easy.

I must also express thanks to the church I currently serve (the Paul Island Wesleyan Holiness Church Family) for their understanding and support financially and otherwise. I am appreciative also of the wider Wesleyan Holiness Church Family, its pastors and members, and former members for participating in the study as well as for their prayers and words of encouragement along the way. Thanks to the Caribbean Wesleyan College family for allowing me the use of their facilities to conduct aspects of this research.



To all the Beeson family, members of my legacy group, and especially my mentor, Dr. Barbara Dobson, thanks to you all. For the financial support provided by Asbury Theological Seminary, a big thank you, my life and ministry will forever be transformed and enriched by the relationships we have forged.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **NATURE OF THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

The Western District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in Jamaica is facing a problem with a decline in membership. This project seeks to address this issue.

This chapter discusses the nature of the project, opening with an autobiographical introduction. This is followed by a statement of the problem and the purpose of the project. The chapter also includes research questions, the significance of the study, and the definition of key terminologies within the project. It also provides defined boundaries of this project, a brief description of the relevant literature is reviewed, and the methods by which data was collected are described. Also included in the chapter are descriptions of the type of research, the participants, the instruments used, and the approach taken in the collection and analysis of data. Finally, the chapter looks at generalizability issues and concludes with an overview of the project.

#### **Personal Introduction**

The word apostasy, though a cause of offense, is scriptural, and hence should not be discarded, but explained. Translated sometimes as backsliding, falling away, losing faith or deconversion, apostasy “is a process in which religious people reduce the importance of religion to their self-identity and may involve loss of faith, disaffiliation from religious communities, spiritual quest, [and] moral criticism...” (Greenwald et al. 1). Apostasy is a very real and dangerous threat that can be traced as far back as the beginning of creation, evidenced by the fall of angels (Jude 1:6) and the fall of man (Gen. 3). It is from these very accounts that Wesley rightly concludes that no state of grace is so

lofty that one cannot fall. Wesley notes “We do not find any general state described in scripture, from which a man cannot draw back to sin” (Wesley “*Plain Account*” 88). As a result, Wesley “portrayed the ongoing dependence of the believer on Christ as a dependence that is analogous to a ‘branch which, united to the vine, bears fruit; but, severed from it, is dried up and withered’” (Collins 298).

The Bible reports numerous instances of apostasy; it is a concept that is found throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament for example,

“Forsaking Yahweh” was the characteristic and oft-recurring sin of Israel, especially in their contact with idolatrous nations. It constituted their supreme national peril... So wayward was the heart of Israel even in the years immediately following the national emancipation, in the wilderness, that Joshua found it necessary to repledge the entire nation to a new fidelity to the Lord and to their original covenant before they were permitted to enter the Promised Land (Josh. 24:1-28). (Bromiley, 192)

In the New Testament, “Apostasy, not in name but in fact, meets scathing rebuke in the Epistle of Jude (1:6). It is foretold with warnings, as sure to abound in the latter days, (1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Thess. 2:3; 2 Pet. 3:17)” (Bromiley 192). Apostasy is alluded to in Jesus’ parable about a man who went to sow seeds, some of which sprouted quickly but not long after were strangled by weeds or scorched by the sun (Luke 8:4-15 NIV). People even walked away from Jesus as he walked the earth when his teaching became too hard (John 6:53-66).

Church history bears record of the phenomena as well. Considered one of Christianity’s worst enemies, “the emperor Julian (A.D. 332-63), who probably never

vitality embraced the Christian faith, is known in history as “the Apostate,” having renounced Christianity for paganism soon after his accession to the throne” (Bromiley 192). In recent church history, David Barrett has calculated that “in Europe and North America, an average of 53,000 persons is permanently leaving the Christian church from one Sunday to the next” (Barrett).

The causes for apostasy are as numerous as there are apostates: “persecution (Mat. 24:9); false teachers (24:11); temptation (Lk. 8:13); worldliness (2 Tim. 4:4); defective knowledge of Christ (1 Jn. 2:19); moral lapse (Heb. 6:4-6); forsaking worship and spiritual living (10:25-31); unbelief (3:12)” (Bromiley, 192). The truth is, people have always walked away from God, and sadly, I was one of those who did.

1998 marks the year I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal savior. It was an “overwhelming new experience of my own self. I didn’t just *feel* ‘new born’ I was ‘new born’ of the Spirit which had laid hold of me” (Moltmann 26). I was thereafter baptized and received in the Solas Wesleyan Holiness Church. However, like the prodigal (Luke 15:11-32), sooner after, I gathered my things and left for a “far country”. I came to my senses and returned home as he did, but not through a self-imposed retrospective and introspective look at self as it was in his case, rather it was a friend’s honest and gentle rebuke that led to the retrospection and introspection in my case. I thereafter recommitted my life to Christ and have been serving Him faithfully ever since.

Following the recommitment of my life to Christ, I knew that I would have to make several lifestyle changes if I were to remain faithful to this commitment. I, therefore, became very involved in the life and ministry of the church: singing in the youth choir, playing musical instruments, serving on the men’s department executive

body, and taking part in other activities. During this period, the pastor and several persons in the church recognized the call of God was upon my life and encouraged me to respond to same. After seeking the face of God concerning this and his will was made clear, I responded to His call to full-time ministry in the year 2005. I enrolled at Caribbean Wesleyan College (CWC) where I earned a diploma in Theology and Pastoral Ministry.

Upon graduating in 2008, I was assigned a charge at the Paul Island Wesleyan Holiness Church, and have been serving in this capacity for the past ten years. Over the decade of pastoring this church, I have seen no less than ten people, male and female, of various ages, of different personalities, and from different backgrounds, profess faith in Jesus Christ, be baptized and received into the body under my ministry, who nonetheless left the church shortly after. This loss of members has become a major concern for me as the pastor. Raising this concern at a quarterly board meeting, revealed that this has been happening long before I became the pastor of the church. I heard story after story and a long list of names of persons from the community who were once members of the church. The stories follow a similar pattern: people came in, but shortly after, left. Personally, the question of why this has been happening, and what can be done about it is a consuming and engrossing one.

It is not just me or within my ministry. Presently, three of my siblings who once walked with the Lord have lost faith. They all at one point had a vibrant relationship with God, attended church regularly, and actively participated in the ministry of the church, singing in the choir and serving on the youth department executive body, among other things, but sadly, today they are no longer members of the church.

I have friends also, who once had a vibrant relationship with God who were heavily involved in the Church of Jesus Christ, and who were young men and women who were passionate about Jesus, but a few years later, some of them appear to have lost faith.

Loss of membership is also an organizational issue. A 2016 report from the District Secretary of Extension and Evangelism of the Western District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in Jamaica revealed that the organization is losing members at a rate that is cause for great concern. This begs the question as to the reason for such decline.

The issue also transcends interdenominational and denominational boundaries. The underlying thought was that maybe this loss of members was just a Wesleyan Holiness Church, Western Jamaica District issue. But casual conversations with pastors from the other districts in Jamaica and across denominations revealed a similar problem. For example, seven denominations are represented in the Paul Island and adjoining communities. Though not speaking on the behalf of their entire organization, these ministers, who had years of experience pastoring these churches in and around the community, confessed that the rate of decline is very much a part of their experience as well.

It is against the background of these very personal, heartbreaking stories, that I was compelled to act and undertake this project. I have raised this concern among my peers and colleagues in ministry many times, and they have met me with responses that range from an acceptance of this phenomenon as a normal and natural part of the life of the church, to a deep concern and exigent call to address the issue. Among the latter responses I stand motivated, as I consider Matthew's purpose for writing his gospel.

Bosch says, “It was primarily because of his missionary vision that he set out to write, not to compose a ‘life of Jesus’ but to provide guidance to a community in crisis on how it should understand its calling and mission” (44). The foregoing statement by Bosch reveals the importance of seeing an identifiable need and undertaking the challenge to responding to same.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Bill Hull, in response to the question of the importance of making disciples says, Most church watchers today believe in the common myth that the evangelical church is growing and the liberal church is in decline ... The truth is that while certain pockets of evangelicalism *have* grown, overall the church is in a decline. Demographical data demonstrate that, since the 1940s, it has steadily dropped in respect to population growth. Between 1970 and 1975 the number of evangelicals increased, only to decline shortly thereafter. The reported revivals of the 1970s made no significant difference in the evangelical population. (Hull, *Disciple-Making* 10-11)

The present situation in the evangelical circle is no doubt a reflection and result of what is happening at the denominational and local church levels. I therefore agree with Hull’s conclusion that “Unless the church makes making disciple its main agenda, world evangelism is a fantasy.” I further agree with him that, “The way we have proceeded has not produced the quality of people or the numbers of people to perform what Christ commanded” (Hull *Disciple-Making* 11). The West Jamaica District faces a similar situation, and the foregoing conclusion by Hull not only calls for a change in approach but points to a biblical response for a viable solution. Larry Osborne presented a very

interesting scenario that in my opinion captures well the specific issue presently facing West Jamaica District and confronted in this research. He says:

Imagine two churches that each grew in attendance from 250 people to 500 over a ten-year period. Church A is a revolving door. It loses 7 people for every 10 it adds. To reach 500, it will have to add 834 new members or attenders. Church B is a sticky church. It loses only 3 people for every 10 it adds. To reach 500, it has to add 357 new members or attenders. On the surface, both churches appear to have doubled. But the revolving door church had to reach 834 new people to get there, while the sticky church only needed to reach 357. But here's the kicker: After ten years, the church with the revolving door will have 500 attenders and 584 former attenders! And every year after that, the spread between the number of ex-attenders and the number of current attenders will grow larger. (17-18)

In 2016, the newly elected district secretary of extension and evangelism and her team conducted a thorough assessment of the Western Jamaica district of the Wesleyan Holiness Church concerning evangelism. The group engaged the SWOT analysis to provide a reasonable assessment of the District in terms of its evangelism. Among the discoveries were several weaknesses. Items number one and two on the list were essentially responsible for the undertaking of this project. The assessment found "a constant hemorrhaging of young Christians in local churches after crusades;" and "a lack of sustainable discipleship programs within local churches." Though the organization became more aggressive in its evangelistic efforts and as a result has experienced tremendous growth, if the weaknesses mentioned above are not addressed, they will continue to affect adversely the rate at which the church grows and by extension to



threaten the very viability and sustainability of the organization. “If the back door of a church is left wide open, it doesn’t matter how many people are coaxed to come in the front door—or the side door, for that matter” (Osborne, 13). The specific issue facing the district and confronted in this project then is represented by the church” in the scenario mentioned above with “the revolving door.” The organization is losing members and as a solution, it must rediscover the *disciple-making* imperative of Matthew 28:19 in fulfilling God’s call for us to “bear fruit that will remain” (John 15:16).

Compounding the issue is the apparent need for a sustainable discipleship program. “In truth, almost *any* church does *some* discipling. When a pastor uses the Bible in a sermon or a teacher opens it in a Sunday-school class, the church provides the initial phases of discipling. But disciple-making must go far beyond that” (Hull *Disciple-Making* 9). West Jamaica District has been in existence for over a hundred years. Over the years, its history shows that it has taken a vested interest in the development of new Christians, evidenced by the number of years it has been in existence. The many Christians who are still serving the Lord for twenty years, fifty years, or even seventy years are also indications that the organization does develop young Christians. However, the shift in trends and culture requires that a more intentional approach be taken to ensure the development of new Christians, especially among the youths. As such, the need for a sustainable discipleship program is sounding louder than centuries ago. What is needed is a formal system in the culture or organizational structure of the church that is geared towards intentionally assimilating and retaining these new ones.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of this project was to identify best practices for discipling new members in the Western District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in Jamaica to reverse the tendency for new members to leave the church soon after joining.

### **Research Questions**

To achieve the project's purpose, I drafted four research questions about the church's discipleship program, the reasons that members leave the church, and how the church can move forward.

#### **Research Question #1**

In the opinion of church leaders and members of the churches in the district, what aspects of the church's ministry contribute to the discipling of members in the church?

#### **Research Question #2**

In the opinion of church leaders and members of the churches in the district, what current or missing aspects of the church's ministry contribute to the exit of members from the church?

#### **Research Question #3**

In the opinion of members who have left the churches in the district, what current or missing aspects of the church's ministry contribute to the exit of members from the church?

#### **Research Question #4**

What are best practices and strategies moving forward for the discipling of members in the churches in the district?

### **Rationale for the Project (1-2 pages)**

The following are five reasons that validate the undertaking and importance of this project.

#### **Biblical and Theological Foundation**

The project is important because it is biblically justified. Both the Old and New Testaments reveal the importance of discipleship and the role of the church in this process. In both Old and New Testament, God's people were to pass on a legacy of faith to the following generation (Gen. 18:19; John 17:6-8). In the New Testament we see discipleship as God's means to maturity, and as God's method to rescue the world. Theologically, several concepts underpin this project: a theology of the Good Shepherd; a theology of the Holy Spirit; a theology of Grace; and a theology of Salvation. In relationship to discipleship, a theology of the Good Shepherd for example reveals the role of the shepherd as one who seeks, nurtures, and equips God's flock. A full treatment of the biblical and theological foundations for this project is presented in chapter 2.

#### **West Jamaica's Existing Practice and Culture**

In West Jamaica District, for decades, when an individual confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and personal savior the individual automatically enters a process within the structure of the organization that takes him/her from that confession of faith to reception as full members in the body of Christ. After that Bible study, prayer meeting, communion service, and fasting service among other spiritual disciplines alone provide the new believer with the continued nourishment that is necessary for continued growth and development. While these means of developing the new Christian have some merit, it does not negate the need for an intentional approach that will allow for further growth

and development. In Ephesians 4:11-13 “The aim of the ministries mentioned ... is the equipment of God’s people for service... [and] the ultimate end in view is the attainment of completeness in Christ” (Gaebelein 11:58-59). Avoidance of this intentional approach opens the door for Christians to fall. In the words of Coleman, “they are left entirely on their own to find solutions to innumerable practical problems confronting their lives, any one of which could mean disaster to their new faith’ (41). West Jamaica District is making the same mistake George Whitefield made. He “led many people to the Cross but quickly left these babes in Christ to starve while he hurried on to another campaign” (Tracy et al. 139). In the end, he looked back upon his career with regret saying, “My Brother Wesley acted wisely - the souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class and thus preserved the fruits of his labor. This I neglected and my people are a rope of sand” (McTyeire 204). West Jamaica District urgently needs to rediscover its heritage! The constant hemorrhaging of members combined with the absence of well-defined discipleship practices reveals a district facing a crisis of unprecedented magnitude.

### **The Forgotten Imperative to Make Disciples**

The West Jamaica District has placed great emphasis on evangelism, especially over the past two years, but evangelism must not be carried out at the expense of the equally important task of working to keep the people who have been won for Christ. A clear understanding of the ultimate objective – the mandate to make disciples must accompany the revived thrust of evangelism (Matt. 28:19). The church must also put into place the necessary mechanisms that will intentionally facilitate making disciples. Robert Logan insists, that the church in this century has focused on the sending imperative to

“Go therefore” while neglecting the imperative to “make disciples” (96). Osborne expressed a similar view when he said, “We have often become so focused on reaching people that we’ve forgotten the importance of keeping people” (13). From all purviews, this observation by Logan and Osborne is a fair assessment of the present missionary thrust of West Jamaica District.

### **The Cultural Dynamic**

Bosch says a fundamental paradigm shift has taken place “... in the experience and thinking of the whole world... in which much of what people used to think and do had to be redefined” (4). The culture at present is characterized by broad skepticism, subjectivism, and relativism. It is a change so vast that its implications for the life of the individual believer and the church by extension are mind-boggling. The importance of this project is seen against the background of this observable paradigm shift in culture. It is a shift that poses a serious threat to disciple-making and faithful Christian living. West Jamaica District is not shielded from the potential dangers of this paradigm shift in culture. It is within this context that it must carry out its mandate to make disciples.

### **The Growth Imperative**

Finally, the importance of the project is seen against the background of the Bible’s emphasis on the importance of spiritual growth and Christian maturity, the attention that must be given to the process, and the critical role of the church as a facilitator and aid in this process. The Bible consistently emphasizes the importance of growth and maturity. The Bible says that Jesus himself “increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). Paul expects and exhorts the believer to “grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (Eph. 4:15). Peter likewise

urges his readers to “*grow* in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18), and the writer of the Hebrews exhorts believers to “leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity...” (Heb. 6:1).

### **Definition of Key Terms**

Best practices are the most efficient and effective ways or methods through which churches disciple new members, in an effort to reverse the tendency of them leaving the church shortly after joining.

Discipling speaks of a process where the church works intentionally to keep new converts through nurturing. This is a system designed to *keep* the people reached for Christ. “Discipleship is the process of spiritual growth in which one becomes a disciple through conversion, and then matures in his or her knowledge of and obedience to Scripture” (Tenney *Zondervan* 129-130). Discipleship is the ongoing process of spiritual growth that involves evangelism and spiritual formation. “A disciple refers to a person who has come to faith in Jesus Christ, is growing in their faith, serving with their gifts, and seeking to carry out the purposes of God in their life and church. In other words, a disciple is a fully devoted follower of Jesus” (Tenney *Zondervan* 129-130). Incorporation of new members into the church fellowship does not happen automatically. “If you don’t have a system and a structure to assimilate and keep the people you reach, they will not stay with your church” (Warren 310).

New Members, these are persons who have recently been baptized and received in the Church

Leaving as the term is used in the purpose statement refers to a person who not only makes a decision not to come back to the church but more specifically enters into

apostasy or backsliding. Backsliding is “a term that refers to people who revert to old ways, to wrongdoing and sin. It assumes people leave the Christian faith because they are, for whatever reason/s, lured back to their previous behavior” (Frost *Introduction*). Thus, leaving as is used here implies both an act and a state.

### **Delimitations**

The Wesleyan Conference in Jamaica consists of sixty-five churches and is divided into three districts: Eastern, Western and Northern. Fifteen churches in Eastern, thirty-eight in the Western, and twelve in the Northern. This research is limited to the thirty-eight churches in the Western District and is further limited to the pastors and members of this district.

A church or denomination may experience loss of membership for many different reasons, death, migration, transfer, church hopping, and others. This research, however, is limited specifically to backsliders, of all age groups, both male and female in this district.

An additional limitation of the project was the openness and transparency of participants, especially the backsliders.

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

An assortment of literature is available today which seeks to resource the church to fulfill its mission and mandate. Touching this project at various points are disciplines such as biblical theology, developmental psychology, church history, sociology, and anthropology which gave meaningful insights into the various approaches to, and challenges associated with the discipling of new converts who have recently joined the body of Christ. The goal of this research has been to find current and notable resources available relating to this issue. The types of literature drawn from for this project include books in print and e-books, Doctor of Ministry dissertations, journal articles, and online articles, which were designed to equip

churches and leaders with skills and strategies to effectively disciple those won for Christ. In addition to the biblical and theological foundations of the project, the focus of literature reviewed in this research project had significant input on key themes and topics pertinent to the area of discipleship. Broad topics such as pastoral theology, church growth, Christian education, missions, and more focused topics such as discipleship, mentoring, coaching, assimilation, and retention contribute to a better understanding of the issue confronted in this project.

Though many authors were consulted and cited in this project, there are several who were considered by the researcher to be leading voices speaking into each of these themes listed above. Pertinent to the area of discipleship is the field of pastoral theology. Notable voices in the area are persons such as Derek Tidball and Bruce Larson. The writer also drew on church growth sources. Almost all the literature consulted in this area had something to say about discipleship. Notable voices in this area are persons such as Gary L. McIntosh, Rick Warren, Win Arn, and Robert E. Logan. Another broad area touching this project is missions. Notable voices in the area are David J. Bosch and Roland Allen. Christian education literature also has much to say about discipleship. Leading voices in the area are James C. Wilhoite and John M. Dettoni, Kenneth O. Gangel, Lois E. Lebar, Michael J. Anthony.

In the area of spiritual formation, notable voices include persons such as Thomas Merton, Jurgen Moltmann, Marva J. Dawn, and Richard Foster. In the areas of assimilation and retention, notable voices are Nelson Searcy and Larry Osborne respectively. I drew on discipleship sources as well. Leading voices in the area include Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Bill Hull, Greg Ogden, and Robert E. Coleman. Consulted also were mentoring and coaching material. The leading voices in these areas include John C. Maxwell, Craig T. Kocher, Eric



Parsloe and Melville Leedham. A literature review of relevant literature, as well as biblical and theological foundations for the project is presented in Chapter 2.

### **Research Methodology**

The project used a qualitative approach to collect data to identify the best practices for the discipling of new members in the body of Christ and to discover how to reverse the tendency of their leaving shortly after they join the Church. Qualitative methods including questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups were used to collect data for this research.

### **Type of Research**

Pre-intervention research methods were used in this study. The focus was to identify, describe and evaluate discipleship practices that would facilitate the effective discipling new members.

The goal was to identify and understand the underlying attitudes, values, and motivations of members, pastors, and even past members to then offer insight into the challenges of effectively discipling new members to reverse the tendency of their leaving shortly after they join the church.

The primary instruments used were questionnaires and personal interviews for present members, past members, and pastors of selected churches. However, focus groups of selected members and selected pastors were also employed.

### **Participants**

The participants for this study were the leaders, current members, and former members of the West Jamaica District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church. They naturally fell in these three categories and were grouped accordingly. The leaders of the organization including the District Superintendent, board members, and pastors of the

West Jamaica District were designated as Group Alpha (*Group A*). Leaders are strategically positioned by God in the organization to influence, lead, and implement change, hence their including in this study was critically important. The participants also included current members who have been in the church for more than ten years. These were designated as Group Delta (*Group Δ*). Finally, the participants also included former members of West Jamaica District designated as Group Sigma (*Group Σ*).

### **Instrumentation**

The instruments employed were focus groups, interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis. The two focus groups were labeled *Focus Group Alpha*, and *Focus Group Delta*. *Focus Group Alpha* consisted of selected leaders, and *Focus Group Delta* consisted of selected members who have been a part of the church for more than ten years. Additionally, face-to-face interviews were utilized in the research. I called these Preintervention Alpha Interviews (Pre-AI), Preintervention Delta Interviews (Pre-ΔI), and Preintervention Sigma Interviews (Pre-ΣI). In addition to these instruments, I used two Pre-intervention Questionnaires, namely, The Pre-intervention Alpha and Delta Questionnaire (Pre-AΔQ), and the Pre-intervention Sigma Questionnaire (Pre-ΣQ). Additionally, I also analyzed the Pastors Annual Service Report Forms which are private district documents.

### **Data Collection**

To understand the current status of discipleship practices within West Jamaica District, I investigated through focus groups, interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis. To understand the current status of discipleship practices within the West Jamaica District, I investigated through focus groups, interviews, questionnaires and

document analysis. I collected data from the leaders, current members, and former members of the district whom I invited to participate in the research. I collected the data in stages. In stage one I followed the proper ethical protocol in preparation for gathering the data.

In stage two, all participants in the categories Alpha (A), and Delta ( $\Delta$ ), were asked to complete the Pre-A $\Delta$ Q, while those in group Sigma ( $\Sigma$ ), were asked to complete the Pre- $\Sigma$ Q. These three-page questionnaires were designed to measure the effectiveness with which West Jamaica District discipled new converts. Questions 1 – 30 on the Pre-A $\Delta$ Q aimed at providing responses to research questions 1, 2, and 4, while questions 1 – 30 on the Pre- $\Sigma$ Q aimed at providing answers to research questions 1, 2, 3, and 4.

In the third stage of the process, I conducted one-on-one interviews with selected participants of all three categories: Alpha (A), Delta ( $\Delta$ ) and Sigma ( $\Sigma$ ). The Interviews aimed at clarifying responses to questions from the Pre- $\alpha\Delta$ Q and Pre- $\Sigma$ Q. They also aimed at providing further information related to all four research questions.

In the fourth stage of the data collection process, I discussed the issues facing the district with two focus groups: Focus Group Alpha and Focus Group Delta. I selected some of the leaders and members of the district and invited them to participate in the focus groups.

During the fifth and final stage of the data collection process I examined private district documents named the Pastor's Annual Service Report Forms.

### **Data Analysis**

According to Creswell, “qualitative data analysis primarily entails classifying things, persons, and events and the properties which characterize them” (258). In

qualitative research, several methods are available to analyze qualitative data (e.g., content analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, grounded theory). In this research however, though the data was collected using qualitative methods the analysis uses quantitative methods. A more detailed description of the data analysis is provided in chapter three.

### **Generalizability**

Though the project is contextually conditioned, focusing specifically on an issue facing the Western Jamaica District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church, it is not contextually bound. This is because the issue confronted in this project transcends denominational and geographical boundaries. It is not unique to this district or the Wesleyan Church. Wherever the church of Jesus Christ exists, and is actively engaged in fulfilling its mission and mandate, it needs to intentionally work to keep those won for Christ through discipleship.

### **Project Overview**

This project delineates best practices for discipling new members in the body of Christ. Chapter Two discusses the most influential writers and practitioners as it relates to discipleship practices. Chapter Three outlines the various ways the researcher investigated the research questions. Chapter Four provides an analysis of the findings that emerge from the collected from the focus groups, questionnaire, and one-on-one interviews. Chapter Five demarcates the major findings of the study with present and future implications for each discovery.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

Isaac Newton says, “If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants.” It is the most familiar English expression of the Latin phrase *nanos gigantum humeris insidentes* which expresses the meaning of “discovering truth by building on previous discoveries” (Chen 135-166).

Building on the work of Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Church*, this chapter lays the biblical and theological foundation for the project through a sustained emphasis and focus on the purposes of discipleship. The qualifier for what constitutes best practices for discipling new believers must ultimately be God’s eternal purposes for discipleship, or at least, be in alignment with these purposes.

Additionally, the chapter surveys pertinent literature of discipleship through three lenses: writers who focuses on the “what?” of discipleship; those that focus on the “how?” of discipleship; and those that focus on the “why?” of discipleship. Most writers focus on a combination of these approaches. The chapter also addresses the question of the relationship between the literature and the research design and concludes with a summary of the main themes, arguments and definitions pertaining to discipleship.

#### Biblical Foundations

Rick Warren, on the importance of being a purpose driven church says, “Nothing proceeds purpose ... until you know what your church exists for, you have no foundation, no motivation, and no direction for ministry” (81). The precedence that Warren accords to purpose provides not only the starting point for exploring the biblical foundation for

discipleship, but also offers a wonderful panorama of discipleship from God's perspective. Warren lists five purposes of the church, and the third is discipleship. I take Warren's approach one step further, and suggest looking at God's eternal purposes for discipleship. If nothing proceeds purpose, then an understanding of and the importance of discipleship are ultimately seen against its purposes. The Scriptures reveal three: 1. Discipleship functions as God's means of transmitting a legacy of faith for the purpose of winning people to God, or establishing faith in YHWH (Ps. 78:7; Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19); 2. Discipleship functions as God's means of nurturing and developing the believer for the purpose of bringing each to the "whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13); and 3. Discipleship functions as God's method for rescuing the world (Matt. 28:19-20). The pages of the Bible are replete with examples of discipleship with sustained emphasis on its purposes in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. A careful examination of how God has dealt with His people and the world reveals that these purposes form the best framework for understanding discipleship. They are the mold for the biblical foundation.

### **Discipleship Transmits and Establishes Faith**

Scripture reveals that discipleship functions as God's means of transmitting a legacy of faith for the purpose of turning people to God, or establishing faith in YHWH

#### *Discipleship in the Old Testament*

The question about examples of discipling relationships in the Old Testament that can be identified with those of the New Testament has generated much discussion.

Rengstorf concluded that there were no such relationships in the Old Testament. He explains, "If the term is missing, so, too, is that which it serves to denote. Apart from

formal relation of teacher and pupil, the OT, unlike the classical Greek world and Hellenism, has no master-disciple relation. Whether among the prophets or the scribes we seek in vain for anything corresponding to it” (427). On the other hand, scholars such as Martin Hengel argue otherwise. He, “was the first to affirm the existence of discipleship relationships in the Old Testament, noting how Josephus describes Elisha as a disciple of Elijah” (Marriner).

I agree with the views of Hengel and those who follow him. I propose an additional conceptual framework of discipleship in the Old Testament. This conceptual framework not only provides a biblical foundation for discipleship in the Old Testament but establishes a link between the discipleship found in both Testaments. The Apostle Paul says, “And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified” (Rom. 8:30). Here, says Grudem “Paul points to a definite order in which the blessings of salvation come to us... that in the actual outworking of his purpose in our lives, God ‘called’ us ... Then immediately lists justification and glorification, showing that these came after calling” (692). In the Old Testament, this “calling” is done through a legacy of faith passed on to successive generations, and in the New Testament through the gospel.

#### Discipleship as a Legacy of Faith in the Old Testament

While the word discipleship is not found in the Old Testament, the concept is embedded from the very beginning. God’s people were to pass on a legacy of faith to the following generation. The conceptual framework is that in the Old Testament discipleship is a legacy of faith, and it becomes the lens that focuses on discipleship in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament the phrase, *legacy of faith*, means the continued

transmission of divine truth to successive generations, for the purpose of establishing faith in Yahweh. The definition is helpful in that it refers to the content, function, and purpose of this legacy of faith and has critical components that later establish its relationship with the discipleship of the New Testament. The scriptures furnish several passages that serve as irrefutable evidence of such a bequest of faith. To be considered at appropriate places in this chapter is Moses farewell speech Deut. 30; Joshua's farewell speech in Joshua 24; Stephens's speech in Acts chapter 7 and Paul's speech in Acts 13.

The legacy of faith has a revelatory function and grows with each new revelation so that its content in sum is "knowledge of the LORD and the work which he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10). Throughout the course of Israel's history, several metaphors have been employed regarding the content of this legacy. It is referred to as: "the way of the LORD" (Gen. 18:19; Judges 2:22; 2 Kings 21:22; Pr. 10:29; Jer. 5:4, 5; Ezek. 18:25, 29; 33:17, 20); and "the fear of the Lord" (Joshua 4:24). The legacy of faith functions as Yahweh's means of transmitting divine truth to successive generations (Gen. 18:19; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 78:1-8 etc.), for the purpose of establishing faith in Yahweh (Ps 78:8). This legacy of faith is like a scarlet thread that weaves its way throughout the fabric of Old Testament history into the New, where it finds its full flowering in Acts 18:25. In the New Testament the legacy of faith or "the way of the Lord" (Gen. 18:19) has now grown to include God's ultimate and final revelation – the person and work of Jesus Christ. In the process of time the legacy of faith became known simply, in terms of its content, as the gospel (1 Corinthians 15: 1-4) and by its function as "the gospel call" (Matt. 11:28-30).



## Biblical Evidence for Discipleship as a Legacy of Faith in the Old Testament

The following are a select number of passages that require particular attention. They provide not only evidence for the claim of a bequest of faith, but they also shed significant light on content and reveal a similar function and purpose to the comparator New Testament discipleship.

***Genesis 18:19:*** “For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just by doing righteousness and justice; so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him” (Gen. 18:19).

This pre-Mosaic law era has one of the earliest pieces of evidence for a legacy of faith. Abraham’s election is for the purpose of passing on a legacy of faith. An inspired spiritual and ethical heritage was to be passed down orally within the home through generations. Abraham, as a condition of his election, was expected to pass on this legacy of faith not just to his children but his “household” which would also included servants (Gen. 15:2). In the words of Tidball, “The responsibility of passing on faith was firmly set in the context of the family and parents were not permitted to abdicate this responsibility in favor of a specialist teacher of religion” (41). Here, there is an intimate connection between Abraham’s responsibilities to transmit this legacy, his posterity’s keeping the way of the Lord, and Yahweh’s bestowing upon them and their children the richest spiritual and temporal blessings.

***Deuteronomy 6:1-9:*** Further evidence is provided by Deut. 6:1-9. Here again, God’s people are expected to pass on the legacy of faith, “You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by

the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deut. 6:7 NKJV). Several noticeable developments have taken place. The injunction is not to an individual as in Gen. 18:19, but to the whole community – Israel. The people of Israel, Gaebelein explains, “were not to concern themselves only with their own attitudes toward the Lord [v.6]. They were to concern themselves with impressing these attitudes on their children as well” (3:66). Thus, the continued transmission of the legacy of faith has developed to include communal responsibility. Another development relates to content. The legacy of faith has also grown with new revelation. Included now is Israel’s deliverance from Egypt (Deut. 6:21, 22) and the giving of the Law (Deut. 6:24; cf. Exod. 20). These new revelations of Yahweh’s dealing with his people were also to be transmitted to successive generations.

The method used to transmit this legacy has also developed. In addition to the oral transmission, Israel was instructed to write or record the legacy. Closely linked to method is the manner of transmission. The use of the Hebrew word for “teach” in verse seven is noteworthy. Roy B. Zuck points out that in the entire Old Testament, this interesting verb is used only nine times and usually means “to sharpen, to whet,” as a sword. Only once in these nine uses is it translated “teach” and that is here in Deut. 6:7, and being the Piel (intensive) form, is rightly rendered by the English words, “teach diligently” (294). Great care must be taken in carrying out this responsibility, for the metaphor used here, indicates the sort of effort that should characterize instruction, that it is to be done diligently, earnestly, and frequently. Only by this means would the passing on of the legacy be safeguarded.

***Psalms 78:1-8:*** Asaph in Ps. 78:1-6 paints a full picture of the legacy of faith in terms of past, present and future as God intends it. He spoke of the legacy received when he said he will speak of “What we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us” (v.3). He spoke to the present responsibility and duty to transmit this legacy of faith to the present generation when he said “We will not hide them from their children” (v.4). He also spoke of the future responsibility of the future generation to pass on this legacy of faith, when he said, “So the generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children” (v.6). In the words of Calvin, “by this means, all pretense of ignorance is removed; for it was the will of God that these things should be published from age to age without interruption; so that being transmitted from father to child in each family, they might reach even the last family of man” (230). This is the genius of God’s plan.

The purpose for the transmitting of this bequest of faith is revealed in verses seven and eight. Israel was expected to pass on this legacy so that each generation might “put their trust in God” (v.7), having a “steadfast heart, and a faithful spirit to God” (v.8). The functions and purpose of this legacy of faith is similar to what God had in mind for the comparator disciple-making imperative of the New Testament (Matt.28: 18-20).

***Joshua 4:21-24:*** Of significance also is Joshua 4:21-24. In addition to furnishing evidence for a legacy of faith (v.22), the veil is drawn back a bit further as it relates to the content and purpose of this bequest of faith. The content also includes acts of deliverance. Joshua said, “tell them, Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground. For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan just what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we

crossed over” (vv.22, 23). Joseph Benson concludes, “we may learn from the injunction here that ours is the indispensable duty to make familiar to our children the historical and doctrinal truths of our faith, from the earliest accounts we have of them in Scripture. Thus, laying a foundation for their faith.” (Benson).

As for the purpose, Joshua says “so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty; that ye might fear the Lord your God forever” (v.24). For the succeeding generations, the “... sight of [the stones] would call to mind the power and goodness of God, which would serve to keep an awe of his majesty on their mind, a due reverence of him and his greatness, and engage them to fear, serve, and worship him, who by such acts as these had abundantly showed himself to be the only true and living God, and the covenant God of them his people Israel” (Gill). The next generation was thus brought up in the nurture and admonishing of the Lord. They were fully aware of what He had said to and done for them. They were to be led both to love and fear Him, and to live to his glory. God’s grace towards Israel was not only shown so that “Israel may know”, it was shown also “that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is mighty” (v.24). This is an early reference to God’s heart for the nations, a glimpse of the scope of God’s mission. As a matter of fact, contrary to what many may believe, the Old Testament is replete with passages that reveal God’s heart for the nations. David declared that through the victory that God will grant him over the Goliath and Philistine army “all the world will know that there is a God in Israel” (1 Sam. 17:46-47). Isaiah prophesied that God would judge Israel’s enemies so “all mankind will know that I, the Lord, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob” (Isa. 49:26). God Himself also declared to Moses that “the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD,

when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt and bring out the people of Israelites out of it” (Exod. 7:5). Also of note in this passage is the phrase “that you might fear the Lord forever,” which is another way to say, “that they might keep the way of the Lord.”

**Joel 1:3:** The prophet said, “Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation” (Joel 1:3). In addition to providing evidence for a legacy of faith, the passage sheds significant light on the content of this legacy. The bequest of faith includes the Judgments of God. James B. Coffman rightly observes that “there is unmistakable allusion to Exodus 10:2” (Coffman) here, but Joel claims that the magnitude of the catastrophe in his day is incomparable with anything in the past. Gills stated the reason why the details of this disaster were to be remembered and passed on to succeeding generations, “that it may be a caution to future posterity” (John Gills). It is to be handed down from one generation to another as a caution, a deterrent to future generations about how they behave, lest they bring down the awful judgments on them.

Similar passages are found throughout the Old Testament, but these suffice as a sampling. The forgoing examples reveal not only that is discipleship found in the Old Testament but also that it was God’s means of turning succeeding generations to him. Discipling the present and succeeding generation was not a suggestion or recommendation. It was an injunction, an imperative from God, both to the individual and community. God expected the people to diligently and faithfully work towards establishing the faith of succeeding generations in God. There are striking similarities between the discipleship that we see in the Old Testament and what we see in the New.

### *Discipleship in the New Testament*

The more than three hundred occurrences of the word disciple and its other derivatives in the New Testament have left no doubts about its importance to God and to the life of the Church. Its importance, in the words of Michael Wilkins, New Testament professor of language and literature at Talbot School of Theology, is seen in the fact that “Disciple is the primary term used in the Gospels to refer to Jesus’ followers ...[occurring] at least 230 times in the Gospels and 28 times in Acts” (40). Bill Hull refers to discipleship as God’s primary work, when he says, “discipleship ranks as God’s top priority because Jesus practiced it and commanded us to do it, and his followers continued to do it” (*Complete* 25). In the field of church growth, not only is discipleship listed as one of the purposes of the Church, but it is front and center in the discussion about the process. The importance of discipleship however, rest not in the testimonies of men but ultimately in the eternal purposes of God.

### Discipleship as a Legacy of Faith in the New Testament

Discipleship in the Old Testament has a biblical basis for understanding it as a legacy of faith. The chapter now considers the biblical evidence for discipleship as a legacy of faith in the New Testament. Three important passages of scripture make clear the connection and relationship between the Old and New Testament. They are Isaiah 59:21, John 1:23 and Acts 18:24-26.

The significance of Isaiah 59:21 is seen in two respects. First, that this is a prophecy about the New Testament age is the foregone conclusion. Second, is an observation made by John Calvin that in this passage “God has testified by the prophet

Isaiah that the same [i.e., the transmission of a legacy of faith] is to be observed under the New Testament dispensation” (232).

The significance of John 1:23 can only be understood against its historical context. George Eldon Ladd, professor of New Testament at Fullers Theological Seminary, explain,

God usually speaks through the prophets to his people for various reasons: to make his will known, to interpret the reason for their oppression by the Gentiles, to condemn their sins, to call for national repentance, to assure judgment if repentance was not given or to promise deliverance when the nation responded. For more than 400 years however, this living voice of prophecy had been stilled. Then suddenly, to a people charting under the rule of a pagan nation, a new prophet appeared with the announcement, “the kingdom of God is near (31-32).

It is within this context that John further declared, “I am the voice of one calling in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord” (Jn.1:23). After 400 years, the old metaphor of Genesis 18:19 – “the way of the Lord” resurfaces, only this time God was about to add a full and final revelation as it relates to what this “way” is, in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

It is not a coincidence that Jesus would later say of himself, “I am the “way” ...” (Jn. 14:6), and the writer of Hebrews said that Jesus’ broken body is the “new and living way” for us to enter the Most Holy Place (Hebrews 10:19–20). Luke refers to the earliest followers of Jesus Christ as simply those of “the Way” (Acts 9:2). Though the followers of Christ were first called Christians in Acts 11:26, “the Way” is Luke’s favorite expression in referring to the followers of Jesus Christ in the book of Acts. Luke says that

in Ephesus, some “publicly maligned the Way...” (Acts 19:9); that a stir arose in Asia “concerning *the Way*” (Acts 19:23); that Paul testified of persecuting *this Way*” (Acts 22:4); that before Felix, Paul testifies that according to *the Way*, he worship the God of our fathers (Acts 24: 14); and that Felix had accurate knowledge of the Way (Acts, 24:22). Considering this, the discussion now makes a final link between the Old and New Testament passages.

In the book of Acts a Jew by the name of Apollos had been “instructed in *the way of the Lord* and spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and expounded to him “*the way of God more accurately*” (Acts 18:24-26 *emphasis mine*). Here, God’s ultimate revelation in the person and work of Jesus Christ has become synonymous with “the way of the Lord”, the metaphor of Gen.18:19.

In sum, the continued transmission of divine truth to successive generations – “the way of the Lord” or a legacy of faith, according to the prophet Isaiah was to continue in the New Testament dispensation (Isa. 59:21). After four hundred years, the old metaphor resurfaces with John pointing to a full and final development in the legacy (John 1:23), which according to Luke in the book of Acts has not only grown to include the person and work of Jesus Christ but also has become synonymous with the person and work of Jesus Christ (Acts 18:24-24).

#### Biblical Evidence for Discipleship as a Legacy of Faith in the New Testament

As the Church moved forward in history, this later development gained the ascendancy and became the legacy, the divine truth that must be preached to all nations.



**John 17:6-8 and Matthew 28:20:** The earliest evidence of the legacy of faith in the New Testament are found in the ministry of Jesus. John 17:6-8 and Matt. 28:20, for example, reveal clearly that Jesus passed on a legacy of faith to his disciples and commanded them to pass it on to others. Jesus says, “For I gave them the words You have given Me...” (Jn. 17:8), and later he told them to teach all nations “to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt.28:20). Here, what Jesus received from His Father was transmitted to his disciples whom he commanded to teach others.

**Acts 3:11-26:** Further evidence surfaces in Acts 3:11-26. Here, Luke provides not only an example of the legacy of faith being transmitted, but reveals its content, function, and purpose. Luke records Peter saying “Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. And you are the heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him to you first to bless by turning each of you from your wicked ways” (24-26). This passage is both a connection of continuity with the legacy of faith transmitted in the Old testament, and irrefutable evidence of a similar purpose for transmission - “to turn each of you from your wicked ways” (26), the exact purpose for which the legacy was transmitted in the Old Testament.

**Acts 13: 16-41:** One of the finest examples of the legacy of faith in the New Testament, especially as it relates to content, is to be found in Acts 13:16-41. Paul began with a reference to “their fathers”, Israel’s sojourn and deliverance from Egypt (17), and of Israel’s time in the wilderness (18). He then spoke at length about Israel’s time in the Promised Land, with brief references to Saul and David, declaring Jesus as not only the

posterity of the latter but Israel's promised Savior (19-23). He spoke of John the Baptist's ministry and testimony about this promised Savior, and also about Jesus' trial, death, and burial (24-29). He again, spoke at length about Jesus' resurrection (30-37), and the consequent preaching of the gospel in light of the revelation (38-41). Thus, beginning with "their fathers" (v.17) he traces God's dealing with His people throughout the ages to His present dealings with them in the person and work of Jesus Christ, and the consequent call of God through the gospel.

**1 John 1:1-5:** On this Christological note, John opens his letter in 1 John 1:1-5. The legacy he intends to transmit here is deeply rooted in his personal experience and his firsthand or experiential knowledge of Christ (1:1). He spoke of the legacy he had received, "This is the message we have heard from him..." (1:1b, 3a, 5a), and his present responsibility to transmit the legacy, "and testify to it, and declare to you..." (1:2b; 5b). The purpose for the passing on of this legacy of faith is clearly stated in 1:3. John says, "that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, *so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ*" (*emphasis mine*). It was John's desire that they might share the same views of Jesus Christ which he had and experience the same hope and joy.

**2 Timothy 2:2:** In contributing to this body of literature, the apostle Paul writes to Timothy, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Tim. 2:2). Here, like Psalm 78:1-8 the legacy of faith is laid bare in its entirety in terms of past, present and future. The verse speaks of the legacy of faith Timothy received from the Apostle – "the things that you have heard from me"; it also speaks of Timothy's present responsibility to

transmit same - “entrust to reliable men”; and finally, to the future responsibility of faithful men “to teach others.” Paul knew that solid transmission of the faith would not occur rapidly through speaking to an audience. Rather, in his exhortation here, he used a personal style to link the gospel to future generations. Jamieson et al. conclude that “Thus, the way is prepared for inculcating the duty of faithful endurance (2 Timothy 2:3-13). Thou shouldest consider as a motive to endurance, that thou hast not only to keep the deposit for thyself, but to transmit it unimpaired to others, who in their turn shall fulfil the same office” (Jamieson). As was the case in the Old Testament so it is here in the New Testament. The baton of faith was to be passed from one generation to the next. The mediums through which this legacy was transmitted largely remain the same in both Old and New Testaments: through the family (compare Gen. 18:19& Eph. 6:4), through the community (compare Deut. 4:1-6 & Eph. 4:11-16), and through relationships (Elijah-Elisha; Paul-Timothy). In this way, as the torch is passed on, the light of the knowledge of God in Christ shines on everyone everywhere, confronting every generation. In the words of Robertson, “Paul taught Timothy who will teach others who will teach still others, an endless chain of teacher-training and gospel propaganda” (Robertson). “Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us run the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1). The current generation has the present responsibility to tell the next generation; to run with the message.

Thus far, the biblical evidence from both the Old and New Testament is clear. Discipleship is found in both Testaments not only in the discipleship relationships that existed but when understood as legacy of faith that was to be transmitted from one generation to the next. The comparative analysis of these discipleship enterprises, reveals

similarity in content, (all God's dealings with his people); in function – God's means of transmitting the legacy of faith); as well as purpose – that of establishing faith in Yahweh). The second contention in this discussion is now considered.

### **Discipleship Nurtures and Develops Believers**

Discipleship functions as God's means of nurturing and developing the believer for the purpose of bringing each to the "whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13).

The Scriptures consistently emphasize the importance of growth and maturity. The scriptures say that Jesus himself "grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Paul expects and exhorts the believer to "grow up in Him who is the Head, that is, Christ" (Eph. 4:15). The writer of the Hebrews likewise urges us to "leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity..." (Heb. 6:1). Peter exhorts his readers to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). This is because God's goal, is for us to be conformed to the image of Christ. Paul writes "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son ..." (Rom. 8:29). He also says that the new nature we have put on "is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator" (Col. 3:10), and that "We all ... are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory ..." (2 Cor. 3:18). "Just as we have borne the image of likeness of the earthly man, so we shall bear the likeness of the man from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:49). Though the process is an ongoing one, marked by periods of acquisition and consolidation, the purpose is clear – every believer is to be "conformed to the image of Christ." It is God's will that every believer be

developed until each reach maturity, and His plan in accomplishing this is through discipleship.

Matthew 28:19-20 is a key passage. A basic understanding of the grammatical structure of the Great Commission (Matt.28:19-20) supports this conclusion. McIntosh explains, “The command to make disciples is accompanied by three other verbs in the form of participles, [going, baptizing, and teaching] ... Baptizing and teaching logically follow the imperative to “make disciples,” and these parallel participles describe the means by which disciples are made” (*Biblical* 65). Of significance here is the tense of the verb forms. David Allan Black points out that, “the aorist is the normal or “unmarked” aspect in Greek, [that] a deviation from the aorist to another aspect is generally exegetically significant” (13). Here, the two words are in the present tense, “which indicates that baptizing of all new converts is to be a continual event and teaching them is to be an ongoing process. Baptizing implies a bonding of new believers to Christ and his Church, while teaching implies the continual maturation of all believers as they are taught all things” (McIntosh *Biblical* 66). Because the growing process is an ongoing one as said earlier, the means by which this is accomplished must also be perpetuated.

Ephesians 4:11-14 is another key passage. Further support for the conclusion that it is God’s plan for every believer to maturity is found in the fourth chapter of the letter to the Ephesians. Here, immediately following the mention of formal offices of the church (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers), the Apostle Paul explains that God has so resourced the Church “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of

Christ” (Eph. 4:12-13). These formal church leaders have a primary responsibility of facilitating the growth and development of every believer. “They are given to build up the Christians so that they also can do the work of God. This will help Christians individually and the church as a whole to grow in maturity towards the perfection and fulness that is found in Christ himself” (Fleming 574).

An article entitled *A Culture of Discipleship* by the Worldwide Discipleship Association Alumni further explains that Ephesians 4 also shows a second element to discipleship, which is a “culture of discipleship – the mutual discipleship of the Body, where all the saints are equipped for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all grow up into maturity in Christ, every part doing its share” (WDA “Culture”). In other words, herein we see the communal responsibility where the church is equipped “for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Eph.4:12) to play its part in the nurturing and development of believers.

### **Discipleship Functions as God’s Method in Rescuing the World**

The biblical material will further demonstrate that the pages of the inspired writings bear witness to a God who is actively involved in history, intentionally working to rescue the world. However, any faithful discussion of the Bible’s view on the God’s method of rescuing the world must include a discussion of key passages of central moments in the history of revelation as indicated by the writers of Scripture. Of seminal importance in the Old Testament are Gen. 3:15; 12:1-3.

God said, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Gen. 3:15). This verse is considered of critical importance for the understanding of the first human

crisis. Many scholars agree that herein lies the first observable step by God to rescue the world, what scholars refer to as *Protevanglium* – the first mention of the good news of salvation in the Bible. It is an interpretation of the text that according to Martin stretches as far back to the 3rd century B.C. with “the LXX as the earliest evidence of such an individual messianic interpretation, along with that of the two Palestinian Targums (Pseudo-Jonathan and the so-called Fragment Targum)” (427). The passage, however, is not without its difficulties. Kaiser Jr. explains,

clearly the noun translated “he” or “it” (“she” in one translation!) is a masculine singular independent personal pronoun in the Hebrew. But the problem comes from the fact that Hebrew employs a grammatical gender agreeing with its masculine antecedent, “seed” (*zera*) whereas English employs the natural gender. The contention, therefore, is that the only proper translation of the Hebrew *hû*’ would be “it” or “they.” (Kaiser 36).

The question then becomes, Are the “seed” and “he” collective, or is either singular? The foregoing observation by Kaiser Jr. and other theologians have resulted in many plausible and justifiable arguments against a messianic interpretation, but the subsequent history of revelation reveals from “Gen. 4:1 to Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants that a representative child continued to be both God’s visible guarantee for the present and a pledge for the future” (Kaiser Jr. 37). Dobson echoes this position saying, “An examination of the genealogies shown in the Old Testament will reveal this redemptive line of Eve's *seed* beginning with Seth, through whose lineage Jesus would come (Gen. 4:25-5:1-32; 10:22; 11:10-26; Matt. 1:1-16)” (37). It is not just the reflection of scholars that warrants such an interpretation of the text however, the

bible itself says to read it retrospectively in light of the resurrection (Jn. 2:13-22; Luke 24:13-35). I must therefore agree with Haines that “When this verse is viewed in the light of the Christian gospel, it is impossible not to see a veiled reference to Christ, the God-man who was indeed the *seed* of the woman, and by whose death and resurrection man is redeemed and Satan defeated” (38). Additionally, Paul clarifies this concept of “Seed” as referring to Jesus when he states, “The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say ‘and to seeds,’ meaning many people, but ‘and to your seed,’ meaning one person, who is Christ” (Gal. 3:16). Galatians 4:4-5 reveals the fulfillment of that promised redeemer, “When the fullness of time was come God sent forth his son born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those under the Law...” which further alludes to the redemptive purpose of that promised seed, who would defeat the enemy Satan.

In the very moment of judgment, the sovereignty and the grace of God were clearly revealed. God had designed man for fellowship with Himself and even rebellion and sin were not going to thwart the grand design. John H. Walton writes, “Evangelical theologies have consistently viewed redemption as being the focal point of the entire Bible” (16). “God has a plan in history that he is sovereignly executing. The goal of that plan is for him to be in relationship with the crown of his creation. God’s purpose is to redeem and bless his people, with the ultimate intent of bringing glory to himself” (Walton 24). Considering this conclusion within evangelical circles and the importance of discipleship, the question of the place of discipleship in the grand scheme of things is unavoidable.



Bill Hull says, “The Great Commission launches a rescue mission” (*Complete* 26), which while helpful and insightful does not do justice to the legacy of faith handed down to the current generation. The rescue mission to which Hull refers, did not begin with the Great Commission, its genesis can be traced back to the book of Genesis, and can only be understood against the background of God’s original design and the Fall recorded in Genesis chapters one to three. The Great Commission does not mark the launch of God’s mission to rescue the world as Hull claims. The Great Commission signals a new development in the mission which began at Genesis 3:15. What happened at Matthew 28:19-20 therefore is best understood against the background of what the apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:19-20, that “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ ... and *has committed to us* the message of reconciliation ...” (*emphasis mine*), resulting in us becoming ambassadors for Christ. The new development in God’s mission to rescue the world is that Christ has now called us to partner with Him in this mission, by entrusting to us the message of reconciliation, and has in the process revealed his method for accomplishing this which is discipleship.

In the New Testament then, discipleship serves yet another equally important purpose, which shows how it fits in God’s ultimate mission since creation to reconcile the world to Himself. In addition to discipleship being God’s means of establishing faith in Him and developing the believer, discipleship is God’s method for rescuing the world.

### **Theological Foundations**

Several basic theological postulates serve as underpinnings of a theory of discipleship. These are not unique to discipleship, but a restatement of basic theological assumptions that provide a focus for continued study and action. The research therefore

established a theological framework for discipleship, around its purposes using these themes:

1. Discipleship and a theology of the good shepherd
2. Discipleship and a theology of the Holy Spirit (*pneumatology*)
3. Discipleship and a theology of grace
4. Discipleship and a theology of salvation (*soteriology*)

### **Discipleship and A Theology of the Good Shepherd**

G. A. Smith writes,

On some high moor, across which at night hyenas howl, when you meet him, sleepless, far-sighted, weather-beaten, armed, leaning on his staff, and looking out over his scattered sheep, everyone on his heart, you understand why the shepherd of Judea sprang to the front in his people's history; why they gave his name to their king, and made him the symbol of Providence; why Christ took him as the type of self-sacrifice (210).

The forgoing quote from Smith epitomizes the special significance attached to the shepherd imagery in the life of Israel. The import accorded to this imagery is evidenced by the recurring presence of the metaphor across the biblical landscape, transcending the boundaries or genre and an obdurate refusal to be confined to any single epoch. This persistence says Laniak, is due, in part, "to Israel's foundational story, which took place in a real wilderness" (75). Notably, Moses and David are both called from tending flocks to become the shepherd of God's people. "These two figures are leadership prototypes, ... extensions of the divine shepherd who leads the covenant community by their hands" (75).

