

ABSTRACT
FOLLOWING OUR RABBI:
DISCOVERING AN APPRENTICE MODEL OF DISCIPLESHIP

by

Judith L. Ransbottom-Stallons

What happens when we forget how to follow our Rabbi? We lose our direction and look for something or someone else to follow: a charismatic leader, the latest trend, the most popular text. When none of it works, we are left scratching our heads and wordlessly wondering what it is we are doing wrong. It is the quandary of the 21st century church, and for the purposes of this paper, The United Methodist Church in the Kentucky Annual Conference.

Some churches grow no matter what. Some churches close no matter what. Yet, the possibilities for substantive growth may have measurable potential if every church restored what it means to follow our Rabbi. In the case of Christendom, our Rabbi is Jesus the Christ. We keep reading more books and attending more seminars, yet it does not seem to catch fire the way we imagined it would. Church membership dwindles, baptisms and professions of faith are sometimes rare occurrences, so we are missing something.

Through the distribution of surveys to pastors within the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church who have utilized either Spiritual Leadership Inc. or 3DM as their top choice for renewing church vitality and what it means to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,” this dissertation seeks to rediscover what it looks like to follow our Rabbi Jesus and what we

are missing that keeps us from fully realizing our mission statement and our Commission from Christ.

The results revealed that it is not an either/or answer, but an “and.” Together, the best of SLI