This metaphor however is not unique to Israel; it also transcends ethnic and geographical boundaries. Historically, the representation of ruler and subject “by means of the image of shepherd and flock is well known through all the ancient East” (Eichrodt 469). While an immersion in the sights and sounds and smells of ancient shepherd life, or an exploration of the shepherd imagery in ancient Near Eastern societies would undoubtedly be helpful in the understanding of the earliest references to shepherds in the Bible, the constraints of this project will not allow for such an undertaking. Instead, the paper focuses on the area pertinent to this research – the role of the shepherd, especially as it relates to the purposes of discipleship. The shepherd’s role as we see it in scriptures though multifaceted can be summed up in the purposes of discipleship. Derek Tidball’s comments on Ezekiel 34 support this conclusion. In his view, “Ezekiel 34 presents God's unchanging manifesto for the ministry and serves as an impressive and appealing call to all who are Shepherds to fulfill their obligations and consider their priorities in evangelism, restoration, teaching, encouraging, and feeding; all of which are aspects of the shepherd's role” (47). Tidball’s conclusion captures in its entirety the process of discipleship.

In drawing from the wealth of the shepherd imagery through the pages of scripture, the biblical survey begins by looking at the divine shepherd. Only by understanding the divine shepherd, can the role of His under-shepherds be discerned. All other shepherds are extensions of the divine shepherd.

One of the earliest references to Yahweh as shepherd is found in Genesis 48. Here, Jacob spoke of “the God who has been my Shepherd all my life to this day” (Gen.48:15). “It was an affirmation about God to which not only Jacob, but all the people

of God in the Old Testament would gladly have assented” (Tidball 31). One of the most familiar psalms in the Old Testament begins “The Lord is my shepherd...” (Ps.23:1). In Psalm 80:1 the psalmist invokes the Lord as “O Shepherd of Israel.” And in Isaiah 40:10-11, Isaiah prophesies that the sovereign Lord will “tend his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart” (Mounce 644). The Bible, however, does more than just speak of YHWH as shepherd, it portrays Him as the model shepherd. YHWH as Israel’s shepherd executes all the roles of a good shepherd. He is pictured as a shepherd who seeks out his own scattered sheep (Ezek. 34:12),

“carrying in his bosom animals which cannot keep up, and mindful of the sheep which have young ... (Isa. 40:11; cf. Gen. 33:13; Ps. 28:9) ... In the song of Moses, YHWH as a shepherd leads his people to safe pastures (Exod. 15:13, 17), and later reflection on this event shows Him as a powerful leader driving out the other nations and making room for his own flock (Ps. 78:52-55, 70-72) (Freedman et. al. 5:1189).

The most beautiful depiction of YHWH as the model shepherd, however, is found in Psalm 23, wherein loyalty and devotion to an individual sheep is portrayed.

The model shepherd, however, became the rejected shepherd (1 Sam. 8:4-22). The shepherd imagery is sometimes applied to the national leaders of Israel, such as David (2 Sam.5:2; 7:7; Ps. 78:72), “even though God was always their principal shepherd” (Freedman et. al. 5:1189). Using such a term for a king is understandable because shepherds, like kings, were expected to care for their sheep, feed them, and protect them from danger (cf. 1 Sam. 17:34-35). God even calls king Cyrus “my shepherd” (Isa. 44:28)” (Mounce 644). Consequently, when Israel rejected God as their

king, they essentially rejected their principal shepherd. Shepherd-leaders were appointed in YHWH's stead, but they failed miserably (Ezek. 34:1-10). As a result, the rejected Shepherd, became the promised Shepherd. In several Old Testament passages God promises that he will take over the shepherding of his people because of the failure of Israel's shepherd-leaders (Isa. 40:10-11; Ezek. 34:11-16, 23), thus, in the fullness of time, the promised shepherd became the present shepherd (Jn. 10:11). Implicitly, the synoptic gospels record Jesus as saying that he is this new shepherd of God's people (Matt. 9:36; 26:31; Luke. 15:4-7); and John 10:11, 14 records Jesus calling himself "the good shepherd. As such, he stands in stark contrast to the hired hand (Jn. 10:12-13). Having a vested interest in the well-being of his sheep, he protects and keeps them (1 Sam. 17:34-35; Jn. 17:12). He cares for the weakest flock (Luke. 15:3-7). In fact, so great was the extent and depth of his love that he laid down his life for them (Jn. 10:11). In this way says Mounce, "Jesus fulfills those OT prophecies about the coming shepherd for God's flock who will care for his sheep in a way that human leaders have not (Jer. 23:1-6)" (645).

The present shepherd is also the eschatological shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 7:14-17). The shepherd imagery runs from Genesis to Revelation. It is an imagery of the old age, the present messianic age, and the eschatological age. God is the shepherd that was, and is, and is to come. This biblical portrait of the divine shepherd, the model shepherd brings understanding to the roles of His under-shepherds.

#### *The Role to Seek for the Lost Sheep*

The evangelistic role of the shepherd is clearly taught in Ezekiel 34. The Lord speaks, and judgment is declared against the kings – the shepherds of the flock of

Israel—for their self-serving failures (v. 3). God’s indictment is that they have failed in their task as shepherds. In Lloyd’s words “on a dark lonely hillside with sounds of the night all around, the ‘sheep of Israel’ were lost” (358). Among other things therefore, God chides Israel’s leaders as shepherds who have not sought the “lost” sheep (v.4), and after this rebuke, promises that he himself will seek his “lost” sheep (v 16). Martin Bucer’s exposition of the pastoral task conforms to the teachings of these verses and supports this conclusion. He saw the responsibilities of the ministry as: 1. “To draw to Christ those who are alienated” (67), and 2. “To lead back those who have been drawn away” (68).

In the New Testament, Matthew picks up the shepherd metaphor in the second chapter of his gospel with the same evangelistic thrust of Ezekiel 34, signaling the pending fulfillment of the prophecy. The angel of the Lord had already indicated the salvific significance of Jesus when he directed Joseph to “call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). Now in a quote which seems to be a composite of Micah 5:2 and 2 Sam. 5:2, Matthew tells us that from Judah “will come a leader, who will shepherd my people Israel.” Matthew 2:6, alludes to Ezekiel 34:23 and Ezekiel 34:30-31 which makes explicit that “my people Israel” are God’s sheep.

Jesus, in describing himself as “the good shepherd” (John 10:1-21), echoes the images of Ezekiel 34. In the words of Tidball, “it is clear that Jesus brings to a climax the wealth of imagery in the Old Testament regarding the shepherd and especially what is found in Ezekiel 34 and Isaiah 53. At the same time, he adds new depth and new dimension to the motif” (85).

The shepherd par excellence Jesus Christ declared himself “the Good Shepherd” (Jn. 10:11, 14), and upon “seeing the crowds, felt compassion for them...for they were like sheep not having a shepherd” (Matt. 9:36). He also declared that he was sent to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15:24), “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10). Note, the terms “lost sheep” and “house of Israel” both occur in Ezekiel 34, so that, after he has set up over them his Davidic shepherd (v 23), the “house of Israel” will know that they are truly God's sheep (vv. 30-31).

Of note also is the Good Shepherd's expansion of the “shepherd metaphor to include his disciples, as he commissions them in Matthew 10:6-8 to go “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (cf. Ezek. 34:4, 30), and to preach and heal. In the words of Heil, “the shepherd metaphor then reaches its climax in the Gospel's final scene where Jesus completes the disciples commissioning as his fellow shepherds equipped to preach and heal (10:7-8) by empowering them to ‘teach’ all peoples ‘to observe all that I have commanded you’ (28:20)” (707). The disciples, Jesus' under-shepherds, would later extend the shepherd metaphor to include the elders with the injunction to “be shepherds of God's flock ...” (1 Pet. 5:2), which identifies another role of the shepherd.

#### *The Role to Nurture and Care for the Sheep*

Ezekiel 34 reveals a further role of the shepherd— to nurture through feeding and caring for the sheep. Verses three and four of the chapter rebukes the shepherds for not feeding or caring for the sheep. Eichrodt sees the consumption of the milk and meat produced by the flock and the use of its wool for clothing as being well within the rights of the Shepherd (v.3). However, he argues that “the enjoyment of this right must go side by side with the duty of caring for the flock and faithfully providing for its pasture,

otherwise that right becomes a crying injustice” (470). “The primary verbs for shepherding (Heb. *rā’āh*; Gk. *poimaino*) can mean feeding, leading (i.e., to pasture) and general tending (oversight),” consequently, “The condition and growth of a flock depends greatly on the care, attentiveness and skill of the shepherd” (Laniak, 53). The shepherds of Israel have failed miserably at this responsibility to the sheep. By contrast, God says, “I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep.... I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak ...” (Ezek. 34: 11-16). What were needed were shepherds like that of Psalm 23. In the words of Keller, “Psalm 23 might well be called ‘David’s Hymn of Divine Diligence.’ For the entire poem goes on to recount the manner in which the Good Shepherd spares no pains for the welfare of His sheep” (Keller, 21). In the Old Testament, the shepherd has an indispensable duty and responsibility to nurture, feed, and care for the sheep.

In the New Testament, the Great Shepherd of the sheep Jesus Christ (Heb. 13:20), pointed to Himself as fulfilling this duty (John 10:22-30). To the question “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly” (v.22). Jesus responded, “The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me.” What are the works? Healing and feeding (Lk. 7:22), precisely the work of the good shepherd, and in direct contrast to the shepherds of Ezek. 34:3-4, who “have not strengthened the weak . . . have not healed the sick . . . have not bound up the injured . . . have not brought back the strayed ... have not sought the lost.” At present, Christians experience these eschatological blessings but it is also their eschatological hope. “For the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any



scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life..." (Rev. 7:15-17).

That Jesus spared no pains in caring for his disciples is a truth born out in John 17:12 as well. Frank E. Gaebelein explains:

In reviewing his care of them to date, He used two different words: "protected" and "kept them safe." The former *tereo* (thre,w) is applied to persons in the sense of "preserve", with the implication of defense. The latter *phyllasso* (fula,ssw) means "to guard," "protect," or "observe conventions." *Tereo* has the sense of protection by conservation; *phyllasso*, by defense against external attack. Jesus stated that he had kept safely all the disciples except Judas. (Gaebelein, 9:164)

Jesus not only *called* his disciples, but he also kept and cared for them, and as the time of his departure drew closer, He commended them to the keeping care of the Father (Jn.17:15).

The Apostles then commissioned elders to care for God's flock (Acts 20:28-30). Here the apostle Paul exhorts the Ephesian elders in light of what he sees will soon take place in the church. He warns regarding persecution from outside and apostasy within, by giving the elders the solemn imperative of verse twenty-eight. The word used here is *poimaino* (poimai,w), and the word applies not only to the act of feeding a flock, but also to that of protecting, guiding, and guarding it. As used here by the apostle, this word makes explicit the role of God's under-shepherds. Theirs are the solemn duty and responsibility not only to properly instruct the church, but also to govern it, securing it from enemies, and of directing its affairs so as to promote its edification and peace. Other

passages such as 1 Peter 5:2 and Ephesians 4:11 give a similar injunction to the leaders to nurture, feed and care for the sheep. The shepherd's role in God's plan to reconcile the world to himself is now discussed.

*The Role to Equip God's flock for the Work of Ministry*

What is the role of the shepherd in God's mission to rescue the world? The shepherd's role in God's mission to rescue the world is to, in a very personal way, seek the lost sheep. In both Old and New Testaments, the shepherd is expected to fulfill this responsibility. This personal engagement on the part of the shepherd is also seen in Jesus' command to his under-shepherds to "go" (πορευθέντες) and make disciples of all peoples (Matt. 28:19). The scope of the mission here as opposed to that of Matt. 10:6 is also worthy of note. It is the same universalistic tone that is sounded in John 10:16. "The flock is not confined to the Jews and can never be permitted to indulge in self-centeredness. As with Jesus, the true shepherd must always be extending his care beyond the boundaries of any particular fold so that others outside can be incorporated into it" (Tidball, 86). It is precisely this universalistic emphasis that brings into sharp focus another vital role of the shepherd in God's mission to rescue the world.

In addition to his personal hands-on engagement in the mission, the shepherd has the responsibility to equip God's flock for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:11). The word translated "pastors" (ποιμένως), literally means "shepherds." In the words of John Eadie "The idea contained in ποιμήν is common in the Old Testament. The image of a shepherd with his flock, picturing out the relation of a spiritual ruler and those committed to his charge..." (Eadie). The shepherds of Ephesians 4:11 are therefore tied to the role of "equipping the saints for the work of ministry" (4:12a). God has therefore resourced the

church with these gifted leaders for the purpose of preparing the rest of the saints to minister and so build up the body of Christ, the church. As Thomas Constable explains,

Equipping (Gr. *katartismos*) means preparing, mending, or restoring people to their proper use (Galatians 6:1; cf. Matthew 4:21; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Hebrews 13:21). The role of these leaders is to minister the Word to the saints in the church so the saints can minister the Word in the world (cf. 1 Timothy 3:15). All the saints should participate in service, not just the leaders. (Constable)

In God's mission to rescue the world, shepherds have the vital role of equipping God's flock for the work of ministry. In Christ the chief Shepherd, God was reconciling the world to himself and has now entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us (2 Cor. 5:19-20; 1 Pet. 5:4). The shepherds have a critical role to play in this ministry of reconciliation, a vital role in God's mission to rescue the world. The shepherd must not only personally engage in this mission but also has the critical responsibility to equip for the work of ministry the saints (Eph. 4:12) who are God's flock (1 Pet. 5:2) and Christ's ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20).

### **Discipleship and A Theology of the Holy Spirit (*pneumatology*)**

The Christian view of the Holy Spirit is that He is the third member of the Godhead, which includes God the Father, and God the Son. The peril of polytheism was so great in Old Testament times that the major emphasis in the Old Testament is on the unity of God, as expressed in the Hebrew name *Elohim*. Now,

in the Old Testament, the presence of God was many times manifested in the glory of God and in theophanies, and in the gospels Jesus himself manifested the

presence of God among men. But after Jesus ascended into heaven, and continuing through the entire church age, the Holy Spirit is now the primary manifestation of the presence of the Trinity among us and is the one most prominently present with us now. (Grudem 634).

As is with the Father and the Son, the Spirit has many roles. In each role, however, the Holy Spirit is said to act only on behalf of the other members of the Trinity. He leads (Isa. 48:16; Matt. 4:1; Acts 8:29), assures (Rom. 8:16; 1 John. 3:24), intercedes according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26), initiates into the body of Christ, illuminates, and transforms all to the glory of the Father and the Son. Traditionally, the wide variety of roles that the Spirit fulfills has given way to a great deal of confusion within the church about what exactly our interactions with the Spirit should look like. However, under consideration here is His role in connection with discipleship. The importance of the person and work of the Holy Spirit to the discipleship process cannot be overstated. In fact, no discussion about discipleship is complete without looking at the role of the Spirit in the process. Discipleship as we see it in bible serves three purposes. A full understanding, therefore, of the role of the Holy Spirit as it pertains to discipleships necessitates looking at the Spirit's role in relation to each of these three purposes.

*The Role of the Holy Spirit in Turning People to Faith through a Legacy of Faith*

Discipleship in the Old Testament is seen as a legacy of faith that was transmitted orally and in written form, so that successive generations might put their trust in Yahweh. Currently theologians have seen a renewed emphasis upon the doctrine that God has taken the initiative in the redemption of men and that the Holy Spirit is involved in the entire process of salvation and by extension discipleship, from beginning to end. Two

critical questions must be answered at this point: 1. In the Old Testament, was the Holy Spirit involved in the continued transmission of the legacy of faith? 2. Did the Holy Spirit assist or aid successive generations to put their trust in YHWH? With just about “86 references to the Spirit of God or the Spirit of the Lord in the Old Testament” (Purkiser 166), this might be a daunting task, but it must be undertaken.

In response to the first question, it is difficult to pinpoint the role of the Spirit as it pertains to discipleship in the Old Testament, but it is not hard to conceive of His involvement in the process, since “from the very beginning of creation we have an indication that the Holy Spirit’s work is to complete and sustain what God the Father has planned and what God the Son has begun, Gen. 1:2” (Grudem 635). A veiled reference however, to the Holy Spirit’s involvement in the transmission of the legacy of faith is found in the book of 2 Peter. Peter tells us that “men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21), and further that Noah was a “preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet. 2:5). As a matter of fact, some scholars view “Noah’s preaching” as one of the ways the Spirit strove with man in the antediluvian world (Gen. 6:3). Further, in Joshua 24:1-28 the Holy Spirit was involved in the continued transmission of divine truth even in this early stage of the oral and written transmission. Here, Joshua faithfully transmitted the legacy of faith. He was a man “in whom is the spirit” (Num.27:18) and a man “full of the spirit of wisdom” (Deut. 34:9). A final bit of evidence comes from Micah 3:8. Here the prophet declared, “But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.” The Holy Spirit was imaginatively and

dynamically involved in continued transmission of divine truth to successive generations. The second question is now discussed.

Did the Holy Spirit assist or aid successive generations to put their trust in YHWH? The short answer is yes. The clearest evidence that He was, is found in Gen. 6:3 where God says, “My Spirit will not always strive with man.” Of importance here is the word “strive.” Greathouse notes that the Holy Spirit: “...is present... not only as the sustaining power of the world, but also as a disturbing moral influence in the lives of sinful men. The Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit” (42).

The New Testament has no difficulty in demonstrating the Holy Spirit’s role in discipleship. More specifically, it has no difficulty in establishing His role in the transmitting of the legacy of faith and the enabling of man to respond positively to this legacy. This is so because, “the entire biblical concept of the Spirit receives its clarification in the New Testament when the age of the Spirit dawned at last. Here we find the personality of the Holy Spirit clearly shown, and the scope of His ministry in the Church and in the world set forth” (Purkiser 170).

The books of Luke-Acts are the logical points of departure because more than any other New Testament author Luke speaks of the Spirit of God. The Spirit is the connecting thread which runs through both Luke and Acts. Merrill C. Tenney points out that in terms of doctrinal emphasis in the Gospel of Luke, “the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is given special prominence; in fact, there are more references to the Holy Spirit in Luke than there are in Matthew and Mark combined. All of the chief actors of the Gospel were empowered for their work by the Holy Spirit, and the whole life of Jesus was lived by the Spirit (1:35; 3:22; 4:1; 4:14, 18; 10:21)” (*New Testament* 184-185). Through these unique

portrayals of Christ's public ministry, Luke highlights the important role of the Spirit in the life of Christ and by extension the life of the Church as seen in Acts.

The book of Acts speaks about the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel and about the pouring out of God's Spirit on all flesh" (Acts 2:16-21; cf. Joel 2:28-29). Acts tells about the fulfillment of the prediction by John the Baptist about "One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 3:15-16); and it describes the fulfillment of the promise by Jesus in Luke 24:49. "The Holy Spirit's arrival brought an arsenal of effective discipling-making tools that addressed both the qualitative and quantitative issues" (Logan 96). The person and work of the Holy Spirit is so prevalent in the book of Acts that scholars such as Ralph Earl and George Ladd even suggested re-titling the book "Acts of the Holy Spirit" saying, "actually we find here 'Acts of the Holy Spirit' in and through the Early Church" (Earl 229).

Throughout the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit's role in the transmission of the legacy of faith is well documented. Before the disciples began their mission, they were to wait for the Holy Spirit (Acts 1: 4-8) and "it is only with the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost in chapter 2 that the mission began. From that time on Luke constantly emphasizes that the disciples depend on the Holy Spirit for power to witness (e.g., 4:8, 31; 5:32; 6:10; 7:55)." (Ladd 244). At this point a few passages must be singled out for special attention.

The first is Peter's address to the Sanhedrin in Acts 4:8-12. Luke tells us that "Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them ..." (v.8). Of note also is Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin in Acts 7:1-53. A direct link or connection exists between the Holy Spirit and the legacy of faith. Stephen was described as "a man full of faith and the

Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:5) and as a man “full of God’s grace and power” (6:8). Those who disputed with him “could not stand up against his wisdom or the *Spirit* by whom he spoke” (Acts 6:10). At the end of his speech the scriptures say, “But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God...” (Acts 7:55). Against this background, Earl points out that when Stephen was given the opportunity to speak, “he presented a resume of God’s dealings with His people” (237), that was the legacy of faith. In this speech Stephen spoke at length of Abraham (7:2-8), Joseph (9-16), and Moses (17-44). Then very briefly he mentioned Joshua, David, Solomon, and the prophets, before concluding with the “betrayal and murder” of Jesus (v.52). Earl says, “the scene that followed is a sad commentary on the Judaism of Jesus’ day. Like a pack of hungry, snarling wolves they “gnashed their teeth against him” (Acts 7:54, 57-58), (237). However, again Luke says that Stephen “full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.” (Acts 7:55-56). This account most clearly shows the vital part taken by the Holy Spirit in the continued transmission of divine truth and the continued transmission of a legacy of faith.

In the New Testament the Holy Spirit not only calls people to salvation, but He also enables them to respond positively to this call. This is because humans outside of God according to the Bible are objects of God’s wrath (Eph. 2:3), enemies of God (Rom. 5:10); aliens without hope and without God, strangers and foreigners (Eph. 2:12, 19), and corrupt in mind and conscience alike (Titus 1:15). Outside of God people are “darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart” (Eph. 4:18). In short, man is dead (Eph. 2:1; Col.



2:13). It is these passages that led those of the Arminian-Wesleyan persuasion to believe and teach the doctrine of original sin and total depravity. Humans are not only “born in sin and shaped in iniquity” (Ps. 51:5), they are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1), and as a result, cannot now turn and prepare themselves by their own natural strength and works of faith to call upon God. In his sermon *The Deceitfulness of the Human Heart*, Wesley stresses the fact that men and women are incapable of altering their condition when he says, “There is in the heart of every child of man an inexhaustible fund of ungodliness and unrighteousness, so deeply and strongly rooted in the soul that nothing less than almighty grace can cure it” (Wesley *Sermon*, 3:123). Collins explains that for Wesley, and those who followed the Augustinian tradition, “the effects of the fall are so devastating that response-ability along the way of salvation is not possible *unless* God first of all sovereignly restores humanity through prevenient grace to some measure of the relation previously enjoyed” (73). If a person is going to be helped, this help must come from outside of the person. This is the work of the Spirit. “It is by the Spirit that God calls men unto salvation; it is by the Spirit that He convicts them of Sin and awakens them to their need. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that people turn to God in repentance and faith, and in is by the Spirit that people are born again and renewed in the image of God” (Purkiser 261). Without this work of the Holy Spirit, people would remain condemned and dead in their sins.

The biblical evidence for such a work of the Spirit is found in places such as John 6:44; 12:32, Acts 16:14, and 1 Cor. 2:12-14. The inability for people to come to Christ on their own, without an initial work of God is emphasized also by Jesus. For example, in John 12:32 the Greek word used for “draw” (*helkuo*) is the same word used earlier in

John 6:44 where Jesus says “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him ...” This word *helkō* means “to drag” like a net (John 21:6), or sword (John 18:10), or men (Acts 16:19), to draw by moral power (John 12:32), as in Jeremiah 31:3. Charles Simeon points out that, as Jesus himself explains in verse 35 of John 6, “to come to Him” is to believe on him for salvation and cannot refer to a mere bodily approach” (13:220). This, however, cannot be done unless people experience the drawing of the Father (John 6:44). Simeon further explains that “drawing” does not ascribe to God an irresistible agency, which would render people as mere machines. Rather, it is as the prophet well expresses it, “with cords of compassion, and with the bands of love (Hosea 11:4)” (13:221). Without these drawings a person cannot come to Christ.

Further, Acts 16:14 captures beautifully this initial work of God. Of Lydia, a seller from Thyatira, the scriptures say, “The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul.” First, the Lord opened her heart, then she was able to give heed to Paul’s preaching and to respond in faith. Another noteworthy passage is in the book of Revelation where “the spirit and the bride say come...” (Rev. 22:17).

#### *The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Maturation of disciples*

In the Old Testament reveals God’s vested interest in the spiritual wellbeing of His people. However, biblical evidence in the Old Testament showing the Holy Spirit’s role in the maturation process is lacking. This does not mean that there was no work of the Holy Spirit within people in the Old Testament as some have wrongly concluded. Joshua is said to be a man in who the Spirit dwelt (Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9), as are Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:2; 3:24), Daniel (Dan. 4:8-9, 18; 5:11), and Micah (Mic. 3:8). In these references it is hard to discern the specific ways in which the Spirit was at work shaping

the lives of these individuals. As Grudem explains “the Holy Spirit had not come *within* them in the way in which God had promised to put the Holy Spirit within his people when the new covenant would come (Ezek. 36:26, 27; 37:14), nor had the Holy Spirit been poured out in the great abundance and fullness that would characterize the new covenant age (Joel 2:28-29)” (637). In short, the Old Testament looked forward to this work of the Spirit in the life of God’s people (Num. 11:29; Jer. 31:31-33; Ezek. 36:26-27). Stated negatively then, the role of the Spirit in developing the believer is one of the discontinuities between the discipleship enterprise of the Old Testament and that of the New. Stated positively by way of progressive revelation, this work of the Spirit is strictly a New Testament development pertaining to discipleship.

The New Testament deals with the growth of believers. The discussion in chapter one about “The Growth Imperative” dealt at some length with both the individual and communal responsibility for the growth and development of believers. The previous section of this chapter looked at the vital role of the Holy Spirit not only in the transmission of faith but also in enabling people to respond positively to the gospel call. The Spirit is the one who opens people’s minds and hearts to hear and respond to the gospel (1 Corinthians 2:12-14). As He brings God’s Word to the heart of a wayward person, he also brings conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11). He draws people to Christ, causes them to be born again, makes them new on the inside, and places them into God’s family (John 6:44; 3:5-8; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 12:13). From beginning to end, the Spirit draws people and brings them into a relationship with Christ. Here the discussion looks at the Spirit’s role in the developmental process. Craig Etheredge points out that, once a person is a believer, the

Spirit's job is not over. He is just getting started. He actually takes up residence in the believers' lives (Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 6:19-20). According to his divine power, He supplies us with all things that pertain unto life and godliness (John 14:16, 26; 15: 4-5, 8; 16:13; Rom. 8:4, 26; Gal. 5:22-23, 25; Tit. 3:5-7), and for effective service (Mic. 3:8; Acts 1:8; John. 15:4-5). He says, it is the Spirit who does the work of growing every believer toward maturity (2 Cor. 3:18) (Etheredge). An exegesis of 2 Corinthians 3:18 proves the point.

The significance of 2 Corinthians 3:18 is seen against the background of a theme that constantly appears in Pauline theology – that it is the will of God that believers bear the image of his Son Jesus Christ. In his letter to the Romans, Paul tells us that “those whom God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son...” (Rom. 8:29). To the church at Corinth, he wrote “Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven” (1 Cor. 15:49). He reminded those at Colossae “you have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Col. 3:10). To those at Thessalonica he declared “To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 2:14).

In 2 Corinthians 3:18, however, the apostle sheds significant light on the hitherto elusive answer to the question of how God intends to accomplish this. According to the apostle this is the work of the Holy Spirit. Second Corinthians 3:18 does more than shed light on a theme. It clearly teaches the role of the Spirit in the development of the believer. Paul says we are all being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another by the Spirit of the Lord. The verb translated “changed or transformed” (Gk.

metamorfoú, meqa), present passive, is the same word used in Matthew 17:2 and Mark 9:2 about Jesus' transfiguration. The tense of the verb leaves no doubt that the transformation is not the believer's doing but rather something that is being done to the believer. The tense also shows the continuous nature of the work being performed by the Spirit. Paul leaves no doubt of this fact, for unlike the fading glory on Moses' face in the Old Testament, the *metamorphoû* is from one degree of glory to another. Considering the transformational work of the Spirit in the life of the believer, God's children rejoice in the hope that the apostle John so beautifully expressed, that "while it does not yet appear what we shall be, we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

*The Role of the Holy Spirit in God's Mission to Rescue the World*

The role of the Holy Spirit in the mission to rescue the world is best understood in the many Trinitarian approaches taken to explain and understand God's redemptive work in the world throughout all ages.

Irenaeus c. 130-202 A.D. is one of the earliest contributors to such understanding of the whole process of salvation. "the economy of salvation" (Irenaeus *Against the Heresies* 349). The Greek word *oikonomia* translated "economy," basically means "the way in which one's affairs are ordered." For Irenaeus then, the economy of salvation meant "the way in which God has ordered the salvation of humanity in history" (Irenaeus *Against the Heresies* 508). In this economy, God the Father is Creator, the Son is Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit is the renewer of human nature. Irenaeus affirmed his faith in,

God, the Father, not made, not material, invisible; one God, the creator of all things: this is the first point of our faith ... The Word of God, Son of God, Christ Jesus our Lord, who was manifested to the prophets according to the form of their prophesying and according to the method of the dispensation of the Father: through whom all things were made; who also at the end of the times, to complete and gather up all things, was made man among men, visible and tangible ... The Holy Spirit ... who in the end of the times was poured out in a new way upon mankind in all the earth, renewing man unto God” (Irenaeus *Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching* 75).

Clearly expressed here is the idea of an economic Trinity. It presents an understanding of the nature of the Godhead in which each person is responsible for an aspect of the economy of salvation – the role of the Holy Spirit being the renewer of human nature.

In the field of missions, one may speak of the omnipresence of a Trinitarian approach to understanding God’s mission in the world. However, this was not always the case. As Bosch explains “Prior to Karl Barth (1932) ... God’s mission was primarily understood in soteriological, cultural, and ecclesiastical terms” (380-381). He further explains that it was not until Willingen Conference of the IMC (1952), that “the idea (not the exact term) *missio Dei* first surfaced where “mission was understood as being derived from the very nature of God and was thus put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or soteriology” (381). With a new Christological understanding the term, *missio Dei* became “a buzzword in missiological circles and has been recognized as

the impetus that should drive the practices, priorities, and programs of the church” (Dobson 34).

After Willigen however, “the *missio Dei* concept gradually underwent a modification ... since God's concern is for the entire world, this should also be the scope of the *missio Dei* ... This wider understanding of mission is expounded *pneumatologically* rather than Christologically” (Bosch 382-384). It was this broader *pneumatological* understanding of the *missio Dei* gained the ascendancy, so that Gaebelein could speak of the power of the Holy Spirit as “the *sine qua non* for the mission” (9:256). Ladd concludes that “it is the Holy Spirit that directs the development of the mission (e.g. Acts 8:29, 39; 10:19; 13:2, 4; 16:6-10); The whole operation is masterminded by the Spirit; without the Spirit there would be no mission, no story for Luke to relate” (Ladd 244). It is within this broader *pneumatological* understanding of God’s mission to rescue the world that the role of the Holy Spirit and the whole process of discipleship is understood.

Discipleship within this context makes it clear that discipleship is the work of the Holy Spirit. He initiates and accomplishes the whole process from beginning to end. The Scriptures testify that “the redemptive workings of God on behalf of His own and the impulses and responses of the soul in worship are the province of the Spirit’s ministry in all ages, before Pentecost as well as afterward” (Purkiser 168). Consequently, the extent to which believers are effective and successful in making disciples largely depends on the extent to which they allow the Holy Spirit to work through them as they partner with Him in this work. Is not this the very reason why Jesus charged his disciples “not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit?” (Acts 1:4-5).

It is the Holy Spirit that calls men to God and enables them to respond to this call; it is He who then regenerates them and works continually within them producing growth and development.

### **Discipleship and A Theology of Grace**

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me;  
I once was lost, but now am found;  
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,  
I have already come:  
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.

Yes, when this heart and flesh shall fail,  
And mortal life shall cease,  
I shall possess within the veil  
A life of joy and peace. (Newton 9).

John Newton penned the words of this beautiful hymn of the church. The theology in this song reflects the heart of orthodox Christianity and the Wesleyan tradition as it pertains to an understanding of grace. In this famous hymn of the church, God's grace is presented as preeminent at every stage in the process of salvation. Stanza one states the orthodox belief that we are saved by grace, echoing not only the biblical perspective of the condition of man outside of God and Christ – “dead in trespasses and sins ...objects of God's wrath; wretched” (Eph. 2:1-5; Rom. 7:24), but also the theology of Ephesians 4:12 “by grace are you saved...”. Stanza two proceeds with a step-by-step process of how this was accomplished, speaking of prevenient grace “grace that taught



my heart to fear”, and also saving grace “grace my fears relieved”. Finally, Stanza three is a clear reference to the sustaining influence of God’s grace “’Tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.” At the heart of the tremendous blessing that this song has been to countless millions of saints in ages past and present is the richness of its theology of grace.

What then is the relationship between God’s grace and discipleship? God takes the initiative in the process through the person and work of the Holy Spirit – the agent of salvation. The emphasis is on the divine initiative regarding the relationship between grace and discipleship. The Holy Spirit is the agent of salvation, while grace is the instrument of salvation. A theology of grace reveals that Grace is the instrument that God uses to turn people to faith, to promote spiritual growth and to serve as the manner and motive of mission.

*Grace as God’s instrument in turning people to faith through a legacy of faith*

Grace is the initiatory act of God that secures the believer’s eternal salvation. In the words of Purkiser, “If man is ever to be saved, it must be by the grace and power of God” (26). The testimony of Scriptures is abundantly clear at this point. In the Old Testament “the subject of grace is too vast for comprehensive treatment. Since creation, the redemption and election of Israel and the gift of the law are all acts of divine favor” (Freedman et. al. 2:1085). Grace relates to the legacy of faith and the consequent turning of successive generations to Yahweh. The two words, *hesed* and *rahm* are significant:

When used to describe the divine-human relationship, *hesed* can appropriately be considered a word for grace, i.e., God’s free and uncoerced action for individuals or for the whole people, in a situation of grave need, when God is appealed to as

the only source of assistance... divine *hesed* is God's gracious and unexpected decision to restore and repair [a] broken relationship. *rahm*(mercy) appears in passages which links divine mercy with the word for grace – *hesed* ...[and] involves the movement of a superior to an inferior, of powerful to weak, provoked by love or pity on the part of the superior and need on the part of the inferior. (Freedman et. al. 2:1086)

The foregoing passage makes plain the relationship between God's *hesed*, and discipleship as we understand it in the Old Testament. The relationship between the transmission of the legacy of faith and the resultant turning of successive generations to Yahweh would not be possible without divine *hesed* and *rahm*. The acts of divine *hesed* and *rahm* form the *content* of the legacy of faith and serves as the basis for Yahweh's appeal to successive generations to put their trust in Him. Were there no acts of divine *hesed* and *rahm* there would be no legacy to transmit, no knowledge of Yahweh, and no basis for faith.

The New Testament writers prefer the word *charis* (grace). The relationship between *charis* and turning people to faith through a legacy of faith is clearly set forth in the process of salvation. There is an observable order in the way God achieves the salvation of individuals, where "calling" precedes justification and glorification (Rom. 8:10). In the words of H. Orton Wiley "The first step toward salvation in the experience of the soul, begins with vocation or the gracious call of God which is both direct through the Spirit and immediate through the Word" (2:340). This order is further affirmed by the apostle when he says "But ... how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:13-14). While the "call"

is first in order, Paul says that it is by the grace of God that the call comes to people (Gal. 1:15), and Luke tells us that God's grace includes help in preaching the gospel (Acts 4:33). Thus, the priority of grace in the transmission of the legacy of faith and the continued transmission of divine truth is affirmed. This is what Augustine and later Wesley referred to as prevenient grace – the notion that “God's grace is active in human lives before conversion – grace going ahead of humanity, preparing the human will for conversion” (McGrath 356). Wesley, however, sees both the ability to hear and heed the gospel call as the work of prevenient grace. In the words of Wesley, prevenient grace includes: “the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first transient conviction of having sinned against him. All these imply some tendency towards life; some degree of salvation; the beginning of a deliverance from a blind, unfeeling heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God” (Wesley “On Working Out”). It is as the song writer pens it “'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear...” (Newton 9). God's grace is therefore “prerequisite to any true movement toward God” (Freedman et. al. 2:1088).

If it is grace that enables people to hear the gospel call, then it is equally grace, that enables people to respond positively to this call (Eph. 2:8). Luke says that when Apollos arrived in Achaia, “he greatly helped those who through grace had believed” (Acts 18:27). Purkiser notes, “Through the free gift of God's grace in Jesus Christ all men...are given a *gracious* (as oppose to *natural*) ability to hear and heed the gospel call” (262). However, in the early fifth century, Pelagius thought differently. For him, “the resources of salvation are located within humanity. Individual human beings have the capacity to save themselves. They are not trapped by sin but have the ability to do all

that is necessary to be saved” (qtd. McGrath 19). To this Augustine reacted forcefully, “insisting upon the priority of the grace of God at every stage in the Christian life, from its beginning to its end” (pdt. McGrath 19). For Augustine “humanity, left to its own devices and resources, could never enter into a relationship with God. Nothing that man or woman could do was sufficient to break the stranglehold of sin” (pdt. McGrath 19). Augustine later spoke of operative grace “which referred to the way prevenient grace does not rely upon human cooperation for its effects” (pdt. McGrath 356). Grace initiates the first step in the discipleship process. It is by grace that the call comes to us, and it is equally grace that makes responding positively possible. Additionally, grace is God’s instrument of spiritual growth.

#### *Grace as God’s Instrument of Growth*

In the Old Testament, the relationship between God’s *hesed* and *rh̄m* and the spiritual development of his people is not taught explicitly. The next section discusses this aspect of the function of God’s grace as a New Testament development or teaching.

The New Testament consistently emphasizes the importance of growth and maturity. What then is the relationship between *charis* and this growth process? In the maturation process grace is “the sustaining influence enabling the believer to persevere in the Christian life ... Grace is not merely the initiatory act of God that secures the believer’s eternal salvation, it is also that which maintains it throughout all of the Christian’s life” (Douglas & Tenney 402). In his letter to Titus, the apostle Paul sheds significant light on this function of grace in the life and development of the believer (Titus 2:11-13). According to the apostle, the grace of God is παιδεύουσα ἡμᾶς, “teaching us” (Titus 2:12). By using παιδεύουσα, the apostle makes it clear that the grace

of God has a pedagogic purpose. Meyer however explains that “here, as also elsewhere in the New Testament παιδεύειν does not simply mean ‘educate,’ but ‘educate by disciplinary correction’” (Meyer). Other scriptures the Meyer alludes to include I Corinthians 11:32 and Hebrews 12:6-7. If it is the grace of God that initiates the journey by setting the believer’s feet at the entrance of the pathway, then it is equally the grace of God that sustains the believer along that path to the very end. “Grace for timely help” (Heb.4:16) is constantly available to the people of Christ. Peter therefore urges his readers to have their hope securely fixed “on the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:13). If some fall short of the grace of God, it is not because his grace was inaccessible, but because they would not avail themselves of it.

To be more direct though, without God’s grace there can be no growth. Pander explains,

Spiritual growth depends upon grace-enabled effort. God’s grace enables our effort that leads to spiritual growth. That’s the message of the Scriptures over and over again. Paul, the apostle of grace, understand the relationship between grace and effort very well. Listen to how he describes grace-enabled effort: “By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me” (1 Cor. 15:10). God’s grace enables our effort that leads to growth. God gives us the desire and the ability to do what pleases him, and then we actually do it. In other words, we “work out what God works in (cf. Phil. 2:12-13). (Pander)

*Grace as the Manner and Motive of the Mission*

“The meaning of *hesed* has been illuminated by the important study of Sakenfeld who listed five characteristics in her definition of *hesed*” (Freedman et. al. 2:1086). Of the five characteristics in her definition, one is of special importance for understanding and establishing the relationship between grace and God’s mission to rescue the world. K. D. Sakenfeld points out that “*hesed* is an act which fulfills an essential need that the person in need cannot meet, and for which there is no alternative source of assistance” (228). No clearer example of this characteristic of divine *hesed* can be found in scripture than in Genesis 3:15 as fulfilled in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Here, God lovingly takes the initiative towards restoring the broken relationship between humankind and Himself. Humans could not do this for themselves, neither were there any other alternatives. Thus, in the Old Testament, it was an act of divine *hesed* that initiated the mission and it remained the manner through which restoration is sustained and completed.

Bromiley comments on grace in the New Testament, “taking the word from the pages of Paul’s letters, the reader can use it as shorthand to describe the motive and manner of the whole program of redemption, from the beginning to the end, even where the word itself had not been put into Christian service” (Bromiley 552). At the micro level, “Every step of God (from eternity past to the everlasting future) is accomplished through grace. His precreational choosing of the elect in Christ, his inner call to the gospel, his regeneration of dead sinners, his gift of saving faith, his redemption of sinners, his sanctification of believers, his preservation of the saints, and his glorification of believers” (Mounce, 304). Against this background believers become agents of God’s

grace at the macro level, participating in the larger mission of world reconciliation.

Recipients of grace are privileged to serve as agents of grace. Believers receive grace (Acts 11:23), are encouraged to continue in grace (Acts 13:43), and are called to testify to the grace of God (Acts 20:24). Jesus says, “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” (John 20:21). God’s mission is to the entire world.

At the macro level, a most beautiful passage pertaining to the relationship between God’s grace and His mission to rescue the world is found in Ephesians. Paul tells us that God saves “in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7). The motive of the mission is the “incomparable riches of his grace.” “One very striking characteristic of this epistle is its frequent reference to God’s purposes, and what, for want of a better word, we must call His motives, in giving us Jesus Christ” (MacLaren). For example, Ephesians 1:3 tells us that He “...has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, according as He hath chosen us in Him,” and immediately after we read that He “has predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of His will” (v.4). The motive or reason for the divine action in the gift of Christ is brought out in a rich variety of expression as being “the praise of the glory of His grace” (1:6); “that He might gather together in one all things in Christ” (1:10); and that “we should be to the praise of His glory” (1:12). MacLaren explains that in this text, “there is a “sublime insight into the divine purpose of thereby showing ‘the exceeding riches of His grace... here we have, not a man making unwarranted assertions about God’s purposes, but God Himself by a man, letting us see so far into the depths of Deity as to know the very deepest meaning of His very greatest

acts...” (MacLaren). Thus, not only is every stage of salvation accomplished by God’s grace at the micro lever, resulting in believers becoming agents of God’s grace in His broader plan to reconcile the world to Himself, but the motive behind it all is to show “the exceeding riches of His grace”. “Paul would have us think that God’s chiefest purpose in all the wondrous facts which make up the Gospel is the setting forth of Himself, and that the chiefest part of Himself, which He desires that all men should come to know, is the glory of His grace” (MacLaren). This of a fact is the marvelous grace of our loving God.

### **Discipleship and A Theology of Salvation (*Soteriology*):**

The previous theological underpinnings, *A Theology of the Good Shepherd*, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, and *A Theology of Grace* see God taking the initiative to act at every stage in the discipleship process and revealing Himself to be an intentional God. However, God’s intentionality and the importance of intentionality in the process of discipleship is ultimately revealed in a theology of salvation. The following sub-sections discuss the relationship between soteriology and discipleship.

#### *Intentionality and the Legacy of Faith*

In the New Testament the intentional God who is working to turn people to faith is first encountered in the person and work of Jesus Christ. George Ladd points out that we find in Jesus’ teaching a particular concept about God,

namely, that God is the seeking God ... the God of Judaism had withdrawn from the evil world and was no longer redemptively working in history ... Jesus’ message of kingdom proclaimed ... that God was now again acting redemptively in history ... In Jesus, God has taken the initiative to seek out the sinner, to bring



the lost into the blessings of his reign. He was, in short, the seeking God. God was no longer waiting for the lost to forsake their sins; God was seeking out the sinner (80).

Paul further tells us that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (2 Cor. 5:19). “The heart of the ‘good news’ about the kingdom is that God has taken the initiative to seek and to save that which was lost” (Ladd 81). The apostle Paul therefore declares “we are God’s workmanship...” (Eph. 2:10). There can be no stronger expression to denote the agency of God in the conversion of people, or the fact that salvation is wholly of God.

Intentionality on God’s part in turning people to faith is further seen in Jesus’ injunction to “Go” and make disciples (Matt.28:19). McIntosh explains that, because the participle “going” describes actions concurrent with the imperative verb, it picks up the force of the command and is thus correctly translated as an imperative “go”. The command is definite and intentional and implies taking the initiative to make disciples (*Biblical* 65).

In Mark’s rendering of the Great Commission “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mk. 16:15), “the word “go” in the passage is also a participle, but the central command is to “preach the gospel.” Luke also says “he said to them, thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things” (Lk. 24:46-48). “This passage combines the two ideas of preaching (noted in Mark) and taking the gospel to all the nations (noted in Matthew)” (McIntosh *Biblical* 73). Combined, these passages reveal

an intentional God working to turn people to faith through the continued transmission of divine truth.

*Intentionality and the Maturation Process*

In several ways scripture reveals God as one who is intentionally working to develop the believer. God's intentionality is seen in His provision of the necessary resources to facilitate growth (Eph. 4:11-16). Peter further tells us that ... "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness ... that through these you may... become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 3-4).

More specifically though is God's direct involvement in producing growth in the believer. The apostle Paul wrote "And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6 RSV). Contrary to those who see here a reference to the Philippians contribution to Paul's ministry, Ralph P. Martin explains that in this passage "Paul is reaching out to see the wider context of their response to God's grace. He who began the work of redemption will continue to perform it until its completion when the Lord returns. The thought here stresses not only the sovereign initiative of God in salvation, but also the sovereign faithfulness of God in Christ" (63). It was God who had produced their transformed lives by the work of regeneration. So, "Paul was confident that God would continue this work until Christ's return. God not only initiates salvation, but He also continues it and guarantees its consummation" (Gaebelein 11:105). Paul's confidence here "has very little to do with them and everything to do with God, who both 'began' a good work in them and will 'bring it to completion'" (Fee, 86). By God's initiative we grow spiritually. As the

apostle says, “God gives the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6). Whether it be numerical or spiritual growth it is God who produces growth.

This truth does not negate personal responsibility. As explained by the Worldwide Discipleship Association,

It is the interaction between what God does and what we do that produces growth. Paul provides remarkable insight to this complementary dynamic when he writes in Colossians 1:29: “For this I toil, striving with all the energy which he mightily inspires within me.” Paul was aware that he had a responsibility to expend effort; however, he also recognized that, without God working through him and giving him strength, his efforts would come to nothing (WDA “God’s Role”).

Paul adds further clarity to this point in the book of Philippians. He writes, “for God is at work in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). “The verb translated *at work* (*Gk, energōn*) does not so much mean that God is *doing it for them*, but that God supplies the necessary empowering” (Fee, 237). Gaebelein further explains,

Paul describes the enablement to carry out the exhortation as being furnished by God himself, who provides in believers both the desire to live righteously and the effective energy to do so... [he notes] It is not always enough to “will” something, for good intentions are not always carried out. Paul sees believers as having their wills energized by God and then also having the power to work supplied by Him. (11:128)

Therefore, whether it be acts of service or steps taken towards one spiritual growth and development, it is God who is at work in people both to will and to do.

Consequently, even what is considered a person's part or responsibility in the growth process is made possible by God's power working in the person. As Jesus said, "apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

This internal work by God was discussed in a previous section concerning *The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Maturation of Disciples*. God intentionally works to produce growth in the believer by external forces. The Worldwide Discipleship Association notes, "God uses difficult circumstances, consequences of our choices, and persecution to mold us into the kind of people He wants us to be ...the believer is therefore challenged to see God's hand in these things and to use them as opportunities to grow and develop in faith (Jas. 1:2)" (WDA "God's Role"). In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul further adds "More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character, and character produces hope" (Rom. 5:3-4). The writer of the Hebrews says, God "disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Heb. 12:10-11). In fact, "all things work together for good for those who love Him ..." (Rom.8:28). "This knowledge of God's role in our spiritual growth should lead us to a position of humility, gratitude, and dependence. And further still, to a deep understanding of God's ongoing work of grace in our lives motivating us to take responsibility for the role we play in our growth and energize us for the task" (WDA "God's Role").

*Intentionality and World Reconciliation*

Both Old and New Testament reveal a God who is intentionally working to rescue humanity. More specifically, in the plan of salvation God is intentionally working to reconcile the world to himself. Supporting this conclusion is the

widespread recognition that revelation has occurred in redemptive history, and that *Heilsgeschichte* ('history of salvation') theology developed by J. C. K Hofmann (cf. J. A. Bengel) is the best key to understand the unity of the Bible ... Hofmann found in the Bible a record of the process of saving or holy history that aims at the redemption of all humanity, a process that will not be completed until the eschatological consummation (Ladd 4).

From as early as the account of the fall scriptures reveal the personal redemptive activity of God within history to affect his eternal saving intentions.

One of the favorite Old Testament passages, Gen. 3:15, reveals divine initiative and intentionality as it pertains to God's plan to save humanity. Of note is the verb *אָשִׁיט* ('ā-šîṭ, lit. "I will put"), which leaves no doubt about who the instigator of this inveterate enmity is. It is what Kaiser Jr. refers to as "the divinely implanted hostility" (36), which led Gaebelein to point out that in this passage "A program is set forth. A plot is established..." (2:55). The rest of the biblical narrative is an unfolding of this plot until it reaches its climax in the first advent of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

A theology of salvation reveals a God who purposefully set out to achieve every stage of the discipleship process. He takes the initiative in securing the salvation of the individual, and equally works directly and indirectly to transform the believer into the image of His Son Jesus Christ. World reconciliation is His ultimate objective, and even in

this endeavor He took the initiative. Therefore, in obeying God's injunction to make disciples, believers too must be intentional at every stage in the process.

### **Discipleship: The Church's Imperative as Seen in the Great Commission**

The project makes several references to the Great Commission of Matt. 28:19-20. However, what has been done in passing now becomes the central issue of focus. This section provides a biblical apologetic for the Church's imperative as seen in the Great commission. According to David J. Bosch,

It was, not until the 1940s that biblical scholarship, pioneered by Michel (1941 and 1950/ 51) and Lohmeyer (1951) began to pay serious attention to Matthew 28: 18-20. Since then there has been a sustained and, in fact, expanding interest among New Testament scholars in the closing lines of Matthew's gospel... Today scholars agree that the entire gospel points to these final verses: all the threads woven into the fabric of Matthew, from chapter 1 onward, draw together here. (43-44)

Through grammatical analysis of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20), scholars agreed that the Church's imperative is to "make disciples." In the Greek text there is one imperative verb, "make disciples" (*Gr. matheteusate*), modified by three participles, "going," "baptizing," and "teaching" (Constable). McIntosh puts it this way, "Christ's command is in the form of an imperative in the main verb 'make disciples,' which is surrounded by three participles (go, baptize, teach)" (*Biblical* 65). The principal command of our Lord therefore, to his disciples and by extension the church, is to make disciples of all nation. According to Matthew, making disciples is the purpose for which the church exists. Rick Warren is correct in listing discipleship as one of the purposes of

the church in his book *The Purpose Driven Church*. It is a missional purpose, for as Greg Ogden says, “when Jesus commanded his disciples to ‘go and make disciples of all nations’ (Matt. 28:19), he spoke the mission statement for the church” (20).

Characteristically the church is missionary; the church is, or ought to be the church militant. Further analysis of the Great Commission reveals not only what the church is to be doing (making disciples), but how the church is to do it, which is inclusive in the church’s imperative.

This is a view supported by Warren who rightly observes that the three participle verbs in the Great Commission form part of the command to make disciples and are therefore essential elements of the disciple-making process (105). The essentiality of each of these participles becomes clear when one critically thinks about the execution of the command. There can be no making of disciples without “going”, neither will there be anyone to baptize or teach. It is therefore “logical to assume that ‘going’ must take place before a disciple can be made, [as this going] presupposes the idea of winning others to Christ or evangelism” (McIntosh 65). The relationship of this participle “going” to the main verb gives it an imperatival force as oppose to being circumstantial. Jesus commands the church to take the initiative and to confront peoples of every nation deliberately and purposefully with the message of the gospel. “In other words, Jesus commanded His disciple to reach out to unreached people to make disciples, not just to make disciples among those with whom they happened to come in contact” (Constable). Intentionality is a critical part of the process. Believers are ambassadors for Christ; thus the church’s mission is to deliberately engage in the evangelizing of the world.

The disciple-making imperative includes baptism. It should be understood in the sense of consummation and not something that must be done after disciple-making. The conversation surrounding the function of baptism has furnished insightful perspectives. Trapp says, “This is the end, use, and efficacy of baptism: it is consecrating them unto the sincere service of the sacred Trinity, and confirming them by this holy sacrament, in the faith of the forgiveness of their sins, and in the hope of life eternal” (Trapp). The function of baptism has been described using other phrases and terminologies. For some it is an initiatory, admissory rite. It is an introduction into the visible church and a distinguishing sign between a Christian and non-Christian. It is the rite by which the believer is formally enlisted and enrolled in the school of Christ. Baptism is the means through which the believer is assimilated in the body of Christ, and as such is a vital part of the process.

Additionally, the church’s imperative as seen in the Great Commission includes the continuous teaching of the believer. That is, the church has the added responsibility of helping believers mature in their faith. Nicol explains that in

Matthew 28:20, διδάσκοντες α., teaching them, present participle, [implies] that Christian instruction is to be a continuous process, not subordinate to and preparing for baptism, but continuing after baptism with a view to enabling disciples to walk worthily of their vocation. — τηρεῖν: the teaching is with a view not to gnosis but to practice; the aim not orthodox opinion but right living. (Nicol).

According to the apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, God has fully resourced the church for the effective execution of this responsibility (Eph. 4:11-16). G. Earl Knight shows a step-by-step process of how the Church accomplishes it’s



imperative. The diagram he uses shows a four-stage process in the cycle of reproduction, labeled the four E's of discipleship: Evangelizing, Establishing, Equipping, and Entrusting. The cycle begins with evangelizing – from the world the church gets believers through evangelism. The next stage in the process involves the establishing the believer in his/her faith. After this establishing, the developing disciple is equipped for the work of ministry. Finally in the entrusting stage, the believer is sent back in the world to do the work of ministry, evangelism and otherwise.

Using a baseball diamond, Warren illustrate the development that takes place in the life of the individual disciple as he/she moves through the reproduction cycle discussed above. In both cases, the disciple made becomes the disciple sent. To him/her is the injunction given as well to “go and make disciples of all nations.”

The Great Commission encapsulates all the purposes of discipleship – to win people, develop them, and enlist them in God's wider mission. In the Great Commission the command to evangelize through a continued transmission of divine truth to successive generations is seen in the general command to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” (Matt. 28:19-20). Discipleship serves the purpose of developing the believer to maturity. The Great Commission tells us not only to develop the believer but how to do it – “by teaching”. “The “all nations” (*Gr. panta ta ethne*) in view are all tribes, nations, and peoples, including Israel (cf. Genesis 12:3; Genesis 18:18; Genesis 22:18)” (Constable). God's heart for the nations is apparent. In the Great Commission is a restatement of God's intent, God's plan to reconcile the world to himself, and how He intends on accomplishing this.

### **Contemporary Discipleship Literature Seen Through Three Lenses: “What” “How” “Why”**

Discipleship has three observable areas of focus. These are: the “What” of discipleship; the “How” of discipleship; and the “Why” of discipleship. Almost all discussion about discipleship can be placed in these three major categories. These categories are helpful not only for sorting through and understanding the vast amount of material on discipleship but facilitate a fair representation of the literature. Any or a combination of these three lenses may characterize a writer’s approach to discipleship.

#### *“What”*

Writers have taken considerable steps to define key terminologies associated with the area of discipleship, not only to facilitate a common understanding within the field of study, but also to express the essential nature of discipleship. The reader will encounter within the field terms such as: disciple, discipling, discipleship, disciple-making, and discipler. A few of these definitions are noteworthy, simply for the simplicity and precision with which they communicate understanding. For example, Bromiley notes that the word *mathetes*,

in the Greek world, variously designated an apprentice, one who accompanied with a teacher in order to learn from him, one who belonged to a certain school of philosophy (e.g., a disciple of Socrates) ... In the rabbinic realm, the *Talmud* devoted himself to learning Scripture and the religious tradition, above all that tradition which is passed on through his teacher (Rabbi, as in Mt. 23:7 cf; Mk. 7:8, 13). (947)

From Bromiley’s observation and characterization, there is no difficulty in identifying examples of discipleship or discipling in both the Old and New Testament.

Mounce further points out that “in general, *mathetes*, means a “learner, disciple,” [and that it] becomes almost a technical term in the New Testament for the followers of Jesus, though is used also of the followers of John the Baptist, of Moses, and even the Pharisees” (183). Looking at this word “disciple” from these different perspectives, Bromiley and Mounce shed significant light on an understanding of the term. The word disciple-making also occurs frequently in the literature. It comes from the verb *matheteusate*, meaning to “make disciples”. Hull explains, “Three dimensions distinguish disciple-making from discipleship: *deliverance*: the first step in disciple – making is evangelism; *development* – once a disciple makes a commitment to Christ the next step in developing character and capacity; *deployment* – once a disciple is trained, the final step is sending” (*Complete* 34). While the distinction is helpful this dissertation makes no observable difference between these two terms.

Of note also is the word “discipling”. Capitol Hill Baptist Church defines discipling as: “The intentional encouragement of Christians on the basis of deliberate, loving relationships and training in God’s Word” (Capitol Hill Baptist Church). The definition is helpful for the following reasons: It confirms all the research has discovered and said about discipleship up to this point. It says that discipling is intentional and deliberate. It involves encouragement, is focused on making followers of Jesus, is rooted in the word of God, and is relational. “Discipling then is a relationship where we intentionally walk alongside a growing disciple or disciples in order to encourage, correct and challenge them in love to grow toward maturity in Christ” (Ogden *Discipleship* 21).

Contributing to the understanding and practice of discipleship are the definitions of discipleship provided by Rick Warren and Bill Hull. Discipleship “is the process of

helping people become more like Christ in their thoughts, feelings and actions” (Warren 106). Here, it is the developmental aspect of the discipleship process that is stressed. He concludes that “discipleship is a lifelong process that God uses to bring us to maturity in Christ” (Warren 49). Hull expressed his preference of this term when speaking about the entire process of discipleship when he says, “the term has a nice ongoing feel – a sense of journey, the idea of becoming a disciple rather than having been made a disciple” (*Complete* 35).

To further facilitate understanding, writers also pay close attention to the historical development of the practice of discipleship down through the ages. *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On being and Making Followers of Christ* by Bill Hull provides an excellent example of such historical development from pre-Christian examples of discipleship to the kind of discipleship common today, with the added component of a comparative analysis with the discipleship in the New Testament.

The foregoing definitions not only provide vital information as it pertains to the understanding and practice of discipleship, but also provide helpful guidelines for the development of discipleship models. Collectively, they are helpful in terms of providing an understanding of discipleship and for laying a solid foundation on which one may construct/develop an approach to discipleship. Additionally, some, if not all, the purposes of discipleship are implicitly or explicitly stated in these definitions.

#### *“How”*

While the “*what*” of discipleship is foundational, in most approaches and discussions about discipleship, the accent falls on the “*how*”. There is a fresh concern about how to bring people to Christ and grow them up into what they ought to be as

followers of Jesus, which seems to be a direct result of a rediscovery of the disciple-making imperative of Matt. 28:19. Consequently, the question of “*how*” comes into sharp focus. Two distinct but related areas emerge as focal points for many writers. These are approach and process.

The approach to discipleship has several observable areas of importance. The first is a sustained emphasis on the essentiality of a biblical approach. Of first importance is a deep conviction that any proposed approach to discipleship must be rooted in the Scriptures. In the words of Ogden, “The Bible teaches us not only the message of our faith but also the method by which that faith is to be passed on to future generations. We are called to do God’s work in God’s way” (21). John Piper’s “grocery list of possibilities” of how discipling happens in the New Testament, echoes the essentiality of the biblical approach. Piper in an article entitled “What is Discipleship and How it is Done” tells us that, discipling happens in so many ways in the New Testament... through the family (Eph. 6:4) through the community of faith (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 3:13; 10:24-25; 1 Pet. 4:10) or through relationships (2 Tim. 2:2; Titus 2:4; Acts 18:24-26). Supremely though, the essentiality of a biblical approach is made evident by the fact that most writers begin their discussion about discipleship by laying a biblical foundation. Popular among the various approaches to discipleship is the one-on-one approach. In describing the approach C. Herman Reece says “It is meeting another, individually - eyeball to eyeball - face to face. It involves sharing your whole life and ministry with him, so he, by the grace of God, will progress from spiritual immaturity in Christ to spiritual maturity in Christ.” The one-on-one approach in recent years, however, has received mixed reviews considering the demonstrable weaknesses in the approach and

the general acknowledgment of the merits or continued relevance of such one-on-one approaches as coaching and mentoring. A shift away from this kind of approach is gradually taking place.

Of note then, is the emerging small group paradigm to discipling new believers. Ogden points out that “the manner in which the Lord works is incarnational: life rubs up against life. We pass on Christlikeness through intimate modeling” (*Discipleship Essentials* 21). Historically, this approach stretches all the way back to the life and ministry of Jesus. The wisdom of Jesus’ method is seen in His foundational principle of concentrating on a small group of twelve disciples. Coleman, in explaining the genius of Jesus’ strategy says,

One cannot transform the world except as individuals in the world are transformed, and individuals cannot be changed except they are molded in the hands of the Master. The necessity is apparent not only to select a few helpers but also to keep the group small enough to be able to work effectively with them.... [this] graphically illustrate a fundamental principle of teaching: that other things being equal, the more concentrated the size of the group being taught, the greater the opportunity for effective instruction... though he did what he could to help the multitudes, he had to devote himself primarily to a few men, rather than the masses, so that the masses could at last be saved. (23-29)

At the heart of Jesus’ methodology, says Coleman, was His concern, “not with programs to reach the multitudes but with men the multitudes would follow” (21). “By focusing on a few Jesus was able to ensure the lasting nature of his mission...disciples cannot be mass produced but are the product of intimate and personal investment”

(Ogden 20). A. B. Bruce expresses a similar view when he says, “the careful, painstaking education of the disciples secured that the Teacher’s influence on the world should be permanent, that His Kingdom should be founded on deep and indestructible convictions in the minds of a few, not on the shifting of superficial impressions on the minds of many” (13).

This principle of devoting oneself to a small group was true not only of Jesus’ ministry but also of others in the New Testament. E. Kenneth Werlein makes the following observation pertaining to the practice of discipleship within the early church. The book of Acts reveals that after baptism, converts were organized into manageable small groups and admitted into Christian communities which met from house to house (Acts 20:20) such as Lydia’s (Acts 16:40), Jason’s (Acts 17:5), Justus’ (Acts 18:7), Philip’s (Acts 21:8), and others. Within these communities, one or more believers took a personal interest in the convert’s progress thus eliminating the threat of post-natal neglect. Leaders were instructed: “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28, NIV). Converts grew in the context of community where they ate together (Acts 2:42), prayed together (2:43; 3:31), learned together (2:42), shared together (2:44-45; 4:32-5:1 1; 10:31), experienced wonders and miracles together (2:43), and cared for the poor, widows, and those in need (2:45; 4:32-35; 6:1-6; 10:31). Additionally, they evangelized in the temple courts, praised God, and enjoyed the favor of all people (2:46-47; 20:7). Significantly, “the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (2:47, NIV) (Werlein 18).

The same principle was applied by Wesley throughout his life and ministry. As a result, his impact in the area of discipleship is too great to be remembered in the confines of this chapter. In the words of Bill Hull, “No other person from the post-Reformation history developed discipleship more than John Wesley (1703-1791)” (*Complete* 102-103). Wesley placed the highest premium upon seeing the already converted move forward in the faith through encouragement and rigorous accountability. To this end, small groups called “bands” were organized (Werlein 23). Wesley’s most significant contribution towards discipleship was yet to be developed however. “It would be called the ‘class meeting.’ Wesley was concerned about the lack of close oversight of converts. This spiritual concern led Wesley to a pragmatic decision. He would organize all society members into coded groups of approximately twelve, appointing a leader to each (Werlein 23).

From Wesley's ministry methods, four noteworthy themes stand out, says Werlein, two of which hold significance for our discussion here. First, Wesley’s method of discipling revolved around community, especially the community of approximately twelve known as the class meeting. Wesley knew nothing of an isolated convert. For Wesley, “Christianity is essentially a social religion ... to turn it into a solitary religion, is indeed to destroy it” (Wesley *52 Standard* 241). Hunter III adds, Christianity “is not an individual game like golf or weightlifting but a team game like football or basketball” (48). Second, “Wesley’s system revolved not around sterile classrooms with pontifications echoing wall-to-wall but rather was centered in real life and focused upon the ongoing practice of faith” (Werlein 27).



A similar approach is suggested by writers such as Greg Ogden, Larry Osborne, Bill Hull, and others. Ogden sees groups of three or four as the optimum setting for making disciples and concludes that, “three ingredients [are] necessary to produce maturity in Christ: *Relational Vulnerability, the centrality of truth, and mutual accountability*” (21).

To this incarnational, communal, small group approach is a complementary approach that focuses on individual responsibility. Here, much emphasis is placed on spiritual disciplines – what I would call the individual responsibility within the discipling community. Richard J. Foster’s *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* is a classic of classics of this kind of approach to discipleship. Also, of note is Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *The Cost of Discipleship*.

In his book *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, Foster divides spiritual disciplines into three broad categories: the inward disciplines, the outward disciplines, and the corporate disciplines. Foster chose to artistically bookend his material with explicit descriptions of what these spiritual disciplines would produce in the life of a believer. The final section focuses on three main products that come from the faithful living out of these spiritual disciplines: Inner righteousness, a transformed life, and joy. Donald S. Whitney’s book *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* is a more modern example of this kind of approach. Foster’s approach, and those who follow him, seeks to disciple people without making them dependent on a program or a person for their spiritual maturity. Here the focus is on helping the individual cultivate habits which will produce long term spiritual growth.

An observable dualism in approach appears at this point. Although a premium is placed on a small group approach to discipleship, this is not to be at the expense of the individual's responsibility in his/her spiritual growth and development. The writers preserve a healthy balance with by placing emphasis on the polarizing yet complementary approaches of cooperate and individual responsibility.

Using a triangle Hull not only illustrate in a simple way the elements we need for spiritual transformation (*Complete* 188) but brings together nicely the complementary dynamic of both cooperate and individual responsibility in the process.

The center of the triangle represents community... [Which] describes the relationships we form to help us live out our beliefs" (Hull *Complete* 189). The communal element here tells us that "God never intended us to follow Christ and engage in the disciplines of life alone ... Training and Pattern of Life" refers to choosing the life of following Jesus – positioning ourselves to be disciples ... As disciples, we start by saying, "I will deny myself and take up my cross"; "I will discipline myself for the purpose of godliness"; "I will run the race set before me" (see Luke 9:23-25; 1 Tim.4:7; 1 Cor. 9:24-27) (Hull *Complete* 190).

Herein we see the complementary personal dynamic.

Closely related to approach is process. Within the context of this discussion, a process illustrates the path to spiritual growth. Several helpful models have emerged in recent years which seek to illustrate this process. The models adopted in this research examine the process of spiritual development but proved limited by the standards of developmental theories. These models range from the simple to the complex. Rick Warren's popular book *The Purpose-Driven Life* for example, uses the simple illustration

of a baseball diamond to capture the idea that spiritual progress is a journey. Warren sees spiritual growth as a process that occurs over time in the context of community.

Robert Coleman identifies eight steps Jesus used to make and to equip disciples.

These steps are as follows:

- *Selection* –men were to be his method. Men with whom the multitudes would follow.
- *Association* –having called men, Jesus made a practice of being with them.
- *Consecration* – Jesus expected the men he was with to obey him.
- *Impartation* – he gave himself away. In receiving his Spirit, they would know the love of God for a lost world
- *Demonstration* – Jesus saw to it that his disciples learned his way of living
- *Delegation* – Jesus was always building his ministry for the time when his disciples would have to take over his work and go out into the world with the redeeming gospel
- *Supervision* – Jesus made it a point to meet with his disciples following their tours of service to hear their reports
- *Reproduction*– Jesus intended for his disciples to reproduce his likeness in and through the church being gathered out of the world. (21-89)

Hull rightly observed and cautioned that while these models are helpful, “the church should not become dependent on such prepackaged programs ... when one thinks more deeply about the process we realize that it’s basically both sequential and segmented” (*Complete* 168-169). Osborne arrived at a similar conclusion when he said, “Most spiritual growth doesn’t come as a result of a training program or a set curriculum.

It comes as a result of life putting us in what I like to call a need-to-know or need-to-grow situation” (42).

A. B. Bruce presented an insightful approach. He demonstrated how Jesus gradually took his disciples through a process that infused them with qualities that made them trustworthy to be carriers of the gospel. Bruce notes, “The twelve arrived at their final intimate relation to Jesus only by degrees, three stages in the history of their fellowship with him being distinguishable” (11). These three stages are “come and see,” “come and follow me,” and “come be with me.”

“Come and See” occurred during a four or five-month period when Jesus introduced a group of disciples to the nature of himself and ministry. “Come and follow me” was a ten-month period when the five, plus others, temporarily left their professions to travel with Jesus. “Come and be with me” lasted nearly twenty months. During that time, Jesus concentrated on the Twelve he called to be with him so they could go out and preach (Hull *Complete* 170).

The list of approaches here considered here are by no means exhaustive, only representative of the way the discussion has proceeded as it pertains to “how” to disciple believers. The final area of focus as revealed by the literature is the “why” of discipleship.

*Why?*

Friedrich Nietzsche as says, “He who has a ‘why’ can endure any ‘how’” (13). The field of organizational leadership has yielded helpful insights that are especially useful for our discussion here concerning the why of discipleship. In an article entitled

“Start with The Why: The Importance of Knowing ‘Why?’” Brian Etheridge on the importance of knowing the “why” of what we do, explains,

“Why?” is the central question to all activity. Knowing the why: sets the priority, establishes the value of the task/project, determines timing (When), influences What and How decisions, and affects which resources to use (Who). Most people focus on the “What” and the “How” ... Important questions with necessary answers, yet wholly incomplete without the “Why”. In a typical organization, the procedures are the “How”, the policy is the “What”, and the reason for having the policies and procedures is the “Why.” (Etheridge)

Etheridge says, “why” sets the priority and establishes the value of the task/project. Warren says without it “there is no foundation, motivation, and no direction” (81). The importance of understanding the “why” of discipleship cannot be overstated. In surveying the literature, discussions surrounding the “why” of discipleship center around the ideas of importance and purpose. In church growth circles the importance of discipleship is viewed from an ecclesiastical perspective, stated in terms of church growth and church health. In the words of Dennis Call, the importance of discipleship is seen in the fact that “discipleship is vital to the growth and development of Christ’s Church” (Call). All the current church health literature recognizes that healthy churches are focused on the disciple-making imperative of Jesus’ Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). Tim Henderson also says, “we disciple because of the far-reaching benefits of discipleship to our local movement, local church, and the body of believers around the world” (Henderson).

Other writers see the importance of discipleship in the personal benefits it holds for the individual. Trillia Newbell explains the importance of discipleship in terms of its potential to “build humility; unite us with fellow believers; and equips us for faithfulness”(Newbell).

Still other sees the importance of discipleship from a Christological perspective. Darryl Wilson sees the importance of discipleship in the fact that Jesus commanded and modeled discipleship. He says, “Jesus’ own example points to the importance of doing so. His investment in twelve men over the three years of his earthly ministry proves his strategy.” MacArthur concludes, “Evangelism is central to the mission of Christ, and in fact it is the focal point of God’s work in creation. If a person fails to understand the importance of evangelism, he misses the entire point of Jesus’ ministry. Evangelism is not one thing Christians are called to do; it is the primary task. All other task is intermediate” (20). While I agree with MacArthur, it is not evangelism but disciple-making “that is central to the mission of Christ ...” (Matt. 28:19-20).

While church growth and church health will be the results of discipleship, the importance of discipleship must ultimately be seen in light of its purposes. It is true, Jesus did command and practiced discipleship, but this cannot be the only basis for practicing discipleship, and neither can the practice of discipleship be for the sole purpose of church growth. The question of “why” Jesus practiced and commanded disciple-making must still be answered. Jesus’ own practice of discipling and the subsequent injunction to his disciples (Matt. 28:19-20) must be understood against the background of his mission. Everything that Jesus did must be understood within the context of the larger purpose for which he came – “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:12). In the words of

Donald A. McGavran “we seek church growth not for a bigger church or a better standing in the denomination, but for the purpose of seeing lost souls found and folded” (qdt. In McIntosh 61).

Closely related to the discussion surrounding the importance of discipleship, is the question of purpose. The field of discipleship gives very little serious attention to the purposes of discipleship. Where mention is made of any of the purposes it is only done in passing and falls short of capturing the real/ultimate purposes. Though scattered throughout the literature, the presence of these purposes is an indication that there is a general awareness of them and their significance for the understanding and practice of discipleship.

The discussion on the Great Commission shows that scholars agree that discipleship serves the purpose of winning people for God.

That discipleship serves the purpose of developing the believer to maturity receives sustained emphasis throughout the literature. In an article entitled “All About Following Christ. The Purpose of Christian Discipleship”, the writer says, “The main purpose of Christian discipleship is to be like Christ. Christian discipleship might best be described as training or mentoring program designed to develop individuals to become more like their Savior... one of the primary purposes of Christian discipleship is to emulate the character of Christ.” Discipleship never existed as an end in its own right, a truth supported and sustained throughout scripture. Paul had purpose in his discipling. “We proclaim him (Jesus), admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect (mature) in Christ.” (Colossians 1:28). “He was looking for both quantity (everyone) and quality (perfect/mature); discipleship ... had purpose to

it... Here is the first purpose of discipleship: to make us more like Jesus; more like him in behavior and more like him in character and attitudes” (Life Wat India).

Besides the purposes of bringing individuals to faith and developing them to maturity, authors such as McArthur, Coleman and Hull point to an additional purpose of discipleship – God’s method of rescuing the world. McArthur notes, “when evangelism is neglected, it indicates that there is a lack of understanding about the purpose of God in the world, and in the plan of salvation. Ever since the creation of man, global belief has always been God’s plan” (20). This is the heart of the triune God, the salvation of the crown of his creation. In the words of Coleman, “The days of his flesh were but the unfolding in time of the plan of God from the beginning ... no one was excluded from his precious purpose. His love was universal. Make no mistake about it. He was ‘the Savior of the world’ (John 4:42). God wanted all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth...” (17). As such, the importance of our Lord’s command in Matt. 28:19-20, and the urgency with which we must respond cannot be overstated.

These three lenses have provided a panoramic view of contemporary literature pertaining to the nature, function and purpose of discipleship. They have shed significant light on how the conversation has proceeded, revealing areas of emphasis and focus, recognizable paradigm shifts in the discipline, and areas for potential exploration going forward. Additionally, while the literature revealed areas of sharp disagreement among scholars, the one constant and common consensus is the importance of discipleship to the life of the believer, the church, and to God.



### Research Design Literature

Research design says Ayiro, constitutes the “blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. It expresses both the structure of the research problem-the framework-and the plan of investigation used to obtain empirical evidence on those relationships” (61). The three types of research designs are qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. This study uses primarily a qualitative paradigm.

The qualitative research paradigm “has its roots in cultural anthropology and American sociology, and has only recently been adopted by educational researchers” (Creswell 255). “It is grounded in the assumption that individuals construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations, which tend to be transitory and situational” (Ayiro 231). Qualitative paradigms therefore “demonstrate a different approach to scholarly inquiry than methods of quantitative research. Although the processes are similar, qualitative methods rely on text and image data, have unique steps in data analysis, and draw on diverse designs” (Creswell 232). It is an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of a social issue.

Though there are several types of qualitative research approaches, in general, there are five characteristics that all qualitative research has in common that distinguishes it from quantitative research. They are the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the use of fieldwork, an inductive orientation to analysis, and findings that are richly descriptive (Merriam 11; Ayiro 17-19; Croswell 225). Jason and Glenwick adds that “qualitative research value depth of meaning and people’s subjective experiences and their meaning-making processes, and that it allows the building of a robust understanding of a topic,

unpacking the meanings people ascribe to their lives—to activities, situations, circumstances, people, and objects” (15). “Qualitative methods also give attention to the iterative nature of processes and knowledge, as well as the standpoint of both the researcher and participants in the production and discovery of such knowledge” (Jason and Glenwick 14). Qualitative research thus produces “culturally specific and contextually rich data critical for the design, evaluation, and ongoing health of institutions like the church” (Sensing 58).

Qualitative research typically involves qualitative data that is obtained through methods such as interviews, on-site observations, and focus groups in narrative rather than numerical form. Such data are analyzed by looking for themes and patterns. “Qualitative methods are adept at answering many of the questions that arise in community-based research in an ecologically valid way, given their premise on the belief that the control demanded by quantitative methods strips away the context that is central to life ...” (Jason and Glenwick 13).

Qualitative research says Creswell, is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation. (13)

The choice of the qualitative design seems logical considering the nature of my research problem, which needed a design that takes seriously not only context, but also the people's perspective and the meanings they ascribe to the issue under investigation. It needed a design that facilitated the building of a robust understanding of the topic through the unpacking of the data gathered from the research questions.

### **Summary of Literature**

I have made a deliberate attempt at a comprehensive review of pertinent literature to provide an understanding of the topic in question. Several major topics, subtopics and even sub-subtopics that are deemed important to understanding the nature, function and purpose of discipleship were covered. They are critical components for determining what may be deemed best practices in the area under study.

As Rick Warren points out, discipleship is one of the primary purposes for which the church exists. This includes the whole process of winning, developing, and equipping people for the work of ministry. The literature revealed that the injunction given by Jesus to his disciples and by extension the church to make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20), is vital for every congregation, but more than that, it is vital for the individual disciple when it comes to their faith and eternal destiny, and for God's ultimate mission of world reconciliation.

A general sense of dissatisfaction exists, not so much with the church's understanding of discipleship but rather with its practice of it. The way the church has proceeded has not produced the quality or the quantity of disciples it could. Michael Green says, "The aftercare side of evangelism is greatly neglected these days, and this is shameful" (Green *Evangelism Now* 37). Compounding the issue are the cultural shifts

that have taken place which has not made the church's job of discipling any easier, neither has it made the context in which contemporary disciples must live out their faith any easier.

The importance of discipleship and rediscovering the disciple-making imperative come into sharp focus and receive sustained emphasis throughout the literature. This importance is stated several ways and from numerous perspectives – personal, ecclesiastical, and Christological. We have demonstrated that ultimately, the importance of discipleship must be seen against the background of its purposes.

Four essentials have emerged from the literature, either through a general consensus or from sustained emphasis in the arguments by various writers. First, is the essentiality of a biblical approach to discipleship.

Second, the Bible and theorists in the field of discipleship have stated that making disciples does not occur automatically and that there is a critical need for intentionality and faithful obedience to the mandate given to the Church by its Lord. Intentionality is crucial at every stage of the process, whether it be at the evangelistic stage that involves the transmission of divine truth to successive generation in an effort to win people for God, or in the growth stage that develops believers to maturity and equips them for ministry and active participation in the broader mission of God to reconcile the world to Himself. Programs to connect with and retain new believers do not occur on their own. Effective programs are intentionally planned and faithfully executed.

Third, is the priority of a small group approach to discipleship. In addition to the premium that writers place on a biblical approach, several observable paradigm shifts have taken place. Strong arguments are made for an incarnational approach to

discipleship. From all previews, a paradigm shift has taken place from the traditional one-on-one approach to discipling new believers to a small group. Groups seem to be a more pragmatic approach to discipleship because they provide a context for spiritual formation that is routinely efficient.

Fourth, is the emphasis on relational models. A shift has also taken place as it pertains to content. The emphasis is a moving away from the prepackaged curriculum-based models to more “situational” or relational models where iron sharpens iron through accountability and vulnerability.

The literature has also revealed uncharted waters within the field of discipleship especially as it pertains to the “why” or the purposes of discipleship. As a way forward, this topic should make for exciting and rewarding exploration. The themes and arguments which have emerged through a common consensus or from sustained emphasis by various writers have laid the foundation by providing a road map for identifying what may be considered best practices for effectively discipling new believers to reverse the tendency of their leaving the church shortly after joining it. In evaluating the discipling practices of new believers on Western Jamaica District, the above four factors are referred to as “discipling initiatives” and used to question respondents in an effort to compare Western Jamaica Districts’ discipling strategy with discipling effectiveness.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

This chapter describes the analytical framework used for this project and addresses several research topics. Provided in this chapter is a description of the project and restatement of its purpose. This is followed by a detailed description of the research questions upon which the research is based, along with what was done to answer each question. The chapter also provides a description of the unique dynamics of the ministry context including geography, worldview (attitudes, values, practices, beliefs, etc.), and relevant demographic data. Provided also is a description of participants, the ethical protocols governing the research, and a detailed description of the types of instruments used for data collection. The chapter also outlines in detail the step-by-step procedure taken in the collection and analysis of the data.

#### Nature and Purpose of the Project

In *The Great Omission* Willard observes that the church is focused on making converts instead of disciples (141). In my opinion, this is a fair assessment of the missionary thrust over the years of the Western District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in Jamaica. Yet, the paradigm shift that has taken place in culture demands that the accent falls on making disciples. Scholars agree that the society around us is “undergoing what may be the fastest, most ominous cultural change in human history” (McDowell & Hostetler 9), something author Dennis McCallum calls “a cultural metamorphosis, transforming every area of everyday life as it spreads through education, movies, television, and other media” (McCallum 21). According to Bosch “the advance of science

and technology and with them, the worldwide process of secularization, seems to have made faith in God redundant” (3). This process has been a contributing factor to the overall decline in membership in the Evangelical wing of the church (Hull *Disciple-Making* 10-11), and by extension to the crisis of declining membership facing the West Jamaica District. A more intentional approach to the after care of new believers is of paramount importance if these young people are to stand any chance of surviving. West Jamaica District does well in working to get people to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, however, too often it falls short in discipling them. Apparently, few church leaders have thought through the key factors associated with effectively discipling new believers.

The purpose of this project was to identify best practices for discipling new members in the Western District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in Jamaica to reverse the tendency for new members to leave the church soon after joining.

The idea was to identify the factors that contribute to the exit of new members and make recommendations about the most effective way to approach discipling these young members.

### **Research Questions**

To understand and effectively respond to the issue facing West Jamaica District, the research was guided by four research questions.

**Research Question #1. (RQ #1): In the opinion of church leaders and members of the churches in the district, what aspects of the church’s ministry contribute to the discipling of members in the church?**

RQ #1 aims at responding to the first part of the purpose of this project. It seeks to gauge the Church’s understanding of discipleship and to identify the present practices and

strategies it uses that are specifically designed to disciple new members. I used four instruments to answer RQ #1, namely, the pre-intervention Alpha and Delta questionnaire (Pre-AΔQ), the pre-intervention Alpha and Delta interviews (Pre-AΔI), the Alpha and Delta focus groups, and document analysis.

In the Pre-AΔQ, questions 7-27, 30 and 32 were aimed at providing responses to RQ #1. Questions 7-15 addressed knowledge, while questions 16-27, 30 and 32 addressed practice. In the Pre-AΔI, questions 1-4 and 7-9 also aimed at providing responses to this research question. Questions 1 and 2 addressed knowledge, while 3, 7, 8 and 9 addressed practice. In Focus Groups Alpha and Delta, questions 1-4, 7, and 8 were also designed to solicit responses to this research question. Questions 1 and 2 addressed knowledge, while 3, 4, 7, and 8 addressed practice. I also analyzed ten years of district documents known as the Pastor's Annual Service Report forms to find responses to this question.

**Research Question #2 (RQ #2). In the opinion of church leaders and members of the churches in the district, what current or missing aspects of the church's ministry contribute to the exit of members from the church?**

RQ #2 addressed the latter part of the purpose of this project by seeking to identify possible contributing factors to the exit of members of the church from the unique perspectives of both leaders and members. To answer RQ #2, I investigated using all four instruments used in this project. They were the pre-intervention Alpha and Delta questionnaire (Pre-AΔQ), the pre-intervention Alpha and Delta interviews (Pre-AΔI), the Alpha and Delta focus groups, and document analysis.



In the Pre-AΔQ, questions 7-21, 28, 29 and 32 aimed at providing responses to RQ #2. Question 7-15 addressed knowledge, while 16-21, 28, 29 and 32 addressed practice. In the Pre-AΔI, questions 1-6, 8, and 9 also aimed at providing responses to this research question. Questions 1, 2 gauged the churches knowledge, while 3-6, 8, and 9 assessed practice. In Focus Groups Alpha and Delta, questions one 1-6 and 8 were also designed to ascertain why people were leaving the church. Questions 1 and 2 of this instrument assessed knowledge while questions 3-6 and 8 assessed practice. I also analyzed ten years of district documents known as the Pastor's Annual Service Report forms in seeking answers to this question.

**Research Question #3 (RQ #3). In the opinion of members who have left the churches in the district, what current or missing aspects of the church's ministry contribute to the exit of members from the church?**

RQ #3 also addressed the latter part of the purpose of this project by seeking to identify possible contributing factors to the exit of members of the church, but it sought the unique perspective of those who have actually left the church. To answer RQ #3, the researcher investigated through the Pre-intervention Sigma questionnaire (Pre-ΣQ), and the Pre-intervention Sigma interviews (Pre-ΣI).

In the Pre-ΣQ, questions 6-29 and 31 aimed at providing responses to RQ #3. Questions 6-14 gauged respondents' knowledge while questions 15-19 and 31 assessed practice. In the Pre-ΣI, questions 1-6 and 8 aimed at providing responses to this research question as well. The questions on this instrument all assessed practice.

**Research Question #4 (RQ #4). What are best practices and strategies moving forward for the discipling of members in the churches in the district?**

RQ #4 solicited responses that aimed at the overall goal of the research that was to identify best disciple-making practices. It also sought to capture the unique perspective of the different groups of participants.

To answer RQ #4, I investigated through four methods: the two pre-intervention questionnaires which were the pre-intervention Alpha, Delta Questionnaire (Pre-AΔQ), and the pre-intervention Sigma Questionnaire (Pre-ΣQ). The pre-intervention Alpha and Delta Interviews (Pre-AΔI), the Alpha and Delta focus groups, and document analysis also helped answer this question.

In the pre-AΔQ, question 31 aimed at providing answers to RQ #4. In the Pre-ΣQ, question 30 also aimed at answering this question. The analysis of 10 years of district documents was also another means employed by the researcher in an effort to fully respond to this question (see Table.1).

**Table 3.1. How each research question was addressed by each Instrument.**

	Pre-ADQ	Pre-ADI	Focus Group Alpha & Delta	Document Analysis	Pre-SQ	Pre-SI
RQ 1	7-27, 30	1-4, 7-9	1-4, 7, 8	10 years of Pastors Service Report forms		
RQ 2	7-26, 28, 29	5, 6	6, 7	10 years of Pastors Service Report forms		
RQ 3					6-29, 31	1-4, 6, 8
RQ 4	31	10	9	10 years of Pastors Service Report forms	30	5

### **Ministry Context**

The ministry context for this research project was the Wesleyan Holiness Church in Jamaica. It is divided into three districts, Eastern, Western and Northern, with a total of sixty-three churches across the districts: twelve on the Northern District, fifteen in the East, and thirty-six in the Western District. The demographic area of focus for this study was limited to the thirty-six churches on the Western District which is situated on the Western end of the Island. All participants are Jamaican nationals and are or were a part of the Wesleyan Church.

The Wesleyan Church has its roots in John Wesley's Methodism, a man who left an indelible mark in history, in relation to intentionally discipling new believers. As heirs of Wesley's legacy, the Wesleyan Church perpetuates the importance of this disciple-making imperative although mostly theoretical. For example, West Jamaica District's stated mission is "to exalt Jesus Christ by evangelizing the lost, discipling the believers, equipping the church, and ministering to society" (Taylor et al, 10). Additionally, the Pastor's Annual Service Report Forms requires all pastors to provide an answer to the question, "Have you provided shepherding/discipling ministries to your congregation, designed to establish in faith, prepare for service, and retain to the body?" It also asks them to provide examples of how this is done. However, as the years passed, this vision seemingly faded, and the legacy was lost, resulting in a dramatic shift in focus to evangelism with little attention given to the aftercare of those who are won for Christ. What was once the culture of the organization is now on the periphery. The present generation is expected to rediscover this legacy.

## **Participants**

This section looks at the target population of the study.

### **Criteria for Selection**

The selection of the participants pivoted on the need to adequately respond to the purpose of the project which required the selection of persons who brought a variety of perspectives to the discussion. Before any prescription could be made regarding the issue facing West Jamaica District, there had to be a proper diagnosis. This necessitated gathering data from all sources with intimate knowledge related to the issue. It was prudent therefore to invite the District Superintendent, the board, pastors, and both present and former members of the local churches to participate in the research.

The leaders of West Jamaica District who are the District Superintendent, the board, and pastors were invited because of the knowledge, perspective and expertise they bring to the table. They are strategically positioned, especially with regards to leading change within the organization according to its stated mission and vision.

Present members of the District who have been a part of the church for more than ten years were also invited to participate in this research. The rationale was that these persons have been in the church long enough to be qualified to evaluate and assess the ministries of the church. Additionally, after a decade of being a member of the church they could indicate what made them stay while others headed for the door. They added a unique perspective to the topic being researched.

Former members of West Jamaica District were also included. Considering the issue facing the district, the question of why people are leaving the church had to be fully explored. I believed that former members had vital information in this regard that could

assist the church in being more effective in its discipleship efforts. Speaking with persons who have left the church provided a rich source of data that illuminated the problem.

Additional rationale for the inclusion of this group of persons comes from Bridget Miller's explanation of the potential benefit of such exit interviews,

1. They may provide opportunity to gain information about the reasons behind persons leaving, which may help to reduce turnover in the future,
2. They may give insights into problems in the organization that were not otherwise obvious.
3. They may also be a source of ideas for training that could be useful.
4. An exit interview may actually be a chance to have an open conversation about what could be changed to get the [person] to stay or to consider coming back at a future date, (Miller)

### **Description of Participants**

To adequately respond to each of the research questions and achieve the purpose of this research, three groups of people were asked to participate in the research. The participants for this study were the leaders, which included the District Superintendent, the board, and pastors. The other groups of participants were current members who have been a part of the church for more than ten years and former members of the West Jamaica District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church.

### **Ethical Considerations**

“Ethical issues in research command increased attention today ... and is therefore helpful that the researcher address them as they relate to different phases of the inquiry” (Creswell 132). Sensing says, “Throughout the process of the research, the researcher

must remember that the people who participated in the project matter” (32). Additionally, Jason and Glenwick advise qualitative researchers to “follow all applicable professional and personal ethical guidelines in order to protect the well-being, confidentiality, and dignity of those who choose to participate in the study” (18). In an effort to protect the participants of this research, develop a trust with them, promote the integrity of the research and guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on West Jamaica District or Asbury Theological Seminary (Creswell 132). I took the following steps at each stage of the research:

1. Prior to conducting the study: The researcher completed the "Protecting Human Research Participants Online Training" and read relevant sections on ethics from Sensing, Creswell, Jason and Glenwick among other writers; got approval from both the General superintendent of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in the Caribbean and the District Superintendent of Western Jamaica district to conduct the research in the district; got permission from the president of Caribbean Wesleyan College to use the facilities as the need arose to conduct aspects of the research; and finally, got approval from the international review board (IRB) at Asbury Theological Seminary.
2. At the beginning of the study: The researcher gave all participants written informed consent forms, and asked them to read the forms carefully, sign, and return at the specified date on the form. In this letter/email, participants were informed fully about the purpose, methods, and intended uses of the research; what their participation in the research entailed; and what risks were involved. The form assured confidentiality of information supplied and the anonymity of

those who choose to participate in the research. Participants chose whether they would receive and respond to the forms through email or use hardcopies personally delivered to them by the researcher.

3. Throughout the study: Confidentiality was always maintained. Participants were given the assurance of confidentiality in the consent form. All of the hard copy data was stored in a locked personal filing cabinet at home, to which only the researcher had access. Where data was collected in a soft copy format, the data was stored on the researcher's personal laptop which has a complex password known only to the researcher.
4. During the data Collecting phase: The researcher outlined the purpose of the study and how data would be used by placing the information at the top of the questionnaires, and interview protocols. The interview protocol was followed exactly. Questions were asked as stated in the interview protocol.
5. During the analysis of the data: The researcher assigned pseudonyms to all participants. Additionally, through triangulation the researcher reported multiple perspectives, as well as contrary findings.
6. In the reporting of the data: The researcher reported honestly and accurately the data gathered. The use of pseudonyms was maintained at this stage as well. Credit was also given where credit was due.

### **Instrumentation**

To gather detailed information from a variety of perspectives and sources, the researcher investigated using four qualitative researcher designed instruments. These

included two questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. The fourth qualitative research method employed by the researcher was document analysis.

The Pre-AAQ and Pre-ΣQ were three-page questionnaires designed not only to help the researcher identify the disciple-making practices, methods, and attitudes in the district, but also to assess and evaluate the effectiveness with which West Jamaica District is fulfilling its primary calling to make disciples. Both had a demographic section, which identified the age, education level, membership status, (present or former members), number of years being a member, and the position held in the church (pastor, leader, member).

The Pre-AI, Pre-ΔI, and Pre-ΣI were interview protocols. These researcher-designed, semi-structured protocols were based on the nature and central focus of the study and were utilized in the data gathering process. Selected individuals from the three major categories of participants, Alpha, Delta and Sigma, were asked seven open ended questions. Interviews were utilized because of the nature of qualitative research and the kind of data that interviews provide. Seidman notes, “at the root of interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (9). Interviews “allow people to describe their situations and put words to their interior lives, personal feelings, opinions, and experiences that otherwise are not available to the researcher by observation” (Sensing 103). Additionally, interviews allow the observation not only of verbal but also nonverbal data (Hiller & DiLuzio, 20). This instrument gave the researcher “access to facial expressions, gestures, and other paraverbal communications that may enrich the meaning of written and spoken words” (Carr & Worth, 521), thus providing richness or depth to the data.



The two Focus Groups were labeled Focus Group Alpha, and Focus Group Delta. Focus Group Alpha, consisted of selected leaders, and Focus Group Delta consisted of selected individuals who have been members of the church for more than ten years. The idea was to get people to share freely. “Being part of a group often creates a more relaxed atmosphere than a one-to-one interview especially when confidentiality is not an issue. Also, information gathered from discussion groups is often more varied than if participants had been interviewed on a one-to-one basis” (MacDonald & Headman 43), In the focus groups, interaction between participants prompted new insights and were a logical choice for the data gathering process given the nature of the research.

The fourth method employed in this research was document analysis. Document analysis “is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (Corbin & Strauss). In this case, the documents identified for analysis were the Pastor’s Annual Service Report Forms. I analyzed reports covering a ten-year period from 2009 to 2020. Question two on these reports reads, “Have you provided shepherding/discipling ministries to your congregation, designed to establish in faith, prepare for service, and retain to the body? If yes, how so?” The use of this method suggested itself, because these documents hold years of responses directly related to the disciple-making practices, approaches and methods of the district and consequently hold a huge amount of data relating to research questions 1, 2, and 4 in this project. This instrument was used also to facilitate triangulation— “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same

phenomenon” (Denzin 291), which according to Eisner provide “a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility” (Eisner 110). By examining information collected through different methods, I corroborated findings across data sets and thus reduced the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study (Bowen 28).

### **Expert Review**

The research methods were sent to expert reviewers Milton Lowe, Doctor of Ministry Associate Director and Academic Coach at Asbury Theological Seminary and Ellen L. Marmon, Director of Doctor of Ministry Program and Professor of Christian Discipleship Beeson School of Practical Theology at Asbury Theological Seminary. I sent an introduction letter with an explanation of the problem being addressed, a statement of the purpose of the research project, the research questions, and an explanation of the purpose of the research questions. All instruments were designed by the researcher. These included, the pre-intervention Alpha, Delta questionnaire (Pre-AAQ), the pre-intervention Sigma Questionnaire (Pre- $\Sigma$ Q), the pre-intervention Alpha and Delta and Sigma interview protocols (Pre-AI, Pre- $\Delta$ I and Pre- $\Sigma$ I), and the protocol for Focus Groups Alpha and Delta. A rubric was created for each of the instruments. It asked whether each question was needed or not needed, clear or unclear, and requested suggestions for clarifying the questions. (See Appendix G & H) At the end the expert reviewers were also asked to make recommendations of questions that were not asked that needed to be asked?

### **Reliability & Validity of Project**

Interitem reliability says Leavy, “refers to the use of multiple questions or indicators intended to measure a single variable” (114). Having secured informed consent

from all the volunteer participants in the research, I took the following steps to ensure reliability. All one-on-one interviews and Focus Group discussions were audio taped. These audio recordings were kept to ensure accuracy in the transcriptions. Great care was taken in transcribing and reviewing all interviews and focus group recordings. During this process, I sometimes contacted participants with a series of follow-up questions to shed more light on their comments and statements. The goal was to make sure that the transcript of the interview gave justice to the actual statements of participants. Comparing the content of the original recorded Focus Group Interview with the responses to all clarification questions allowed for consistency in data collection.

Creswell says, “validity is one of the strengths of qualitative research and is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account” (Creswell 251). Several steps were taken throughout the project to insure validity. First, based on the qualitative nature of the study, I used the types of instruments/methods experts in the field of research methodology said were appropriate for collecting qualitative data. Contributing to validity also, were the number of methods used in the data gathering process. Four instruments were used which facilitated triangulation of data. To reduce bias, information was collected through four different methods, which allowed the researcher to corroborate findings across data sets. Additionally, the researcher checked for Content validity which Leavy says “is a judgment call made by experts in the particular area that the measure is valid” (Leavy 114). All researcher-designed instruments were sent to expert reviewers to determine: a. whether they were representative of the area of interest of this research; b. whether they were in alignment with the purpose and research

questions; and c. whether each question was in alignment with the research questions and the purpose of the research.

### **Data Collection**

I took a qualitative approach to the inquiry. The project design was a qualitative pre-intervention approach that used four qualitative instruments. Three of these were researcher designed instruments: a qualitative questionnaire, qualitative interviews, and Focus Groups. The fourth involved examining qualitative documents. The intent of qualitative research says Creswell, “is to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction. It is largely an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of a social phenomenon” (255). Qualitative methods “which aim[ed] at gaining an understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations for actions and establish how people interpret their experiences and the world around them” (MacDonald & Headlam 5) were employed. When using qualitative methods, “data collection is usually accomplished through observations and interviews but could also involve photographs, video, personal or public historical records and other extant data, or data created with participants” (Jason and Glenwick 15). What follows is a detailed description of this research’s data gathering process which unfolded in several stages.

At the initial stage of the process, I solicited permission to conduct the research on the district from the General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Church in the Caribbean and the District Superintendent of West Jamaica District both of whom granted permission. Following this, I used three forums to announce the project to bring awareness and sensitize the district of the research and to solicit full participation. Announcements were made at the Western Jamaica District Annual Conference held

December 13-14, 2019, at the 2019-2020 one-week Annual District Convention held December 29, 2019 to January 5, 2020, and to the Western Jamaica district pastors WhatsApp group. Additionally, following the International Review Board's (IRB) approval, invitation/consent letters were sent to all prospective participants who indicated their willingness to participate by signing, and returning the letter by the date specified in the letter. (See Appendix E.)

Upon receiving these responses, I proceeded to the second stage of the data gathering process with the distribution of the Pre-AΔQ. This was a three-page researcher-designed qualitative questionnaire that all participants in the two major categories, Group A and Group Δ, were asked to complete. (See Appendix A) The questionnaire was coded so as to distinguish between the two major groups of respondents. The respondents from Group A who were the leaders including the District Superintendent, the board, and pastors from those of Group Δ who were present members who have been a part of the church for more than ten years.

In the third stage of the data gathering process I conducted semi-structured face-to-face interviews with selected participants from the three categories of participants: Group A, Group Δ and Group Σ. The interview protocol was presented to the respondents in advance of the data gathering process. (See Appendix C & D.) I asked participants open ended questions aligned with the study's central focus and research questions. The responses were digitally recorded and were later transcribed verbatim by the researcher. I also took handwritten notes during the interviews in an effort to capture nonverbal communications such as body language and facial expressions as well as thoughts and ideas concerning the interviews. The Interviews lasted for forty-five minutes and aimed

at clarifying responses to questions from the Pre-AAQ. They also aimed at providing further information related to all four research questions.

In stage four the researcher conducted two Focus Groups, labeled *Focus Group Alpha* and *Focus Group Delta*. The participants of *Focus Group Alpha* consisted of eight persons selected from among the leaders and pastors of the district, while *Focus Group Delta* consisted of present members of the district who have been part of the church for more than ten years. I contacted participants of both groups by phone and invited to be part of the focus groups. He then sent out confidentiality forms for participants to sign and return on the day of the group discussion. Familiarity of the location reduces the anxiety of the participants (McDonald & Headlam 45), and so the discussion groups were held at the place where all Wesleyans in the district converge yearly for either the District Conference or District Convention. The focus groups were semi-structured (Sensing 107), and the questions asked were open-ended, in alignment with the study's central focus and research questions. (See Appendix B.) I digitally recorded the responses and later transcribed them verbatim. I also took notes during the discussion to capture nonverbal communications. The Focus Group discussion lasted for an hour and aimed at clarifying responses to questions from the Pre-AAQ. They also aimed at providing further information related to all four research questions.

The fifth stage of the data gathering process involved the review of qualitative documents collected over several years. I sent a letter to the District Board of Administration requesting access to the Pastor's annual service report forms. The letter outlined the purpose for the request and assured confidentiality of information gathered (See Appendix I). Question two on the form, "Have you provided shepherding/discipling

ministries to your congregation, designed to establish in faith, prepare for service, and retain to the body? If yes, how so?”, was of particular interest to the researcher because it seeks to solicit an answer from pastors relating to their disciple-making practices and methods employed to accomplish it. The forms held years of answers to research questions 1, 2 and 4. Responses to the question were copied verbatim and securely stored pending the analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

According to Creswell, “qualitative data analysis primarily entails classifying things, persons, and events and the properties which characterize them” (258). Unlike quantitative methods, data analysis is “not entirely separate from data collection. Instead, an iterative process, in which the researcher begins informal analyses while collecting data, is commonplace” (Jason and Glenwick 16). It is further pointed out that while “methods of analysis can vary considerably across types of community-based qualitative work and data types; they share an aim to organize, interpret, and present the collected data in order to shed light on the phenomena and settings of interest and to remain contextually grounded” (Jason and Glenwick 16). It is safe to say then that “the data do not speak for themselves. We have to speak for them” (Vogt et al. 2). For the sake of clarity, the general phases of analysis and interpretation says Leavy, include “(1) data preparation and organization, (2) initial immersion, (3) coding, (4) categorizing and theming, and (5) interpretation” (50). The same procedure was followed in the analysis of data.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

The importance of discipling new believers cannot be overstated, especially in a context of declining membership. Postmodernism and the resulting shift in context and culture which has made faith in God redundant draws attention to the urgent need to arrest the current trend of leaving this critical work of discipling members to mere chance. The purpose of this project was to identify best practices for discipling new members in the Western District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in Jamaica in order to reverse the tendency for new members to leave the church soon after joining.

The idea was to identify the factors that contribute to the discipling and exit of new members and make recommendations about the most effective way to disciple these young members. Addressed in this chapter were the four research questions that guided the study: 1. In the opinion of church leaders and members of the churches in the district, what aspects of the church's ministry contribute to the discipling of members in the church? 2. In the opinion of church leaders and members of the churches in the district, what current or missing aspects of the church's ministry contribute to the exit of members from the church? 3. In the opinion of members who have left the churches in the district, what current or missing aspects of the church's ministry contribute to the exit of members from the church? 4. What are best practices and strategies moving forward for the discipling of members in the churches in the district?

The chapter concludes with a summary of the major findings of the project.



## **Participants**

The participants were the District Superintendent and board, pastors, members of the Wesleyan Holiness church, Western Jamaica District, and former members of the District. One hundred persons participated in the study: twenty-two pastors, fifty-eight present members, and twenty former members. Part I of the Pre-intervention Alpha and Delta Questionnaire (Pre- $\Delta\Delta$ Q), and the Pre-intervention Sigma Questionnaire (Pre- $\Sigma$ Q), were structured to capture the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. This section on the Pre- $\Delta\Delta$ Q covered six areas: membership status, years of affiliation with the Western Jamaica District, age, gender, marital status, and positions in the district. The Pre- $\Sigma$ Q covered the first five of the six areas just listed. The socio-demographic data for each of the groups of participants are represented in Tables 4.1 – 4.13. The collective demographic data is represented in Figures 4.1 – 4.6.

### **Individual Group Demographics**

In addition to demonstrating that the individuals in this study are representative of the target population, the socio-demographic data which follows aids a better understanding of these individuals and their context.

#### *Alpha Group*

The vital role of pastors in accomplishing what Jesus commands in Matt. 28:19-20 necessitated their participation in the research. All the pastors that participated were currently pastoring churches across the district.

**Years of Affiliation.** According to the Pre- $\Delta\Delta$ Q, 91.37% of the Alpha group participants were affiliated with the Western District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church for more than t years, while 4.54 % were less than ten years. The data showed that the

average number of years these pastors were affiliated with the district was 38.95 (see Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1. Years of Affiliation of Alpha Participants**

# of Answers	% 1-9 Years	% 10 Years and Over	Average
22	4.54	91.37	38.95

**Age Group:** Respondents chose from four different age ranges, 20-30, 31-50, 51-70, and 71 and above. Alpha participants who were less than 30 years of age made up 4.54% of the group, with the same percentage representing those 71 years and above. The Alpha group members between 31-50 years old made up 50% of the group. Those within the 51-70 years range totaled 40.90%. The findings showed that the average age of participants in this group was 50.02. (See Table 4.2.).

**Table 4.2. Age Group of Alpha Participants**

# of Answers	% 20-30	% 31-50	% 51-70	% 71 and over	Ave.
22 of 22	4.54	50	40.90	4.54	50.02

**Gender.** Of the 22 Alpha participants that completed the Pre-Adq, 63.63% were male, and 36.36% were female. This reflects a 2:1 male to female ratio. (See Table 4.3.)

**Table 4.3. Gender of Alpha Participants**

# of Answers	% Male	% Female	Ratio
22 of 22	63.63	36.36	2:1

**Marital Status.** The findings showed 90.90% of participants in this group were married while 9.09% were single. The data further showed that all the single Alpha

participants were female. Of the total number of those that were married, 40% were female while 60% were percent male (see Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4 Marital Status of Alpha participants**

Category	Total %	% Female	% Male
<b>SINGLE</b>	9.09	100	0
<b>MARRIED</b>	90.90	40	60
<b>DIVORCED</b>	0	0	0
<b>WIDOW</b>	0	0	
<b>WIDOWER</b>	0		0

#### *Delta Group*

Invited to participate in the research also were present members (Group Delta). A total of 58 persons from this category participated in the research. All 58 persons were members in the district.

The findings showed that 91.37% of the Delta group participants were affiliated with the Western District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church for more than ten years. Another 6.89% had been affiliated with the district for 4 years, while 1.72% had been members for 9 years. The average number of years these participants were affiliated with the district was 27.21. (See Table 4.5).

**Table 4.5 Years of Affiliation of Delta Participants**

# of Answers	% 1-4 Years	% 5-9 Years	% 10 Years +	Ave.
<b>58 of 58</b>	1.72	6.89	91.37	27.21

The four age groups from which the participants chose were 20-30, 31-50, 51-70 and 71. A greater number of persons, 44.42% were among the 31-50 age group. 31.03% were among the 51-70 age group, 17.24% were among the 20-30 age group, and 6.89%

indicated that they were 71 years and over. The age variable expressed as the median of the four age ranges was 46.79. (See Table 4.6.)

**Table 4.6. Age Group of Delta Participants**

# of Answers	% 20-30	% 31-50	% 51-70	% 71 and over	Ave.
<b>58 of 58</b>	17.24	44.82	31.03	6.89	46.79

The data showed that a higher percentage of females than males participated in the Delta group. Of the total number of respondents, 75.86% were females while the males account for 24.13%. The findings further revealed a 3:1 female to male ratio. (see Table 4.7)

**Table 4.7. Gender of Delta Participants**

# of Answers	% Female	% Male	Ratio
<b>58 of 58</b>	75.86	24.13	3:1

The findings indicated that of the total number of persons in group Delta, 37.93% were single, 56.89% were married, 3.45% were divorced, while 1.72% were widows. The data further showed that of the total number of singles, 68.18% were female while 31.8% were male. Of the total number of married participants, 78.79% were female while 21.2% were male. Those that were divorced were female as were the widows. (See Table 4.8.)

**Table 4.8. Marital Status of delta participants**

Category	Total %	% Female	% Male
<b>SINGLE</b>	37.93	68.18	31.8
<b>MARRIED</b>	56.89	78.79	21.2
<b>DIVORCED</b>	3.45	100	
<b>WIDOW</b>	1.72	100	
<b>WIDOWER</b>			

On the Pre- $\Delta$ Q, participants were given a choice between one of the following: Superintendent/assistant (S/A), pastor (P), zone coordinators (ZC), others (O), and none (N). The findings showed 75.86% held no position (N) in the district. Another 3.44% were zone coordinators while 20.68% indicated others. (See Table 4.9.)

**Table 4.9. Position in the district of Delta Participants**

# of Answers	% S/A	% P	% ZC	% O	% N
58	0	0	3.44	20.68	75.86

### *Sigma Group*

Invited to participate in the study also were former members of the Western District. Part I of Pre-intervention Sigma Questionnaire (Pre- $\Sigma$ Q) was designed to capture the demographic characteristics of this group.

The demographic data from the Pre- $\Sigma$ Q, showed that 85% of the Sigma group respondents were affiliated with the district for more than 10 years. Five were affiliated to the district between 1-4 years and 10% had been part of the district for 5-9 years. The data further showed that on the average, Sigma group participants were affiliated with the district for seventeen years (see Table 4.10).

**Table 4.10 Years of Affiliation of Sigma Participants**

# of Answers	% 1-4 Years	% 5-9 Years	% 10 Years +	Ave.
20 of 20	5	10	85	17

Respondents were given a series of age ranges to choose from: 18-30, 31-50, 51-70 and 71 and over. The majority, 60% fell between ages 18-30, followed by 30% of respondents who were between 31-50 years of age. Additionally, 10% were between 51-

70 years of age. The data further showed that the average age of those who participated in the study from this group was 31.77 (see Table 4.11).

**Table 4.11. Age Group of Sigma**

# of Answers	% 18-30	% 31-50	% 51-70	% 71 and over	Ave.
20 of 20	60	30	10	6.89	31.77

The demographic data showed the greater number of respondents in this group to be females. Of the total number, 70% were females and 30% male (see Table 4.12).

**Table 4.12. Gender of Sigma Participants**

# of Answers	% Female	% Male	Ratio
20 of 20	75.86	24.13	3:1

The responses to this question fell in two of the five categories, namely single and married. The data showed the greater percentage, 85% of respondents were single, while 15% were married. Of the total number of single former members, 64.70% were female and 35.29% were male. The findings further showed that all the married Sigma group participants were female (see Table 4.13).

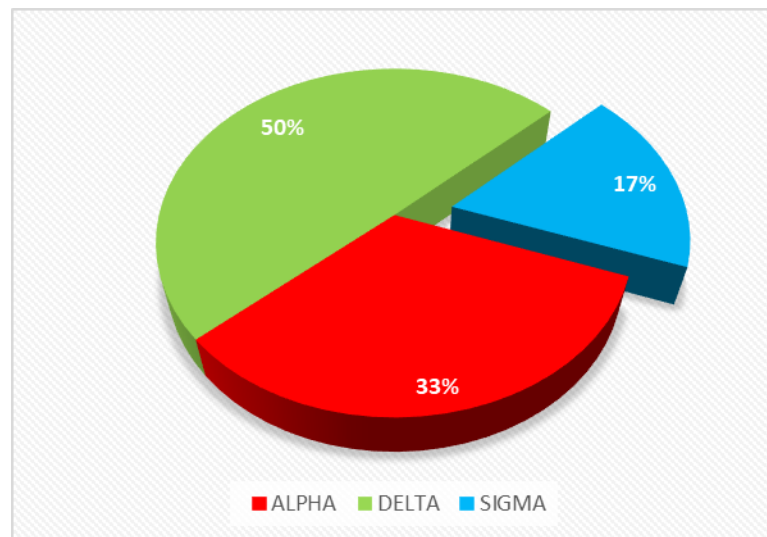
**Table 4.13. Marital Status of Sigma Participants**

Category	Total %	% Female	% Male
<b>SINGLE</b>	85	64.70	35.29
<b>MARRIED</b>	15	100	0
<b>DIVORCED</b>	0	0	
<b>WIDOW</b>	0	0	
<b>WIDOWER</b>	0	0	

### Collective Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic data was analyzed at two levels in this section. First was the analysis of the collective data of present members, that is, an analysis of the collective socio-demographic characteristics of the Alpha and Delta participants. This is followed by a second level of analysis, an analysis of the collective socio-demographic characteristics of all participants of the study, that is, both present and former members (Alpha, Delta, and Sigma).

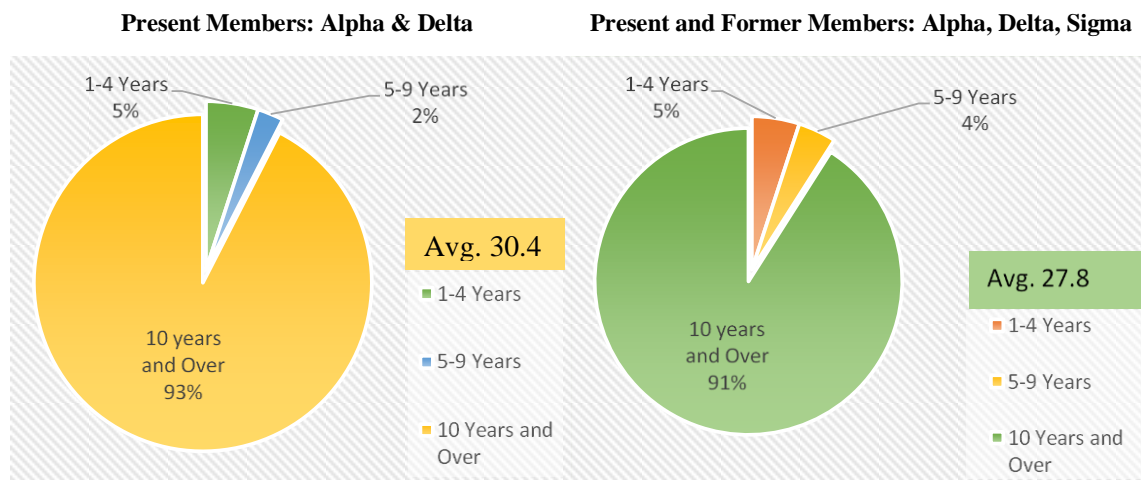
Figure 4.1 below showed all three groups of the targeted subjects for this research participated in the study. Eighty-three percent of the total number of participants were present members in the district, with 50% falling in the Delta category, while 33% fell in the Alpha category. In addition to the present members who were the Alpha and Delta subjects, were the Sigma subjects who were the former members and accounted for 17% of the total number of participants.



**Figure: 4.1. Membership Status of Participants: Collective Data**

The findings showed that 93% of present members referred to as the Alpha and Delta participants have been affiliated with the Western Jamaica District of the Wesleyan

Holiness Church for ten years and more. Five percent have been affiliated with the district between 1-4 years while the remaining 2% have been for between 5-9 years. The data showed that the average number of years present members have been affiliated with the district was 30.9 and that 91% of all the participants of the study including both present and former members, have been affiliated with the district for ten years and more. Five percent of the total number have been affiliated with the district between 1-4 years, while the additional 4% have been affiliated with the district for between 5-9 years. Of the total number of participants, the average number of years of affiliation was 27.8. (See Figure 4.2.)

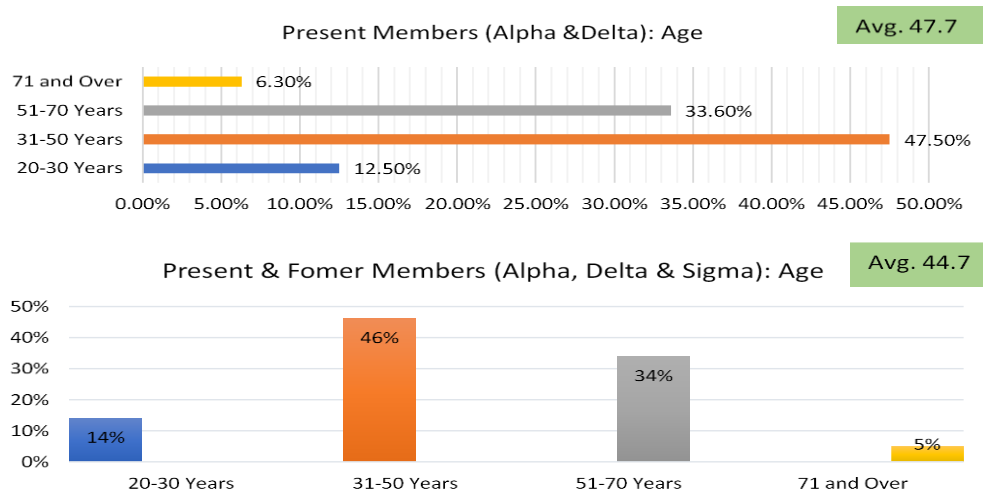


**Figure: 4.2. Participants Years of Affiliation to the District (Collective Results)**

The present members (Alpha and Deltas) had a choice between four age ranges structured in four groupings, 20-30, 31-50, 51-70 and 71 and over years. The data showed that most of the participants, 47.50%, were between the age of 31-50 years old. Close to this range were the 33.60% of the respondents who were between 51-70 years of age. Additionally, 12.50% of respondents were less than thirty years of age while 6.30% were

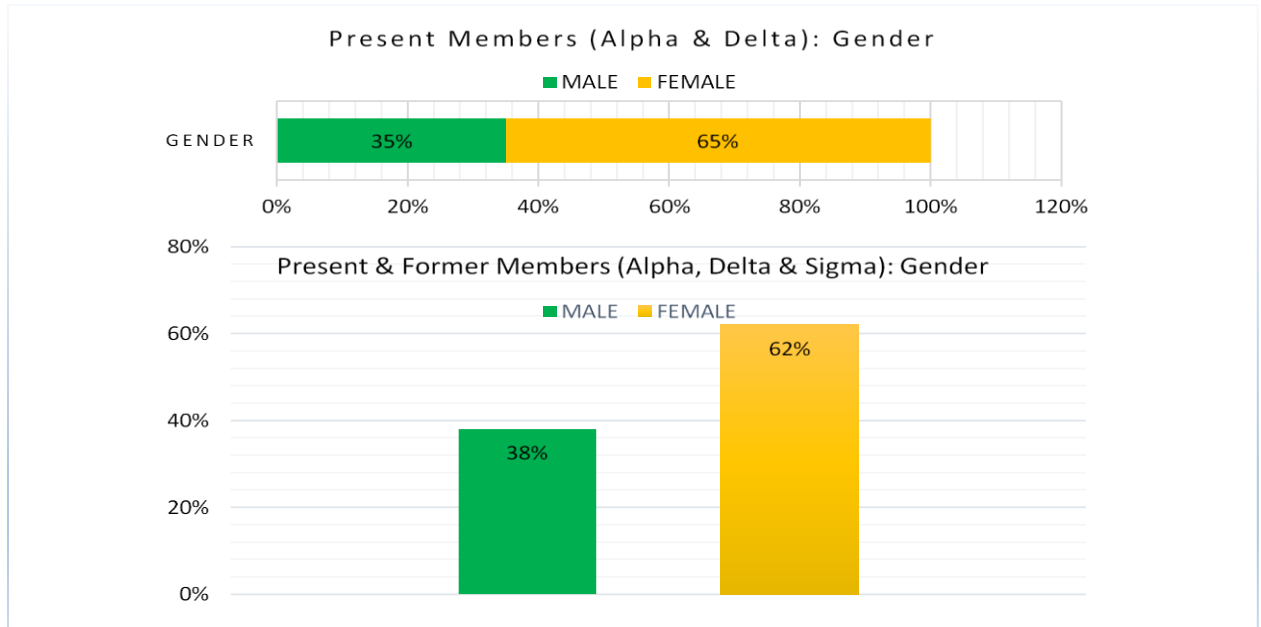


seventy-one years and older. The average age of present members was 47.7. The findings further showed that of the total number of participants, present and former members, 46% were within the 31-50 age range. A total of 34% fell within the 51-70 range, while 5% were with the 70 and over range, and 14% was less than 30 years of age. The average age of the total number of subjects was 44.7. (See Figure 4.3.)



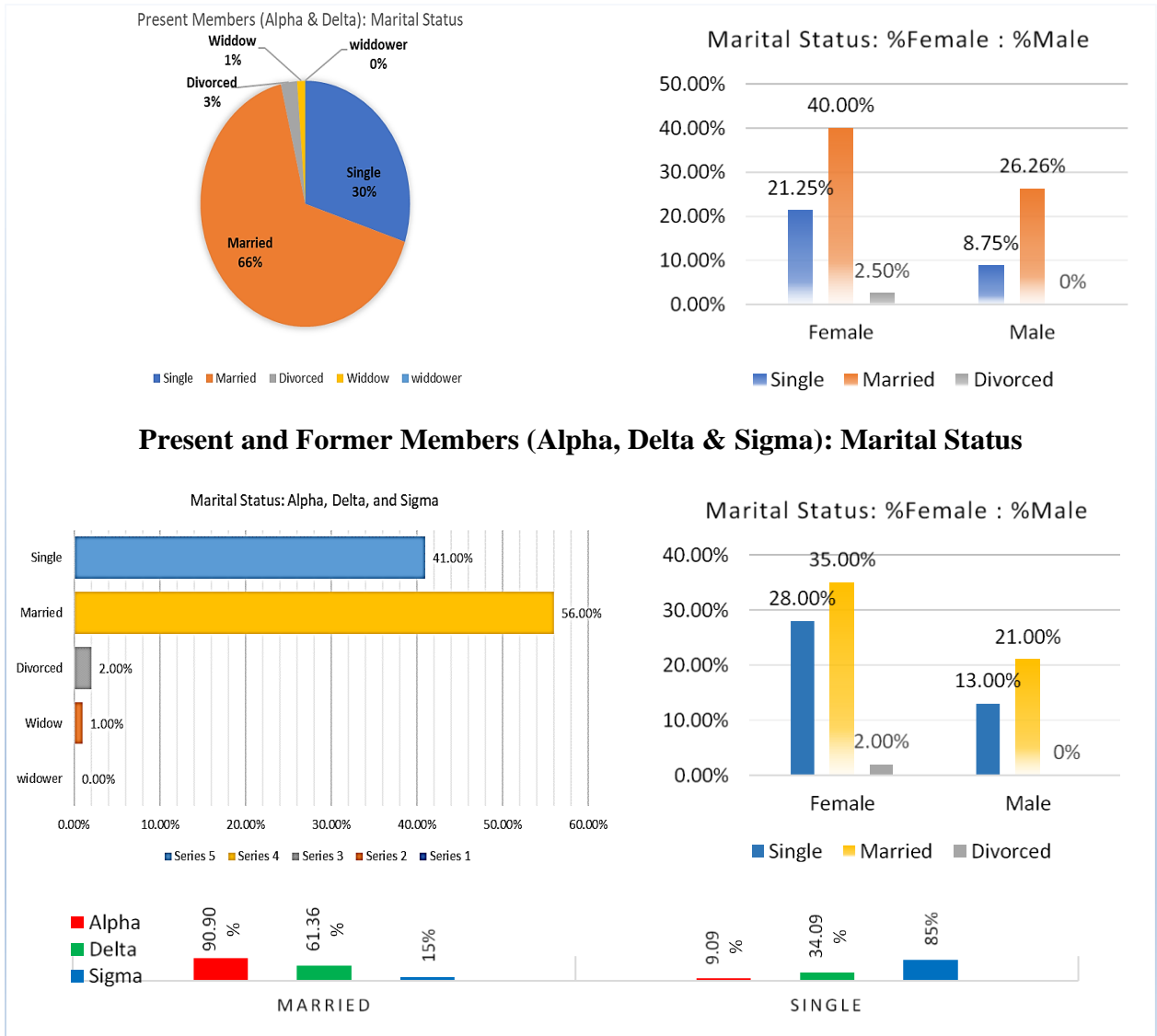
**Figure: 4.3. Age of Participants (Collective Results)**

Figure 4.4 showed that among present members, a higher percentage of females participated than males. Of the total number of present members, 65 % were females while the males accounted for 35%. Of the total number of participants, 62% were females while 38% were male.



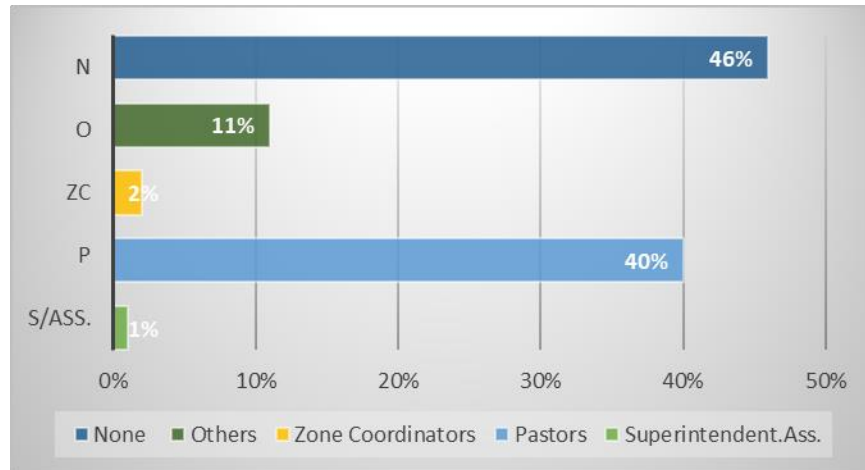
**Figure 4.4. Gender of Participants (Collective Results)**

As can be seen in Figure 4.5, 66% of present members were married. Of this 66%, 40% were female while 26.26% were male. Singles accounted 30%, and 21.25% of the singles were female while 8.75% were male. The 3% that were divorced were female, while the remaining 1% were widows. Figure 4.5 also shows that of the total number of participants including both the present and former members, 56% were married. Of that percentage, 35% were female, and 21% were male. Singles made of 41% of the study participants. Of these, 28% were female and 13% were male. Figure 5.5 further shows that while the majority of the present members—90.9% of Alphas and 61.36% of Deltas—were married, the majority of the former members—85% of Sigma participants—were single.



**Figure: 4.5. Marital Status of Participants (Collective Results)**

The position of participants in the district was represented by each respondent identifying with one of the following: Superintendent/assistant; pastor; zone coordinators; others such as a board member, lay leaders, or departmental leader; and none. The largest representation of participants, 46%, held no position in the district. Following this were the pastors, 40%. The zone coordinators made up 2%, and the others made up 11% of the participants. The data further showed that combined, the 54% of participants who held some position in the district was greater than the 46% who did not. (See Figure 4.6)



**Figure 4.6. Participants Position in the district (Collective Results)**

### **Research Question #1: Description of Evidence**

Research Question 1 assessed the understanding and practice of the Wesleyan Holiness churches on the Western Jamaica District as pertaining to the discipling of new believers. Four instruments were used to collect the data: The Pre-AΔQ, the Pre-AΔI, the Focus Groups Alpha and Delta, and document analysis. Parts II and III of the Pre-AΔQ, directly responded to this research question and was analyzed in three different stages at different levels from different points of views.

#### **Stage 1 Analysis: Individual Group Responses**

This stage of analysis looked at the individual group responses to part II of the Pre-Intervention Alpha and Delta questionnaire. It also looked at each group's understanding and practice of Discipleship as revealed by their answers to questions 7 – 26.

#### *Alpha Responses*

The Pre-AΔQ was used to gather crucial data regarding current knowledge about and disciple-making habits present in both the leader and the congregations they lead.

The following Tables and Figures demonstrate graphically the disciple-making knowledge, trends, and behaviors or practices of both leaders and the congregation they lead.

#### Analysis of Alpha Group Responses to Individual Questions

As can be seen in Table 4.14, Question 7 through 11 assessed the church's understanding of discipleship from the unique perspective of pastors known as the Alpha Group. Question 7 assessed the church's understanding of what it means to be a disciple. The findings showed 90.9% of Alphas felt that the members had clear understanding (CU), that 4.54% had a partial understanding (PU), while 4.54% had little to no understanding (LU). Question 8 gauged the church's understanding of discipleship themes such as the meaning, call and cost of discipleship. The larger percentage, 90.9%, said members had clear understanding (CU). 4.54% had partial understanding (PU), while 4.54% had little understanding (LU). Question 9 addressed the five principles essential for growing as disciples. 40.9% indicated their congregation has clear understanding (CU) of these principles while 54.54% indicated partial understanding (PU) and 4.54% indicated little to no understanding (LU). Question 10 asked Alpha participants how clearly members of their church know and understand in practical terms what it means to live under the Christ's Lordship in every area of life. The majority, 86.36%, indicated clear understanding (CU), while the remaining 13.63% indicated partial understanding (PU). Question 11 addressed the frequency with which discipleship themes such as the meaning, call and cost of discipleship is emphasized from the pulpit. Most, 95.44%, said this regularly happens (RG). The remaining 4.54% said this rarely happens (RR).

**Table 4.14. Alpha and Delta Questionnaire PART II Results: Alpha Responses to Qs.7-11.**

Question	# of Answers	Response %				
		VCU	CU	PU	LU	NU
7. How clearly do the members of your church understand what being a 'disciple' means?	22 of 22	27.27	63.63	4.54	4.54	0
8. How clearly do the members of your church understand the meaning, the call, and the cost of discipleship?	22 of 22	27.27	63.63	4.54	4.54	0
9. How clearly do the members of your church know and understand in practical terms the 5 principles essential for growing as disciples – a. the Holy Spirit's ministry in their lives, b. regular feeding on the Word, c. personal prayer and worship, d. fellowship with other believers, e. being active in witness, service and ministry?	22 of 22	22.72	18.18	54.54	4.54	0
10. How clearly do the members of your church know and understand in practical terms what it means to live under Christ's Lordship in personal life, family life and in daily work?	22 of 22	27.27	59.67	13.63	0	0
11. How often are these discipleship themes (i.e., meaning, call, and cost of discipleship etc.) preached and touched on as an emphasis from the pulpit?	22 of 22	31.81	63.63	4.54	3.22	0

Question 12 through 15 were also viewed from the standpoint of Alphas.

Question 12 examined the disciple-making emphasis in relation to the churches' purpose statement. The data showed that it was the core purpose (CP) of 13.63% of churches, but 72.72% indicated that it was a part of the purpose (PP). The remaining 13.63% said it was not really stated (NRS). As it pertains to leaders modeling discipleship by their own example and commitment to the disciple-making process, 100% of respondents to this Question (Question 13) agreed (A) that leaders were modeling discipleship. Question 14 examined the frequency with which the disciple-making vision and strategy of churches was being communicated verbally. The majority, 68.18%, said constantly (C), and 27.27% said occasionally (O) while 4.54% said rarely (RR). Similarly, Question 15

examined the extent to which this same vision and strategy was emphasized in written form. The majority of the alpha participants, 72.72% agree it was (A), while 27.27% disagreed (D). (See Table. 4.15.)

**Table 4.15. Alpha and Delta Questionnaire Part II Results: Alpha Responses to Qs. 12-15**

Questions	# of Answers	Response %				
		CP	PP	NRS	NS	NF
12. How clearly is 'disciple-making' emphasized in your church's purpose statement?	22 of 22	13.63	72.72	13.63	0	0
13. Leaders are modeling discipleship by their own example and commitment to the disciple-making process.	22 of 22	22.72	77.27	0	0	
14. How clearly is the disciple-making vision and strategy of your church communicated and emphasized to the congregation verbally (eg. From the pulpit)?	22 of 22	68.18	27.27	4.54	0	0
15. The disciple-making vision and strategy of your church are communicated and emphasized in written form (e.g., in the bulletin).	22 of 22	9.09	63.63	4.54	0	0

Alpha responses to Question 16 through 19 (Q. 16-19) were important.

Discipleship structures are paramount to any church attempting to effectively disciple new believers. As such, churches were assessed along the line of praxis. Question 16 examined the extent to which churches demonstrated concern for the growth and development of participants after their baptism and reception into full membership.

95.45% agreed (A) that the church showed great concern for their growth while 4.54% disagreed (D). Question 17 dealt with the issue of follow-up and nurture. One hundred percent agreed (A) that the church they represented had a clear system of follow-up.

Question 18 addressed the matter of training groups designed to equipped people in

evangelism. Only 9.09% indicated that this regularly happens (RGH) while 81.81% said it sometimes happens (SH), and 9.09% said it rarely happens (RRH). When Question 19 asked about the existence of discipleship training groups designed to nurture new Christians, only 4.54% of respondents indicated that this regularly happens (RGH). In contrast, 31.81% said it sometimes happens (SH), while 63.63% said this rarely happens (RRH). (see Table 4.16).

**Table 4.16. Alpha and Delta Questionnaire Part II Results: Alpha Responses to Qs. 16-19**

Questions	# of Answers	Response %				
		SA	A	D	SD	NA
16. The church shows great concern for my growth and development after my baptism and reception into the full membership of the church.	22 of 22	27.27	68.18	4.54	0	
17. Our church has a clear system of follow-up and nurture designed to establish believers in the faith and equip them for service.	22 of 22	9.09	90.90	0	0	0
18. To what extent does your church have training groups operating that equip people in the areas of personal witness and evangelism?	22 of 22	9.09	81.81	9.09	0	0
19. Our church has discipleship training groups operating that train and equip people in how to nurture new Christians, and how to disciple and mentor others.	22 of 22	4.54	31.81	63.63	0	0

Questions 20 and 21 addressed the issue of making disciples and disciplers at the small group level and inquired about the percentage of small groups within churches that were discipling or training disciplers in small groups. In response to Question 20, 77.27% agreed (A) the churches they represented were making disciples and disciplers through its small groups while 22.72% disagreed (D). In response to question 21, 27.27 % of the



respondents said that between 20-50% of the total number of small groups at their church were making disciples and disciplers, while 72.72% indicated that less than 25% of the total number of small groups were doing this. (See Table. 4.17.)

**Table 4.17 Alpha and Delta Questionnaire Part II Results: Alpha Responses to Qs. 20-21**

Questions	# of Answers	Response %				
		SA	A	D	SD	NA
20. Our church, through its small group structure is clearly training believers in how to become disciples themselves, and then showing them how to make disciples of others.	22 of 22	0	77.27	18.18	4.54	0
21. Of the total number of small group meetings in our church, the following have a clear discipleship training focus and follow a specific disciple-making strategy:	22 of 22	<b>Over 75%</b>	<b>20-50%</b>	<b>Less than 25%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>DK</b>
		0	27.27	72.72	0	0

Questions 22 through 26 assessed the participants own practice of disciplines essential to their personal growth and development as disciples. Question 22 revealed that 95.44% of participants were regular (RG) attendees to divine worship services, while 4.5% attended very rarely (VRR). Similarly, 100% of respondents to Question 23 indicated that they went to communion service all of the time (AT). In response to question 24 pertaining to bible study, 95.45% of respondents attended regularly (RG), while 4.54% did not attend (N). Question 25 looked at attendance to prayer meeting and fasting services. A total of 86.36% of respondents indicated that they regularly attended (RG) while 9.09% said rarely (RR), and 4.54% said not at all (N). Question 26 looked at daily devotions. 100% indicated frequent (F) daily devotions. (See Table. 4.18)

**Table 4.18. Alpha and Delta Questionnaire Part II Results: Alpha Responses to Qs. 22-26**

Questions	# of Answers	Response %				
		VRG	RG	O	RR	VRR
22. How would you describe your attendance to divine worship services at your church?	22 of 22	90.90	4.54	0	0	4.54
23. How often do you participate in communion services at your church?	22 of 22	100	0	0	0	0
24. How often do you attend bible study at your church?	22 of 22	86.36	9.09	0	0	4.54
25. How would you describe your attendance to prayer meetings and fasting services?	22 of 22	68.18	18.18	9.09	0	4.54
26. How would you describe your devotional life (e.g., personal reading, studying, and meditating of the Word; personal prayer time etc.)?	22 of 22	27.27	72.72	0	0	0

#### Analysis of Alpha Group Assessment of the Five Levels

Apart from capturing individual responses to individual questions, Part II of the Pre-AΔQ was designed to assess the church at five levels: Preaching and Teaching level (Q7-11), Leadership level (Q12-15), Disciple-making Structures (Q16-19), Small Group level (Q20-21) and the Personal level (Q22-26). This sections discusses how the Alpha participants assessed the church at these five levels.

The findings showed that church received significantly high marks at all five levels of its ministry from Alpha participants. The data showed that the church's disciple-making initiative variable at the preaching and teaching level expressed as the mean of Q7-Q11 was 80.9. Similarly, the disciple-making initiative at the leadership level expressed as the mean of Q12 through Q15 was 88.63. As it pertains to the church's initiative at the disciple-making structures level – expressed as the mean of Q16-Q19,

was 72.7. The findings also showed that when expressed as the mean of Q20 and Q21, the church's disciple-making initiative at the small groups level was 52.27. The personal responsibility individuals took for their own growth and development expressed as the mean of Q22 through Q26 was 95.45 (See Table 4.19).

**Table 4.19 Analysis of Alpha Responses at the Five Levels: Preaching and Teaching, Leadership, Disciple-making Structures, Small Groups, and Personal**

LEVELS	Positive & Negative	QUESTION NUMBER & SCORES					TOTAL	MEAN
		Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11		
Preaching & Teaching	+ & -							
	+	90.9	90.9	40.9	86.36	95.44	404.5	+80.9
	-	4.54	4.54	4.54	13.63	4.54	31.79	-6.4
Leadership	+ & -							
	+	86.35	100	95.45	72.27		354.52	+88.63
	-	13.63	0	4.54	27.27		45.44	-11.36
Disciple-making Structures	+ & -							
	+	95.45	100	90.9	4.54		290.49	+72.7
	-	4.54	0	9.09	95.44		109.07	-27.3
Small Groups	+ & -							
	+	77.27	27.27				104.54	+52.27
	-	22.72	72.72				95.44	-47.72
Personal	+ & -							
	+	95.44	100	95.45	86.36	100	477.25	+95.45
	-	4.54	0	4.54	13.63	0	22.71	-4.54

Analysis of Alpha Group Assessment of the two major Categories (Theory and Praxis).

Part II of the Pre-AΔQ was also designed to assess the church along the lines of theory (Q7-15) and praxis (Q16-21). With mean scores of 84.3 for its understanding of discipleship and 65.8 for its practice of discipleship, the Alpha group participants signaled their approval of the church's ministry as far as it relates to theory and praxis. (See Table 4.20.)

**Table 4.20. Analysis of Alpha Assessment of the Church's Knowledge and Practice of Discipleship (Theory and Praxis)**

LEVELS	Positive & Negative	Question Number & Scores									TOTAL	MEAN
		Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15		
Knowledge (Theory)	+ & -											
	+	90.9	90.9	40.9	86.36	95.44	86.35	100	95.45	72.27	759.02	+84.3
	-	4.54	4.54	4.54	13.63	4.54	13.63	0	4.54	27.27		-8.6
Practice (Praxis)	+ & -											
	+	95.45	100	90.9	4.54	77.27	27.27				395.03	+65.8
	-	4.54	0	9.09	95.44	22.72	72.72				204.51	-34.1

*Delta Responses*

This section discusses the Delta group responses to the Pre-Intervention Alpha and Delta Questionnaire (Pre-AΔQ) Part II and their understanding and practice of discipleship as revealed by their responses to (Q.7-26). The unique perspective of the present members (Deltas) on the questions in Part II of the Pre-AΔQ was critical to this study.

*Analysis of Delta Group Responses to Individual Questions*

This section discusses the responses to questions 7 through 11 (Q. 7-11). Question 7 gauged the church's understanding of what it means to be a disciple from the unique perspective of Delta Participants. The majority, 74.13% of the participants, indicated that members of the church they represented had clear understanding (CU), but 20.68% said members partially understand (PU), while 5.17% indicated little to no understanding (LU). Question 8 focused on the church's understanding of the meaning, call, and cost of discipleship. A total of 67.24% indicated that members of the church they represented had clear understanding (CU), and 32.75% said members partially understands (PU). Only 10.34% indicated little to no understanding (LU). Question 9 addressed the five principles essential for growing as a disciple. Most, 72.41% of respondents, said the

church they represented clearly understood those principles (CU), and 25.86% indicated partial understanding (PU). Just 1.72% indicated no understanding (NU)...

**Table 4.21. Alpha and Delta Questionnaire Part II Results: Delta Responses to Qs. 7-11**

Question	# of Answers	Response %				
		VCU	CU	PU	LU	NU
1. How clearly do the members of your church understand what being a 'disciple' means?	58 of 58	13.79	60.34	20.68	5.17	0
8. How clearly do the members of your church understand the meaning, the call, and the cost of discipleship?	58 of 58	24.13	32.75	32.75	10.34	0
9. How clearly do the members of your church know and understand in practical terms the 5 principles essential for growing as disciples – a. the Holy Spirit's ministry in their lives, b. regular feeding on the Word, c. personal prayer and worship, d. fellowship with other believers, e. being active in witness, service and ministry?	58 of 58	12.06	60.34	25.86	1.72	0
10. How clearly do the members of your church know and understand in practical terms what it means to live under Christ's Lordship in personal life, family life and in daily work?	58 of 58	13.79	53.44	24.13	8.62	0
11. How often are these discipleship themes (i.e., meaning, call, and cost of discipleship etc.) preached and touched on as an emphasis from the pulpit?	58 of 58	29.31	37.93	27.58	5.17	0

The response to Question 10 indicated that 67.24% of the members of their church have clear understanding of what it means to live under Christ lordship in all areas of their life (CU), while 8.62% indicated little understanding (LU). In terms of how often such discipleship themes as the meaning, call and cost are preached on as an emphasis from the pulpit, 67.24% of response to Question 11, while 32.75% said rarely (RR). (See Table 4.21)

Questions 12 through 15 inquired about the leadership level (Q. 12-15). Question 12 examined the disciple-making emphasis in relation to the churches purpose statement. The data showed that it was the core purpose of 25.86% of churches (CP) while 44.82% indicated that it was a part of the purpose (PP), 3.45% said it was not really stated (NRS) and 1.72% said it was not stated at all (NS). Another 27.58% indicated they were not familiar with the church's purpose statement (NF). As it pertains to leaders modeling discipleship by their own example and commitment to the disciple-making process (Question13), 82.75% of the respondents agreed that leaders were (A), while 17.24% disagreed (D). Question 14 examined the frequency with which the disciple-making vision and strategy of churches was being communicated verbally. Only 37.93% said constantly (C), and 37.93% said occasionally (O) while 20.68% said rarely (RR) and 3.44% percent said it was not (N).

**Table 4.22. Alpha and Delta Questionnaire Part II Results: Delta Responses to Qs. 12-15**

Questions	# of Answers	Response %				
		CP	PP	NRS	NS	NF
12. How clearly is 'disciple-making' emphasized in your church's purpose statement?	58 of 58	25.86	44.82	3.44	1.72	27.58
13. Leaders are modeling discipleship by their own example and commitment to the disciple-making process.	58 of 58	SA	A	D	SD	
		34.48	48.27	15.51	1.71	
14. How clearly is the disciple-making vision and strategy of your church communicated and emphasized to the congregation verbally (eg. From the pulpit)?	58 of 58	C	O	R	VR	N
		37.93	37.93	17.24	3.44	3.44
15. The disciple-making vision and strategy of your church are communicated and emphasized in written form (e.g., in the bulletin).	58 of 58	SA	A	D	SD	NA
		17.24	25.86	29.31	8.62	18.96

Similarly, Question 15 examined the extent to which this same vision and strategy was emphasized in written form. Only 43.10% agreed it was (A), while 37.93% disagreed (D) and 18.98% indicated they were not aware (NA). (See Table 4.22 p.141).

Question 16 through 19 (Q. 16-19) addressed the question of follow-up programs for its members. Question 16 examined the extent to which churches demonstrated concern for the growth and development of participants after their baptism and reception into full membership. The majority, 65.51% agreed that the church showed great concern for their growth while 34.47% disagreed. Question 17 dealt with the issue of follow-up and nurture. Whereas 6.89% agreed that the church they represented had a clear system of follow-up, 93.09% disagreed. Similarly, Question 18 addressed the matter of training groups designed to equipped people in the area of evangelism.

**Table 4.23. Alpha and Delta Questionnaire Part II Results: Delta Responses to Qs. 16-19**

Questions	# of Answers	Response %				
		SA	A	D	SD	NA
16. The church shows great concern for my growth and development after my baptism and reception into the full membership of the church.	58 of 58	31.03	34.48	27.58	6.69	
17. Our church has a clear system of follow-up and nurture designed to establish believers in the faith and equip them for service.	58 of 58	0	6.89	84.48	1.72	6.69
18. To what extent does your church have training groups operating that equip people in the areas of personal witness and evangelism?	58 of 58	10.34	44.82	20.68	20.68	3.44
19. Our church has discipleship training groups operating that train and equip people in how to nurture new Christians, and how to disciple and mentor others.	58 of 58	3.44	3.44	67.24	18.96	6.89

Only 10.34% indicated that this regularly happens (RGH), but 44.82% said it sometimes happens (SH), 20.68% said it rarely happens (RRH), 20.68% said it's not happening (NH), and 3.44% said they are not aware (NA). Question 19 asked about existence of discipleship training groups designed to nurture new Christians. Only 6.98% of respondents indicated that this regularly happens, 86.20% said it rarely happens, and the remaining 6.89% were unaware. (See Table 4.23 p.142).

Question 20 and 21 addressed the issue of making disciples and disciplers at the small group level and the percentage of small groups within churches that were doing that respectively. In response to Question 20, 29.31% agreed the churches they represented were making disciples and disciplers through its small groups while 70.68% disagreed. Only 31.03% of the respondents to Question 21 said that between 20-50% of the total number of small groups at their church were making disciples and disciplers, while 68.95% indicated that less than 25% of the total number of small groups were doing this. (See Table. 4.24)

**Table 4.24. Alpha and Delta Questionnaire Part II Results: Delta Responses to Qs. 20-21**

Questions	# of Answers	Response %				
		SA	A	D	SD	NA
20. Our church, through its small group structure is clearly training believers in how to become disciples themselves, and then showing them how to make disciples of others.	58 of 58	6.89	22.41	51.72	3.44	15.51
21. Of the total number of small group meetings in our church, the following have a clear discipleship training focus and follow a specific disciple-making strategy:	58 of 58	<b>Over 75%</b> 3.44	<b>20-50%</b> 27.57	<b>Less than 25%</b> 36.20	<b>0%</b> 13.79	<b>DK</b> 18.96



Question 22 through 26 assessed the participants own practice of disciplines essential to their personal growth and development as disciples. Question 22 revealed that 93.10% of the participants were regular attendees to divine worship services (RG), while 1.71% rarely attended (RR). Similarly, 96.55% of respondents to Question 23 indicated that they went to communion service some of the times (S), while 1.72% rarely went (RR). In response to Question 24 that pertained to bible study, 43.10% of respondents attend regularly (RG), while 34.48% rarely do (RR), and 22.41% do not attend (N). Question 25 looked at attendance to prayer meeting and fasting services. Only 32.72% of respondents indicated that they regularly attended while 37.93% said rarely, and 25.85% said not at all. Question 26 looked at daily devotions, and 86.20% indicated they frequently had daily devotions while 1.72% said rarely. (see Table. 4.25)

**Table 4.25. Alpha and Delta Questionnaire PART II Results: Delta Responses to Qs. 22-26**

Questions	# of Answers	Response %				
		VRG	RG	O	RR	VRR
22. How would you describe your attendance to divine worship services at your church?	58 of 58	63.79	29.31	5.17	1.72	0
23. How often do you participate in communion services at your church?	58 of 58	62.06	34.48	1.72	0	1.72
24. How often do you attend bible study at your church?	58 of 58	22.41	20.68	18.96	15.51	22.41
25. How would you describe your attendance to prayer meetings and fasting services?	58 of 58	18.96	17.24	37.93	17.24	8.62
26. How would you describe your devotional life (e.g., personal reading, studying, and meditating of the Word; personal prayer time etc.)?	58 of 58	60.34	25.86	12.06	0	1.72

### Analysis of Delta Group Assessment of the Five Level

Table 4.26 reveals that the disciple-making initiative of the church at the preaching and teaching level received positive approval rating from Delta's with a mean score of 69.7 of Questions 7 through 11. With mean scores of 68.09 at the leadership level and 71.03 at the personal level, Delta participants rated positively the disciple-making initiative of the church. In contrast, the negative mean scores of -59.46 for the disciple making structures addressed by Questions 16 through 29 and -69.81 regarding the small group levels addressed by Questions 20 and 21, Deltas voiced their disapproval with the church's initiative at these levels. (See Table 4.26.)

**Table 4.26. Analysis of Delta Responses at the Five Levels: Preaching and Teaching, Leadership, Disciple-making Structures, Small Groups and Personal**

LEVELS	Positive & Negative	QUESTION NUMBER & SCORES					TOTAL	MEAN
		Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11		
Preaching & Teaching	+ & -							
	+	74.13	67.24	72.41	67.24	67.24	348.26	+69.7
	-	5.17	10.34	1.72	8.62	32.75	58.6	-11.72
Leadership	+ & -							
	+	70.68	82.75	75.86	43.10		272.39	+68.09
	-	29.3	17.24	24.12	56.89		127.55	-31.88
Disciple-Making Structures	+ & -							
	+	65.51	6.89	55.17	6.89		134.49	+33.61
	-	6.89	93.09	44.81	93.09		237.85	-59.46
Small Groups	+ & -							
	+	29.31	31.03				60.34	+30.17
	-	70.68	68.95				139.63	-69.81
Personal	+ & -							
	+	93.10	96.55	43.10	36.20	86.20	355.15	+71.03
	-	1.72	1.72	37.96	25.86	1.72	68.98	-13.79

### Analysis of Delta Group Assessment of the two major Categories (Theory and Praxis)

Table 4.27 reveals how Delta participants assessed the church along the lines of theory and praxis. According to Deltas the church's understanding of discipleship expressed as the mean of Questions 7 through 15 was 68.96. Deltas however assessed

less favorably the church's initiatives in the area of practice. Table 4.27 further showed that the church's practice of discipleship expressed as the mean of Questions 16 through 21 was +32.46 or - 62.91.

**Table 4.27. Analysis of Delta Assessment of the Church's Knowledge and Practice of Discipleship (Theory and Praxis)**

LEVELS	SCORES	QUESTION NUMBER									TOTAL	MEAN
Knowledge (Theory)	+ & -	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15		
	+	74.13	67.24	72.41	67.24	67.24	70.68	82.75	75.86	43.10	620.65	+68.96
	-	5.17	10.34	1.72	8.62	32.75	29.3	17.24	24.12	56.89	186.15	-20.68
Practice (Praxis)	+ & -	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21					
	+	65.51	6.89	55.17	6.89	29.31	31.03				194.8	+32.46
	-	6.89	93.09	44.81	93.09	70.68	68.95				377.48	-62.91

### Stage 2 Analysis: Comparative

This section compares the responses of the alpha participants with those given by the delta participants.

#### *Alpha vs. Delta: Similarities and Differences in Responses to Individual Questions*

For the most part, with slight differences in percentages, Alpha and Delta group participants responded similarly to 70 percent of the questions in Part II of the Pre-Adq. Table 4.28 presents a comparison of the summarized findings of Alpha and Delta responses to questions 7-8, 10-14, 16, 18-19, 21-23, and 26.

In response to question 7 both Alpha and Delta participants expressed a similar view that members had clear understanding of what being a disciple means. The data showed that 90.9% of Alpha participants and 74.13% of the Deltas believed members had clear understanding. Similarly, the data showed that both groups clearly felt members understood such themes as the meaning, call and cost of discipleship when 90.9% of Alphas and 67.24% of Delta's responded positively to Question 8. Also, in

response to question 10, 86.36% of Alphas and 67.24% of Deltas felt that members understood clearly what it means to live under Christ's lordship in every area of life.. In the same way, the data clearly indicated that both groups share a similar view on the frequency with which discipleship themes are emphasized, when 95.44% of Alpha participants and 67.24% of Deltas responded in the affirmative to Question 11. Equally, their responses to question 12 had similar views with 86.35% of Alpha's and 70.68% of Deltas saying that disciple-making is a part of their churches purpose statement. In response to question 13, 100% of Alpha and 82.75% of Delta participants agreed that leaders were modeling discipleship by their example. This was a clear indication of similarity of viewpoint on the issue. The responses from both groups to questions 14, 16 and 18 were all positive. To question 14, 95.45% of the Alpha participants and 77.86% of the Delta participants gave positive response. The data from question 15 show that 95.45% of Alphas and 65.51% gave responded positively, and 90.9% of Alphas and 55.17% of Delta's gave positive responses to questions 18. This clearly indicated a consensus. The data also showed both Alphas and Deltas came to the same negative conclusion on certain issues. Question 19 showed that 95.44% of Alpha participants and 93.09% of Delta participants said the church does not have discipleship training groups that train and equip people about how to nurture new Christians, and how to disciple and mentor others. Similarly, Alphas and Deltas expressed similar views in response to Question 21 when 72.72% of Alpha's and 68.95% of Delta's said less than 25% of small groups had a clear discipleship training focus and followed a specific disciple-making strategy. The data also showed a consensus among Alpha and Delta participants on the

issues raised by questions 22, 23, and 26. 95.44% of Alphas responded positively to question 22. All Alpha participants (100%) responded positively to question 23...

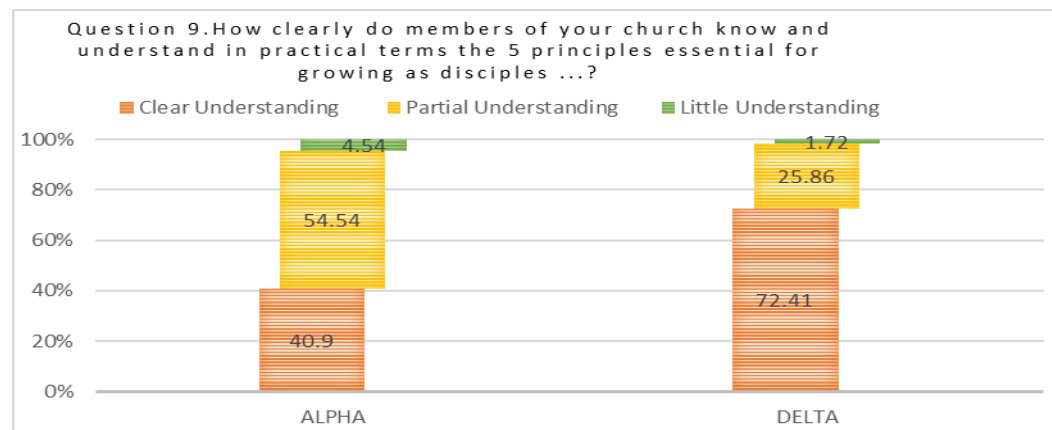
**Table 4.28. Similarities Between Alpha and Delta Responses to Individual Questions (Qs. 7-8, 10-14, 16, 18-19, 21-23, and 26)**

Question Q#	Alpha Scores		Delta Scores	
	% High	% Low	% High	% Low
1. How clearly do the members of your church understand what being a 'disciple' means?	90.9	4.54	74.13	5.17
8. How clearly do the members of your church understand the meaning, the call, and the cost of discipleship?	90.9	4.54	67.24	10.34
10. How clearly do the members of your church know and understand in practical terms what it means to live under Christ's Lordship in personal life, family life and in daily work?	86.36	13.63	67.24	8.62
11. how often are these discipleship themes (i.e., Meaning, call, and cost of discipleship etc.) Preached and touched on as an emphasis from the pulpit?	95.44	4.54	67.24	32.75
12. How clearly is 'disciple-making' emphasized in your church's purpose statement?	86.35	13.63	70.68	29.3
13. Leaders are modeling discipleship by their own example and commitment to the disciple-making process.	100	0	82.75	17.24
14. How clearly is the disciple-making vision and strategy of your church communicated and emphasized to the congregation verbally (e.g., From the pulpit)?	95.45	4.54	75.86	24.12
16. The church shows great concern for my growth and development after my baptism and reception into the full membership of the church.	95.45	4.54	65.51	6.89
18. To what extent does your church have training groups operating that equip people in the areas of personal witness and evangelism?	90.9	9.09	55.17	44.81
19. Our church has discipleship training groups operating that train and equip people in how to nurture new Christians, and how to disciple and mentor others.	4.54	95.44	6.89	93.09
21. Of the total number of small group meetings in our church, the following have a clear discipleship training focus and follow a specific disciple-making strategy:	27.27	72.72	31.03	68.95
22. How would you describe your attendance to divine worship services at your church?	95.44	4.54	93.10	1.72
23. How often do you participate in communion services at your church?	100	0	96.55	1.72
26. How would you describe your devotional life (e.g., Personal reading, studying, and meditating of the word; personal prayer time etc.)?	100	0	86.20	1.72

The same percentage (100%) of Alpha's responded positively to questions 26. Similarly, 93.10, of Deltas responded positively to question 22. The findings also showed 96.55% of Deltas responded positively to question 23, while 86.20% of Delta's responded positively to question 26. (see table 4.28 p.148).

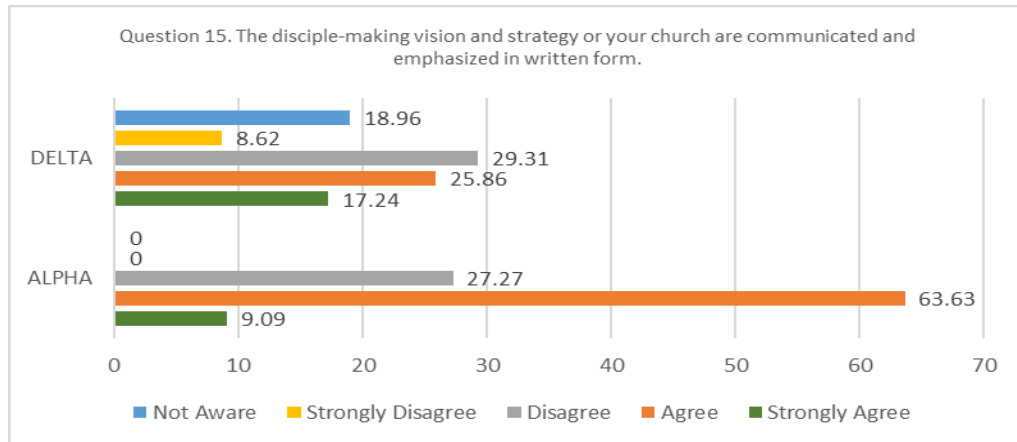
Significant differences in how Alpha's and Delta's responded to some questions emerged, especially in the case of questions 9, 15, 17, 20, 24 and 25. The data is represented in Figures 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12.

The responses to question 9, represented in Figure 4.7, showed Alpha and Delta's disagree on the members level of understanding of the five principles essential for growing disciples. Whereas 54.54% of Alphas felt that members possessed only partial understanding, 72.41% of Deltas felt members had clear understanding.



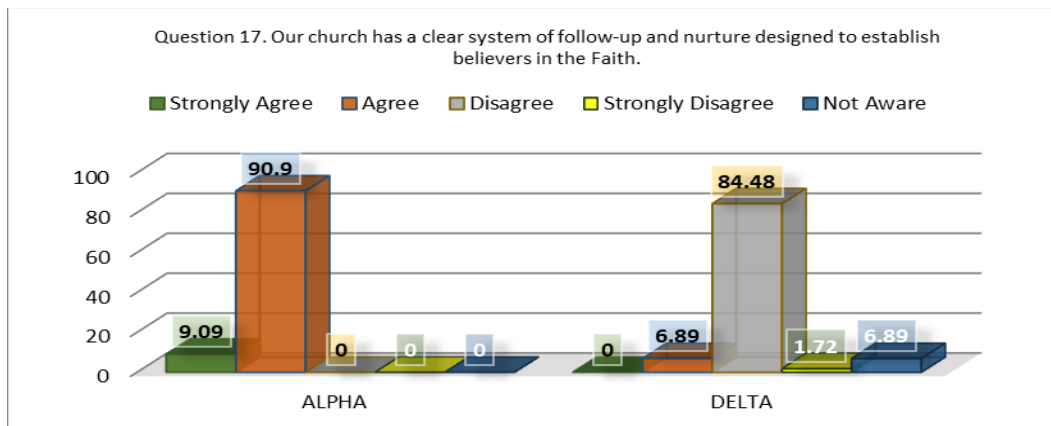
**Figure 4.7. Differences in Alpha and Delta Responses to Q9 of the Pre-AAQ**

The data also showed significant difference in how Alpha and Delta participants responded to Question 15. The question examined the extent to which the disciple-making vision and strategy of churches was emphasized in written form. Unlike the 72.72% of Alpha respondents who agreed, 56.89% of Delta respondents disagreed. (See Figure 4.8.)



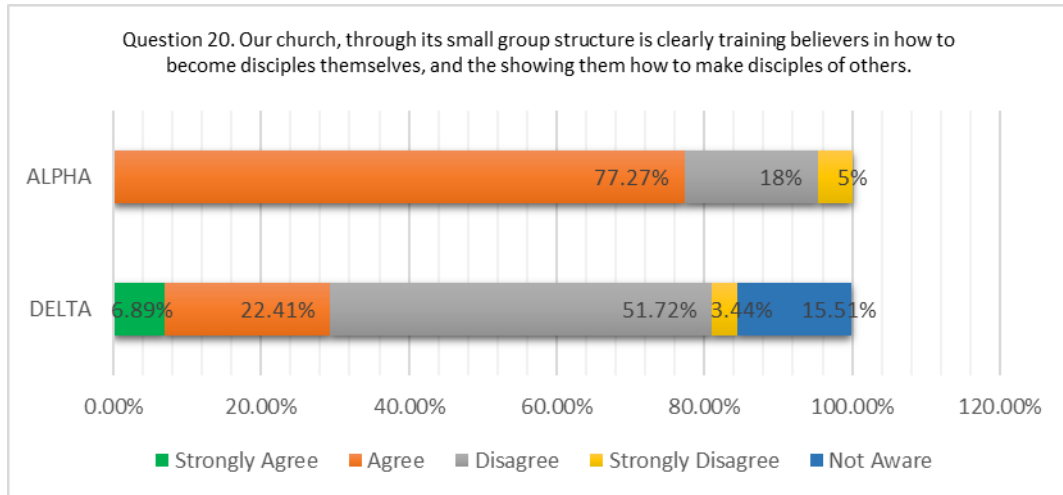
**Figure 4.8. Differences in Alpha and Delta Responses to Q15 of the Pre-AAQ**

Question 17 dealt with the issue of follow-up and nurture. The findings showed a stark contrast in the responses of Alpha’s and Delta’s on the issue. All Alpha participants (100%) indicated that the church had a clear system of follow-up. In contrast, 93.09% of Delta participants disagreed. (See Figure 4.9.)



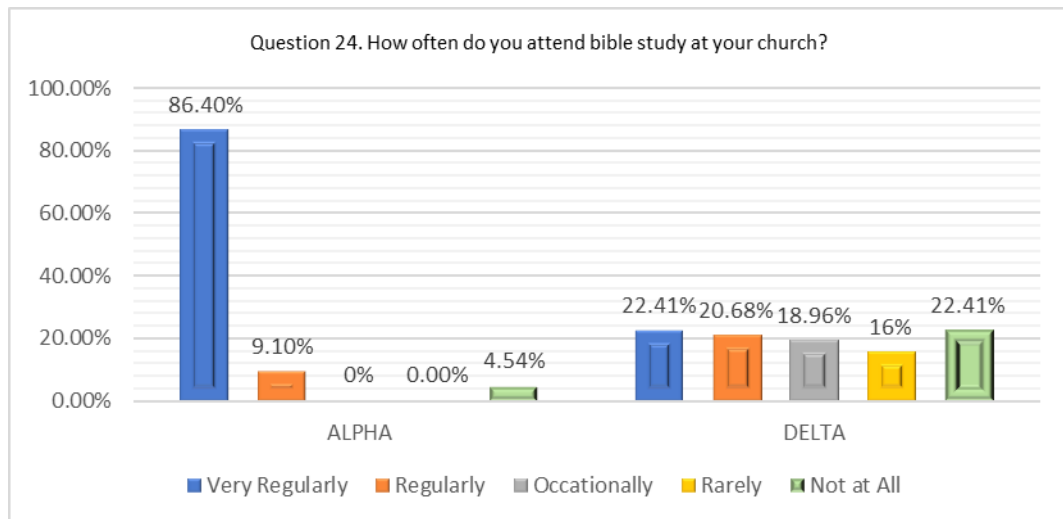
**Figure 4.9. Differences in Alpha and Delta Responses to Q17 of the Pre-AAQ**

Question 20 addressed the issue of making disciples and disciplers at the small group level. Whereas 77.27% of Alpha participants said the church was making disciples and disciplers through its small groups, 70.68% of delta participants disagreed. (See Figure 4.10).



**Figure 4.10. Differences in Alpha and Delta Responses to Q20 of the Pre-ΔΔQ**

Question 24 examined the frequency with which respondents attended Bible study. While close to one hundred percent (95.5%) of Alpha’s were regular attendees, less than 50% of Delta participants were regular in their attendance to these services. (See Figure 4.11.)

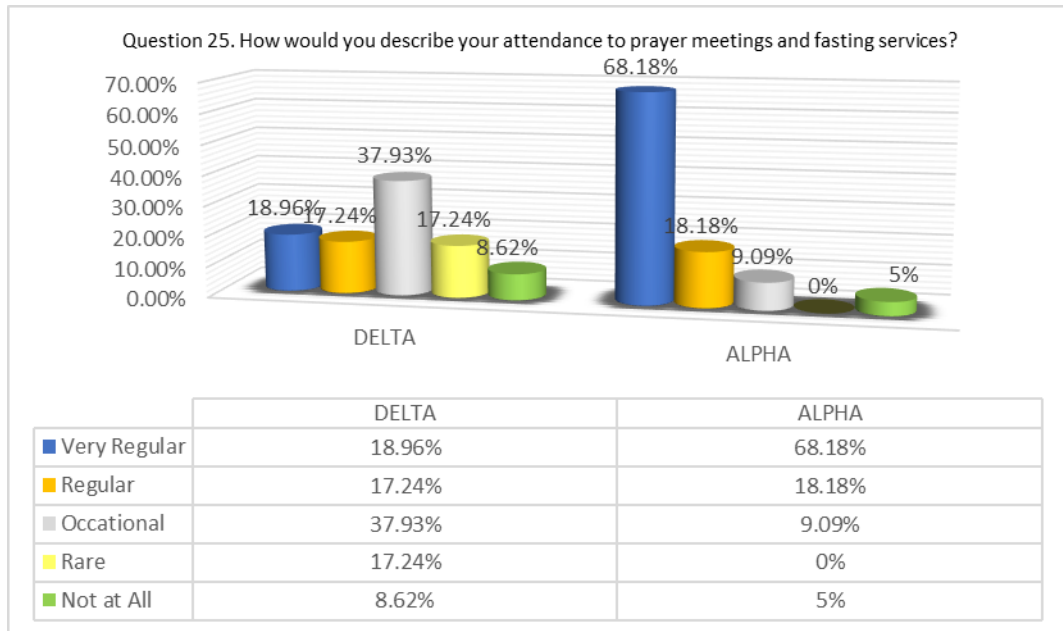


**Figure 4.11. Differences in Alpha and Delta Responses to Q24 of the Pre-ΔΔQ**

Similarly, as it pertains to participants attendance to prayer meeting and fasting services (Question 25), while 86.36% of Alpha participants are regular attendees to these



services, a mere 36.2% of Delta’s by contrast are regular in their attendance. (See Figure 4.12.)



**Figure 4.12. Differences in Alpha and Delta Responses to Q25 of the Pre-AΔQ**

*Alpha vs. Delta Responses at the Five Levels Assessed*

How did Alpha and Delta participants assess the church at the five levels of the Pre-AΔQ? The findings showed significant similarities between the Alpha and Delta Groups assessment of the church at the five levels of the Pre-AΔQ. With mean highs of 68 and above, both groups graded the church approvingly at three of the five levels: The Preaching and teaching level, the leadership level and the personal level. Conversely, the data showed significant differences in both group’s assessment of the church at the disciple-making structures level and the small groups level. While the Alpha group assessed the disciple-making structures and small groups level of the church favorably with mean scores of 72.7 and 52.27, the Delta group, in contrast, gave the church significantly low mean scores of 33.61 for disciple making structures and 30.17 for small

groups. The data further showed that while Alpha Group gave the church passing grades for its disciple-making initiative at all five levels, the Delta Group failed the church at two of the five Levels. (See Table 4.29.)

**Table 4.29. Comparative Analysis. Alpha vs. Delta Assessment of the Five Levels: Preaching and Teaching, Leadership, Disciple-Making Structures, Small Groups, and Personal**

SIMILARITIES				DIFFERENCES			
LEVELS	Q#	Alpha Mean	Delta Mean	LEVELS	Q#	Alpha Mean	Delta Mean
Preaching & Teaching	7 – 11	+ 80.9	+ 69.7	Disciple-Making Structures	16 – 19	+ 72.7	+ 33.6
		- 6.4	- 11.72			- 27.3	- 59.46
Leadership	12 – 15	+ 88.63	+ 68.1	Small Groups	20 – 21	+ 52.3	+ 30.2
		- 11.36	- 31.9			- 47.7	- 69.61
Personal	22 – 26	+ 95.45	+ 71.0				
		- 4.54	- 13.8				

*Alpha and Delta Responses to the Two Major Categories: Knowledge (Theory) and Practice (Praxis).*

Alpha and Delta participants came to a similar conclusions regarding the church's knowledge of discipleship. Expressed as the mean of Questions 7 through 15, the church's knowledge variable according to Alpha was 84.3 and according to Delta it was 68.9. However the data reveals a significant difference between the Alpha and Delta group assessment of the church's practice of discipleship. The mean of Qusetions16 through 21, the Alpha group assessment of the church's practice of discipleship was 65.8. In contrast, the Delta group assessment of the church in the same area was 32.4. (See table 4.30.)

**Table 4.30. Comparative Analysis. Alpha vs. Delta Assessment of the Church's Knowledge and Practice of Discipleship (Theory and Praxis)**

SIMILARITY				DIFFERENCE			
CATEGORY	Q#	Alpha Mean	Delta Mean	CATEGORY	Q#	Alpha Mean	Delta Mean
Knowledge of Discipleship (Theory)	7 – 15	+ 84.3 - 8.6	+ 68.9 - 20.7	Practice of Discipleship (Praxis)	16 – 21	+ 65.8 - 34.1	+ 32.5 - 62.9

**Stage 3 Analysis. Collective Responses (Alpha & Delta)**

This section looks at the collective data of the Alpha and Delta research groups.

*Alpha & Delta Responses to Individual Question (Summary)*

Questions 7 through 11 focused on the respondent's understanding of discipleship. In the collective response to Question 7, 78.75% of participants indicated that members of the church they represented had a clear understanding of what being a disciple means (CU), while 5% indicated little to no understanding (LU). The collective response to Question 8 showed that 66.25% indicated that members had clear understanding of the discipleship themes, while 8.75% said little to no understanding . Responses to Question 9 showed 62.5% of respondents clearly understood the principles essential for growth, while 2.5% indicated no understanding. The answers to question 10 showed that 72.5% of respondents indicated that members had clear understanding of what it means to live under Christ lordship in all areas of life while 6.25% indicated little understanding. As it pertains to the frequency with which emphasis was placed on discipleship themes (Question 11), 75% of respondents said regularly (RG), while 25% said rarely (RR). (See Table 4.31.)

**Table 4.31. Collective Analysis: Summary of Alpha and Delta Responses to Qs.7-11**

Question	# of Answers	Response %				
		VCU	CU	PU	LU	NU
7. How clearly do the members of your church understand what being a 'disciple' means?	80 of 80	17.5	61.25	16.25	5	0
8. How clearly do the members of your church understand the meaning, the call, and the cost of discipleship?	80 of 80	25	41.25	25	8.75	0
9. How clearly do the members of your church know and understand in practical terms the 5 principles essential for growing as disciples – a. the Holy Spirit's ministry in their lives, b. regular feeding on the Word, c. personal prayer and worship, d. fellowship with other believers, e. being active in witness, service and ministry?	80 of 80	13.75	48.75	33.75	2.5	0
10. How clearly do the members of your church know and understand in practical terms what it means to live under Christ's Lordship in personal life, family life and in daily work?	80 of 80	17.5	55	21.25	6.25	0
11. How often are these discipleship themes (i.e., meaning, call, and cost of discipleship etc.) preached and touched on as an emphasis from the pulpit?	80 of 80	30	45	21.25	3.75	0

Questions 12 through 15 (Q. 12-15) inquired about disciple-making. Question 12 examined the disciple-making emphasis in relation to the churches purpose statement. Collectively, 52.5% said it was part of the purpose (PP) while 20% indicated they were not familiar with the church's purpose statement (NF). The collective response to question 13 showed 87.50% of respondents agreed that leaders were modeling discipleship by their example, while 12.50% disagreed. In response to Question 14, 46.25% said the disciple-making vision was communicated constantly verbally (C), 35% said occasionally (O), while 2.5% said it is not (N). Similarly, responses to Question 15,

showed 51.25% agreed that the disciple-making vision was communicated in written form, while 48.75% disagreed (See Table. 4.32).

**Table 4.32. Collective Analysis: Summary of Alpha and Delta Responses to Qs.12-15**

Questions	# of Answers	Response %				
		CP	PP	NRS	NS	NF
12. How clearly is 'disciple-making' emphasized in your church's purpose statement?	80 of 80	22.5	52.5	6.25	1.25	20
13. Leaders are modeling discipleship by their own example and commitment to the disciple-making process.	80 of 80	31.25	56.25	11.25	1,25	
14. How clearly is the disciple-making vision and strategy of your church communicated and emphasized to the congregation verbally (eg. From the pulpit)?	80 of 80	46.25	35	13.75	2.5	2.5
15. The disciple-making vision and strategy of your church are communicated and emphasized in written form (e.g., in the bulletin).	80 of 80	15	36.25	28.75	6.25	13.75

Questions 16 through 19 (Q. 16-19) inquired about the churches' follow-up programs for converts. In response to Question 16, 73.75% agreed (A) that the church showed great concern for their growth, while 26.25% disagree (D). Whereas in response to question 17, 32.5% agreed that their church had a clear system of follow-up, but 62.50% disagreed. Similarly, the collective response to Question 18 showed a mere 10% indicating that their church had training groups that regularly equips people for personal evangelism. Although 42% said it sometimes happens, and 2.5% said they are not aware. As it pertains to the nurturing of new Christians through discipleship training groups (Question 19), only 3.75% of respondents indicated that this regularly happens (RGH).

66.25% said it rarely happens (RRH), 18.75% said this was not happening (NH). (See Table 4.33.)

**Table 4.33. Collective Analysis: Summary of Alpha and Delta Responses to Qs.16-19**

Questions	# of Answers	Response %				
		SA	A	D	SD	NA
16. The church shows great concern for my growth and development after my baptism and reception into the full membership of the church.	80 of 80	30	43.75	21.25	3.75	1.25
17. Our church has a clear system of follow-up and nurture designed to establish believers in the faith and equip them for service.	80 of 80	2.5	30	61.25	1.25	5
18. To what extent does your church have training groups operating that equip people in the areas of personal witness and evangelism?	80 of 80	10	42.5	17.5	15	2.5
19. Our church has discipleship training groups operating that train and equip people in how to nurture new Christians, and how to disciple and mentor others.	80 of 80	3.75	11.25	66.25	13.75	5

Question 20 through 21 (Q. 20-21) inquired about small groups. In response to Question 20, 42.5% agreed the church they represented was making disciples and disciplers through its small groups while, 57.5 disagreed. Only 27.5% of respondents to Question 21 said that between 20-50% of the total number of small groups at their church were making disciples and disciplers, while 46.25% indicated that less than 25% of the total number of small groups were doing this (see Table. 4.34).

**Table 4.34. Collective Analysis: Summary of Alpha and Delta Responses to Qs.20-21**

Questions	# of Answers	Response %				
		SA	A	D	SD	NA
20. Our church, through its small group structure is clearly training believers in how to become disciples themselves, and then showing them how to make disciples of others.	80 of 80	5	37.5	42.5	3.75	11.25
21. Of the total number of small group meetings in our church, the following have a clear discipleship training focus and follow a specific disciple-making strategy:	80 of 80	<b>Over 75%</b>	<b>20-50%</b>	<b>Less than 25%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>DK</b>
		2.5	27.5	46.25	10	13.75

Question 22 through 26 (Q. 22-26) were related to church attendance. Responses to Question 22 revealed that 93.75% of participants were regular (RG) attendees to divine worship services, while 2.5% rarely (RR) attended. Similarly, 97.5% of respondents to Question 23 indicated that they went to communion service some of the times (S), while 2.5% rarely went (RR). As it pertains to bible study (Question 24), 57.5% of respondents attended regularly (RG), while 25% rarely did (RR). Question 25 responses showed that 47.5% of respondents regularly attended prayer meeting while 12.5% said rarely. Question 26 looked at daily devotions, and 90% indicated that they had frequent daily devotions while 8.75% said rarely. (See Table. 4.35.)

**Table 4.35. Collective Analysis: Summary of Alpha and Delta Responses to Qs.22-26**

Questions	# of Answers	Response %				
		VRG	RR	O	RR	VRR
22. How would you describe your attendance to divine worship services at your church?	80 of 80	71.25	22.5	3.75	1.25	1.25
23. How often do you participate in communion services at your church?	80 of 80	72.5	25	1.25	0	1.25
24. How often do you attend bible study at your church?	80 of 80	40	17.5	13.75	11.25	17.5
25. How would you describe your attendance to prayer meetings and fasting services?	80of 80	30	17.5	30	12.5	7.5
26. How would you describe your devotional life (e.g., personal reading, studying, and meditating of the Word; personal prayer time etc.)?	80 of 80	51.25	38.75	8.75	0	1.25

#### *Alpha & Delta Assessment of the Five Levels*

Collectively, how did Alpha and Delta participants grade the church at each of the five levels? The church received a significantly high grade at the preaching and teaching level. The data showed that the effectiveness of the church's preaching and teaching initiative expressed as the mean of Questions 7 through 11 was 70.4. Similarly, participants had high ratings for church at the leadership level. The findings showed that the disciple-making initiative at the leadership level expressed as the mean of Questions 12 through 15 was 73.75. The collective response of Alpha and Delta participants showed that the effectiveness of the disciple-making structures initiative expressed as the mean of Questions 16 through 19 was 46.56, while the effectiveness of the small group initiative expressed as the mean of Questions 20 and 21 was 36. (See Table 4.36.)



**Table 4.36. Collective Analysis. Alpha and Delta Assessment of the Five Levels: Preaching and Teaching, Leadership, Disciple-making Structures, Small Groups, and Personal**

LEVELS	SCORES	QUESTION NUMBER					TOTAL	MEAN
Preaching & Teaching	+ & -	<b>Q7</b>	<b>Q8</b>	<b>Q9</b>	<b>Q10</b>	<b>Q11</b>		
	+	78.75	66.25	62.5	72.5	75	352	+70.4
	-	5	8.75	2.5	6.25	25	47.5	-9.5
Leadership	+ & -	<b>Q12</b>	<b>Q13</b>	<b>Q14</b>	<b>Q15</b>			
	+	75	87.5	81.25	51.25		295	+73.75
	-	27.5	12.5	18.75	48.75		107.5	-26.87
Disciple-making Structures	+ & -	<b>Q16</b>	<b>Q17</b>	<b>Q18</b>	<b>Q19</b>			
	+	73.75	32.5	65	15		186.25	+46.56
	-	26.25	67.5	35	85		213.75	-53.43
Small Groups	+ & -	<b>Q20</b>	<b>Q21</b>					
	+	42	57.5				72	+36
	-	30	70				127.5	-63.75
Personal	+ & -	<b>Q22</b>	<b>Q23</b>	<b>Q24</b>	<b>Q25</b>	<b>Q26</b>		
	+	93.75	97.5	57.5	49.5	90	388.25	+77.65
	-	6.25	2.5	42.5	50.5	10	111.25	-22.25

*Alpha & Delta Assessment of the Two Major Categories (Theory and Praxis)*

What was the overall assessment of the church's knowledge and practice of discipleship by participants? The data showed that while the church received high marks for theory, it received a significantly low grade in the area of praxis. The findings showed that the knowledge/understanding variable expressed as the mean of Questions 7 through 15 was 71.88, while the discipling initiative variable expressed as the mean of Questions 16 through 21 was 43.04. (See Table 4.37.)

**Table 4.37. Collective Analysis. Alpha and Delta Assessment of the Church's Knowledge and Practice of Discipleship (Theory and Praxis)**

LEVELS	SCORES	QUESTION NUMBER									TOTAL	MEAN
Knowledge (Theory)	+ & -	<b>Q7</b>	<b>Q8</b>	<b>Q9</b>	<b>Q10</b>	<b>Q11</b>	<b>Q12</b>	<b>Q13</b>	<b>Q14</b>	<b>Q15</b>		
	+	78.75	66.25	62.5	72.5	75	75	87.5	81.25	51.25	647	+71.88
	-	5	8.75	2.5	6.25	25	27.5	12.5	18.75	48.75	155	-17.22
Practice (Praxis)	+ & -	<b>Q16</b>	<b>Q17</b>	<b>Q18</b>	<b>Q19</b>	<b>Q20</b>	<b>Q21</b>					
	+	73.75	32.5	65	15	42	57.5				258.25	+43.04
	-	26.25	67.5	35	85	30	70				339.25	-56.54

### **Pre-Intervention Alpha and Delta Questionnaire (Pre-Adq) PART III**

Part III of the questionnaire was designed to capture participants thoughts on question related to the understanding and practice of discipleship. The findings are represented in Table 4.38. which addressed questions 27 and 30.

Question 27 asked, “How important do you think discipleship is to the church/organization? Explain.” Seventy-nine of 80 persons responded to this question. “Important,” “very important,” “vital importance,” “core foundation,” “most important,” “essential,” and “extremely important” are but a few of the words and phrases respondents used in expressing their view on the importance of discipleship. From the rational provided, four major categories emerged: Command, evangelism, growth (numerical and spiritual, individual and collective) and others. Of the total numbers of responses, 17.7% said making disciples is important because it is commanded. One person said, “This aspect is important since it was the mandate given by Jesus himself.” 16.5% said it is important for evangelistic purposes. “Discipleship is the most important thing in the church because it helps us to lead others towards Christ” said another individual. A majority of 63.3% said discipleship is important because it fosters growth, numerical and spiritual, individual and collective. According to respondents “It helps you to grow spiritually.” Another said, “Without discipleship the church cannot grow.” The remaining 2.5% provided other rational. “That was the model Jesus used” said one individual.

Question 30 asked, “In your opinion what aspect/s of the church’s ministry (training style, methodology, etc.) has contributed most to retaining membership within your church?” Seventy of 80 participants responded to this question. Four major

categories emerged from the responses: Sunday and mid-week services, relationship with God, church environment, and aftercare programs and activities. Outside of the 7.1% who were “unsure,” the larger percentage of 47.1% said Sunday and mid-week services contributed most to the retention of members. One individual said, “In my opinion the aspect of the church ministry that keeps membership is the ministry from the pulpit.” Ten percent attributed persons staying to their own personal relationship with God. One participant remarked, “Persons that remain are persons that have a personal relationship with God and realize the vow they have made to follow God and not man.” Another 11.4% said it was church environment. According to one participant, it is the “Supportive friendly atmosphere purposely created by members.” The remaining 24.3% said aftercare programs and activities are to be mostly accredited for the retention of membership. One individual said, “Well I would say that there are some old folks who will always check on you, and there is the new converts class.” (see Table 4.38)

**Table 4.38. Alpha and Delta Questionnaire PART III Results: Open-ended Questions (Qs. 27 & 30)**

Question & Answers		Categories, Percentages, Strongest Words/Phrases/Sentences							
Question	# of Ans.	Commanded	%	Evangelism	%	Growth	%	Others	%
27. How important do you think discipleship is to the church/organization? Explain.	79/80	“Very important” “Christ commanded it as stated in Matt. 28:19-20.” “it was the mandate given by Jesus himself.”	17.7	“It is the most important thing in the church because it helps us to lead others towards Christ.” “help you to win souls”	16.5	“It helps you to grow spiritually.” “It helps the church grow numerically and spiritually.”	63.3	“it is very important, when we operate this way, we will attract more people in coming to church”	2.5

**Table 4.38 Continued ...**

30. In your opinion what aspect/s of the church's ministry (training style, methodology, etc.) has contributed most to retaining membership within your church?	70/80	<b>Sunday &amp; Mid-week Services</b>	%	<b>Relationship with God</b>	%	<b>Church Environment</b>	%	<b>Aftercare Programs &amp; Activities</b>	%
		<p>“Preaching and teaching. The different auxiliary group programs”</p> <p>“Prayer meeting and fasting services. They tend to be more result oriented.”</p>	47.1	<p>“Persons that remain are persons that have a personal relationship with God.”</p> <p>“I believe that it is more the commitment of the members and less church ministry”</p>	10	<p>“Our family structured setting. Each is a family member and is loved and cared for.”</p> <p>“Persons feel welcome and appreciated.”</p> <p>“Supportive friendly atmosphere purposely created by members.”</p>	11.4	<p>“Well, I would say that there are some old folks who will always check on you and there is the new converts class”</p> <p>“Small group cells especially operating in homes.”</p>	24.3

### **Pre- Intervention Alpha and Delta Focus Groups**

This section looks at the focus groups responses to Question 1 through 4, 7, and 8 as it pertained to research question one. Two focus groups were conducted to gather information pertinent to RQ #1, 2 and 4. The first focus group was done with a group of eight pastors (Focus Group Alpha), randomly selected from churches across the district. Questions one through four, seven and eight (Q1-4, 7, 8) of the focus group protocol, were designed to solicit responses to RQ #1. Questions one and two gauged participants knowledge of discipleship, while questions three and four, seven and eight assessed practice. To protect the identity of participants pseudonyms were assigned to each participant. For example, AFP1, where A stood for Alpha which was the group name. F stood for focus group which was the research instrument, and P1 represented the participant identified by a number. The same applies to ΔIP2, where D equals Delta which is the group name), I equals interview and P2 stands for participant number 2.

*Alpha Focus Group*

Questions 1 and 2 evaluated participants understanding of the importance of discipleship against the echelon of importance accorded to it by scripture. When asked, “What should be the primary focus of the church? And Why?” (Question 1), 60% of respondents said that they believe the primary focus of the church should be discipleship. In response to this question AFP1 simply said, “Disciple the believers.” that rationale was “because it is biblical.” The other 40% said evangelism should be the primary focus. AFP5 said, “My basis is Matt. 28. Jesus words ‘Go.’ I would say the primary role of the church is evangelism, that is the primary role.” The responses revealed some level of uncertainty about what the primary command is, (Matt.28:19-20), which lead one participant (AFP3) to suggest a synthesis – “so, I am understanding then, in our minds, do we need to capture a meaning of evangelism and discipleship that comes together as oppose to pulling them apart.”

When asked Question 2, “How important is discipleship and why?”, “important,” “very important,” “core foundation,” “very vital,” “very essential,” and “extremely important” are but a few of the words and phrases used by all participants (100%) in reference to the importance of discipleship. “I would rate in very important. On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest, I would put discipleship as being number 10.” It is the rationale however that spoke volume to the participants understanding of the importance of discipleship. Stated positively, for participants, discipleship is important because “it makes our believers more committed followers of Christ, they grow and mature when we disciple them.” Expressed in terms of church growth, AFP5 said “I would say discipleship is the fuel that sees to the continuity of the church.” For participants,

discipleship is important because “It is the example set by Jesus,” and. “It is commanded in Matt. 28:19-20.” AP3 described discipleship as “an investment that we make today ... knowing that we may not get what we want in a year or two years, but we know that this is the projection, by the third year, we know that this is what we are expecting to get.” Stated negatively, one participant explained, “for members who have not been discipled properly, they will become barriers in the church, meaning they don’t know how to treat persons, and so the persons that we bring in, it is not their intention to go out or to leave, but because of those who are there they do.”

Question 3 asked the participants, “What methods or strategies does your church currently use that is specifically designed to establish believers in their faith and equip them for service?” Three of 8 persons responded to this question. Following the 37.5% that responded, the question was met with deafening silence from the remaining 62.5%. The 37.5% who responded, identified clear methods and strategies. AFP2 said, “For me, I use small groups, I put a leader over that group, and I encourage them to study together.” AFP7 explained, “Well, one of the things that we have been engaged in is, a structured aftercare program for new converts. Because what we have discovered is that most times after baptism and they receive the right hand of fellowship, it’s kind of left for them to swim or sink. So, we have an aftercare program that specifically deals with those new persons coming in, whether they are 10 years old or 110, they are a part of the program.”

Question 4 asked respondents to share their view on the current state of the aftercare of new believers in their church. Seventy-five percent of the focus group participants responded. Fifty percent of the total number of those who responded simply

said there is room for improvement, since they had just mentioned the specific methods and strategies employed by their church. The remaining 50% lamented the present state of aftercare at their church especially as it relates to resources and approach to discipleship. AFP3 for example, began by saying, “For me it’s like a work in progress, and probably that is why I didn’t respond to the previous question.” He then went on to speak of the “absence of a standard approach to discipleship in the district,” the “lack of resources that is Wesleyan based,” and the difficulty experienced in “finding fellow ministers in the district who have something that they use to disciple new believers,” followed by a call for a “New Believers Wesleyan Discipleship manual.” He finished with, “So, the current state, I am very concern about it on different levels.” Adding to the discussion, AFP2 concluded that new believers are basically “left of their own”, when he said “I think it can be very detrimental also when you have new believers coming in the church, and they are left on their own. And many times, that happens. They were kind of disciplined up to baptism, and when baptism pass, it’s like they are left to just fend for themselves.”

Question 7 asked participants to share their opinion on the aspect/s of the church’s ministry they believe has contributed most to retaining membership within their church. All (100%) responded to this question. A single theme emerged from all the responses – relationships. This was evidenced by words and phrases such as “the love shown to them,” “love and value,” “bonds,” “a sense of belonging,” and “the social dimension.” AFP4 said “Valuing them, and just the seeing them as part of a family unit ... many times persons come in the church, but they don’t have a place, they don’t have a role, so

they don't feel apart." AFP5 said "bonds, and these bonds are developed through our small groups like the different departments of the Wesleyan church." ...

**Table 4.39. Alpha Focus Group Results: Responses to Qs. 1-4, 7 & 8**

Question	# Answers	Supporting Words/Phrases/Sentences
1. In your opinion, what should be the primary focus of the church? Why?	5 of 8	<p>"Disciple the believers. Reason, because it is biblical"</p> <p>"My basis is Matt. 28. Jesus words "Go." I would say the primary role of the church is evangelism, that is the primary role."</p> <p>"so, I am understanding then, in our minds, do we need capture a meaning of evangelism and discipleship that comes together as oppose to pulling them apart."</p>
2. How important is discipleship and why?	8 of 8	<p>"very important", "very vital", "very essential", "extremely important"</p> <p>"it makes our believers more committed followers of Christ, they grow and mature when we disciple them"</p> <p>"It is commanded in Matt. 28:19-20"</p>
3. What methods or strategies does your church currently use that is specifically designed to establish believers in their faith and equip them for service?	3 of 8	<p>"For me, I use small groups, I put a leader over that group, and I encourage them to study together."</p> <p>"Well, one of the things that we have been engaged in is, a structured aftercare program for new converts"</p>
4. What is your view on the current state of the aftercare of new believers in your church?	6 of 8	<p>"For me it's like a work in progress"</p> <p>"So, the current state, I am very concern about it on different levels."</p> <p>"I think it can be very detrimental also when you have new believers coming in the church, and they are left on their own."</p> <p>"it's like they are left to just fend for themselves."</p>
7. In your opinion what aspect/s of the church's ministry has contributed most to retaining membership within your church?	8 of 8	<p>"the love shown to them"; "love and value"; "bonds"; "a sense of belonging"; "the social dimension."</p> <p>"When you feel like you belong, when you are away you feel like you are missing out"</p>
8. How would you rate the church's concern for your growth and development after you were received in the church?	8 of 8	<p>"On a scale of 1-10, I say 3."</p> <p>"on a scale of 1-10, I would say 10"</p> <p>"I will give him 10 and if it is more I will give him more"</p>



Contributing to the discussion AFP2 said “That aspect of belonging, because people can be a part of a family and they don’t feel like they belong. And when you get people involved in the church, you’re going to get a sense of belonging and a sense of self-worth because they are contributing to the ministry.”

Question 8 asked participants to rate the church’s concern for their growth and development after they were received in the church. All (100%) of the participants responded to this question. Using a scale of 1-10 following the precedence set by AFP7, 87.5% of respondents gave their church a 10. AFP2 for example explained “when I got called to the ministry, the church was behind me just the same. So, they wanted to see my growth and development; they didn’t just want to see it, they contributed to it in all the way that they could. So, I have to give my church full marks for that.” The remaining 12.5% gave their church a 3. AFP7 for example said, “I say 3, but I don’t blame the church at the time because they gave what they had. That is where they were.” (see Table 4.39 p.167).

*Delta Focus Group (Q1-4, 7&8)*

Question 1 asked, “In your opinion, what should be the primary focus of the church? Why?” All of the focus group participants responded to this question. The larger number of respondents, four or 66.66% said evangelism should be the primary focus of the church. Justification for their conclusion fell in two categories: Jesus command in Matthew 28:19-20 and the example of the early church. For example, one participant said “I believe it is evangelism. And I say this is because of the mandate Jesus left with us in Matthew 28.” Another said, “Going back to the early church in Acts, that’s what their concern was, to spread the gospel.” One participant or 16.66% said, discipleship, and

cited as justification the Great Commission. The remaining 16.66% said evangelism and discipleship, “So, I believe this is the primary focus of the church, evangelism and discipleship.”

Question 2 asked, “How important is discipleship and why?” All participants (100%) responded to this question. All agreed on the importance of discipleship. “Vital,” “integral,” “Very, very, very important,” and “highly important,” are words and phrases used to express the level of importance that respondents accorded discipleship. The rationale provided by respondents can be placed in two categories: Nurturing (83.33%) and Church Growth (16.66%). DFP2 said, Discipleship “is very important in terms of the church, to grow the membership, to strengthen them, so that they can mature spiritually.” DFP4 said, “I believe that discipleship is very very very important, because it teaches one how to live as we are suppose.”

Question 3 asked, “What methods or strategies does your church currently use that is specifically designed to establish believers in their faith and equip them for service?” Five participants (83.33%) responded to this question. Of the total number of persons who responded, only 20% identified clear aftercare strategies. DFP3 said “Currently we have the believers’ class, and it goes on for quite a while. Not only up to two or three classes before baptism, it goes on for quite a while.” The remaining 80% could not identify any clear aftercare strategy at the church they represented. DFP1 said “I can’t say we have a strategy right now.” DFP4 said “To be quite frank, other than the bible study there is nothing in place ... That is lacking, if it is there, I don’t know, but from what I am seeing and from what I know, I do not see that. ...For me I believe that needs to be a major area of focus. That’s where we are losing people.”

Question 4 asked, “What is your view on the current state of the aftercare of new believers in your church?” Four of six participants (66.66%) responded to this question, all of whom decried the current state of aftercare in the church they represented. Below are some of the strongest statements respondents made concerning the present state of affairs. DFP6 said, “I think we need to be more intentional in how we do aftercare.” DFP1 said “For me I believe that needs to be a major area of focus. That’s where we are losing people.” DFP4 said that new believers “are left on their own.”

Question 7 asked “In your opinion what aspect/s of the church’s ministry has contributed most to retaining membership within your church?” Only three participants (50%) responded to this question. Two themes emerged after careful analysis: Sunday and mid-week services, and relationship. Of the total number of respondents, 66.66% identified Sunday and mid-week services as contributing most to the retention of membership at the church they represented. The remaining 33.33% said it is the relationship members have with their pastor that contribute most.

Question 8 asked, “How would you rate the church’s concern for your growth and development after you were received in the church?” All participants (100%) responded to this question. Following the precedence set by DFP1, respondents rated their churches on a scale of 1-10. The church’s concern for the growth and development of respondents expressed as the mean of the respondents’ ratings was 9.16. Two themes emerged from the reasons provided by respondents for the rating they gave: Relationship, and teaching. The majority 83.33% of respondents spoke highly either of the relationship they had with their pastor, individuals in the church, or the church as a whole...

**Table 4.40. Delta Focus Group Results: Responses to Qs. 1-4, 7 & 8**

Question	# Answers	Strongest supporting Words/Phrases/Sentences
1. In your opinion, what should be the primary focus of the church? Why?	6 of 6	<p>“Yes I agree with DFP4, and as it relates to the primary focus, discipleship ...”</p> <p>“Evangelism is really the main focus of the church ... Why, because we see it in Acts and also Matthew 28 the great commission which also tells us to go forth and bring to persons”</p> <p>“So I believe this is the primary focus of the church, evangelism and discipleship.”</p>
2. How important is discipleship and why?	6 of 6	<p>“Vital” “integral” “Very, very, very important”, “highly important”</p> <p>“I believe discipleship truly teaches one how to live ...”</p> <p>“is very important in terms of the church, to grow the membership, to strengthen them, so that they can mature spiritually,”</p>
3. What methods or strategies does your church currently use that is specifically designed to establish believers in their faith and equip them for service?	5 of 6	<p>“Currently we have the believers class, and it goes on for quite a while. Not only up to two or three classes before baptism, it goes on for quite a while.”</p> <p>“I can’t say we have a strategy right now ...”</p> <p>“My church has believers week, the week before crusade, we have candidates class for the new believers ...”</p> <p>“to be quite frank, other than the bible study there is nothing in place ...”</p>
4. What is your view on the current state of the aftercare of new believers in your church?	4 of 6	<p>“sometimes people get saved, then they get lost shortly after because the attention that needs to be given to them is not given ...”</p> <p>“I think we need to be more intentional in how we do aftercare...”</p> <p>“For me I believe that needs to be a major area of focus. That’s where we are losing people.”</p> <p>New believers “are left on their own.”</p>
7. In your opinion what aspect/s of the church’s ministry has contributed most to retaining membership within your church?	3 of 6	<p>“Two things, Sunday morning service, and the departments”</p> <p>“Sunday service, namely praise and worship ...”</p> <p>“love for pastor. Also, some people come because the love the praise and worship. It just speaks to the emotional aspect of that.”</p>
8. How would you rate the church’s concern for your growth and development after you were received in the church?	6 of 6	<p>“Sunday school was one of the areas that help me to grow ...”</p> <p>“there was this family kind of atmosphere where you talk to them, we chat all kinds of thing ...”</p> <p>“... there was a relationship that was really family like, and really was supportive, and that really helped.”</p>

DFP2 said “There was this family kind of atmosphere where you talk to them, we chat all kinds of things, chat about God, chat about all kind of things. So having those relationships helped me to be active in the church even to this day.” DFP6 expressed a similar sentiment, in the church “... there was a relationship that was really family like, and really was supportive, and that really helped.” DFP4 simply said, my pastor “was there and she help[ed] me grow.” The remaining 16.66% spoke about the teaching they received. DFP5 said “Sunday school was one of the areas that help[ed] me to grow. I cannot speak for other aspects, just Sunday school.” (See Table 4.40 p.171)

*Comparative Analysis of Alpha & Delta Focus Group Responses To Questions 1-4, 7&8*

What follows is a summarized comparative analysis of the Alpha and Delta Focus Group responses to questions 1 through 4, 7 and 8. The findings showed marked similarities between Alpha and Delta responses to question 1. In both groups, there were those who believed evangelism, discipleship, or both should be the primary focus of the church, using the Great Commission (Matt.28:19-20) as justification for their conclusion. This not only revealed a level of uncertainty among both groups as it relates to what the primary command of the Great Commission is, but it also showed some level of uncertainty about the relationship between evangelism and discipleship. As evidence of this uncertainty, 60% of Alpha participants said discipleship should be the primary focus. In contrast, 66% of Delta participants said evangelism should be the primary focus.

As it relates to Question 2, there were no noticeable difference in the responses provided by Alpha and Delta groups. Both agreed on the importance of discipleship and both provided similar rational for their conclusion. Concerning Question 3, a very small percentage of respondents, only 37.5 % of Alpha and 20% of Delta groups, could identify

clear aftercare programs and strategies at the church they represented. Noticeable also was the fact that majority of Alpha participants did not respond to the question. By contrast, Delta participants responded but failed to identify any clear aftercare program or strategy. Alpha and Delta group respondents had similar responses to question 4. Both groups lamented the present state of aftercare in the churches they represented and called for greater focus to be placed in that area.

Responses to question 7 showed that while all Alpha participants felt relationships contribute most to the retention of membership, Deltas felt that it was the Sunday and mid-week services. In response to question 8, participants of both groups rated the church highly for the care and concern it showed for their growth and development.

### **Pre-intervention Alpha & Delta Interviews**

Data pertinent to Research Question 1 was gathered through personal interviews. Questions 1-4, and 7-9 of the Pre-A $\delta$ i directly responded to this research question.

#### *Alpha Interview Results*

Question 1 asked, “In Your Opinion what should be the Primary Focus of the Church, why?” Only 33.33% of the Alpha interviewees said making disciples should be the primary focus of the church, while 66.66% said evangelism and discipleship. They cited the Great Commission as the rationale. One person said, “St Mathew 28:19-20 go ye therefore, preach and teach, that mandate, so that should be first and foremost. Also, discipleship, to equip the people so that they can go and equip others.”

Question 2 asked, “In your opinion, how important is discipleship, and why?” “Very important” and “outmost importance” were the phrases used by interviewees in reference to discipleship. The reasons provided had to do with “example” and church

growth. One person said, “It is of utmost importance because that is the only way that the church is going to grow and develop.” Another individual said, “To me discipleship is very important, that was the model that Jesus used. He disciplined the disciples.”

Question 3 asked, “What methods or strategies does your church currently use that are specifically designed to establish believers in their faith?” In response to this question, only one (33.33%) pointed to a clear strategy being used at their church. This person said, “We don’t finish converts class after baptism, as a matter of fact we call it discipleship class, there is a continuation and I encourage those that are baptized that even though they are baptized they need to continue.” The remaining two (66.66%) did not point to any strategy.

Question 4 asked, “What is your view on the current state of the aftercare of new believers in your church?” Two persons (66.66%) expressed deep concern for the present state of aftercare. There was the general feeling that “not enough emphasis is being placed on this area” and that as a result “nothing much is being done in this area”. The need for present members to be disciplined properly, and the need to follow-up new believers were point of major concern. An interviewee said, “I think that more emphasis needs to be placed on it [aftercare], even though here we are trying to do something, I think this needs to become fundamental, that is, this is something that you put emphasis on, something that becomes your primary focus. Because I have recognized that over the years you have new members coming in but as soon as they come in, they go out.” One interviewee however, (33.33%), spoke with a kind of indifference towards those who leave the church. “People come and people go, we see it even in Jesus’ ministry”, the individual said.

Question 7 asked, “In your opinion what aspect/s of the church’s ministry has contributed most to retaining membership within your church?” The responses to this question fell into three categories: Sunday and mid-week services, church environment, and discipleship strategy. As it pertains to Sunday and mid-week services, interviewees said peaching and Bible study contribute most to the retention of membership. As it pertains to Church Environment, individuals said that fellowship and the resulting relationships that are formed contribute most. Interviewees identified mentorship as a discipleship strategy.

Question 8 asked, “How would you rate the church’s concern for your growth and development after you became a member in the church?” On a scale of 1-10, the church’s concern for growth and development of respondents expressed as the mean of respondent’s ratings was 9.66. One person said it was the love shown to her by specific individuals in the church, that caused her to come back in the church after she had backslidden. She said “I got so much love and support when I came back in the church ... The love that I got, I didn’t get this love at home.” Another spoke of the church environment saying, “Our church then had great fellowship. Good relationship with each other, and converts were cared for by senior members. People embrace and continue to express love.”

Question 9 asked, “Was there a key person/s who helped you grow in your faith?” Interviewees in their response to question 8, identified individuals who had helped them and spoke at length about them. Each interviewee identified at least one person who had a significant impact of their growth and development. One individual said, “Even though I was a young Christian, they took me under their wings, especially Sister X.” Another



person said, “After fasting I would just spend the evening with her because she gave me that love and support as an elder in the church.” (See Table 4.41.)

**Table 4.41. Alpha Interview Results: Responses to Qs. 1-4, 7 -9**

Question	# Answers	Supporting Words/Phrases/Sentences
1. In your opinion, what should be the primary focus of the church? Why?	3 of 3	“... So reaching lost souls and also discipling and keeping those you have.” “St Mathew 28:19-20 go ye therefore, preach and teach, that mandate, so that should be first and foremost. Also discipleship ...” “Based on Jesus final words to his disciples, go ye therefore teach all nations, make disciples, and also based on his own practice”
2. How important is discipleship and why?	3 of 3	“very important” “outmost importance” “It is of outmost importance because that is the only way that the church is going to grow and develop.” “If we don’t have that as the core, we not going to have that growth...” “To me discipleship is very important, that was the model that Jesus use, he discipled the disciples.”
3. What methods or strategies does your church currently use that is specifically designed to establish believers in their faith and equip them for service?	3 of 3	“we don’t finish converts class after baptism, as a matter of fact we call it discipleship class, there is a continuation ...” “For me, since I have been here, I have not seen a lot of persons coming to the Lord, and so I have been working on these at the church ...” “Teaching and engagement of audience”
4. What is your view on the current state of the aftercare of new believers in your church?	3 of 3	“... so I think we need to be place emphasis there. I think that more care needs to be given ...” “We need to have people well discipled to help the pastor with the work to take care of these people, following up ...” “People come and people go, we see it even in Jesus’ ministry”
7. In your opinion what aspect/s of the church’s ministry has contributed most to retaining membership within your church?	3 of 3	“Fellowship, relationship, mentorship” “some might love the church and love to hear the word.” “he made sure that I attended bible study...”
8. How would you rate the church’s concern for your growth and development after you were received in the church?	of 3	“I got so much love and support when I came back in the church ... The love that I got, I didn’t get this love at home” “they took me under their wings ...” “converts were cared for by senior members. People embrace and continue to express love ...”
9. Was there a key person/s who helped you grow in your faith?	3 of 3	“My pastor was great ...” “they took me under their wings especially sis. X” “The love that I got for Sis. Y I didn’t get this love at home”

*Delta Interview Results*

Question 1 asked, “In your opinion what should be the primary focus of the church, why?” All three interviewees responded to this question. Of the three interviewees, two (66.66%) said evangelism should be the primary focus of the church. DIP1 said, “The primary focus of the church I believe, is to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ ... to have people accept him as Lord and Savior of their lives.” Another interviewee said “It is definitely to make believers. That is the command that was given to go out and make disciples, so it has to be evangelism.” The other interviewee (33.33%) said evangelism and discipleship should be the primary for. “After you witness to them and they have given their lives to the Lord then you are going to be discipling them.” All pointed to Matthew 28:19-20 as the rationale for their answers, which suggests a level of uncertainty about what the command is in the Great Commission.

Question 2 asked, “In your opinion, how important is discipleship, and why?” All the individuals interviewed (100%) said discipleship is important. “Important” “very important” and “very very important” were the actual words and phrases interviewees used in reference to discipleship. When asked why, all pointed to the need for care and nurture for these new babes in Christ. One interviewee said, “if I was to use the analogy of newborn babies, people don’t leave babies to just fend for themselves, you need persons to take care of these babies ... [in the same way] you need persons in the church to look after the welfare of these persons.” Another interviewee said, “The Christian life is a new way of life for them, and it is important that they be taught, that they be guided in the new life so to speak.”

Question 3 asked, “What methods or strategies does your church currently use that are specifically designed to establish believers in their faith?” The responses to this question were the same for all three interviews. All three persons said candidate’s class is the current method and strategy their churches use. All also expressed a similar concern. To use the words of one interviewee, “after they come in, the truth of the matter is the believer’s class normally finish[ed]. They are left on their own now to swim or sink.” Another person said, “I see there is a candidates’ class but sad to say, after the candidates’ class is finished and the person is received, I don’t see anything else being done and I don’t think that is right.” The other interviewee simply said “Honestly, I don’t see a formal mentorship program in place, none.”

Question 4 asked, “What is your view on the current state of the aftercare of new believers in your church?” A general concern was expressed by interviewees about the present situation. Those interviewed lamented the absence of discipleship and mentorship programs for new believers. One interviewee said “this is one area that I believe the church is really lacking, aftercare. We need to pay more attention to them [i.e. new believers] and give a little more exposure to what is happening.” Another said, “there should be a discipleship program in the church...”. The other simply said “I think that a mentorship program would be very good.”

Question 7 asked, “In your opinion what aspect/s of the church’s ministry has contributed most to retaining membership within your church?” The responses to this question can be placed in three categories: Church atmosphere, Sunday and mid-week services, and ministry involvement. Interviewees used the following words and phrases to describe the Church atmosphere that they believe contributes to the retention of

membership: “Feeling welcome” “feeling a part of a family,” “showing interest in people,” “feeling included,” “feeling comfortable,” and “comradery.” As it pertains to Sunday and mid-week services they said: “Bible study,” “constant Sunday school,” “the preaching,” and “prayer meeting and fasting services.” Concerning ministry involvement the interviewees said that, “getting persons involved,” “Giving persons responsibilities,” and “feeling useful” are what contributes most to the retention of membership.

Question 8 asked, “How would you rate the church’s concern for your growth and development after you became a member in the church?” On a scale of 1-10, the church’s concern for growth and development of respondents expressed as the mean of the respondents’ ratings was 9. One person said, when I came to the church I am presently at, I felt welcome, I felt as if I had use, I could do something to contribute.” Another said, “I would say about 8 as it relates to concern and encouragement, but I think the church needs to be a bit more strategic and intentional in terms of its aftercare, after people are baptized and received in the church.”

Question 9 asked, “Was there a key person/s who helped you grow in your faith?” With fondness, a deep sense of gratitude, and even indebtedness each interviewee reflected not only on the role that their pastor and at least one other person played in their growth and development as a Christian but also on the lasting impact they had on their lives. The ministry of these key persons was holistic, exuding love and care through visits, words of advice, encouragement, and even reprimand when necessary. One interviewee said, “She would make sure that I go to these services ... and if anything was happening at church I would have to participate.”

**Table. 4.42. Delta Interview Results: Responses to Q. 1-4, 7 -9**

Question	# Answers	Supporting Words/Phrases/Sentences
1. In your opinion, what should be the primary focus of the church? Why?	3 of 3	<p>“The primary focus of the church I believe, is to spread the gospel ... Because as Christians we were given a mandate...”</p> <p>“It is definitely to make believers. That is the command that was given to go out and make disciples, so it has to be evangelism”</p> <p>“So after you witness to them and they have given their lives to the Lord then you are going to be discipling them”</p>
2. How important is discipleship and why?	3 of 3	<p>“After they have been evangelized, it is very important to have discipleship going ... If that is not done, then they might die, the babies might die.”</p> <p>“Discipleship is very very important. The Christian life is a new way of life for them and it is important that they be taught, that they be guide in the new life ...”</p>
3. What methods or strategies does your church currently use that is specifically designed to establish believers in their faith and equip them for service?	3 of 3	<p>“I see there is a candidates class but sad to say, after the candidates class is finished and the person is received, I don’t see anything else being done and I don’t think that is right ...”</p> <p>“So after they come in, the truth of the matter is the believers class normally finish. They are left on their own now to swim or sink”</p> <p>“The church should continue to nurture them and not just leave them after baptism so to speak”</p>
4. What is your view on the current state of the aftercare of new believers in your church?	3 of 3	<p>“The church needs to do more in this department. I don’t think enough is being done with regards to aftercare”</p> <p>“The aftercare needs to be improved”</p> <p>“I think you should have mentorship program in the church ...”</p>
7. In your opinion what aspect/s of the church’s ministry has contributed most to retaining membership within your church?	3 of 3	<p>“Involvement in activities” “Giving persons responsibilities”</p> <p>“Feeling welcome,” “feeling a part of a family,” “comradery”</p> <p>““The preaching,” “prayer meeting and fasting services”</p>
8. How would you rate the church’s concern for your growth and development after you were received in the church?	3 of 3	<p>“I would give it a 9 ... I don’t know if the care and concern that I got was because I was a teenager”</p> <p>“Out of 10, 7 or 8 ... when I can to the church I am presently at felt welcome, I felt as if I had use”</p> <p>“So I would say about 8 as it relates to concern and encouragement, but I think the church needs to be a bit more strategic and intentional in terms its aftercare”</p>
9. Was there a key person/s who helped you grow in your faith?	3 of 3	<p>“She would make sure that I go to these services ... and if anything was happening at church I would have to participate.”</p> <p>“I admired him so much that I actually wanted to pattern my life after his own...”</p> <p>“Our talks always end with her reassuring me that God loves me...”</p>

Another person said, “I admired him so much that I actually wanted to pattern my life after his own ... he allowed me to be a part of his lifestyle, of his group, a part of his surroundings or environment...”. The other person said, “Our talks always end with her reassuring me that God loves me and as I said I was going through a difficult point in my life, she was always there, it helped to keep me from leaving the church and going into depression.” (See Table 4.42 p.180)

*Comparative Analysis of Alpha and Delta Interview Responses.*

Comparing and contrasting the responses to questions 1 through 4 and seven through nine from the Alpha and Delta interviews revealed noteworthy similarities and differences. The following is a summary of those findings.

Both Alpha and Delta interviewees felt that the primary focus of the church should be either evangelism or discipleship or both (Question 1). Also, interviewees of both groups pointed to the Great Commission as justification for their position. However, whereas 33.33% of Alpha’s felt discipleship should be the primary focus, 66.66% of Delta’s felt evangelism should be the primary focus. And whereas 33.33% of Deltas felt that both evangelism and discipleship should be the primary focus of the church, 66.66% of Alphas said the same.

Both sets of interviewees agreed that discipleship was very important (Question 2). Differences appear however in the rationale provided. For Alphas it is the example set by Jesus and the relationship between discipleship and church growth that speaks to its importance. Deltas on the other hand, felt the importance of discipleship must be understood against the background of the importance of nurture and care.

Significant differences appeared in responses to Question 3. Only 33.33% of Alpha interviewees could point to a discipleship program at their church, the larger percentage could not. In contrast, all Delta participants (100%) said candidate's class was the current strategy employed by their church. The problem with this however, is that candidate's class usually ends when persons are baptized and received in the church.

Both sets of interviewees lamented the present state of aftercare in their respective churches (Question 4). As can be seen in Tables 4.39, 4.40, 4.41, and 4.42 from the focus groups as well as the interviews conducted, among pastors and laity, there was a general feeling that more emphasis needs to be placed in this area, and that the absence of aftercare programs and activities could be a contributing factor to why people leave.

Alpha and Delta interviewees gave similar responses to Questions 7, 8 and 9. In response to Question 7, Sunday and mid-week services, the church atmosphere, and discipleship strategies were identified by both groups as areas of the church's ministry that contributed most to the retention of membership. Similarly, with mean scores of 9.66 and 9 respectively, Alpha and Delta interviewees gave high ratings to the church for its care and concern for them when they came in the church (Question 8). As it pertains to question 9, interviewees of both groups identified at least one person who contributed significantly to their growth and development as Christians.

### **Document Analysis**

Ten years of the Pastor's Annual Service Report Forms were gathered for analysis. On these forms, question two, "Have you provided shepherding/discipling ministries to your congregation, designed to establish in faith, prepare for service, and retain to the body? If yes, how so?" was of particular interest. I copied responses to

question two verbatim and analyzed them. The total number of pastors in the district was 46, and on average, 35.8 reports were submitted each year for the past ten years. The number of responses to question 2 on the service report forms expressed as the mean of the past ten years was 35.8 (see Table. 4.43.)

**Table 4.43. Year and Number of Responses to Question 2 on the Pastor’s Annual Service Report Form**

YEAR	# OF ANSWERS	TOTAL
2010 – 2011	38 of 38	Number of Pastors: 46
2011 – 2012	36 of 36	Number of Years: 10
2012 – 2013	37 of 37	Number of Reports: 358
2013 – 2014	33 of 33	Avg. # of Annual Reports: 35.8
2014 – 2015	36 of 36	Avg. # of Responses to Question 2: 35.8
2015 – 2016	38 of 38	
2016 – 2017	34 of 34	
2017 – 2018	35 of 35	
2018 – 2019	37 of 37	
2019 – 2020	34 of 34	

The data gathered from these reports showed that the shepherding/discipling ministries pastors provided for their congregation, designed to establish in faith, prepare for service, and retain to the body fell under four major categories: Sunday services, mid-week services, discipleship programs, and other aftercare activities. The total number of responses was 358. The activities that fell within the Sunday services category, appeared on the reports 157 times over the period under review. Activities fitting the mid-week services category were mentioned 308 times. Under the discipleship programs category, activities were mentioned a total of 46 times over the same period, while those activities that fell under the other aftercare activities category appeared on the reports 239 times. The findings showed that of the total number of occurrences 750, those belonging to the Sunday services category accounted for 20.93%, those having their place in mid-week



services category accounted for 41.06%, those appropriate to the discipleship programs category accounted for 6.13%, while those belonging to the other aftercare activities category accounted for the remaining 31.86%. The data showed that Sunday services and mid-week services accounted for 61.99% of the total occurrences and by extension the “How have you provided discipling ministries ...” while discipleship programs accounted for a mere 6.13%. (See Table 4.44.)

**Table 4.44. Document Analysis Results. Pastor’s Annual Service Report Forms (Question 2): How Have You Provided Discipling Ministries to Your Congregation ...?**

Categories	Activities	# of Occ.	Total Occ.	% Occ.	Supporting Words/Phrases/Sentences
Sunday Services	Sunday School	6	157	20.93	“Sunday school” “Preaching the word” “serving communion”
	Preaching	142			
	Communion	9			
Mid-week Services	Bible study/teaching	275	308	41.06	“By conducting bible studies” “prayer and fasting services” “fasting and prayer services to build the up in Christ” “believers week meetings”
	Prayer Meeting	20			
	Fasting Services	9			
	Believers Services	4			
Discipleship Programs	Candidate class	15	46	6.13	“candidate classes” “discipleship classes;” “creating discipleship groups” The Book “Christian to the Core”, used for discipleship “Mentoring” “mentoring of members”
	Discipleship class	25			
	Christian 2 Core	4			
	Mentoring programs	2			
Other Aftercare Activities	Counseling	82	239	31.86	“personal counseling” “cottage meeting and other outreach ministries” “personal example;” “living an exemplary life” “Leadership seminars marriage seminars” “Being available to members” “telephone calls, text ministry” “Text ministry” “engaging believers in corporate visitation” “Encouraging” “Guidance, counseling” “Training sessions” “outreach programs” “Members meeting”
	Cottage Meeting	5			
	Modeling	15			
	Seminars	18			
	Being available	1			
	Telephone calls	2			
	Text messaging	2			
	Visiting	25			
	Encouragement	7			
	Guidance	11			
	Training	64			
	Outreach ministries	5			
Members meeting	2				

**Research Question #2: Description of Evidence**

Question two aimed at identifying possible contributing factors to the exit of members of the church. All four instruments were used to collect the data. The findings are as follows.

**Pre-Intervention Alpha and Delta Questionnaire (Pre-AΔQ) Part II**

Questions 7 through 21 made up Part II of the Pre-Intervention Alpha and Delta questionnaire (Pre-AΔQ) which dealt with the understanding and practice of discipleship. The responses to these questions revealed several areas of weakness in the church’s ministry that could be major contributors to why members exit the church. Of the five levels, the results at the disciple-making structures and small group levels are of particular interest here. As seen in Table 4.36 (p.164), the disciple-making initiative of the church at the disciple-making structures level expressed as the mean of Questions 16 through 19 was 46.56. Also, the disciple-making initiative at the small groups level expressed as the mean of Questions 20 and 21 was 36. The data further showed that the church was failing in the area of Praxis which when expressed as the mean of Q16 through Q21 was 43.04. (See Table 4.45.)

**Table 4.45. Alpha and Delta Questionnaire PART II Results (Qs.16-21): Current or Missing Aspect of The Church’s Ministry Contributing to the Exit of Members**

	+ & -	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19				
Discipleship Structures	+	73.75	32.5	65	15	186.25	+46.56		
	-	26.25	67.5	35	85	213.75	-53.43		
Small Groups	+ & -	Q20	Q21						
	+	42	57.5			72	+36		
	-	30	70			127.5	-63.75		
Practice (pRAXIS)	+ & -	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21		
	+	73.75	32.5	65	15	42	57.5	258.25	+43.04
	-	26.25	67.5	35	85	30	70	339.25	-56.54

### **Pre-Intervention Alpha and Delta Questionnaire Part III**

The open-ended Questions 28, 29, and 32 made up Part III of the Alpha and Delta questionnaire. Question 28 asked, “What missing aspect of the church’s ministry may be contributing to people leaving the church?” Sixty out of 80 individuals responded to the question. From the responses, several broad headings emerged, and responses were grouped accordingly. Some, 8.33%, could not identify any missing aspect that was a contributing factor in people leaving the church. Others, 6.66%, faulted the individuals who left, pointing to their “lack of commitment” or their “not being fully surrendered to the Holy Spirit.” However, 55% of the respondents said that aftercare programs and activities are the missing aspects that contribute to the exit of members. One individual said “Lack of proper discipleship, which in churches is a lack of proper teaching. Persons are normally submerged into the congregation after baptism, left to paddle their way in. The fittest of the fittest survive.” Another 25% said a loving and caring church community is what is missing. One person said, “Hospitality, church people are seldom warm these days.” Another person said, “In my opinion, most members (not the pastor) especially long-standing members are not welcoming toward the new members, therefore they leave because of the lack of acceptance.”

Similarly, participants were asked, what current aspect of the church’s ministry may contribute to people leaving the church (Question 29). Seventy-one of 80 participants responded to this question. A significant number of persons, 25.35%, found no fault with the church and instead, pointed to person’s lack of “commitment and dedication to God”, while 22.53% said “the negative behavior of members” is a current contributing factor, to use the words of one individual. Some of the respondents, 25.35%,

said the church’s aftercare programs and activities are contributing factors, while another 19.71% were unable to identify any such aspect ...

**Table 4.46. Alpha and Delta Questionnaire PART III Results. Open-Ended Questions: Current or Missing Aspect of The Church’s Ministry Contributing to the Exit of Members (Qs. 28, 29, 32)**

Categories’ Strongest Phrases and Sentences									
%	Aftercare Programs & Activities	%	Negative Attitudes and Behavior of Members	%	Individual’s Fault	%	Unsure	%	Others
55	“not enough programs in place to help the growth and development.”  “Persons are normally ... left to paddle their way in. The fittest of the fittest survive.”  “A clear and structured path to follow-up after baptism ...”	25	“Hospitality. Church people are seldom warm these days.”  “long standing members are not welcoming toward the new members.”  “People may leave due to lack of love shown to them.”	6.7	“The truth – persons failing to accept the truth being told to them”  “People leave because of their own desire”  “People are free moral agents and make choices accordingly”	8.3	“I am not knowledgeable of anything”  “I am unable to identify such a missing aspect”  “Not sure”  “If one’s relationship with Christ is great then there is no reason to leave”	5	“Stable leadership”  “Not having vibrant and dynamic worship”  “unity”
25.4	“Lack of continued teaching and mentoring of young Christians until they are fully mature enough to continue on their Christian walk.”  “The lack of organized discipleship and mentorship strictures”	22.5	“Negative behavior of members”  “Some members have become stumbling block”  “Members waywardness”  “the attitudes of members towards each other”	25.4	“Depend on the individual Christian development.”  “Nothing is wrong with the church’s ministry, it’s all about being obedient and fully surrendered”  “Lack of commitment and dedication to God”	19.7	“I can’t say”  “Not sure”  “I don’t know of anything”	7	“We do not have this issue presently”  “Too much focus on buildings and not much investment in people”  “The kind of leadership displayed”
57.5	“The church focus too much on numerical growth”  “What strategy is being put forward to help those who are weak in the faith?”	0		0		0		42.5	“Community development programs”  “The church should strive to be more self-sufficient in financial matters”

Question 32 gave participants an opening to express any other concern they may have about the church's aftercare practices. forty of 80 participants responded to this question, with responses falling in one of two major categories: aftercare, and others. The larger percentage, 57.5%, expressed concern relating to the aftercare programs and activities of the church. One person expressed concern about the absence of such aftercare practices saying, "I don't see any care practices taking place" Another expressed concern about the scope of these activities saying, "The church should not only minister to the spiritual wellbeing of the members but also to the social and financial where necessary." The remaining participants, 42.5%, listed other concerns that did not seem to share any relationship to each other. These were classed as others. (See Table 4.46 p.187)

### **Focus Group Alpha**

Questions 5 and 6 asked about the current or missing aspects of the church's ministry that may be contributing to members leaving the church. These two questions directly responded to Research Question 2. Question 5 asked the participants in the Alpha focus group, "What missing aspects of the church's ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from the church? Five of 8 individuals responded to the question. Of the total number of respondents, 60% expressed a kind of indifference to those who have left the church as opposed to providing any critical evaluation of the ministry of the churches they represented. The room erupted in laughter after AFP1 said, "I don't think you have to do anything special for people to leave the church." Using the parable of the sower Matthew 13:1-8, the individual concluded "you are going to gain and lose. The point is not what happen[ed] to those you lose, but what you do with those that you retain." To

this AFP7 agreed, adding, “Trying to find out why people leave may send us down a rabbit-hole, if we try to figure out why people stay, we could zero in on that. Okay, this is what is working, let’s see if we can replicate this.” AFP2 also agreed with AFP1 and AFP7. After sharing a story about a woman who indicated that she was leaving the church to attend another, he said “I didn’t discourage her, because I know you are going to lose some, and you are going to gain some.” Twenty percent highlighted the poor behavior of members as a contributing factor to people leaving the church. AFP7 said, “There seems to be a low tolerance level among the senior members for those who slip-up. And while they will excuse that in a believer who have been there for a while, they are very harsh on the ones coming in. to the point where you actually feel like they are pushing you away. They don’t give any space for you to; if you make a mistake, it’s as if you are cutoff right away. The remaining 20% of the respondents said a disconnect between what the church knows (theory) and what the church does (praxis) is a contributing factor to why people leave. AFP5 says “I believe all that the church needs to do is there in theory, but it doesn’t come out in the practice of the members, so it’s not that something is missing from the structure or the policies that we have in place and so forth.”

Question 6 looked at current aspect of the church’s ministry that may be contributing to the exit of members from the church. Two persons responded to this question. The areas of concern which emerged in the discussion were follow-up and the way new believers are treated by other members of the church. As it relates to follow-up, one person said, “We don’t follow-up people enough, especially when they drop out and

you are not seeing them, I don't think that follow-up process to find out what happened, call them up, go see them; I think that is missing and is not since Covid-19.”

**Table 4.47. Alpha Focus Group. Responses to Qs. 5 & 6: Current and Missing aspect of the Church's Ministry that may be Contributing to Members leaving the church**

Q & A		Categories, Percentages, Strongest phrases, and Sentences							
Q#	# of Ans	Indifference to those who Leave	%	Negative Attitude and Behavior of Members	%	Theory vs. Praxis	%	Follow-up	%
Q. 5	5 of 8	“you are going to gain and lose. The point is not what happen to those you lose, but what you do with those that you retain”  “... I know you are going lose some and you are going to gain some.”	60	“when I see the reaction of a few of the members who where there, it's like, I was appalled, it's like I was saying, we are trying to win these people, how can we relate to them that way”  “there is a low tolerance level, and so, persons feel like ok, those members can do it and they are easy on them, but we make the mistake and it is as if we are cut off.”	20	“I believe all that the church needs to do is there in theory, but it doesn't come out in the practice of the members”  “It all comes down to the practice of members because as a church we care about members, we care about our people and those things, but when it comes down to, actually execute certain things then...”	20		
Q. 6	2 of 8			“I just think that the whole aspect of Love, people are not feeling it as they should feel it in the church”				“we don't follow-up people enough, especially when they drop out and you not seeing them, I don't think that follow-up process to find out what happened is there”	

Another participant highlighted the behavior of members towards those who are coming in the church as a contributing factor to why they eventually leave. He said “I just

think that the whole aspect of Love, people are not feeling it as they should feel it in the church, because when people come, I think they are expecting something better. Many are chastised when they are out there in the world and abused. When they come to church they are looking for something different and many times, if we are to speak the truth, they don't get that at all." (See Table 4.47 p.190)

### **Focus Group Delta**

Focus group Delta also discussed questions 5 and 6 about the current or missing aspects of the church's ministry that may be contributing to members leaving the church. Question 5 asked, "What missing aspect of the church's ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from the church?" Four of 6 persons responded to this question. From the analysis, two major categories emerged, and responses were placed accordingly. According to 50% of the respondents, the absence of aftercare programs and activities may be contributing to members leaving the church. In response to the question, DFP1 said "Aftercare and what we mentioned earlier, mentorship structure" is what is missing. The finding also showed that absence of a loving and caring church community may be a contributing factor. Fifty percent of respondents highlighted this issue. DFP6 said "we need to be kinder, in the sense of not being harsh. We have to be careful about people's feelings, how we speak to them." DFP4 in adding to the discussion said "we must connect before we correct. I think the missing aspect is the relationship, that is missing, at times we can act like the Pharisees, and it is so sad."



**Table 4.48. Delta Focus Group. Responses to Qs. 5 & 6. Current or Missing aspect of the Church’s Ministry that may be Contributing to Members leaving the church**

Questions & Answers		Categories & Strongest Phrases and Sentences	
Q#	# of Answers	Aftercare Programs/Activities	Loving and Caring Church Community
5. What missing aspect of the church’s ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from the church? OR (What is the church failing to do now that might be contributing to the exit of members from the church?)	4 of 6	<p>“Aftercare and what we mentioned earlier, mentorship structure”</p> <p>“So if their expectations are not met, they just use the side door”</p>	<p>“we need to be kinder, in the sense of not being harsh. We have to be careful about people’s feelings, how we speak to them.”</p> <p>Another thing too, is when pastor go up there and every minute they just beat, beat, beat the congregation...”</p>
6. What current aspect of the church’s ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from the church?	5 of 6		<p>“Not befriending people may cause people to feel isolated, or feel not at home”</p> <p>“sometimes we overlook the cleeks, but it is something that is breaking the relationship and the connection that should be in the church”</p> <p>“it connects with the whole thing about relationships, because cleeks is that little group, and so the others feel left out”</p>

Delta participants were asked question 6, “What current aspect of the church’s ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from the church?” Five of 6 participants responded to this question, and all (100%) expressed concern about the same issue – the absence of a loving and caring church community. DFP6 for example said, “Not befriending people may cause people to feel isolated or feel not at home.” DFP4 said, “The clique, I strongly believe that this is an aspect that contributes to members leaving the church.” AFP6 further added, “It connects with the whole thing about relationships, because clique is that little group, and so the others feel left out ... We have to make the effort to connect with people so that when they are in that group they feel like they are in their space and feel appreciated for what they are and what they can do.” (See Table 4.48).

### **Comparative Analysis of Alpha and Delta Focus Group Responses**

A number of similarities and differences emerged when the responses of the Alpha Focus Group are compared and contrasted with those from the Delta Focus Group. Responses to Question 5 showed that 20% of Alphas and 50% of Deltas expressed similar concern for what they felt was a lack of love and care for new believers by members. They saw lack of care as a contributing factor to why people leave. However, several significant differences surfaced. While all Delta participants (100%) spoke of one thing or another that they felt was missing and contributing to the exit of members, in contrast, only 60% of Alphas expressed a kind of indifference towards those who leave the church. Also, while 50% of Deltas highlighted aftercare programs and activities as missing, only 20% of Alphas highlighted members failure to practice what they know.

Both Alpha and Delta participants in response to question 6 said the negative attitudes and behavior of members towards new believers is a current aspect of the church's ministry that is contributing to the exit of members. The data further showed that all Delta participants spoke of after care as in important issue, and the Alphas are also deeply concern about the present state of aftercare.

### **Alpha Interviews**

Questions 5 and 6 asked about current or missing aspects of the church's ministry that may be contributing to members leaving the church.

How did Alpha participants respond to the question 5, "What missing aspect of your church's ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from your church?" All 3 of the interviewees responded to the question. Two major categories emerged: Aftercare programs/activities, and the seeming absence of a loving and caring church

community, and the responses were grouped accordingly. For AIP1, the absence of discipleship programs is contributing to members exiting the church. In response to the question, AIP1 simply said, “Failing to disciple others; failing to prepare people to reach out and to take care of these people, follow-up.” AIP2 shared a similar view saying “failure on the part of everyone. Especially the older or senior members, because many of them expect the pastor to do everything and so they fail to mentor the younger believers in the faith.” In addition to highlighting the absence of a discipleship process for new believers, AIP3 spoke of the lack of love and care from members, saying, “there is not that enfolding or embracing of them that you are there for them ... and so many times they don’t feel or see that care from the older members.”

Alpha participants also responded to the question 6, “What current aspect of the church’s ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from the church?” AIP1 believed that at present, new members are “not getting enough love and affection” from older members and so that could be contributing to them leaving. For AIP3, the absence of discipleship programs may be a contributing factor. She explained, “We don’t put programs in place, and so sometimes they come in and they don’t feel involved.” Using the parable of the sower (Matt.13:1-9) as justification, AIP2 expressed a kind of indifference towards those who leave the church. He concluded “members leave the church for various reasons, and try as hard as you may, people are people.” (See Table 4.49.)

**Table 4.49 Alpha Interviews. Responses to Qs. 5 & 6: Current and Missing aspect of the Church’s Ministry that may be Contributing to Members leaving the church**

Question and Answers		Categories strongest phrases and Sentences		
Q#	# of Answers	Aftercare Programs/Activities	Loving and Caring Church Community	Indifference towards those who Leave
5. What missing aspect of the church’s ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from the church? OR (What is the church failing to do now that might be contributing to the exit of members from the church?)	3 of 3	“Failing to disciple others”  “they fail to mentor the younger believers in the faith”	“there is not that enfolding or embracing of them”  “many times they don’t feel or see that care from the older members”  “they rough them; one little mistake ...”	
6. What current aspect of the church’s ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from the church?	3 of 3	“we don’t put programs in place, and so sometimes they come in and they don’t feel involved”	“not getting enough love and affection could be one”  “Members may have conflict, that might have push them away”	“members leave the church for various reasons, and try as hard as you may, people are people.”

### Delta Interviews

The Delta interviews also addressed Questions 5 and 6 which asked about current or missing aspects of the church’s ministry that may be contributing to members leaving the church.

In Question 5, Delta participants were asked about the missing aspects of their church’s ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from your church. All three interviewees responded to this question. DIP1 felt that the absence of aftercare programs such as a mentorship program may be a contributing factor in why people leave the church. She explained “if we had that mentorship program where you had persons serving as big brothers or big sisters, or mothers or fathers, that they would be more in tuned with what’s happening with the person, that would cause them, if it is that they are slipping away, to arrest, to catch that before it happens.” Expressing concern for this area

also was DIP3, who believed that the limited scope of the church's aftercare programs/activities may be a contributing factor to why people leave. She said, "Another thing is not caring for the entire man, you are there preaching, come to Sunday school teaching, but I think there are other things that we can do." DIP2 identified two things that might be contributing to new believers leaving. He said, "I believe" some of the more mature Christians are not so patient with them. As soon as they slip, we crucify them, we are a little bit too hard on them. It's not that you are saying it's ok to sin, but you have to be patient with them knowing that we all make mistakes." Another contributing factor, he said, was that "Sometimes we don't give them enough exposure. We don't get them involved enough, in terms of ministry, and so therefore, them not feeling apart of the things, it's easy for them to leave."

Question 6 asked, "What current aspect of the church's ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from the church?" All 3 interviewees responded to this question. Though expressed in different ways, all three interviewees came to the same conclusion – people exit the church because of the ostensible absence of a loving and caring church community. DIP1 explained that this lack of love and care manifest itself in a kind of indifference and a decision not to pry. She said,

I am thinking maybe that there is a kind of indifference, they are not being shown much care, like ok, I am on my way to heaven and that's fine, if there are persons who wants to come along then fine, but if you choose not to then that's up to you, so it could be that." She added, "I don't know to what extent we do follow-up to find out why they are not coming, as I said, it could be that some people really don't care but it could be that they think that it is not their business; they don't

want to pry in terms of what is happening in these persons lives. And that could contribute to the exit because, maybe these persons will feel like these people actually don't care about them.

DIP2 said, "we are not really patient enough with them. We criticize them, criticism not to improve but destructive criticism and these are the things that push people away." (See Table 4.50).

**Table 4.50. Delta Interviews. Responses to Qs. 5 & 6: Current and Missing Aspect of the Church's Ministry That May Be Contributing to Members Leaving the Church**

Question & answers		Categories & Strongest phrases/ sentences		
Q#	# of Answers	Aftercare Programs/Activities	Loving and Caring Church Community	Ministry Involvement
5. What missing aspect of your church's ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from your church? Or (what is the church failing to do now that might be contributing to the exit of members from your church?)	3 of 3	<p>"we don't have a mentorship program."</p> <p>"I think that each person in the church should have at least one person that they can talk to, who is checking upon them, who is making sure that that person is ok and not just assume that once they are in the fold that they are ok, which I think happens a lot"</p> <p>"you get them in, and it's like we believe everything cool, everything ok now, without paying specific attention to them"</p> <p>"Another thing is not caring for the entire man, you are there preaching, come to Sunday school teaching, but I think there are other things that we can do."</p>	<p>"I am thinking maybe that there is a kind of indifference, they are not being shown much care"</p> <p>"I believe some of the more mature Christians are not so patient with them. as soon as they slip we crucify them, we are a little bit too hard on them."</p> <p>"We lose them because it is out of frustration that we sometimes are the ones who cause the frustration, because we are not patient enough to deal with their faults and mishaps."</p> <p>"Mistakes will be made, and we the mature one need to know how to correct them and need to be more patient with them"</p>	<p>"Sometimes we don't give them enough exposure, (we don't get them involved enough), in terms of ministry, and so therefore, them not feeling apart of the things, it's easy for them to leave"</p>

**Table 4.50 Continued ...**

Question & answers		Categories & Strongest phrases/ sentences		
Q#	# of Answers	Aftercare Programs/Activities	Loving and Caring Church Community	Ministry Involvement
6. What current aspect of the church's ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from the church?	3 of 3		<p>"we really need to be a more caring people with these young one, be supportive ... that is why sometimes we lose them because we are not as caring."</p> <p>"We are not really patient enough with them. criticism not to improve but destructive criticism and these are the things that push people away"</p> <p>"they find that people are not some sympathetic or even empathetic to their situations ... so it discourages them, and so we lose them."</p>	

### **Comparative Analysis of Alpha and Delta Interviews**

This sections compares the Alpha interviewees' and the Delta interviewee's responses to questions 5 and 6.

The data showed only similarities between Alpha and Delta interview responses to question 5. Both groups felt that the absence of aftercare programs and activities as well as the lack of love and care for new members by senior members, were missing aspects of the church ministry that maybe contributing to persons leaving.

As it relates to question 6, both groups again highlighted the negative attitudes and behavior of senior members towards new believers as a current aspect that might be contributing to the exit of members, but there were also several noticeable differences. While Deltas highlighted a single issue, negative attitudes and behavior of members, Alphas spoke of the absence of discipleship programs in addition to the negative attitudes

of some of the members. Another noticeable difference also was the kind of indifference with which one Alpha interviewee spoke about those who have left the church.

### **Research Question #3: Description of Evidence**

Also critical to this study was the participation of former members of the church (Sigma Group) and the unique perspective they brought to the discussion in trying to understand the why people leave the church shortly after they become a member. Because this group of participants may not have been to church in a while, the instrument was designed to capture the participants' responses retrospectively. Question 6 through 31 of the pre-intervention Sigma questionnaire captured pertinent data to RQ #3.

### **Pre-Intervention Sigma Questionnaire PART II**

Questions 6 through 24 of the Sigma questionnaire asked about the understanding and practice of discipleship.

#### *Analysis of Sigma Responses to Individual Questions (Q.6-24)*

Question 6 assessed the Sigma participants understanding of what it means to be a disciple. The findings revealed that 60% felt they had clear understanding (CU) when they attended, 30% said they had little understanding (LU), while 10% said they had no understanding (NU).



**Table 4.51. Sigma Questionnaire PART II Results: Questions 6-10**

Question	# of Answers	Response %				
		VCU	CU	PU	LU	NU
6. When you attended church, how clearly did you understand what being a 'disciple' means?	20 of 20	20	40	5	25	10
7. When you attended church, Did you understand the meaning, the call, and the cost of discipleship?	20 of 20	35	25	5	20	15
8. When you attended church, how clearly did you know and understand in practical terms the 5 principles essential for growing as a disciple – a. the Holy Spirit's ministry in your life, b. regular feeding on the Word, c. personal prayer and worship, d. fellowship with other believers, e. being active in witness, service and ministry?	20 of 20	20	35	15	10	20
9. How clearly did you know and understand in practical terms what it means to live under Christ's Lordship in personal life, family life and in daily work?	20 of 20	25	30	20	10	15
10. When you attended church, how often did you hear about the meaning, call and cost of discipleship from the pulpit?	20 of 20	<b>VRG</b>	<b>RG</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>VR</b>	<b>N</b>
		20	45	5	25	5

Question 7 gauged the Sigma participants understanding of specific aspects of discipleship, namely, the meaning, the call, and the cost of discipleship. The data showed that 60% felt they had clear understanding, while 25% indicated little understanding and 15% indicated no understanding. Question 8 focused on the five principles essential for growing as a disciple. The data showed that 55% had clear understanding, with 25% having little understanding. 20% said they did not understand. Question 9 revealed 59% understood what it means to live under Christ's lordship in all areas of life, while 15% said they did not. Question 10 revealed 65% of respondents regularly (RG) heard about

the meaning, the call, and the cost of discipleship from the pulpit, while 20% said they did not (see Table.4.51 p.200).

Questions 11 through 14 of the pre-intervention Sigma questionnaire asked former members to assess the leadership level of churches as it relates to discipleship when they attended. Question 11 asked how clearly disciple-making was emphasized in the church's purpose statement when they attended. The data showed that of the total number of responses, 15% said in was the core purpose (CP) when they attended church; an additional 15% said it was a part of the purpose (PP), but 50% indicated that they were not familiar (NF) with the church's purpose statement, while 15% said it was not stated at all (NS). Question 12 revealed 70% agreed (A) that leaders were clearly modeling discipleship by their example, while 30% disagreed (D).

**Table 4.52. Sigma Questionnaire PART II Results: Questions 11-14**

Questions	# of Answers	Response %				
11. How clearly was 'disciple-making' emphasized in the purpose statement of the church when you attended?	20 of 20	CP	PP	NRS	NS	NF
		15	15	0	15	50
12. When I attended church the leaders clearly modeled discipleship by their own example and commitment to the disciple-making process.	20 of 20	SA	A	D	SD	
		15	55	15	15	
13. The disciple-making vision and strategy of the church was communicated and emphasized to the congregation verbally (e.g. From the pulpit).	20 of 20	C	O	RR	VRR	NA
		15	40	5	30	10
14. The disciple-making vision and strategy of your church was communicated and emphasized in written form (e.g. in the bulletin).	20 of 20	SA	A	D	SD	NA
		15	15	15	0	55

Questions 13 and 14 focused on the extent to which the disciple-making vision and strategy was emphasized in churches when former members attended. Fifteen percent said it was constantly (C) communicated verbally at the church they attended; 40% said

occasionally (O); 35% said rarely (RR); and 10% said it was not (NS). Pertaining to emphasis through written communication, 30% agree that it was, however the larger percentage (70%) either disagreed or were not aware (See Table 4.52 p.201).

Questions 15 through 18 looked at the critical area of disciple-making structures. Question 15 examined whether there was a clear system of follow-up and nurture designed to establish believers in their faith. While 10% said there was (WH) or that it sometimes happened (SH), 10% said it rarely (RRH) or never happened (N) and 80% were not aware of any such follow-up system. When asked if there were training groups equipping persons for personal witness and evangelism, 10% either said it rarely happened or was not happening while 75% were not aware of any such training groups. Only 10% said it was or sometimes happened. Similarly, as it pertains to discipleship training groups designed to nurture new believers, 15% of respondents to Question 17 said this rarely or it was not happening while 80% said they were not aware of it happening and 5% said it sometimes happened. On the matter of the church's concern for new believers after baptism and reception, 50% of former member agreed that the showed concern, while 50% disagreed. Question 19 assessed the church at the small group level. Ten percent strongly agreed that the churches they represented were making disciples and disciplers, while 20% disagreed and 14% were not aware of that happening. (See Table 4.53.)

**Table 4.53. Sigma Questionnaire PART II Results: Questions 15-19**

Question	# of Answers	Response %				
		WH	SH	RRH	N	NA
15. A clear system of follow-up and nurture designed to establish believers in the faith was present when I attended church.	20 of 20	5	5	5	5	80
16. The church had training groups operating that trained and equipped people in the areas of personal witness and evangelism.	20 of 20	5	5	5	10	75
17. When I attended, the church had discipleship training groups operating that train and equip people in how to nurture new Christians, and how to disciple and mentor others.	20 of 20	0	5	5	10	80
18. The church showed great concern for my growth and development after my baptism and reception into the full membership of the church.	20 of 20	SA 5	A 45	D 10	SD 40	

## Question 19: Small Group Level (Praxis)

Question	# of Answers	Response %				
		SA	A	D	SD	NA
19. The church through its small group structures was clearly training believers in how to become disciples themselves, and then showing them how to make disciples of others.	20 of 20	10	0	10	10	70

Questions 20 through 24 dealt with the individual practice of spiritual disciplines.

Question 20 asked about church attendance. The data showed that 60% of respondents were regular attendees while 25% very rarely attended. Question 21 asked about their attendance at communion services. The findings showed that 35% of the former members participated some of the times in communion services while 65% very rarely participated, and 10% did not participate. Question 22 inquired about Bible study attendance, and 35% said they went sometimes, while 65% very rarely attended. Question 23 revealed that 70% of the former members rarely attended and participated in prayer and fasting

services, while 30% sometimes did. In response to question 24 concerning their devotional life, 10% said almost daily and 15% said frequently, but 60% said some of the times, while 15% said rarely. (See Table. 4.54.)

**Table 4.54. Sigma Questionnaire PART II Results: Questions 20-24**

Question	# of Answers	Response %				
		VRG	RG	O	RR	VRR
20. How often did you attend divine worship services when you attended church?	20 of 20	20	40	15	5	20
21. How often did you participate in communion services when you attended church?	20 of 20	AT	S	RR	VRR	N
		15	20	35	20	10
22. How often did you attend bible study when you attended church?	20 of 20	5	30	25	40	0
23. How would you describe your attendance and participation in prayer meetings and fasting services?	20 of 20	10	20	25	45	0
24. Looking back, how would you describe your devotional life when you attended church (e.g. personal reading and reflecting on the Word; personal prayer time or quiet time with God etc.)?	20 of 20	AD	F	S	RR	N
		10	15	60	15	0

#### *Analysis of Sigma Group Assessment of the Five Levels*

Part II of the Pre- $\Sigma$ Q was structured to capture not only participants response to individual questions but also to assess the church at five levels. How then, did Sigma participants grade the church at each of the five levels?

The responses to questions 6 through 10 showed that the Sigma participants gave the church a passing grade at the preaching and teaching level. The data showed that the effectiveness of the church's preaching and teaching initiative variable, expressed as the means of questions 6 through 10 was 59. At the leadership level, participants gave the church a failing grade. The leadership effectiveness variable expressed as the means of

questions 11 through 14 was 46.25. Similarly, Sigma participants gave the church significantly low grades at the discipleship structures and small groups levels. The findings showed that the discipleship structures variable, expressed as the means of questions 15 through 18 was 18.75, while the small groups initiative variable expressed as the means of question 19 was 10. (See Table 4.55).

**Table 4.55. Sigma Questionnaire PART II. Analysis of The Five Levels: Preaching and Teaching, Leadership, Disciple-Making Structures, Small Group, and Personal**

LEVELS	SCORES	QUESTION NUMBER					TOTAL	MEAN
Preaching & Teaching	+ & -	<b>Q6</b>	<b>Q7</b>	<b>Q8</b>	<b>Q9</b>	<b>Q10</b>		
	+	60	60	55	55	65	295	+59
	-	35	30	25	35	30	155	-31
Leadership	+ & -	<b>Q11</b>	<b>Q12</b>	<b>Q13</b>	<b>Q14</b>			
	+	30	70	55	30		185	+46.25
	-	65	30	45	70		210	-52.5
Discipleship Structures	+ & -	<b>Q15</b>	<b>Q16</b>	<b>Q17</b>	<b>Q18</b>			
	+	10	10	5	50		75	+18.75
	-	85	85	90	50		310	-77.5
Small Groups	+ & -	<b>Q19</b>						
	+	10					10	+10
	-	90					90	-90
Personal	+ & -	<b>Q20</b>	<b>Q21</b>	<b>Q22</b>	<b>Q23</b>	<b>Q24</b>		
	+	60	35	35	30	25	185	+37
	-	25	65	65	70	15	240	-45

*Analysis of Sigma Group Assessment of the Two Major Categories (Theory and Praxis)*

PART II of the Pre- $\Sigma$ Q was further structured to assess the church along the lines of theory and praxis. Questions six through fourteen addressed knowledge, while question fifteen through nineteen addressed practice. As it pertains to knowledge (Q. 6-14), the church received high marks for its understanding/knowledge of discipleship. The data showed that the church's knowledge of discipleship variable expressed as the means of questions 6 through 14 was 53.33. The church received a failing grade however, in the area of Praxis (Q.15-19). The findings showed that the church's discipling initiative variable expressed as the means of questions 15 through 19 was 17. (See Table 4.56.)

**Table 4.56. Sigma Questionnaire PART II. Analysis of Sigma Assessment of the Church’s Knowledge and Practice of Discipleship (Theory and Praxis)**

LEVELS	SCORES	QUESTION NUMBER									TOTAL	MEAN
Knowledge (Theory)	+ & -	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14		
	+	60	60	55	55	65	30	70	55	30	480	+53.33
	-	35	30	25	35	30	65	30	45	70	345	-38.33
Practice (Praxis)	+ & -	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19						
	+	10	10	5	50	10					85	+17
	-	85	85	90	50	90					344	-68.8

**Pre-Intervention Sigma Questionnaire Part III**

Part three of the Sigma questionnaire was comprised of open-ended questions 25 through 31.

Question 25 examined why former members left the church. Sixteen of 20 persons responded to this question. Of the total number of responses provided, 50% of the issues highlighted were socio-emotional issues, and the other 50% related to sin after justification. One participant said “I am not sure. I guess I couldn’t give up some things.” Another said “No fault of the church; I personally needed a change.” The findings further showed that while 62.5% of the participants pointed to their own personal failures (Personal Factors) as the reason they left the church, 18.75% highlighted contributing factors originating within the church (Internal Factors), and 18.75% cited factors originating outside the church (External Factors). One participant said, “I left because I got pregnant.” Another said “I left because I didn’t feel like I belong.” And another said “I was influenced by my friends” (see Table 4.57).

**Table 4.57. Sigma Questionnaire PART III Results: Open-ended Questions (Q.25)**

Issues & Answers		Contributing Factors & Strongest Words and Phrases		
Issues	# of Answers	Personal Factors	Internal Factors (Church)	External Factors (Church)
Socio-Emotional	16 of 20	“Frustration” “personal problems” “I personally needed a change.”	“Members were not kind to help me in my situations...” “I left because I didn’t feel like I belong.” “I was criticized” “some love to judge and discriminate.” “Members were not showing me any love...”	“I felt pressured by my peers and laughed at ...” “influence of my friends...” “I got a job that took me away from church.”
Sin after Justification		“I got involved with a woman” “I backslide, I was in a relationship with a guy ...” “I got involved with a woman” “I got pregnant ...” “I didn’t believe I was saved ... I was still doing the same things...” “Backslide, drinking problem...”		

Question 26 asked, “What missing aspect of the church’s ministry may have contributed to people leaving the church?” Sixteen of 20 participants responded to this question. The data showed that 68.75% of Sigma participants felt that the absence of aftercare programs and activities may have contributed to people leaving the church. In retrospect, many felt a sense of abandonment after their baptism and reception. “No one to encourage you as a young Christian,” “someone to help you with your problems,” “keeping in touch and active in the lives of young people,” and “someone to come look for you when you are absent” are just a few sentences and phrases that not only speaks to the sense of abandonment former members felt but also to a kind of indifference on the



part of the church towards these recent converts. According to 31.25% of Sigma participants the negative attitudes and behavior of members caused people to leave. Words like “condemn”, “criticized” “gossip” were used to describe the actions and attitudes of members towards young Christians who “fall” or “make a mistake.” One participant said, “Don’t seem like members really love people.” And another said, “Members will share your problem with others; too much gossip and malice.” (See Table 4.58).

**Table 4.58. Sigma Questionnaire PART III Results: Open-ended Questions (Q.26)**

Question & Answers		Categories, Percentages & Strongest Words/Phrases/Sentences			
Q#	# of Answers	%	Aftercare Programs/Activities	%	Negative Attitudes & Actions of Members
26. what missing aspect of the church’s ministry may have contributed to people leaving the church?	16 of 20	68.75	“People need more teaching” “someone to help you with your problems.” “Helping individuals to grow and develop after baptism. Keeping in touch and active in the lives of young people”	31.25	“condemn,” “criticized,” “gossip” “Don’t seem like members really love people” “The church condemn sinners and those who fall.”

Question 27 asked, “What happened in the church that contributed to your decision to leave?”

**Table 4.59 Sigma Questionnaire PART III Results: Open-ended Questions (Q.27)**

Question & Answers			Categories, Percentages & Strongest Words/Phrases/Sentences						
Q#	# of Answers	%	Negative Attitudes & Actions of Members	%	Nothing in the Church	%	Personal Failure	%	Others
27. what happened in the church that contributed to your decision to leave?	50		“Criticizing others too much.” “didn’t feel welcome after my pregnancy.” “Lack of care”	31.71	“Nothing really” “It was not the church”	7.14	“It was not a church problem it was my relationship”	7.14	“Politics! The pastor is the leader of the church not those who are rich”

Fourteen of 20 participants responded. Fifty percent pointed to negative behavior of members as a contributing factor. One individual said, “Too much criticizing. No encouragement.” Another 31.71% said it was not the church, while 7.14% said it was their personal failure. “It was not a church problem it was my relationship” said one individual. The remaining 7.14% pointed to other things. (See Table 4.59 p.208).

Question 28 looked at factors outside of the church that may have contributed to persons leaving the church such as death in the family, relationship problems, illness or family emergency, and the loss of job. Fifteen of 20 persons responded to this question. From the responses provided two major categories emerged: Intimate relationships, and peer-pressure. The remaining responses were grouped as others. Evidenced by words and phrases such as “relationship,” “boyfriend,” “The relationship I was in,” 46.66% of the total number of respondents identified intimate relationships as the outside force that contributed to them leaving. Another 20% identified peer-pressure as the external contributing factor. One individual said, “I was influenced by my friends”, another said “peer pressure and family pressure.” The remaining 33.33% identified a number of other external factors. For one individual it was a “new job,” for another it was “A lot of personal problems” (see Table 4.60).

**Table 4.60. Sigma Questionnaire PART III Results: Open-ended Questions (Q.28)**

Question & Answers			Categories, Percentages & Strongest Words/Phrases/Sentences				
Q#	# of Answers	%	Intimate Relationships	%	Peer-Pressure	%	Others
28. What factors outside of the church contributed to your leaving the church? (e.g. death in the family ...)	15 of 20	46.66	“relationship with boyfriend” “got pregnant” “The relationship I was in”	20	“I was influenced by my friends” “peer pressure and family”	33.33	“I decided I did not want to worship with fake people” “A lot of personal problems” “I don’t believe in outside influence”

Question 29 asked, “What do you wish the church would have done that would have contributed to your staying? Sixteen of 20 participants responded to this question. Two major categories emerged from the analysis and responses were grouped accordingly. The majority, 87.5%, felt that aftercare programs and activities would have caused them to stay. As it pertains to aftercare activities such as follow-up, 75% of the total number of Sigma respondents felt a kind of abandonment and condemnation, and wished the church had shown more love, care, and concern for them. One individual said, “encourage me after I got pregnant. Show me that I was still loved and accepted.” Another person said, “I think if I had someone to encourage and help me I would have stayed,” and another said, “I wish the church had more love to come to me to find out what they could have done.” As it relates to aftercare programs, 12.5% believed this would have helped. One individual said, “Christianity classes that teach us how to live.” Another said, “active ministry groups that are able to counsel or encourage them.” The remaining 12.5% said the church could not have done anything to get them to stay (see Table 4.61).

**Table 4.61. Sigma Questionnaire PART III Results: Open-ended Questions (Q.29)**

Question & Answers		Categories, Percentages & Strongest Words/Phrases/Sentences			
Q#	# of Answers	%	Aftercare Programs/Activities	%	Nothing
29. What do you wish the church would have done that would have contributed to your staying?	16 of 20	87.5	“Encourage me after I got pregnant, show me that I was still loved and accepted” “To be more understanding”  “Christianity class that teach us to follow the rules”	12.5	“Nothing”

Question 31 gave Sigma participants the opportunity to share any other concerns they may have about the church’s aftercare program. Only 2 persons responded to this

question. Both individuals called upon the church to do more in the area of aftercare. One individual said, “Treat young Christians equally, when they fall down encourage them to stay committed to Christ; hold their hands and lead them into the right path if they see us entering the wrong path.” The other individual said, “Have more active programs for persons to participate in.”

### **Sigma Interviews**

Personal interviews were also conducted in responding to research question 3. Question 1 asked Sigma participants to share what their experience was like when they first became a part of the church. The general feeling was that it was good, because of the love and care they received from those in the church, and also because they were involved in the ministry of the church. SIP1 explained “at first it was good, everybody looked out for us, we were like their children.” “They teach us to bake, sew, they would buy clothe for us. We were pretty much involved” she further added.

Question two asked Sigma interviewees, “Why did you leave the church?” SIP1. Narrated a rather humiliating and embracing situation she experienced in the church which led to her leaving. She was publicly tried for an alleged affair which she said she knew nothing about. She explained, “It was the way that they approach[ed] me, it was the way that they approached the whole thing. It cracked me! ... I left saying I was not coming back, I will leave, because they did not listen to me, and they did not give me a second chance to come back and maybe hear me out or something, nothing, so I just left. I came back to church, but I left the membership.”

When asked question 3, “What could the church have done that would have caused you to stay?” SIP1 simply said, “They should have been more understanding.”

She further explained “I keep saying they weren’t understanding, I don’t know if it was bias, but that could be it, because nobody listened to me ... No counseling, not nothing, they just through me out.”

**Table 4.62. Sigma Interviews Results: Responses to Qs. 1 – 7**

Question	# Answers	Strongest Supporting Phrases/Sentences
1. What was the experience like when you first became a part of the church?	of 3	“at first it was good, everybody looked out for us, we were like their children” “We were pretty much involved” “Prayer meetings, we have to testify, as young as we were. We had to read the bible. It was good the experience was great.”
2. Why did you leave the church?	1 of 3	“So it was the way they approached me, it was the way that they approached the whole thing. It cracked me!” “you can’t be having an affair and still be a member of the church. So I said I will go, because I remember I explained to them that I had no idea what they were talking about at the time.”
3. Looking back, what could the church have done that would have caused you to stay?	1 of 3	“I keep saying they weren’t understanding, they, I don’t know if it was bias, but that could be it...” “No counseling, not nothing, they just through me out.”
4. Looking back what aspects of the church’s ministry may have contributed to the exit of members from the church?	1 of 3	“I think the church is divided ...” “It just doesn’t feel welcoming”
5. What factors outside of the church contributed to your leaving the church? (e.g. death in the family; relationship problems; illness or family emergency, loss of job etc.)	1 of 3	“It wasn’t anything outside of the church ...”
6. How would you rate the church’s concern for your growth and development after you were received in the church?	1 of 3	“on a scale of 1 – 10, I would give the church a 9.”
7. Going forward, what are the most effective practices or strategies the church should employ in its effort to establish members in their faith? Why?	1 of 3	“you could have counseling sessions for persons ...” “more socializing groups” “Also persons need to feel more welcomed...”

Question 4 examined whether the church had contributed to the exit of members.

Two possible contributing factors were identified by SIP1: absence of unity and hospitality in the church. She explained, “I think the church is divided, when you are in the church and you feel like it is divided, you are not going to want to be a part of that, but I know it happens everywhere. ... It just doesn’t feel welcoming.”

Question 5 examined whether outside factors played a part in the interviewees leaving the church. SIP1 simply said, “it wasn’t anything outside of the church, as you heard earlier.”

When question 6 asked her to rate the church’s concern for her growth and development after her reception in the church, SIP1 said, “on a scale of 1 – 10, I would give the church a 9.”

Question 7 asked the interviewees to share their opinion on are the most effective practices or strategies the church should employ in its effort to establish members in their faith? A more hospitable community of believers, and more aftercare activities, especially social activities were suggested by SIP1. (See Table 4.62 p.214)

#### **Research Question #4: Description of Evidence**

Four instruments were used to collect data pertinent for responding to Research Question 4 (RQ #4). These were questionnaires, focus group, interviews and document analysis. Questions 31 on the Pre-AΔQ questionnaire, Question 30 on the Pre-ΣQ questionnaire, and Question 9 of the Alpha and Delta focus groups directly responded to RQ #4. Question 10 of the Alpha and Delta Interviews as well as Question 7 of the Sigma Interviews responded to this question. Ten years of Pastors Annual Service report forms were also analyzed in an effort to amply respond to RQ #4.

#### **Pre-Intervention Alpha and Delta Questionnaire (Pre-AΔQ) Part III**

Question 31, an open-ended questions, asked, “What practices or strategies should the church employ in its effort to establish members in their faith and equip them for service?”

*Alpha Responses*

All 22 participants responded to this question. Two categories of classification surfaced from the approaches suggested: Aftercare programs and aftercare activities. The majority, 59.09%, of the total number of respondents felt the church should employ aftercare programs as a strategy. Suggested aftercare programs were, “small groups where people can feel that they belong, also proper discipleship of new converts so they understand what following Jesus means and what is expected of them.” Suggested also was a “structured discipleship program that is common to the denomination and not just individual church developed.” Another 40.90% of Alphas mentioned a range of aftercare activities. “Regular seminars and training sessions,” “Follow-up with other believers,” and “preaching, teaching, and training discussions,” were a few of the suggested activities. (See Table 4.63).

*Delta Responses*

Delta participants were also asked about the most effective practices and strategies the church should employ in its effort to establish members in their faith and prepare them for service. Fifty-one of 58 participants responded to this question. From the responses two major categories emerged: Aftercare programs and aftercare activities. The data showed that 49.01% of those who responded felt that aftercare programs should be employed by the church as a strategy going forward. Those mentioned were, discipleship classes and mentorship programs. One participant for example suggested, “Effective structured new converts classes.” Another said, “Have more discipleship classes and structured follow-up.” “Choose mentors for Christian babies” said another. Someone else said, “From the onset establish a one-to-one relationship with each member

so wherever they are having spiritual issues they can seek guidance from the leaders of the church.” The remaining 50.98% of Deltas suggested a wide range of Aftercare activities such as, “Getting them involved in the activities of the church,” “avenues to unearth talents as well as utilize them,” and “more evangelizing and constant training,” “In-depth doctrinal teaching of members separate and apart from what is offered in the Sunday school,” “regular check-up meetings. WhatsApp groups, community out-reach and family life ministries” just to mention a few. (See Table 4.63.)

### *Sigma*

Question 30 on the Sigma questionnaire asked for suggestions for practices and strategies the church should employ in its effort to establish members in their faith and prepare them for service. Sixteen of 20 participants responded to this question. From the responses, two categories emerged: Aftercare programs and aftercare activities. Fifty percent suggested programs as a strategy, while the other 50% suggested a range of activities. In general, Sigma participants called for an intentional approach to aftercare that exudes love and patience with new believers; that is designed to teach, encourage, counsel, train, mentor, and guide and is an approach that provides more opportunity for member involvement in worship services. The call was not only for an intentional approach but also for a relational approach.



**Table 4.63. Alpha, Delta and Sigma Questionnaire PART III Results: Responses to Questions 31 & 30**

Groups, Question & # of Ans.				Categories, Percentages & Strongest Words/Phrases/Sentences		
Groups	Q#	# of Ans.	%	Aftercare Programs	%	Aftercare Activities
ALPHA	31	22 of 22	59.09	<p>“small groups where people can feel that they belong...”</p> <p>A “structured discipleship program that is common to the denomination ...”</p> <p>“Discipleship classes should continue long after instruction classes end”</p>	40.90	<p>“to share the ministries of the church ...”</p> <p>“Regular seminars and training sessions,”</p> <p>“Follow-up with other believers,”</p> <p>“preaching, teaching, and training discussions,”</p> <p>“Tell people the truth in a loving way”</p>
DELTA	31	51 of 58	49.01	<p>“Effective structured new converts classes.”</p> <p>“Have more discipleship classes and structured follow-up.”</p> <p>“Choose mentors for Christian babies”</p>	50.98	<p>“Maintaining more frequent presentations of our core values”</p> <p>“Encourage and motivate”</p> <p>“Getting them involved in the activities of the church,”</p> <p>“more evangelizing and constant training,”</p> <p>“Prayer, training sessions, more bible study, more fellowship with the young and mature individuals”</p> <p>“regular check-up meetings. WhatsApp groups, community out-reach and family life ministries”</p>
SIGMA	30	16 of 20	50	<p>“Assign a mentor, someone to help guide.”</p> <p>“Have teaching classes for Christians after they are baptized.”</p> <p>“Assign spiritual mothers and fathers to young believers.”</p>	50	<p>“Visit members more. Encourage them”</p> <p>“Do more teaching.”</p> <p>“Counseling sessions, regular social events, bible study”</p> <p>“Love people even after they sin.”</p> <p>“Don’t condemn people when they fall.”</p>

The suggestions to “assign mentors, someone to help guide” “assign spiritual mothers and fathers to young believers” “to visit members more” to “love people” as

oppose to “condemn” them when the fall, and to have “regular social events” gave evidence. All these phrases point to a call for an approach that seeks to build and deepen relationships in an effort to establish young believers in their faith. (See Table 4.63 p.218)

### **Pre-Intervention Focus Group**

Question 9 of the Focus Group protocol asked participants to share their opinion on practices and strategies the church should employ in its effort to establish members in their faith and prepare them for service.

#### *Alpha Response*

In the Alpha Focus Group discussion 5 of 8 persons responded to this question. Eighty percent of the total number of respondents suggested practices and strategies that were very abstract as oppose to the other 20% that suggested specific practices and strategies the church should employ. Alpha participants did not suggest the use of aftercare programs. As it pertains to abstract suggestions, AFP7 said, “It is recognizing that the work is not ours, the work belongs to Christ ...” AFP5 said, “The love of Christ. Once we allow the love of Christ to guide everything we do, that will be translated into people being established in their faith.” Now, as it relates to concrete suggestions, AFP1 said “The Bible sets it out, simplicity to me is the basic, in preaching, in teaching, in talking to people, make sure that we have the mind of Christ.” (See Table 4.64.)

#### *Delta Responses*

Question 9 also asked the Delta focus group participants to share their opinion on practices and strategies the church should employ in its effort to establish members in their faith and prepare them for service. All participants responded. From the responses

emerged Two categories emerged from the responses into which can be classified as aftercare programs and aftercare activities. Fifty percent of respondents suggested aftercare programs such as mentorship programs and small groups as strategies the church should employ.

**Table 4.64. Alpha and Delta Focus Group Responses to Question 9**

Groups, Question & # of Ans.				Categories, Percentages & Strongest Words/Phrases/Sentences		
Groups	Q#	# of Ans.	%	Abstract Practices	%	Concrete Activities
ALPHA	9	5 of 8	80	“it is recognizing that the work is not ours, the work belongs to Christ ...”	20	“The bible sets it out, simplicity to me is the basic, in preaching, in teaching, in talking to people, make sure that we have the mind of Christ”
				“The love of Christ. Once we allow the love of Christ to guide everything we do, that will be translated into people being established in their faith.”		
				“the key is whatever we are sharing with people we share it so that they understand”		
				“Well for me, if we can just get the church to love each other. Love all those who come to it, love the visitors ...”		
DELTA	9	6 of 6	50	<b>Aftercare Programs</b>	50	<b>Aftercare Activities</b>
				“Mentorship will work. Connect before you correct. Connection, relationship, it all boils down to that.”		“We mentioned the bible study earlier ...”
				“The practice we can employ going forward is mentorship”		“training,”
				“Another way to do that mentorship is to have a group of people and you chose one of them to lead that group.”		“starting a “book club”

DFP4 said “Mentorship will work. Connect before you correct. Connection, relationship, it all boils down to that.” And DFP6 said “Another way to do that mentorship is to have a group of people, and you chose one of them to lead that group. Put mature people in the group, people who can help deal with the different issues that may arise, persons who have understanding of group dynamics and relationships.” The

remaining 50% suggested aftercare activities such as “bible study,” “training,” and starting a “book club”. (See Table 4.64 p.220)

### **Interview Responses (Q.10)**

Personal interviews were also used to answer RQ #4. Question 10 asked, “What are the most effective practices and strategies the church should employ in its effort to establish members in their faith and prepare them for service?” The question was addressed to both Alpha and Delta interviewees.

#### *Alpha Interview Responses*

All Alpha interviewees responded to question 10. Aftercare programs and activities were the two major categories that emerged from the responses. Concerning aftercare programs, one interviewee simply said, “I think it comes right back down to discipleship.” Concerning aftercare activities, Alphas felt that the church should try to identify and develop talents. (See Table 4.65).

#### *Delta Interview Responses*

All of the Delta interviewees responded to question 10. The suggested practices and strategies fell in two categories: Aftercare programs and aftercare activities. As it pertains to programs, one Delta interviewee said, “the key one is discipleship,” but further added that a “formal mentorship program should be put in place.” Another individual said, a “committee should be established in the church that deals with sustaining these younger ones.” Suggested also were aftercare activities such as “sermons geared towards them developing in the faith,” “prayer meeting and bible study” as well as having “persons following up on what is happening with the members.”

*Sigma Interviews*

Question 7 for the Sigma interviewees asked, “Going forward, what are the most effective practices or strategies the church should employ in its effort to establish members in their faith? Why?” The aftercare activities the Sigma interviewees suggested included counselling sessions, social activities, and hospitality.

**Table 4.65 Alpha, Delta and Sigma Interview Responses to Questions 10 of the Pre- $\Delta\Theta$  and 7 of the Pre- $\Sigma Q$**

Groups	# Answers	Supporting Words/Phrases/Sentences
ALPHA	3 of 3	<p>“The church should be able to identify the gifts, and talents that are displayed among its members and help to develop them along the way.”</p> <p>“I think it comes right back down to discipleship ... Like Jesus we need to take people out and engage them in ministry”</p>
DELTA	3 of 3	<p>“I would have mentioned the formal mentorship program. Don’t just leave it to chance, have something formal put in place to do this.”</p> <p>“Also, persons following up on what is happening with the members, and I think the mentor could do that.”</p> <p>“we really want to keep them, so we really need to be strategic in terms of getting this committee together and putting programs in place that will help them along the pathway.”</p> <p>“Try as much as possible to use up other persons in the church.”</p>
SIGMA	1 of 3	<p>“you could have counseling sessions for persons ...”</p> <p>“Also, young people need more activities ... Especial social activities.”</p> <p>“... everybody supposed to feel welcome”</p>

SIP1 said “you could have counseling sessions for persons who are going through some things where they can’t even pray at times. ... Also, young people need more activities to feel more vibrant and apart. Especially social activities.” In addition, SIP1 called for a more hospitable church community. She said, “persons need to feel more welcomed; you must not have persons looking out for one set of persons, everybody supposed to feel welcome.” (See Table 4.65.)

## **Document Analysis**

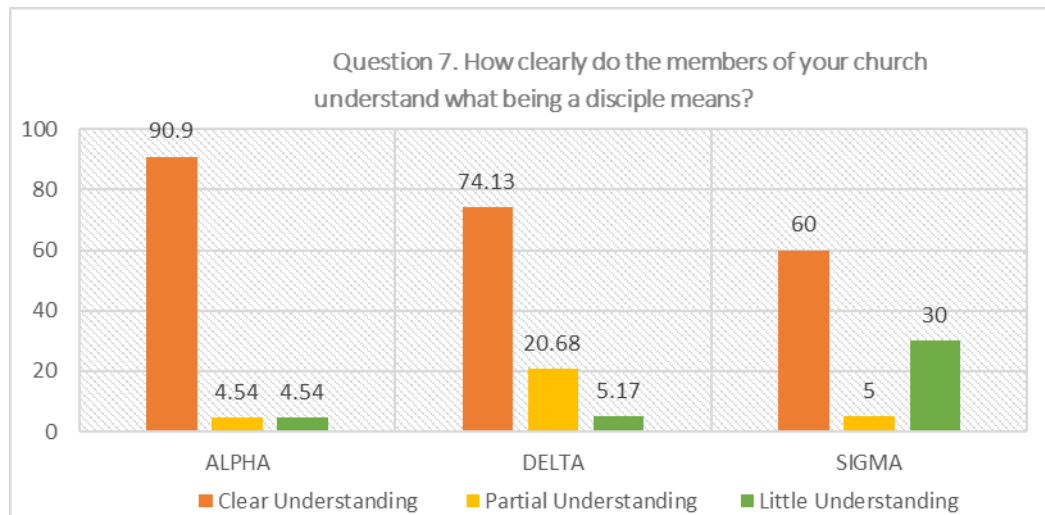
As is shown in Table 4.65 above, Sunday and mid-week services account for 61.99% of the approach to discipleship for the past 10 years. Though 6.13% mentioned discipleship programs, the data did not show any formal approach to discipleship, neither was there any evidence that the discipleship programs were the primary focus of the churches that mentioned them. Additionally, the data showed that while pastors are doing many good things, evidenced by 31.8% aftercare activities, there appears to be no structure to these activities.

## **Final Analysis. Comparative: Alpha, Delta, Sigma**

The following section looks more closely at how individual groups responded to individual questions on the Pre-A $\delta$ Q and the Pre- $\Sigma$ Q. It also compares the individual groups assessment of the five levels as well as that of the two major categories which are the church's knowledge and practice of discipleship. While all three groups, Alpha, Delta and Sigma, were asked the same questions in PART II of their respective questionnaires. However the questions were numbered differently on the questionnaires. Question 7 on the Pre-A $\Delta$ Q is Question 6 on the Pre- $\Sigma$ Q, and Question 8 on the Pre-A $\Delta$ Q is Question 7 on the Pre- $\Sigma$ Q and so forth. Only the numbering on the Pre-A $\Delta$ Q will be used in this section. Additionally, while the Alpha and Delta participants spoke of the present, the Sigma group participants spoke of the past when they attended the churches. Sigmas brought a historical component to the analysis which added an additional layer of thickness to the analysis. With this component revealed any significant developments between then and now.

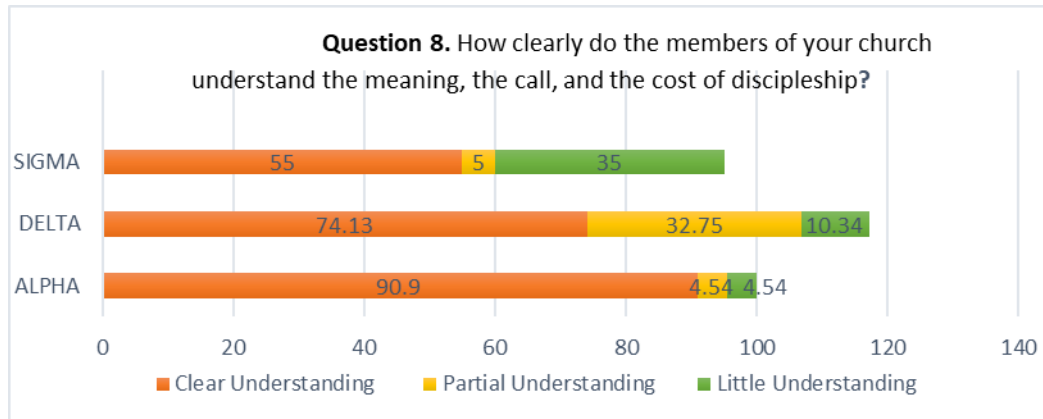
### *Responses to Individual Questions*

This section makes a comparative analysis of the specific group responses to questions 7 through 11. The data showed a consensus across the three groups of participants (Alpha, Delta and Sigma), that members had a clear understanding of what being a disciple means (Question 7). The majority, 90.9% of Alphas, 74.13% of Deltas, and 60% of Sigmas responded in the affirmative. The Sigma participants also said, when they attended, members had clear understanding. (See Figure 4.13.).



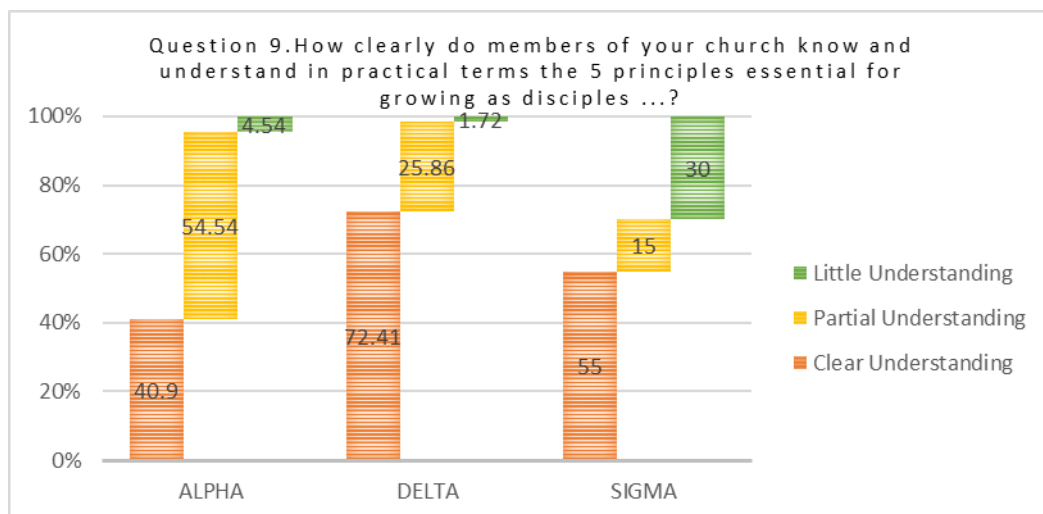
**Figure.4.13. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q7**

Similarly, in response to question 8 all three groups indicated that members understood of the meaning, call, and cost of discipleship. A total of 90.9% of Alphas and 67.24% of the Delta group indicated that members of the church they represented had clear understanding, and 60% of the respondents from the Sigma group said that when they attended, members understood those themes. (See Figure 4.14.)



**Figure.4.14. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q8**

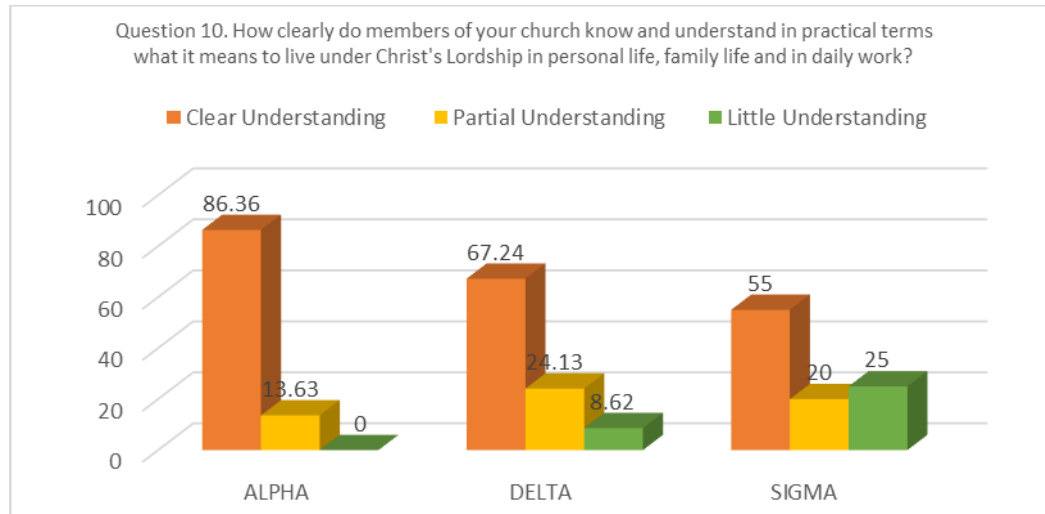
Question 9 asked about the members’ understanding of the five principles essential for growing as a disciple. Delta and Sigma participants agreed, but the Alpha group disagreed slightly with Delta and Sigma groups, on the extent to which members understood these principles. While 72.41% of Delta participants and 55% of Sigma participants said members had clear understanding now and when they attended, 54.54% of Alpha participants said members had partial understanding. (See Figure 4.15.).



**Figure 4.15. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q9**

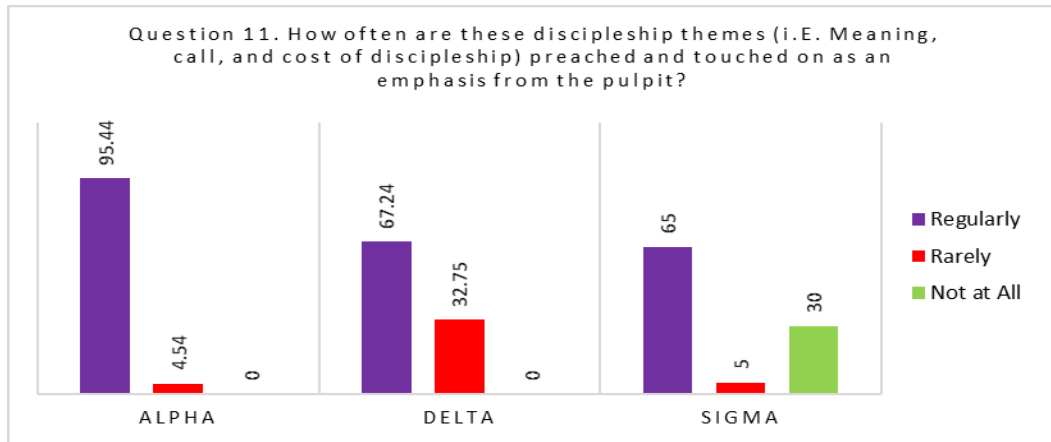


Question 10 asked how clearly members of the churches they represented understand in practical terms what it means to live under Christ's Lordship. Participants across the three groups had a similar response. A total of 86.36% of Alphas and 67.24% of Deltas indicated members had clear understanding, while 55% of Sigma participants said that when they attended members had clear understanding. (See Figure 4.16.)



**Figure 4.16. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q10**

Question 11 addressed the frequency with which discipleship themes such as the meaning, the call, and the cost of discipleship are preached and touched on as an emphasis from the pulpit. The data showed an agreement across the three groups, with 95.44% of Alpha, and 64.24% of Delta respondents said this was done regularly, while 65% of Sigma respondents also indicated that when they attended, this was done regularly. (See Figure.4.17).

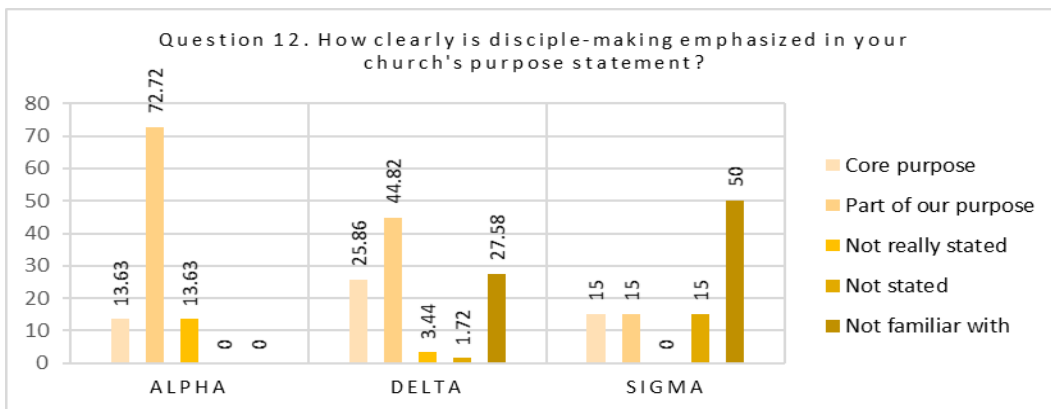


**Figure 4.17. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q11**

Questions 7 through 11 were used to compute the effectiveness of the churches preaching and teaching initiative based on the members’ understanding and knowledge of discipleship..

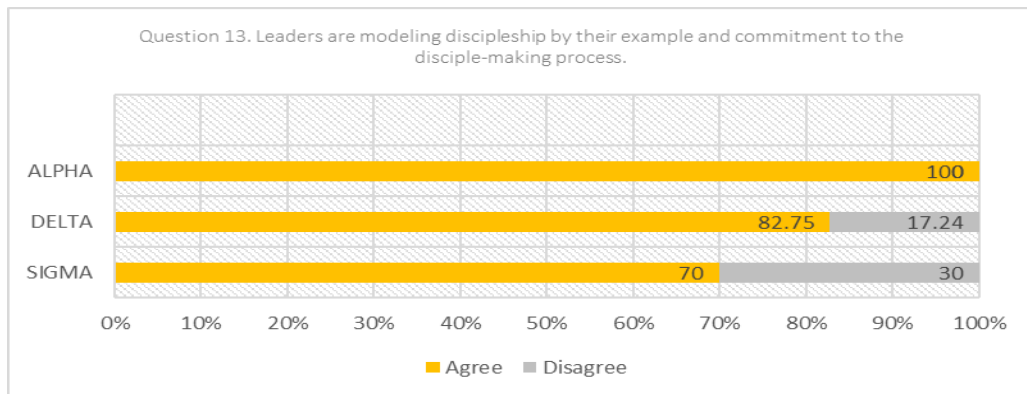
Questions 12 through 15 were related to making disciples and discipleship..

Question 12 dealt with disciple-making emphasis in relationship to the churches purpose statements. Less than 26% across groups said disciple-making was their core purpose. While over 70% of pastors said it was a part of the purpose, less than 50% of members said it was. Of note, 50% of former members said they were unfamiliar with the church’s purpose statement when they attended. (See Figure 4.18.)



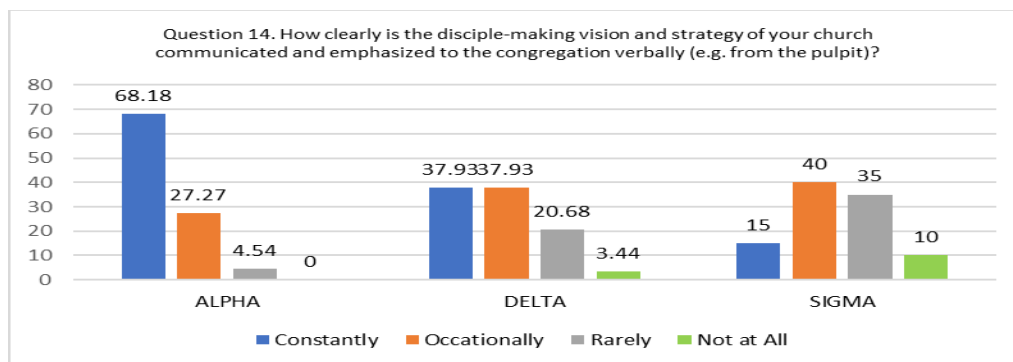
**Figure 4.18. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q12**

Question 13 examined whether leaders were modeling discipleship by their example and commitment to the disciple-making process. The data showed a consensus across groups with significantly high percentages agreeing. All Alpha respondents (100%), and 82.75% of Delta respondents agreed. Also, 70% of Sigma participants, said when they attended, leaders were modeling this. (See Figure 4.19).



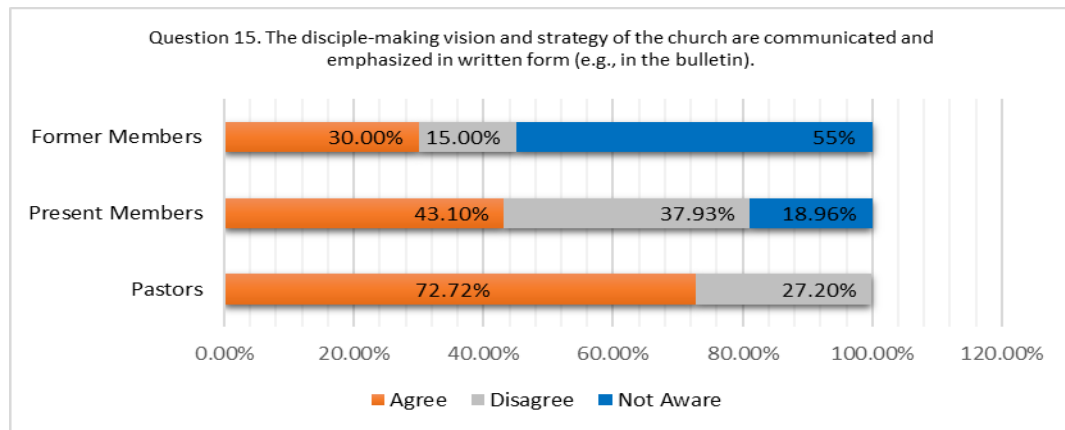
**Figure.4.19. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q13**

Question 14 pertained to the frequency with which the disciple-making vision and strategy of churches was communicated verbally. The finding showed that while a significant number, 68.18%, of Alpha participants indicated that this was done constantly, Only 37.93% of Delta participants 37.93% said constantly and the same percentage said occasionally. (See Figure 4.20.)



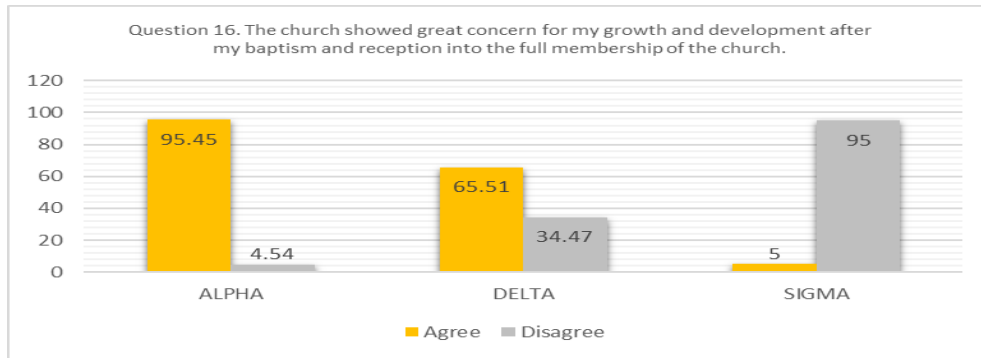
**Figure 4.20 Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q14**

Question 15 asked how clearly the disciple-making vision and strategy was communicated and emphasized in written form. The data showed a significant percentage of Alpha respondents (72.72%), agreeing while 56.89% of Delta respondents disagreed, with 70% of Sigma respondents saying they were not aware of this, when they attended. (See Figure 4.21.).



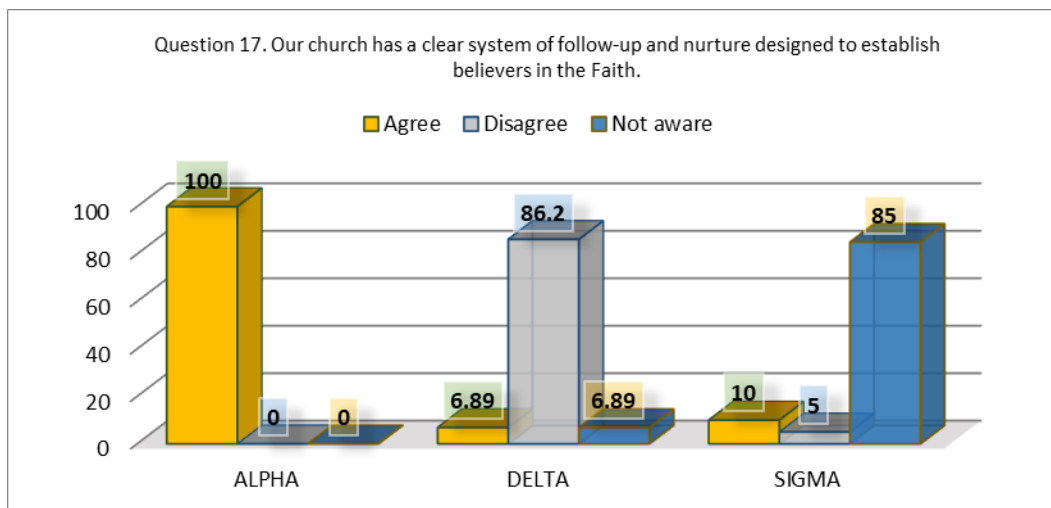
**Figure 4.21. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q15**

Questions 16 through 19 dealt with the church's role in the development of its members. The data showed significantly high percentages of positive and negative responses to Question 16. A majority, 95.45% of Alpha, and 65.51% of Delta participants, agreed that the church showed great concern for their growth and development after baptism and reception into full membership. However, 95% of Sigma participants disagreed with the statement. (See Figure 4.22.)



**Figure.4.22. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q16**

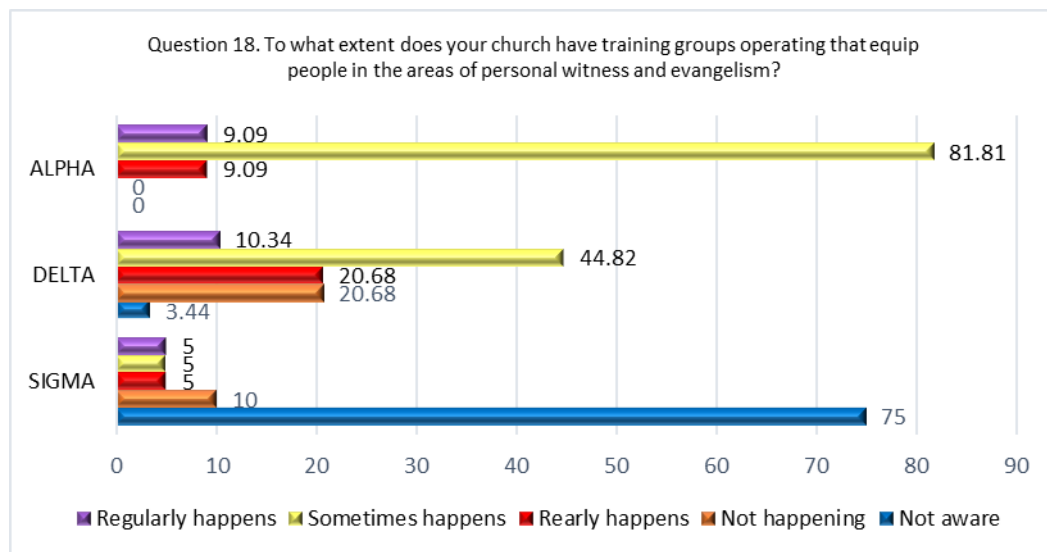
Question 17 addressed the matter of clear systems of follow-up and nurture designed to establish believers in the faith. All respondents of group Alpha (100%) said the churches they represented has a clear system of follow-up and nurture designed to establish believers in the faith. However, 86.2% of Delta members disagreed, and 85% of Sigma respondents said they were not aware of any such system when they attended. (See Figure 4.23.)



**Figure 4.23. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q17**

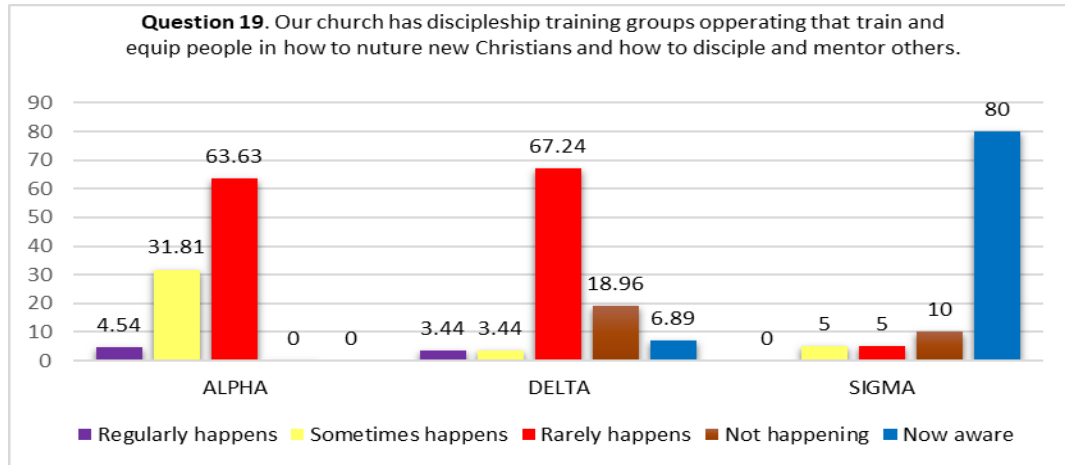
Question 18 examined the extent to which churches have training groups operating that equip people in the areas of personal witness and evangelism. A

surprisingly low percentage of participants across the three groups said this regularly happens. Only 9.09% of Alpha, 10.34% of Delta participants and 5% among Sigma participants said that it happens regularly. The data further showed that while 81.81% of Alpha participants said that it happens regularly, less than 50% of Delta participants said the same. Of note also, 75% of Sigma participants said they were not aware of this happening when they attended. (See Figure 4.24).



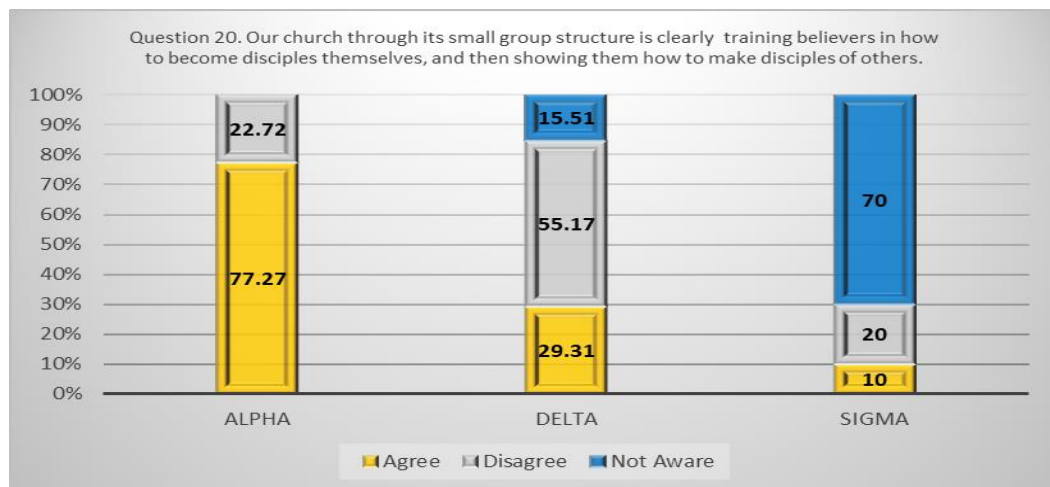
**Figure 4.24. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q18**

Question 19 asked if the churches they represented had discipleship training groups operating that train and equip people in how to nurture new Christian and how to disciple and mentor others. A dismal 4.54% of Alpha and 3.44% of Delta respondents indicated this regularly happens. The findings further showed that 63.63% of Alpha participants said this rarely happened, and 67.24% of Delta's saying it rarely did. The data also showed 80% of Sigma's indicating they were not aware of this happening when they attended. (See Figure 4.25.)



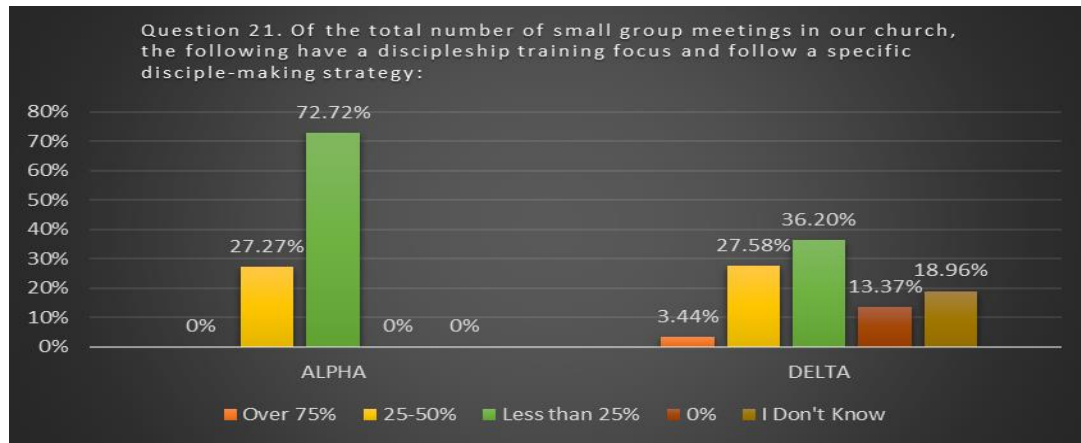
**Figure 4.25.. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q19**

Questions 20 and 21 inquired about small groups. Question 20 revealed that 77.27% of Alpha respondents agree that the church they represented were, through its small group structures, clearly training believers about how to become disciples themselves, and then showing them how to make disciples of others. However, 55.17% of Delta respondents disagreed. Similarly, 70% of Sigma respondents were not aware of this happening when they attended. (See Figure 4.26).



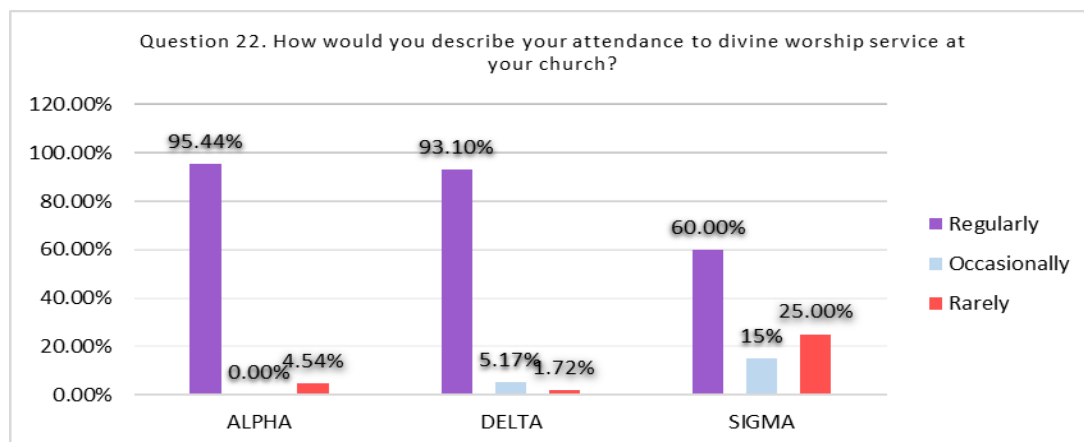
**Figure 4.26. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q20**

Additionally, question 21 asked what percentage of small groups had a discipleship training focus and followed a specific disciple-making strategy. The majority of Alphas, 72.72%, indicated less than 25%, with the largest percentage of Delta’s 36.20% saying the same. (See Figure 4.27.)



**Figure 4.27. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q21**

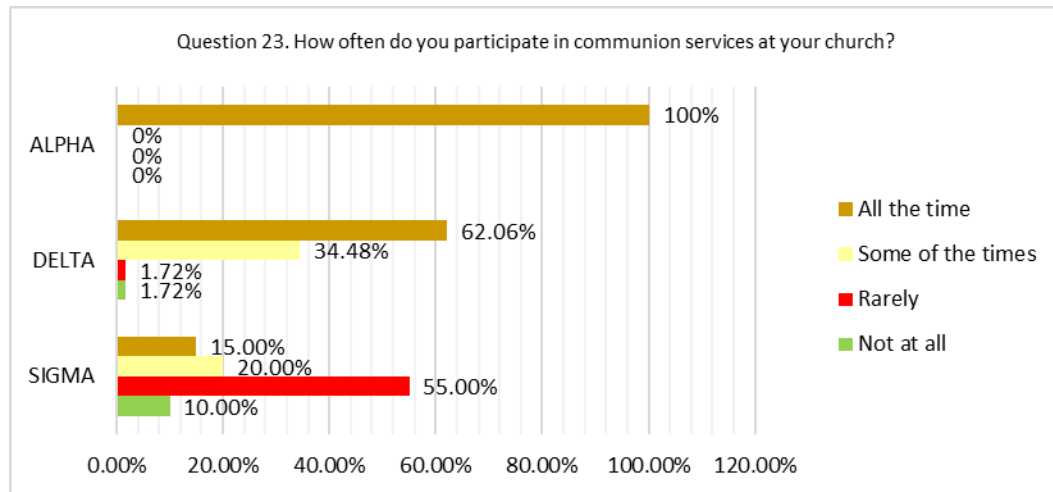
Questions 22 through 26 (Q. 22-26) asked about attendance at and participation in church events. Question 22 addressed attendance to divine worship services. 95.44% of Alpha participants, and 93.10% of Delta’s indicated that they were regular attendees. 60% of Sigma participants also indicated that they attended regularly when they were members. (See Figure 4.28.).



**Figure 4.28. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q22**

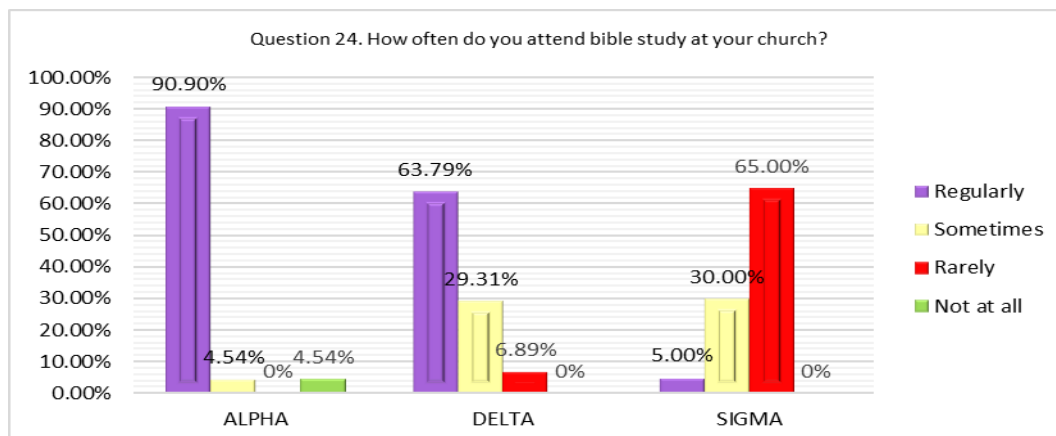


Question 23 addressed participants participation in communion services. All Alpha group participants (100%) indicated they participated all the time, with 62.06% of Deltas saying the same. The data further showed that 55% of Sigma participants rarely attended communion services when they were members. (See Figure 4.39.)



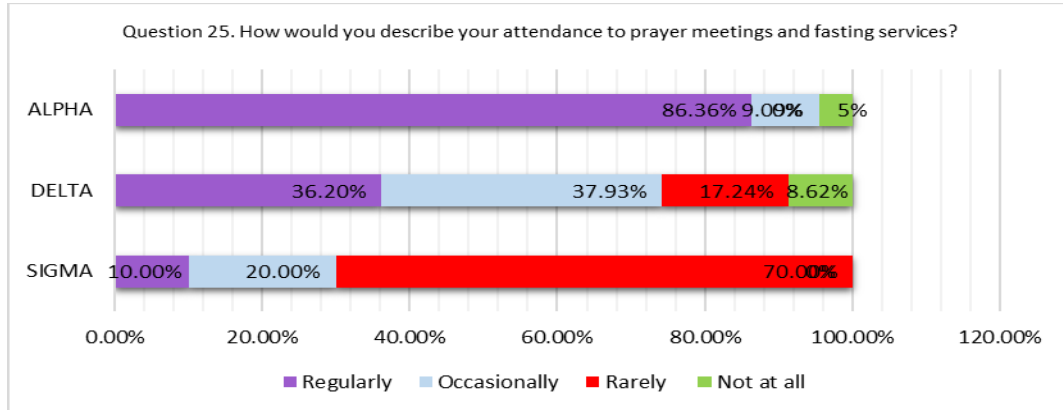
**Figure 4.39. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q23**

As it relates to bible study attendance, Question 24, the data showed that 90.90% of Alphas and 63.79% of Deltas were regular in their attendance, while 65% of the total number of Sigma’s rarely attended bible study when they were members. (See Figure 4.30.)



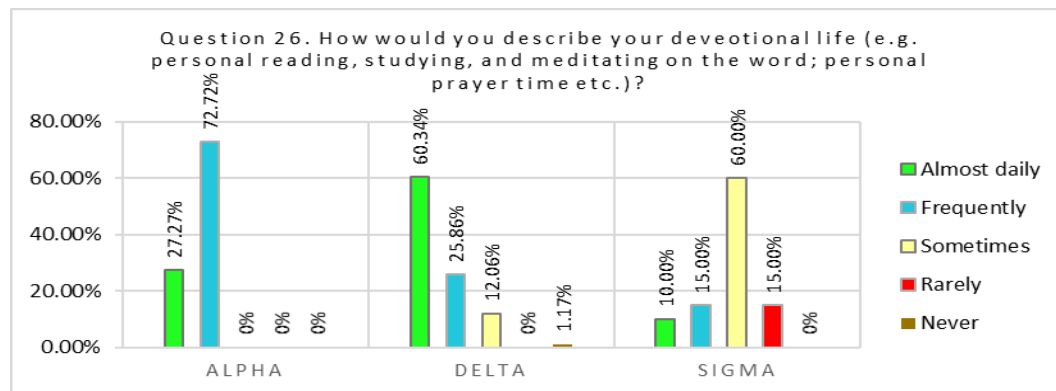
**Figure 4.30. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q24**

Question 25 looked at attendance to prayer meeting and fasting services. The findings showed that 86.36% of Alphas attend regularly and 9.09 occasionally. Only 36.20% of Deltas were regular in their attendance 36.29 %. The data also showed 70% of Sigma respondents rarely attended these meetings when they were members. (See Figure 4.31.)



**Figure 4.31. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q25**

Question 26 asked respondents across the three groups to describe their devotional life. The data showed that 72.72% had frequent devotions. The data also showed 60.34% of Deltas had devotions almost daily. The findings showed that 60% of Sigma participants said they had devotions sometimes, when they were members. (See Figure 4.32.)



**Figure 4.32. Comparative analysis: Alpha, Delta & Sigma Responses to Q26**

*Assessment of the Church at the Five Levels*

All three groups gave the church high positive ratings at the preaching and teaching level. The mean scores of 80.9 for Alphas and 68.7 for Deltas indicated that at present the church is doing well in this area. A positive mean score of 59 at the preaching and teaching level indicated also that the church was doing a good job in this area when Sigma participants attended.

The data showed a difference in mean scores of the Sigma Group in comparison to that of the Alpha and Delta groups at the leadership level, which perhaps may be an indication of significant improvement in the church's disciple-making initiative at this level. While the mean score at the leadership level for the Sigma group was 46.25 retrospectively, at present, the mean scores at this level for Alpha was 88.63 and for Delta was 68.09.

The data also showed significant difference in mean scores at the disciple-making structures level. Whereas the mean score of the Alpha group for this level was a high of 72.7, the scores for the Delta and Alpha groups were significantly lower. The mean for the Delta group was 33.61, and for Sigma it was 18.75. The historical component that the Sigma group add to the analysis further suggests that the church has been performing poorly in this area for quite some time.

The data showed a similar finding at the small group level. Whereas the mean score of the Alpha group at this level was a high of 52.27, the mean scores for this level of the Delta and Sigma groups were significantly lower. Delta's mean score was 30.17 and Sigma's was 10. Again, the historical dimension that the Sigma group's mean score brings to the analysis suggests that this is a longstanding issue.

There was a difference in mean scores at the personal level as well. While the data showed significantly higher mean scores for the Alpha and Delta groups at this level with Alpha having a score of 95.45 and Delta's score being 71.03, it showed a significantly lower mean score of 37 for the Sigma group. The findings at this level seems to suggest that the extent to which individuals take personal responsibility for their growth and development is a major contributing factor in why some members remain while others fall away. (See Table 4.66.)

**Table 4.66 Comparative Analysis. Alpha, Delta and Sigma Assessment of the Five Levels**

LEVELS	Alpha & Delta Q#	Sigma Q#	Scores + & -	ALPHA MEAN	DELTA MEAN	SIGMA MEAN
Preaching & Teaching	7 – 11	6 – 10	+ -	+80.9 -6.4	+69.7 -11.72	+59 -31
Leadership	12 – 15	11 – 14	+ -	+88.63 -11.36	+68.09 -31.88	+46.25 -52.5
Disciple-making Structures	16 – 19	15 – 18	+ -	+72.7 -27.3	+33.61 -59.46	+18.75 -77.5
Small Groups	20 – 21	19	+ -	+52.27 -47.72	+30.17 -69.81	+10 -90
Personal	22 – 26	20 – 24	+ -	+95.45 -4.54	+71.03 -13.79	+37 -45

*Assessment of the Two Major Categories (Theory and Praxis)*

The data showed a consensus among the Alpha, Delta and Sigma groups as it pertains to the church's knowledge/understanding of discipleship. In Table 4.67 below, the data showed high positive mean scores of 84.3 Alpha, 68.9 Delta, and 53.33 Sigma. However, in practice, while the Alpha mean score was a positive 65.8, the mean scores of the Delta and Sigma group for this category were significantly low with Delta having a

score of 32.5 and Sigma having a score of 17. The data suggests a disconnect between theory and praxis, between what the church knows, and what the does.

**Table 4.67 Comparative Analysis. Alpha, Delta, and Sigma Assessment of the Church's Knowledge and Practice of Discipleship (Theory and Praxis)**

CATEGORY	SIMILARITY				CATEGORY	DIFFERENCE			
	Q#	Alpha Mean	Delta Mean	Sigma Mean		Q#	Alpha Mean	Delta Mean	Sigma Mean
Knowledge of Discipleship (Theory)	7 –	+ 84.3	+	+53.33	Practice of Discipleship (Praxis)	16 –	+ 65.8	+ 32.5	+17
	15	- 8.6	68.9	-38.33		21	- 34.1	- 62.9	- 68.8
	6 – 14		- 20.7			15 – 19			

### Summary of Major Findings

The study set out to find out three things: 1. What might be contributing to the discipling of members? 2. What might be contributing to the exit of members? and 3. What are the best practices and strategies for discipling new believers? From the instruments used to collect data: The pre-intervention alpha and delta questionnaire, the pre-intervention sigma questionnaire, the alpha and delta focus groups, the alpha, delta and sigma interviews, and from the analysis of district documents, the following major findings emerged:

1. The district has a forgotten or lost heritage/legacy of intentional discipleship.
2. The absence of a disciple-making culture is prevalent in the churches.
3. The church environment is the major the deciding factor whether members stay or leave.

## CHAPTER 5

### LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

As already noted in Chapter 1, almost every church has some kind of strategy and process, formal or informal, that is designed to establish new believers in their faith. The Western Jamaica District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church is no exception. As Coleman observed, however, very few churches manage to keep the majority of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, let alone nurturing them to the point of spiritual maturity (41). The question of whether West Jamaica District was failing in this regard, was both unavoidable and unsettling following the revelation that the church was losing members after crusades. The issue was further compounded by the absence of a sustainable discipleship program in the district. Personally, the revelation was disconcerting and disquieting, resulting in a deep concern about what could be done to address this issue; about what could be done to lead these new converts into an ever increasing and deepening relationship with Jesus Christ and with the life-supporting community of the local church.

The purpose of this project was to identify best practices for discipling new members in the Western District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in Jamaica in order to reverse the tendency for new members to leave the church soon after joining.

What follows is a discussion surrounding the major findings of this study, the ministry implications of the findings, the limitations of the study, as well as some unexpected observations. Following this are a few recommendations and a reflection on my journey over the course of this study, as well as a few words in prospect.

## **Major Findings**

This section discuss the three major findings of this study which are related to the lost legacy of the church, the absence of a disciple-making culture in the churches, and the church environment.

### **First Finding: A Forgotten or Lost Heritage/Legacy of Intentional Discipleship**

This section discusses this finding as it relates to my personal observation, to the literature and to the Biblical framework for the finding.

#### *Personal Observation*

Very early during this study while researching and writing chapter two, it became very clear that Wesleyans have a rich heritage of intentional discipleship. This is seen in two streams of history: biblical history (Old and New Testament) and Wesleyan organizational history. As the research progressed however, a deeper revelation dawned – this was a lost and forgotten heritage, and that at present, there is an urgent need to rediscover it.

Several observations support this conclusion: First, the district is generally aware or admits that there is a problem with the present approach to discipleship, and this is good. (See Tables 4.39; 4.40; 4.41; 4.42; 4.46; 4.47; 4.48; 4.49; 4.50; 4.61; 4.63; 4.65) Participants from all groups and across data sets felt that the aftercare side of evangelism “needs to be a major area of focus [because this is] where we are losing people,” and that we need to be “more intentional in how we do aftercare.” “The church focus[es] too much on numerical growth” one individual felt, and therefore asked “What strategy is being put forward to help those who are weak in the faith?” Participants felt new believers are being abandoned and that they are being “left on their own.”

The polarizing attitude that exists pertaining to what can or should be done about the present state of affairs, only serves to further exacerbate the issue. Those who through their actions and attitudes proclaim “defeat,” seem to have given up on the notion of an amicable solution that can address the current problem. It is this attitude that manifest itself in expressions that suggest a kind of indifference towards those who are leaving the church. In Table 4.41, 33.33% of Alpha interviewees glibly said, “People come, and people go, we see it even in Jesus’ ministry.” Similarly, Table 4.47 showed 60% of Alpha Focus Group participants expressing the same lack of concern about those who are leaving the church. Someone in the Alpha group said, “You are going to gain and lose. The point is not what happen[ed] to those you lose, but what you do with those that you retain. ...People come, and people go.” These are but a few of the expressions that suggest some have made peace with the current situation. There are those, however, who resist. They refuse to accept the status quo, seeing the present state of aftercare as a threat to the very survival of those won for Christ and by extension to the viability and sustainability of the organization. They not only express deep concern about the situation as it stands, but suggest practical solutions to arrest the current trend. (See Tables 4.63; 4.64; 4.65)

The present approach to discipling believers was another observation that strongly suggested an urgent need to rediscover our heritage. Haphazard at best, describes the present approach. Table 4.44 showed that for the past ten years, the discipling of believers has been left to mere chance, as Sunday and mid-week services account for 61.99% of the overall approach taken to discipleship. Outside of Sunday school, divine worship service, communion service, Bible study, prayer meeting and fasting service, the



believer has no contact with a definite discipleship program. “To be quite frank, other than the bible study there is nothing in place ...” said one individual. Such an approach to the problem is problematic, in that, there are several observable weaknesses which may be contributing factors to the eventual exit of members from the church. First was the lack of intentionality. Careful analysis of the ten years of documents (Table 4.44) showed no formal discipleship structure was in place in the district, which exposes a lack of intentionality in the present approach. The importance of intentionality seen in the discussion on “Discipleship and a Theology of Salvation” (Chapter 2, p. 72-78) received sustained emphasis throughout the literature. The discussion revealed an intentional God, one who takes the initiative, one who purposefully set out to achieve every stage of the discipleship process.

A second weakness of the present approach is its limited scope. Sunday services and mid-weeks services are designed to take care of the spiritual needs of individuals. What is needed is an approach that caters for the total man – a holistic approach.

A third weakness in the present approach is the obvious lack of process. As seen in chapter 2, p. 80, process illustrates the path to spiritual growth and is a critical component of any approach to discipleship. As with intentionality, process received sustained emphasis throughout the literature (Chapter 2 p. 89-91). Thus, an approach to discipleship that lacks intentionality and process and is limited in its scope is a potential contributing factor to the exit of members from the church. While Table 4.44 showed a dizzying array of aftercare activities (31.86% of the overall approach), these are clearly unstructured, and such an approach is tantamount to “leaving them [believers] entirely on

their own ...” It is this kind of haphazard follow-up of believers that eventuates in the falling away of half of those who make professions and join the church (Coleman 41).

The findings across the three groups and across various data sets, further corroborate the point. Participants saw the present approach as nothing short of a total abandonment of new believers in their time of greatest spiritual transition and need. The participants explained that when an individual confesses faith in Jesus Christ, she/he immediately enters a candidate class which is a process within the organizational structure of the church that takes that individual from that confession to baptism and reception into the full membership of the church. However, in the words of participants, after this, “they are left to fend for themselves” (Table 4.39: Q4), “they are left to swim or sink” (Table 4.42: Q3), “they are left to paddle their way in. Only the fittest of the fit survives” (Table 4.46: Q28). When asked about their views on the current state of aftercare, it was this post-natal neglect that led one individual to say “I am very concern about it on different levels.” (Table 4.39: Q4). Many others concluded that “the church needs to do more in this department” (Table 4.42: Q4) and that “this needs to be a major area of focus [because] this is where we are losing people” (Table 4.40: Q4).

It was no surprise when individuals struggled to identify current practices and strategies their church uses that are specifically designed to establish believers in their faith and equip them for service. A notable 62.5% of Alpha Focus Group participants responded with utter silence when this question was asked (p.165 Q.3; see also Table 4.39 p.167). Similarly, 80% of the Delta focus group participants could not identify any clear aftercare strategy at the church they represented. One individual admitted, “I can’t say we have a strategy right now” (p.169: Q3; see also Table 4.40 p.171). Additionally,

between Alpha and Delta Groups, six interviews were conducted, and the findings was the same, 66.66% of Alpha interviews did not point to any strategy” (p.174 Q3; see also Table 4.41 p.176). While Delta interviewees pointed to candidate’s class as the current method and strategy their church use to disciple believers, they were quick to admit that such classes usually end after baptism. One respondent admitted “I see there is a candidate class but sad to say, after the candidate’s class is finished and the person is received, I don’t see anything else being done and I don’t think that is right ...” (p. 178 Q3, see also Table 4.42 p.180).

In my estimation, the foregoing realities amount to a sad show of “ignorance” about the rich history of Wesleyan disciple-making initiatives, of Jesus’ own example and of the example of the Early Church.

#### *Literature Review*

In general, experts in the field of discipleship (Robert E. Coleman, Greg Ogden, Bill Hull, Rick Warren) has stated in no uncertain terms that “Discipleship doesn’t just happen. It only occurs in churches that are intentional” (Byrd). Intentionality in developing and faithfulness in executing are critical components in any disciple-making initiative. From a Wesleyan organizational history standpoint, there is no greater example of this than John Wesley.

The literature showed that Wesleyans have a rich heritage of intentional discipleship. We have seen that “No other person from the post-Reformation history developed discipleship more than John Wesley (1703-1791)” (Hull, 102-103), who placed the highest premium upon seeing the already converted move forward in the faith. Wesley was not so much concerned with efforts leading up to baptism and reception in

the body of Christ, but with efforts in the period after. He was not contented with making converts, he was absorbed by the injunction to make-disciples. As seen in Chapter 2, Wesley organized what he called societies where he would meet with those won for Christ for fellowship and the word. The idea behind these societies seemed to have been a desire to not only keep in contact with those won for Christ, but to replicate what he saw in the early church in Acts. Concerned about the individual care that the newly converted needed, Wesley organized smaller groups call bands. The idea behind this was a desire to provide members with a safe space to live out James 5:16 “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” Wesley left us his greatest example of intentional discipleship when he arranged smaller groups called classes, to ensure each individual got the kind of individual care and attention necessary for their growth and development. Indeed, ours is a rich heritage of intentional discipleship.

#### *Biblical/Theological Foundation*

The biblical and theological foundation of this study supports this major finding that ours is a rich heritage of intentional discipleship. Discipleship in the Old Testament is seen as a legacy of faith, which when so understood, reveals a long and rich history of intentional discipleship stretching from the injunction given to Abraham “teach your children ...” (Gen. 18:19) to the injunction Paul gave to the leaders of the church “to take care of God’s flock...” (Acts 20:28) and beyond. In the pre-Mosaic era Gen.18:19, a term of Abraham’s election was that he passed on a legacy of faith not only to his children but to his entire household. In the Mosaic era Deut. 6:1-9, this injunction became the cooperate responsibility of the Israelite community. Theirs was the responsibility to “disciple” the next generation. The word translated “teach” in Deut.6:7, being the *Piel*

intensive form, is rightly rendered “teach diligently” indicating the great care that must be taken in carrying out this responsibility. In Psalm 78:18 the psalmist spoke not only of the present generation’s responsibility but also their commitment to the injunction to work intentionally and diligently towards establishing the faith of their posterity. These words by Yahweh Himself, “I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exod. 3:6, 15, 16; 4:5; Matt. 22:32; Mk. 12:26; Lk. 20:37; Acts 3:13; 7:32), are a testament to this legacy of intentional discipleship.

Supremely though, the example of Jesus Himself is the clearest picture of this legacy of intentional discipleship. Discipleship is intentionally and diligently working to preserve and develop those won for Christ. Jesus did just that with the Twelve. In Chapter 2 of this research noted that Jesus, in reviewing his care for his disciples in John 17:12 declared, “While I was with them, I kept them in thy name, which thou hast given me; I have guarded them ...”. “Clearly the policy of Jesus at this point teaches us that whatever method of follow-up the church adopts, it must have as its basis a personal guardian concern for those entrusted to their care. To do otherwise is to essentially abandon new believers to the devil” (Coleman 42).

Further support for this major finding comes from the example of the early church. As seen in the literature review (Chapter 2), the book of Acts gives us a birds-eye view into the practice of discipleship in the early church. The literature showed that in the early church, after baptism, the newly converted were organized into manageable small groups (Acts 20:20; 17:5; 18:7; 21:8). In stark contrast to the abandonment of these converts that we witness today, the early church took a personal interest in the growth and development of new believers in acquiescence to the injunctions to “make disciples”

(Matt. 28:19-20) and to “Keep watch over yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son” (Acts 20:28).

Further substantiating this finding is the discussion on “Discipleship and a Theology of Salvation” in Chapter 2. As noted, God takes the initiative to act at every stage in the disciple-making process thereby revealing Himself to be an intentional God.

It appears that the values expressed through these traditional examples are clearly overlooked, forgotten, or lost. The present disciple-making initiatives are pale imitations of the stellar example of Jesus, the Early Church, and John Wesley. Going forward, West Jamaica District would be well served to look back and reclaim the practices of Jesus, the early church, and the Wesleyan roots as it seeks to carry out its mandate and treat with the crisis it now faces.

### **Second Finding: Absence of a Culture of Discipleship**

Discussed in this section are the personal observations from the data gathered and the literature reviewed that resulted in this major finding.

#### *Personal Observation*

Participants did not always agree on the range of issues discussed in this study, however, there was one exception, the importance of discipleship. As can be seen in Tables 4.39: Q2; 4.41 and 4.42: Q2, discipleship is “important,” “very important,” “extremely important,” “very vital,” and “very essential,” according to all participants of this study. Additionally, 60% of Alpha focus group participants, 33.33% of Alpha interviewees, 16% of Delta focus group participant and 33.33% of Delta interviewees said that discipleship should be the primary focus of the church. The rationale provided

spoke volumes about their knowledge and understanding. Some pointed to the example of Jesus and the early church, others pointed to the Great Commission, and still others to the purposes of discipleship which is to bring persons to faith in Christ and to facilitate their growth and development. However, the echelon of importance ascribed to discipleship by churches in the district does not translate into the sort of sustained emphasis one would expect to be placed on it, nor does it translate into the kind of intentional, consistent, and robust practice one would expect to accompany such a view. This begs the question of why? According to the data, West Jamaica District does not have a culture of discipleship. This absence of a discipleship culture manifested itself in several ways.

The first is the inconsistency of the practice of discipleship in the district, which is symptomatic of an absent discipleship culture. At the beginning of 2017, prior to the commencement of this study, the Christian to the Core (C2C) discipleship model was implemented in the district and discipleship training was conducted in all five zones across West Jamaica District by the then District Secretary of Extension and Evangelism. Through this program 120 persons were trained including pastors and departmental leaders. It was expected that all our churches would use the model to intentionally engage the discipling process with their members, especially those newborn babes in the faith, but as I suspected that was “not” happening. I observed, that although Twenty-two of our churches reported gain under the baptism section of the statistical report at the end of 2018, but only 5 of 22 (22.72%) were using the C2C discipleship model to disciple the new believers. The ten years of documents analyzed for this research further confirmed my suspicion of inconsistency of practice. As can be seen in Table 4.43 on average 35.8

pastors report each year. The pastors' service reports examined for the past five years since the implementation of the C2C discipleship program in the district in 2017, showed that only one pastor mentioned using the C2C discipleship program, and that was in the 2018-2019 church year. The documents made no further mention of the program. Additionally, during the course of the research, participants were provided with several opportunities to speak of the programs they use to disciple believers. For example, they were asked what practices and strategies their church currently used that were specifically designed to establish believers in their faith. At this point I thought they would mention the C2C discipleship program, but it was never mentioned. From all indications, the program was implemented and used by some for a while, but then it was back to usual.

Further evidence of this inconsistency of practice came from the responses of the participants themselves. During the Delta focus group discussion, one participant confessed "I can't say we have a strategy right now. I know that we had the same mentorship thing that was mentioned earlier, I think that was happening in a previous administration. I think it was good and helpful when that was introduced, the problem is, it was not sustained. We don't continue with it, it was used for a while but then it was back to usual." Another individual said, "I know that one time there was this concept of cells, I don't think we do it now as a general church, but we need to have that kind of thing; I really think that this is the kind of thing that Wesleyans need to zero in on, in an effort to build people and help them to grow more spiritually in the church." These references are by no means exhaustive, only representative. My point is, where there is a culture of discipleship, there is consistency of practice. Therefore, if there were a culture



of discipleship in West Jamaica District, there would be no inconsistency in its disciple-making initiatives.

Supporting this major finding was another observation – a noticeable disconnect between theory and praxis. The data showed a disconnect between the church’s knowledge of discipleship, and its practice of discipleship which again is symptomatic of an absent discipleship culture. As was explained in Chapter 4, the first two of the five levels at which the church was assessed in the Pre-AΔQ, were designed to assess the church’s knowledge of discipleship. As can be seen at the first two levels in Tables 4.19; 4.26; 4.29; 4.37, and 4.66, the church’s understanding of discipleship was never in question. Even the Sigma group understood discipleship. (See Table 4.55). Further evidence can be found in Tables 4.20; 4.27; 4.30; 4.67; and 4.56.

The first appearance the disconnect that exist between the church’s knowledge and practice of discipleship became evident when I analyzed the Delta responses to the five levels at which the church. As can be seen in Table 6.6, the mean scores of 33.61 for the Disciple-making structures and 30.17 for the Small Groups Levels were significantly lower than the mean scores of 69.7 at the preaching and teaching and 68.09 at the leadership levels. The disconnect between theory and praxis became even more obvious following an analysis of responses to questions 7 through 15 and 16 through 21 of the Pre-Aδq. As can be seen in Table 4.27 the church’s knowledge of discipleship variable expressed as the mean of questions 7 through 15 was 68.96 while the church’s practice of discipleship variable expressed as the mean of questions 16 through 21 was 32.46. The strongest bit of evidence, however, came from the collective analysis of Alpha and Delta responses to questions 7 through 15 and 16 through 21 of the Pre-Aδq. Table 4.37

showed that the church's knowledge of discipleship expressed as the mean of questions 7 through 15 was 71.88, while its practice of discipleship expressed as the mean of questions 16 through 21 was 43.04. Of note also are the findings in Table 4.67 which represents a comparative analysis of the responses of all three groups. The comparison Table 4.67 showed a consensus among all three groups—Alpha, Delta and Sigma—pertaining to the church's knowledge of discipleship. The data showed a high positive mean scores of 84.3 Alpha, 68.9 Delta, and 53.33 Sigma. However, in the practice of discipleship the Alpha mean score was a positive, 65.8, but the mean scores of 32.5 for the Delta group and 17 for the Sigma group for this category were significantly low. The historical component that the Sigma group added to the analysis may indicate that the church has been performing poorly in its practice of discipleship for quite some time. The point is that where there is a culture of discipleship there will be no disconnect between theory and praxis since culture speaks of a way of life. Sadly, the evidence here does not suggest discipleship is a way of life for West Jamaica District.

The absence of a formal discipleship program in the district was also indicative of an absent discipleship culture. Table 4.44 not only showed that discipleship programs accounted for a dismal 6.13% of the total approach to discipleship in the district, but it also showed that churches have been operating without a formal discipleship program for the past ten years. This was identified as a major contributing factor to the exit of members from the church. Participants from all three groups—Alpha, Delta, and Sigma—across data sets, identified the absence of a discipleship program as a missing aspect of the churches ministry that is contributing to the exit of members from the church. As can be seen in Table 4.46, 55% of the respondents to questions 28 and 57.%

of the respondents to question 32 felt that the absence of programs “to help growth and development” and that the absence of a “clear and structured path to follow-up after baptism and acceptance in the church as members” is contributing to the exit of members from the church. Fifty percent of the focus group participants as and the interviewees shared a similar view, as can be seen in Tables 4.48: Q5; 4.49: Q5 and 4.50: Q5. Table 4.58 further showed that 68.75% of former members, Sigma’s, also identified aftercare programs and activities as a contributing factor to members exit, and 87.5% felt that if the church had aftercare programs and activities when they attended, then it would have contributed to them staying in the church. (See Table 4.61.) Additionally, the calls for a “structured discipleship program that is common to the denomination and not just individual church” Table 4.63 as well as the many suggested discipleship programs that could be implemented going forward (Tables 4.63; 4.64 and 4.65), further substantiate this observation. One of the primary ways in which culture is recognizable in any society or organization is through the programs and activities that are woven into the very fabric of that society or organization, that is habitually or routinely used to communicate, perpetuate, and preserve that culture. Within the context of this discussion, West Jamaica District has no such discipleship program or structured activities, let alone one that is woven into its organizational structure that would remotely suggest a culture of discipleship. The evidence here, just does not support this.

The inconsistent disciple-making initiatives, the obvious disconnect between what the church knows about discipleship and its practice of discipleship, as well as the absence of a formal discipleship program are all symptomatic of a deeper issue – the absence of a culture of discipleship in our local churches and in the district.

*Literature Review*

There are several authors who looked at the whole issue of a discipleship culture and its relative importance to the practice of discipleship. Notable among these are Mike Breen and Steve Murrell. Although this was not a topic directly addressed in Chapter 2, the literature did show general sense of dissatisfaction with the church's practice of discipleship, but not so much with the church's understanding of discipleship. This is symptomatic of an absent discipleship culture. Experts in the field suggest that the way the church has proceeded has not produced the quality or the quantity of disciples it could. Michael Green stated, "The aftercare side of evangelism is greatly neglected these days, and this is shameful" (37). Coleman lamented the haphazard way in which the church today does follow-up of new believers (41). And Logan and Osborne felt that we have often become so focused on the "sending imperative" (Logan 96), "on reaching people, that we've forgotten the importance of keeping people" (Osborne 13). The post-natal neglect that Green spoke of here, the haphazard follow-up Coleman lamented, and the wrong focus hinted at by Logan and Osborne, reflects the state of discipleship in our time, and is in my estimation indicative of an absent discipleship culture.

*Biblical/Theological Foundation*

Closer examination of Genesis 18:19 revealed God not only signaled His intention to create a culture of intentional discipleship, but by making it a command, laid the foundation for such a culture. It was a command given to both the individual (Gen.18:19) and the community (Deut. 6:6-10). That God intended to create a culture of intentional discipleship is also seen in the frequency and the consistency with which He expected His people to engage the discipling process (Deut. 6:6-10). Discipleship was to

be a way of life for the Israelites. They were commanded to teach God's ways diligently to their children. They were to "talk of them when they sit in their house, and when they walk by the way, when they lie down, and when they rise" they were to bind them for a sign upon their hand, they shall be as frontlets between their eyes, they were to write them on the doorposts of their house and on their gates" (Deut. 6:6-10). By making it mandatory for the entire community, by incorporating it into the things people do routinely daily, and by strategically positioning what was to be taught to serve as reminders, God laid the foundation for consistent practice and a culture of discipleship. Chapter 2 showed that this was not a practice that was to be confined to the old age (Isaiah 59:21). "God has testified by the prophet Isaiah that it was to be observed under the New Testament dispensation" (Anderson 232). A similar injunction was given to the church – the Great Commission (Matt. 28.19-20), which resulted in the robust practice we saw in the early church of Acts.

Again, in my estimation, the values expressed through these traditional examples are clearly overlooked today, especially in West Jamaica District.

### **Third Finding: Church Environment Major Deciding Factor Whether Members Stay or Leave**

As noted in the opening Chapter of this study, the causes for apostasy are as numerous as the apostates. The opposite is also true, there are as many reasons for persons staying in the church as there are persons who stayed. Given the range of possibilities, the question of why would seem pointless. Nevertheless, the nature of the study demanded such an inquiry. Against this background, no one would be overly optimistic about finding any single factor which through its persistence commands

attention, but this study did precisely that. The church environment and its influence on members' decision to stay in the church or to leave frequented the data.

### *Personal Observation*

The church environment is a major deciding factor in whether members stay or leave. Substantiating this major finding was the observation that the one-to-one relationships people form within the church contributes to persons decision to stay. While responses to question 9 in Tables 4.41 and 4.42 show excerpts of these relationships via phrases, hearing a couple of those stories is necessary at this point. One person said,

Rev. White got my contact information, contacted me, and involved me in the junior church ...and even when I was going through a certain difficult time she *never* leave me alone. Every night she knew that I was alone, and it reaches 8:30, she calls and instead of me drinking wine to stabilize myself, she would call me and we would talk and she would always pray for me, and say God loves you. Our talks always end with her reassuring me that God loves me and as I said I was going through a difficult point in my life, she was always there to help to keep me from leaving the church and going into depression. We became very very very good friends because of that, and I vowed to her that I would continue in the Sunday school and I have been doing that.

It was not just pastors who built relationships. Several persons spoke of some of the mothers and fathers in Zion who took a personal interest in their growth and development. These persons were there for them through some of the most difficult times in their lives. One individual said,

Sister Brown, she was the one who help me to grow. I had backslidden and she was the one who help me to come back. I remember when I had my son, and they planned a meeting, sister Brown was the only one that came, but she is always giving me that love and support. Sister Gray gave me so much love and support when I came back in the church, that she became one of my best friends in the church along with sister Brown. I used to go by sister Gray after fasting, and I would just spend the evening with her because she gave me that love and support as an elder in the church. And I could talk to her about anything. I could talk to these two ladies about anything. The love that I got from Sister Brown, I didn't get this love at home. And so, I was so drawn to her.

Another individual said, "When I just came in the church, Brother Blue was a very good friend of mine, and I admired him so much that I actually wanted to pattern my life after his own ...". With fondness, a deep sense of gratitude and even indebtedness individuals spoke at length, not only about the role that their pastor, a member, or a family member played in their growth and development as a Christian but also about the lasting impact such individuals had on their lives. The ministry of these key persons was holistic, exuded love and care through visits, and spoke words of advice, encouragement, and even reprimand when necessary. It was these relationships, these bonds that people form with individuals in the church that kept them from leaving the church.

I also observed that it was not just the individual relationships, but it was the church community as a whole. It was the atmosphere and the church environment. The initial appearance of the church environment as a contributing factor to the retention of members seemed to be insignificant, as suggested by the responses to question 30 of the

Pre-AΔQ (Table 4.38). There, church environment accounted for a mere 10% of what respondents felt contributed most to the retention of membership. The strength of the statements made by these few individuals, however, were striking and noteworthy. For them, it was the “family structured setting” of their church, where “each is a family member and is loved and cared for.” It was the “Supportive friendly atmosphere purposely created by members,” that contributed most to the retention of membership. Later, the percentage of pastors (Alphas) from the focus group discussions who spoke of relationships commanded attention. Table 4.39 showed 100% of pastors felt that it was the “bonds,” “the sense of belonging,” and “the social dimension” of the church’s ministry that contributes most to the retention of membership. The personal interviews further substantiated the finding. Table 4.41 and 4.42 also showed that for interviewees “fellowship and relationships,” “showing interest in people,” “feelings of inclusion,” and the “camaraderie” among brethren is what contributes most to the retention of membership. One interviewee felt and spoke strongly about this collective responsibility saying, “all of us need to understand that it is not just the pastor that has the responsibility to keep the flock, but the other members in the church need to know that we need to keep the flock ... So, the membership needs to know also that we have a responsibility to go out and win souls and nurture them, and so members need to be trained in that way”.

The significantly high percentage of 87.5% for Alpha and 83.33% of the Delta Focus Group respondents and the significantly high mean ratings of 9.13 and 9.16 that both groups gave the church for the care and concern it showed for their growth and development when they became a part of the church were noticeable. The church was highly rated because of the actions of individuals in the body. The data showed that



church was rated highly because “there was a relationship that was really family like, and really was supportive, and that really helped” and because “there was this family kind of atmosphere where you could talk to them ... having those relationships helped me to be active in the church even to this day.” (See Table 4.39 and 4.40: Q8.) Similarly, on a scale of 1-10, with an Alpha mean of 9.66 and a Delta mean of 9, interviewees rated the church highly for the care and concern it showed to them. According to participants, the church was so rated because “Our church then had great fellowship. Good relationship[s] with each other, and converts were cared for by senior members. ...when I came to the church I am presently, I felt welcome, I felt as if I had use, I could do something to contribute” (see Table 4.41 and 4.42: Q8). Whether it shines through the actions of a single individual within the church community or through the whole church community, the church atmosphere and the church environment are a major deciding factor in whether members stay or leave.

Supporting this major finding, also, was the observation that the negative attitudes and behavior of members is a major contributing factor in why members leave the church. As represented in Table 4.46 questionnaire results showed subjects used phrases such as “seldom warm,” “not welcoming,” “lack of love,” “the lack of acceptance,” “negative behavior,” and “stumbling block,” to describe the actions and attitudes of members in the church towards new believers, which eventually contributes to their exit. Members who left the church, Sigmas added their voice. Fifty percent used words such as “condemn,” “gossip,” and “criticize” to describe the negative actions and attitudes of members that contributed to their leaving. Some felt that there was “too much criticizing. No encouragement.” One “didn’t feel welcome after [her] pregnancy.” Others felt there

was “too much favoritism.” (See Table 4.58 and 4.59) The results from the pastors and present members, Alpha and Delta, focus groups’ discussions substantiated this observation. As shown in Table 4.47, 20% of pastors felt “there is a low tolerance level” towards new believers and were “appalled” by the reaction of members towards persons the church was trying to win for Christ. Table 4.48 showed 100% of present members, Deltas, expressed a similar view that, currently, the negative attitudes and behaviors of members are contributing to the exit of members. One individual felt, “We need to be kinder, in the sense of not being harsh ...” Another said, “We must connect before we correct ... at times we can act like the Pharisees, and it is so sad.” The results from the personal interviews corroborates this observation and by extension the major finding. Table 4.49 showed about 33.33% of Alpha interviewees highlighting the absence of gentleness, and love and care on the part of senior members for new believers as a contributing factor to the exit of these young ones. According to one interviewee, “they rough them; one little mistake ...”. Table 4.50 showed all Delta interviewees (100%) felt the negative behaviors and attitudes of members is currently contributing to the exit of members from the church. One individual said, “some of the more mature Christians are not so patient with them, as soon as they slip, we crucify them.” Another, confirming what former members said, spoke about criticism, “Criticism not to improve but destructive criticism and these are the things that push people away,” he said. Former members, Sigmas, who were interviewed also weighed in on this matter. One individual said, “I keep saying they weren’t understanding, I don’t know if it was bias, but that could be it, because nobody listened to me ... No counseling, no nothing, they just threw

me out.” This confirms what one focus group participant said earlier “at times we can act like the Pharisees, and it is so sad.”

The foregoing section seems to have a contradiction, but the contradiction is more apparent than real. The mean scores of 9.13 for the Alpha group and 9.16 for the Delta group were significantly high and suggested a positive church environment. Also, 87.5% of the Alpha focus group and 83.33% of the Delta focus group respondents spoke highly about the church environment, and of the care and concern the church showed for their growth and development when they came in. However, these same participants also spoke very strongly against the church environment lamenting the negative behavior and attitudes of members. As can be seen in the demographic data (Figure 4.2 above), 93% of the Alpha and Delta participants are persons who have been affiliated with the district for ten 10 years or more. Figure 4.2 further showed that on average these individuals have been affiliated with the church for 30.4 years. Many of the participants were looking back, at least 25 years, and so the high praises they sang for the environment in which they came and the care they received must be understood within this context. A lot has changed over the past 25-30 years and not for the better. Comparing the past with the present, one focus group participant said, “I don’t know what would have happened if I was coming-in in most recent years. But there *was* [emphasis mine] the whole order of the church membership and this was like right through, from children up to the older people, there was a relationship that was really family like, and really was supportive, and that really helped.” (See Table 4.40)

The church environment is a major contributing factor in the retention or exit of members from the church.

*Literature Review*

That the district had a problem prior to the start of this project was evident, and it became even more pronounced during the study. Churches were ineffective in their efforts to disciple new believers as evidenced by the findings of a 2016 assessment discussed in Chapter 1. However, the findings showed that while churches in the district were commonly ineffective, they were not completely ineffective. For example some individuals who took a vested interest in the growth and development of new believers, an approach corroborated by the literature. Chapter 2 noted that one-on-one approach to discipleship was popular among the various approaches to discipleship. This validates the observation above that the bonds people form with individuals in the church contributes significantly to the retention of membership. Describing this one-on-one approach, C. Herman Reece stated “It is meeting another, individually – eyeball to eyeball – face to face. It involves sharing your whole life and ministry with him, so he, by the grace of God, will progress from spiritual immaturity in Christ to spiritual maturity in Christ.” Individuals referred to this kind relationship as they spoke about the impact key persons had on their growth and development as Christians. Formally or informally, it was this kind of ministry that the church was engaged in that has resulted in the retention of many in the body of Christ.

The literature clearly attests to the important role that the church community plays in the retention of membership. Experts in the field (Greg Ogden, Larry Osborne, Bill Hull, Hunter) spoke of the centrality of community. They made clear that an environment that is conducive to the growth and development of members is a critical component in any disciple-making initiative. Chapter 2 demonstrated that behind the effectiveness and

success of Wesley's disciple-making initiatives was his conviction that "Christianity is not a solitary religion, but a social religion"; it is not an individual game like golf or weightlifting but a team game like football or basketball" (Hunter III, 48). Wesley knew nothing of an isolated convert. His methods of discipling revolved around community, especially the community of approximately twelve known as the class meeting. Ogden stated, "the manner in which the Lord works is incarnational: life rubs up against life. We pass on Christlikeness through intimate modeling." (21). He further stated, "three ingredients necessary to produce maturity in Christ. Relational Vulnerability ... the centrality of truth ... and mutual accountability ..." (21). In our discussion above (chapter 2, p. 89), Hull illustrated in a simple way the elements we need for spiritual transformation (*Complete* 188). "The center of the triangle represents community... [Which] describes the relationships we form to help us live out our beliefs" (Hull *Complete* 189). The communal element tells us that "God never intended us to follow Christ and engage in the disciplines of life alone" (Hull *Complete* 189). Using the simple illustration of a baseball diamond to capture the idea that spiritual progress is a journey, Warren sees spiritual growth as a process that occurs over time in the context of community (124).

#### *Biblical/Theological Foundation*

Individuals and whole organizations, through their actions and attitude, consciously or unconsciously, intentionally, or unintentionally, sometimes reflect the attitude of Cain – "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen.4:19). This attitude manifested itself during the study, in the indifference some expressed concerning those who are leaving the church. The phrase "we are our brother's keeper" is a sharp rebuke and reminds the

“Cains” of our day, of both the individual and collective interest that should be taken in the wellbeing of others, especially in the body of Christ. There is no clearer rebuke of such an attitude than that which our Lord Himself gave through the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15. 4-7).

It was no surprise that the survey of the biblical text in Chapter 2 showed that the God who exists in community and who exists in relationships of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, intended the community of faith to play an integral role in the spiritual growth of individuals, whether through the instrumentality of a single individual or the community as a whole. This is why “the responsibility of passing on faith was firmly set in the context of the family and parents were not permitted to abdicate this responsibility in favor of a specialist teacher of religion” (Tidball 41). Abraham, as a condition of his election, was expected to be intimately involved in the spiritual growth and development of his household (Gen. 18:19). But it was YHWH Himself however, who epitomized the interest, concern, and care that is emblematic of the one-to-one approach. In the discussion on “Discipleship and A Theology of the Good Shepherd” in Chapter 2, the most beautiful depiction of YHWH as the model shepherd was found in Psalm 23, wherein loyalty and devotion to an individual sheep is portrayed.

The injunction given to an individual (Gen.18:19) was later extended to the community (Deut. 6:1-9). The people of Israel “were not to concern themselves only with their own attitudes toward the Lord [v.6]. They were to concern themselves with impressing these attitudes on their children as well” (Gaebelein 3:66). In the New Testament, it is the nurturing community of the early church as seen in the book of Acts that further corroborates this major finding. Chapter 2 pointed out that converts grew in

the context of community. Converts were organized into manageable small groups and admitted into Christian communities which met from house to house (Acts 20:20). A nurturing community is vital to the retention of membership.

The opposite is also true, an environment that is not conducive to growth and development and a community that is not nurturing will significantly impact membership retention as can be seen in Ezekiel 34:17-22. Here, God took to task the sheep that “feed on the good pasture, but tread down with their feet the rest of the pasture, who drink of clear water, but foul the rest with their feet, those that push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with their horns, till they have scattered them abroad.” During the research, this negative attitude and behavior of sheep towards sheep currently contributes to the exit of members.

### **Ministry Implications of the Findings**

The guiding belief that insight could be gained in how to best disciple new members to reverse the tendency of their leaving the church soon after joining drove this study. The controlling conviction was that insights could be gained into the best programs and strategies the church should employ that would influence a growing relationship between the new believers and their God, and between them and those who make up the body of Christ in its local expression. This study provides insight into a range of contributing factors within and without the church that have fostered growth and development or have been hazardous to the fragile faith of new members and may have encouraged or discouraged their ongoing engagement with the church. Awareness of these factors should provoke intentional and strategic responses on the part of the church

to create the most conducive atmosphere for the growth and development of these converts, and thereby significantly reduce the present turn-over rates.

In the past, West Jamaica District has tended to focus on passive or on imported approaches that were not based on a critical analysis for contextual relevance. These approaches were foreign to West Jamaica District's heritage and the district used a "copy and paste" approach, hoping that the imported approach would "address the crisis" and "plug the leak." The nature of this study was highly contextual, and the thickness of the data that was gathered may provide well needed guidance to the organization in terms of overall approach to discipleship. The guidance from this study should help with the development and implementation of programs and strategies for maxim effectiveness in the district's disciple-making initiatives and for treating the problem of declining membership.

This study expands the corpus of knowledge and resource available in the study of discipleship making. I admit, novel or revolutionary may not describe the findings as it pertains to disciple-making initiatives or practice, however, the study do present an additional conceptual framework for understanding discipleship in the Old and New Testament. That is, discipleship as a legacy of faith, that was to be passed from one generation to the next. The results of the study also offer useful information for church growth seminars in teaching and training on disciple-making and in efforts to foster a culture of discipleship in the church. The findings provide the church with useful data pertaining to discipleship culture and its significance to the practice of discipleship. It also provides insights into how to create a discipleship culture that will lead to consistent and robust practices necessary for organizational effectiveness in making disciples.



In response to the church's failure to produce the quality and quantity of disciples to accomplish what Jesus commands in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20), this study provides useful data to the church as an organization by identifying the kind of practices necessary to be effective in fulfilling the mandate that Jesus gave to the church.

Additionally, the aftercare side of evangelism is greatly neglected, and this raises fresh concerns about how to bring people to Christ and lead them to continued attendance, growth, development, and service within the body of Christ. The study contributes to the ongoing work of the church. For churches seeking to increase their effectiveness in keeping those won for Christ, this study reveals and reinforces the need for intentionality if we are to be successful in leading these new converts into an ever increasing and deepening relationship with Jesus Christ and with the life-supporting community of the church.

The results of this study also provide insight into the critical role of the church community in disciple-making initiatives. While most studies of this nature approach the subject from the perspective of the church pastors and members, few do so from the perspective of both the church and former members who have left the church. The value of having a nurturing community that is warm and welcoming, inclusive, and caring and loving emerged from the context that included former members of the church.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The context was limited. The study was conducted in the Western Jamaica District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church. Findings may have been different if the study had been conducted in the Northern or Eastern Districts of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in Jamaica, or in other districts in the Caribbean region. Closely related to the contextual

limitation was the denominational limitation. The study was conducted among Wesleyan Churches, it remains to be seen if the findings would be the same across denominational barriers.

Another limitation was the sample size. The original goal was to have 150 participants, but in the end there were only one hundred. The difficulty in locating former members significantly impacted the original sample size. Most churches were unable to provide any contact information for these individuals. Many former members had migrated to other countries or to other parishes in Jamaica. Others were not interested in participating in the study. Only twenty of the desired thirty were a part of this study.

Similarly, a little over fifty percent of the pastors invited participated in the study. Many did not return the questionnaires, and when contacted, others said they were too busy to participate in interviews or focus groups discussions.

Additionally, I intended to interview at least three former members. However, only one person submitted for the interview. Former members were more willing to provide written answers, as opposed to having a face-to-face conversation, evidenced by the number of former members who filled out and returned the questionnaires. Changing the format of the interviews for this group may have yielded greater participation.

### **Unexpected Observations**

The obvious uncertainty among pastors and members about the primary command in the Great Commission (Matt.28:19-20) was an unexpected observation. Forty percent of the Alpha focus group, 66.66% of Delta focus group and 66.66% of Delta interviewees understood the primary command to be “go”, and they insisted that evangelism should be the primary focus of the church. Sixty percent of Alpha focus group, 33.33% of the Alpha

interviewees, and 16.66% of Delta focus group understood it to be “make-disciples”, and they insisted that the primary focus of the church should be discipleship. This uncertainty led some to propose a synthesis with 66.66% of Alpha interviewees, 16.66 of Delta focus group, and 33.33% of Delta interviewees agreeing that both evangelism and discipleship should be the primary focus of the church. This uncertainty surrounding the Lord’s command might be largely responsible for the lack of emphasis and focus on disciple-making, and the post-natal neglect so prevalent across the West Jamaica District.

The kind of indifference some pastors expressed towards those leaving the church and the rationale provided for the indifference was also surprising. Armed with the parable of the four soils as justification (Matt.13:1-8), 60% of Alpha focus group participants and 33.33% of Alpha interviewees expressed a kind of indifference towards those who are leaving the church. “People come, and people go. You see it even in Jesus’ ministry, ...you are going to gain, and you are going to lose. The point is not what happen to those you lose, but what you do with those that you retain” they said. This, however, was not what Jesus intend to teach from the parable. Such an interpretation, understanding and use of the biblical text betrays sound hermeneutical and exegetical principles and contradicts the clear teaching of scripture elsewhere. Such indifference, such lack of concern stands in stark contrast to David’s attitude toward his father’s sheep (1 Sam.17:34-35); to God’s attitude towards his flock (Ezek.34.11-16); and to that of Jesus in the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4-7). This kind of indifference reflects the attitude and behavior of the hired hand (John 10:12-14) and not that of the good shepherd. It was this same indifference and lack of concern for the sheep that received sharp rebuke (Ezek. 34:1-6) with God’s promise to set up His shepherd “David” over his

flock (Ezek. 34:23-24). This too may further explain the present state of aftercare in the district.

The observation that relationships, not programs and activities contribute most to people staying in the church was also unexpected. Over the years, there has been a lot of clamor for more programs and activities in churches that will foster growth and development. I agree only to the extent that these programs and activities help people form more meaningful relationships and stronger bonds in and with the body of Christ which are a more effective approach to facilitating growth. In this way, programs and activities become a means to an end and not ends in themselves.

Going forward then, programs and activities must be intentionally designed and strategically implemented to create, nurture, and sustain relationships which will in turn facilitate growth and development. Also, any approach to discipleship in the district must be relational based, where life rubs off on life and iron sharpens iron as opposed to curriculum-based approaches.

### **Recommendations**

One noticeable observation was the limited resources in the field of discipleship pertaining to the “why” or purpose of discipleship. No one would deny the central importance of question “why”. Concerns about the aftercare side of evangelism and renewed interest in how to lead others to Christ and establish them in the faith are mounting. It is yet to be seen how a shift in focus, from “how” to “why,” and a shift of emphasis from method to purpose will impact the practice of discipleship as a whole. Perhaps, this gap or lack of emphasis in the literature and in the understanding and practice of discipleship has contributed to the present state of affairs. Purpose is the

greatest motivator. I am therefore convinced that if we are going to see the kind of intentionality, consistency, and robust practice of discipleship necessary for accomplishing what Jesus commands in the Great Commission (Matt.28:19-20) then a new or renewed focus on the “why,” or the purpose/s of discipleship is critical.

Additionally, the limited material that exists about cultivating discipleship culture needs to be addressed because many of the problems pertaining to the practice of discipleship stem from and can be traced back to this issue. A lot more needs to be said about the importance of having a discipleship culture and how to create such a culture. This kind of focus will greatly impact the practice of discipleship in our time.

Also, greater emphasis needs to be placed on the role of the community of faith in discipleship initiatives. If the church is to be effective in its disciple-making efforts, creating an atmosphere conducive to growth and development is of utmost importance. To provide the individual care that is necessary for the growth and development of each believer, the church must mobilize the community of faith. It must create small groups that prioritize and emphasize relationships as opposed to programs and activities, and it must strategize and establish a game plan for creating, sustaining, deepening, and strengthening these bonds. In sum, a communal approach must be emphasized.

Further study needs to be done into the extent to which marital status contributes to the retention or exit of members from the church. The fact that eighty-five percent of the total number of former members were single, strongly suggests that attention needs to be paid to this issue. Such a study should include recommendations for significantly reducing the turn-over rate among this group.

### Postscript

The postscript looks at the study both in retrospect and prospect. Mike Barres in his article “Burden, Vision, and Passion” described burden as “something that is deep down inside of us, something we think about, worry about and are deeply concerned about, something God has put there,” and passion as “... something we are really excited about doing for God.” For as long as I can remember, I have had a passion for theology. Like the apostle, I have always been fascinated and intrigued by the “breadth, and the length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ” (Eph.3:18) and “the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.” Though “unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom.11:33), “I want to know Him ...” (Phil.3:10). In retrospect, it is this passion that is responsible for the joy and the fulfillment I find in pastoral ministry and as a theology lecturer. Five years ago, however, God placed a burden on my heart – the aftercare of those won for Christ. It is this burden that resulted in the undertaking of this project.

I remember in my first dissertation training session, we were asked to give one word that described how we were feeling, and I recall saying nervous. It was nervousness born out of a deep unsettling feeling of inadequacy, the fear of not having the intellectual acumen, the knowledge, skill, and temperament, which in my mind, were prerequisite for the rigors of doctoral studies. In retrospect, the dissertation training sessions which followed, conducted by Dr. Verna Lowe or “the original Dr. Lowe” according to Dr. Milton Lowe, did nothing to quiet my fears. Rather, they only served to exacerbate the issue, lending credence to how I felt. After the first session, I was convinced that I was in over my head. However, I recall the calm and reassuring words of Dr. Marmon, we are

“living on the edge of our own incompetence,” and those of my dissertation coach Dr. Barbara Dobson, “you are going to finish, and finish well.” Four years later, here I stand on the threshold of graduation. God has once again demonstrated his faithfulness, adding fresh significance and meaning to His words “I can do all things through Christ ...”.

Like Johnson “I wish I could say that the project was a natural outpouring of the knowledge and insight I gained in the research, but it was more in line with mining for ore, one stone at a time and then still having to refine the ore to something of use” (170). The result is a completed dissertation that probably does not stand in any measure to exceptional scholarship, but that was never the goal. Instead, the goal was to immerse myself in an issue, to better understand its complexity, so as to discern how best to address it. The completion of this study is a major endeavor and accomplishment for me. I do feel a great sense of pride and accomplishment in the result, but of far greater value for me, was the journey, the process and the growth and development that resulted from it. I am excited about what I am becoming because of this ongoing process. I am a more confident and competent individual, wiser, more knowledgeable, and a better writer. Indeed, for the process I feel grateful and enriched.

What shall I say then in prospect? Looking ahead, the completion of this project though a monumental achievement, is only the first necessary step in two respects: continued personal development and future ministry engagement. In regard to personal development, I intend to continue researching and writing, both for the purpose of personal development which includes gaining greater knowledge and improving my writing skills). I have a deep conviction that I have more to contribute. The first in such

endeavors will be the publishing of aspects of this project under the title *Discipleship: Purpose, Culture and Context*.

In regard to future ministry engagement, this project was the first necessary step. Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey in his book *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome it and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization*, says, “No leader needs convincing that improvement and change is at the top of the agenda” (18), and Woodward and White say, “The only constant in starting and sustaining missional-incarnational communities is change.” The Western District of the Wesleyan Holiness church in Jamaica at present, is at critical juncture in its development. Although things are grimmer than originally thought, there is hope. A general awareness and acknowledgment that there is a problem and change is needed brings hope to the situation. Kegan and Lahey further explains however that “no leader needs a book of sympathy for how hard it is to bring change about—whether in oneself or organizations” (18). In leading this change in the district, I anticipate two major challenges. The first relates to the immune system of the organization, and the second relates to the transition process. As it pertains to the organization’s immune system, I am fully aware that changing an eighty-year-old culture is no easy feat, since “Collectivities ... whole organizations—also unknowingly protect themselves from making the very changes they most desire” (Kegan and Lahey 101). Without this kind of fundamental change in culture, however, “there is little hope of enduring improvement in organizational performance” (Cameron and Quinn 12) and meeting the challenges and opportunities of this context. I intend therefore to continue the conversation started in the project and to secure a way to



share my findings with the district. My intention is to work with both individual churches and the district in charting a way forward in light of the findings of this project.

This project has increased my burden and compassion for the newborn babes in Christ and for the need to work intentionally and diligently to facilitate and foster their growth and development. I am not only grateful for the journey and process that helped to cultivate this in me, but I embrace the challenges of this change initiative, in the long journey ahead.

## APPENDIX A

### Title: Pre-intervention Alpha, and Delta Questionnaire (Pre-AAQ)

**Instruction:** This questionnaire is designed to help you evaluate your church's life and function to see how well it is fulfilling its primary calling as a group of believers to make disciples. Try to answer each statement as accurately as you can. Don't overrate your church or underrate it. In areas where you are not sure, do what you can to find out to make this measure more accurate.

#### PART I: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

1. What is your present church membership status? Member \_\_\_ Former Member \_\_\_
2. How many years have you been affiliated with the Wesleyan Church, Western Jamaica District? \_\_\_\_\_
3. To what age group do you belong? 20-30 \_\_\_ 31-50 \_\_\_ 51-70 \_\_\_ 71 and above \_\_\_\_\_
4. Your Gender: Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
5. Marital Status: Single \_\_\_ Married \_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_ Widow \_\_\_ Widower \_\_\_
6. What positions, if any, do you currently hold on the district level?  
 Superintendent/Asst. \_\_\_ Pastor \_\_\_ Zone Coordinator \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_ None \_\_\_

**PART II:** Please answer the following statements by rating them according to your personal understanding and perception.

#### PREACING AND TEACHING LEVEL

7. How clearly do the members of your church understand what being a 'disciple' means?  
 \_\_\_ [5] Very Clear understanding  
 \_\_\_ [4] Clear understanding  
 \_\_\_ [3] Partial understanding  
 \_\_\_ [2] Little understanding  
 \_\_\_ [1] No understanding
8. How clearly do the members of your church understand the *meaning*, the *call*, and the *cost* of discipleship?  
 \_\_\_ [5] Very Clear understanding  
 \_\_\_ [4] Clear understanding  
 \_\_\_ [3] Partial understanding  
 \_\_\_ [2] Little understanding  
 \_\_\_ [1] No understanding
9. How clearly do the members of your church know and understand in practical terms the 5 principles essential for growing as disciples – **a.** the Holy Spirit's ministry in their lives, **b.** regular feeding on the Word, **c.** personal prayer and worship, **d.** fellowship with other believers, **e.** being active in witness, service and ministry?  
 \_\_\_ [5] Very Clear understanding  
 \_\_\_ [4] Clear understanding  
 \_\_\_ [3] Partially understands  
 \_\_\_ [2] Little to no understanding  
 \_\_\_ [1] No understanding
10. How clearly do the members of your church know and understand in practical terms what it means to live under Christ's Lordship in personal life, family life and in daily work?  
 \_\_\_ [5] Very clear understanding  
 \_\_\_ [4] Clear understanding  
 \_\_\_ [3] Partial understanding  
 \_\_\_ [2] Little understanding  
 \_\_\_ [1] No understanding
11. How often are these discipleship themes (i.e. meaning, call, and cost of discipleship) preached and touched on as an emphasis from the pulpit?  
 \_\_\_ [5] Very regularly  
 \_\_\_ [4] Regularly  
 \_\_\_ [3] Rarely  
 \_\_\_ [2] Very rarely

[1] Not at All

#### LEADERSHIP LEVEL

12. How clearly is 'disciple-making' emphasized in your church's purpose statement?
- [5] is our core purpose  
 [4] is a part of our purpose  
 [3] is not really stated  
 [2] Not stated at All  
 [1] I am not familiar with the church's purpose statement
13. Leaders are modeling discipleship by their own example and commitment to the disciple-making process.
- [4] Strongly Agree  
 [3] Agree  
 [2] Disagree  
 [1] Strongly Disagree
14. How clearly is the disciple-making vision and strategy of your church communicated and emphasized to the congregation verbally (eg. From the pulpit)?
- [5] Constantly  
 [4] Occasionally  
 [3] Rarely  
 [2] Very rarely  
 [1] Not at All
15. The disciple-making vision and strategy of your church are communicated and emphasized in written form (e.g. in the bulletin).
- [5] Strongly Agree  
 [4] Agree  
 [3] Disagree  
 [2] Strongly Disagree  
 [1] I am not aware

#### DISCIPLE-MAKING STRUCTURES

16. The church shows great concern for my growth and development after my baptism and reception into the full membership of the church.
- [5] Strongly Agree  
 [4] Agree  
 [3] Agree to some extent  
 [2] disagree  
 [1] Strongly disagree
17. Our church has a clear system of follow-up and nurture designed to establish believers in the faith.
- [5] Strongly agree  
 [4] Agree  
 [3] Disagree  
 [2] Strongly Disagree  
 [1] I am not aware
18. To what extent does your church have training groups operating that equip people in the areas of personal witness and evangelism?
- [5] regularly happens  
 [4] sometimes happens  
 [3] rarely happens  
 [2] Not happening  
 [1] I am not aware
19. Our church has discipleship training groups operating that train and equip people in how to nurture new Christians, and how to disciple and mentor others.
- [5] regularly happening  
 [4] sometimes happens  
 [3] rarely happens  
 [2] Not happening at All  
 [1] I am not aware

**SMALL GROUP LEVEL**

20. Our church, through its small group structure is clearly training believers in how to become disciples themselves, and then showing them how to make disciples of others.
- [5] Strongly Agree
  - [4] Agree
  - [3] Disagree
  - [2] Strongly Disagree
  - [1] I am not Aware
21. Of the total number of small group meetings in our church, the following have a clear discipleship training focus and follow a specific disciple-making strategy:
- [5] over 75%
  - [4] 25-50%
  - [3] less than 25%
  - [2] 0%
  - [1] I don't know

**PERSONAL LEVEL (Practice of Spiritual Disciplines)**

22. How would you describe your attendance to divine worship services at your church?
- [5] Very Regular
  - [4] Regular
  - [3] Occasional
  - [2] Rare
  - [1] Very rare
23. How often do you participate in communion services at your church?
- [5] All the time
  - [4] Some of the time
  - [3] Rarely
  - [2] Very Rarely
  - [1] Not at All
24. How often do you attend bible study at your church?
- [5] Very Regularly
  - [4] Regularly
  - [3] Occasionally
  - [2] Rarely
  - [1] Not at all
25. How would you describe your attendance to prayer meetings and fasting services?
- [5] Very Regular
  - [4] Regular
  - [3] Occasional
  - [2] Rare
  - [1] Not at all
26. How would you describe your devotional life (e.g. personal reading, studying, and meditating of the Word; personal prayer time etc.)?
- [5] Almost Daily
  - [4] Frequently
  - [3] Sometimes
  - [2] Rarely
  - [1] Never

**PART III: OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS:** Please complete the following questions

27. How important do you think discipleship is to the church/organization? Explain.

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28. In your opinion, what *missing* aspect of the church's ministry may be contributing to people leaving the church?

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29. In your opinion, what *current* aspect of the church's ministry may be contributing to people leaving the church?

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- 
- 
30. In your opinion what aspect/s of the church's ministry (training style, methodology, etc.) has contributed most to retaining membership within your church?

- 
- 
31. In your opinion, going forward, what are the most effective practices and strategies that the church should employ in its effort to establish members in their faith and prepare them for service?

- 
- 
32. Do you have any other concerns about the church's after care practices that you would like to share?
- 
-

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Focus Groups Alpha & Delta (FG-A & FG-Δ)**

1. In your opinion, what should be the primary focus of the church? Why?
2. How important is discipleship and why?
3. What methods or strategies does your church currently use that is specifically designed to establish believers in their faith and equip them for service?
4. What is your view on the current state of the aftercare of new believers in your church?
5. What missing aspect of the church's ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from the church? OR (What is the church failing to do now that might be contributing to the exit of members from the church?)
6. What current aspect of the church's ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from the church?
7. In your opinion what aspect/s of the church's ministry has contributed most to retaining membership within your church?
8. How would you rate the church's concern for your growth and development after you were received in the church?
9. Going forward, what are the most effective practices or strategies the church should employ in its effort to establish members in their faith and prepare them for service? Why?

## APPENDIX C

### **Title: Pre-intervention Alpha & Delta Interview (Pre-AI & Pre-ΔI)**

1. In Your Opinion what should be the Primary Focus of the Church, why?
2. In your opinion, how important is discipleship and why?
3. What methods or strategies does your church currently use that are specifically designed to establish believers in their faith?
4. What is your view on the current state of the aftercare of new believers in your church?
5. What missing aspect of your church's ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from your church? OR (What is the church failing to do now that might be contributing to the exit of members from your church?)
6. What current aspect of the church's ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from the church?
7. In your opinion what aspect/s of the church's ministry has contributed most to retaining membership within your church?
8. How would you rate the church's concern for your growth and development after you became a member in the church?
9. Was there a key person/s who helped you grow in your faith?
10. Going forward, what are the most effective practices or strategies the church should employ in its effort to establish members in their faith and prepare them for service? Why?

## APPENDIX D

### **Title: Pre-Intervention Sigma Interview Protocol (Pre- $\Sigma$ I)**

1. What was the experience like when you first became a part of the church?
2. Why did you leave the church?
3. Looking back, what could the church have done that would have cause you to stay?
4. Looking back what aspects of the church's ministry may have contributed to the exit of members from the church?
5. What factors outside of the church contributed to your leaving the church? (e.g. death in the family; relationship problems; illness or family emergency, loss of job etc.)
6. How would you rate the church's concern for your growth and development after you were received in the church?
7. Going forward, what are the most effective practices or strategies the church should employ in its effort to establish members in their faith? Why?
8. Do you have any other concerns about the church that you would like to share?



## APPENDIX E

### Title: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

#### ***Discipling with Purpose: Best Practices in light of God's Telos for Discipleship***

You are invited to be in a research study being done by Leighton McFarlane from the Asbury Theological Seminary. As you may have been aware, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree at Asbury Theological Seminary. The purpose of my research is *to identify best practices for discipling new members in the Western District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in Jamaica in order to reverse the tendency for new members to leave the church soon after joining*. You are invited because you are either a present or former member of West Jamaica District, which is the area of focus for this study.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, and may also be asked to submit to an interview, or be asked to come to Caribbean Wesleyan College at Torrington for a focus group discussion. Interviews and focus group discussions will be audiotaped. The researcher intends to reimburse participants their traveling expenses to the stated venue. The data gathering process is expected to last a few months and so you will be called upon two or three times to participate during the course of this process.

Participation in the study is completely confidential. Your name will be kept confidential in all the reporting and/or writing related to this study. I will be the only person present for the interview and the only person who listens to the tapes. When I write my findings, I will use pseudonyms – made up names – for all participants. I plan to write a dissertation -a written account of what I learn – based on these interviews together with other data I have gathered. This will be submitted to Asbury Theological Seminary at the end of my study. I plan also to share what I learn from this study with the church. There is also the possibility that I will publish this study or refer to it in published writing in the future. In this event, I will continue to use pseudonyms to protect your anonymity. If anyone else is given information about you, they will not know your name. A number or initials will be used instead of your name.

If something makes you feel uncomfortable in any way while you are in the study, please tell Rev. Dr. B. Dobson who can be reached at 280arbara\_dbsn@yahoo.com. You can refuse to respond to any or all of the questions, and you will be able to withdraw from the process at any time.

If you have any questions about the research study please contact Leighton McFarlane at leighton\_mcfarlane@yahoo.com or at 876-403-6123.

Signing this paper means that you have read this or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

---

Signature of Person Agreeing to be in the Study

---

Date Signed

**APPENDIX F**

**Title: Confidentiality Agreement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, will be assisting the researcher by  
\_\_\_\_\_ (specific job description, e.g., being an interpreter/translator)

I agree to abide by the following guidelines regarding confidentiality:

1. Hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual(s) that may be revealed during the course of performing research tasks throughout the research process and after it is complete.
2. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the *Researcher(s)*.
3. Keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession (e.g., using a password-protected computer).
4. Return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the *Researcher(s)* when I have completed the research tasks.
5. After consulting with the *Researcher(s)*, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the *Researcher(s)* (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive) upon completion of the research tasks.

(Print Name)	(Signature)	(Date)
 <i>Researcher(s)</i>		

(Print Name)	(Signature)	(Date)

**APPENDIX G**

**Expert Review**

**Pre-intervention Alpha, Delta and Sigma Questionnaire**

Q#	Needed	Not Needed	Clear	Unclear	Suggestion to Clarify
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					
26					
27					
28					
29					
30					

✚ Are there any recommendation of questions that were not asked that needed to be asked?

Review Completed by \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX H

**Expert Review**

**Pre-Intervention Sigma Interview Protocol (Pre-SI)**

**Description/Context:**

1. What was the experience like when you first became a part of the church?

Evaluation

Q#	Needed	Not Needed	Clear	Unclear	
1	x		x		Suggestion to Clarify

2. Why did you leave the church?

Evaluation

Q#	Needed	Not Needed	Clear	Unclear	
2	x		x		Suggestion to Clarify

3. Looking back, what could the church have done that would have caused you to stay?

Evaluation

Q#	Needed	Not Needed	Clear	Unclear	
3	x				Suggestion to Clarify See red above

4. What is the church failing to do now that might be contributing to the exit of members from the church?

Evaluation

Q#	Needed	Not Needed	Clear	Unclear	
4	x		x		Suggestion to Clarify

5. What Current aspects of the church's ministry may be contributing to the exit of members from the church?

Evaluation

Q#	Needed	Not Needed	Clear	Unclear	
5	x		x		Suggestion to Clarify

6. Going forward, what are the most effective practices or strategies the church should employ in its effort to establish members in their faith and prepare them for service? Why?

Evaluation

Q#	Needed	Not Needed	Clear	Unclear	
6	x		x		Suggestion to Clarify

7. How would you rate the church's concern for your growth and development after you were received in the church?

Evaluation

Q#	Needed	Not Needed	Clear	Unclear	
7	x		x		Suggestion to Clarify

8. Do you have any other concerns about the church that you would like to share?

Evaluation

Q#	Needed	Not Needed	Clear	Unclear	
8	x		x		Suggestion to Clarify

🚩 Are there any recommendation of questions that were not asked that needed to be asked?

Review Completed by \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX I**

**PERMISSION LETTER TO DBA FOR DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**  
Discipling with Purpose: Best Practices in light of God’s Telos for Discipleship  
Asbury Theological Seminary: Doctor of Ministry Program

Dear District Board of Administration (DBA)

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As you may have been aware, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree at Asbury Theological Seminary. The purpose of my research is *to identify best practices for discipling new members in the Western District of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in Jamaica in order to reverse the tendency for new members to leave the church soon after joining*. The research will be guided by the following research questions:

1. In the opinion of church leaders and members of the churches in the district, what aspects of the church’s ministry contribute to the discipling of members in the church?
2. In the opinion of church leaders and members of the churches in the district, what current or missing aspects of the church’s ministry contribute to the exit of members from the church?
3. In the opinion of members who have left the churches in the district, what current or missing aspects of the church’s ministry contribute to the exit of members from the church?
4. What are best practices and strategies moving forward for the discipling of members in the churches in the district?

In an effort to respond adequately to the above research questions, I am requesting access to the *Pastors Annual Service Report Forms* for the past ten years. The researcher is ONLY interested in responses to Question 2 on these forms which holds years of information about the practice of discipleship on the district. Such data is extremely important to the present research. I am fully aware of the personal nature of these documents, the sensitivity of information that might be contained therein, and the confidentiality with which such information was shared. I therefore assure you that the necessary steps will be taken to protect the participants of this research; promote the integrity of the research; and guard against misconduct or any impropriety that might reflect on West Jamaica District or Asbury Theological Seminary. I further assure you that there are strict ethical protocols governing the present research, and that information gathered will be kept private and completely confidential. There will be no attempt to identify individual participants or responses. I am looking forward to your favorable response.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX J****LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS for Tables in Chapter 4**


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<b>ABBREVIATION</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>A</b>	Agree
<b>AD</b>	Almost daily
<b>AT</b>	All the time
<b>Ave.</b>	Average
<b>CU</b>	Clear understanding
<b>CP</b>	Core purpose
<b>D</b>	Disagree
<b>DK</b>	I don't know
<b>F</b>	Frequently
<b>LU</b>	Little understanding
<b>N</b>	Not at all
<b>NA</b>	Not aware
<b>NF</b>	Not familiar with
<b>NH</b>	Not happening
<b>NRS</b>	Not really stated
<b>NS</b>	Not stated
<b>NU</b>	No understanding
<b>NV</b>	Never
<b>O</b>	Occasionally
<b>PU</b>	Partial understanding
<b>Q</b>	Question
<b>Qs</b>	Questions
<b>RG</b>	Regularly
<b>RGH</b>	Regularly happens
<b>RR</b>	Rarely
<b>RRH</b>	Rarely happens
<b>S</b>	Sometimes
<b>SA</b>	Strongly agree
<b>SD</b>	Strongly disagree
<b>SH</b>	Sometimes happens
<b>VCU</b>	Very clear understanding
<b>VRG</b>	Very regularly
<b>VRR</b>	Very rarely
<b>WH</b>	Was happening
<b>%</b>	Percentage
<b>#</b>	Number

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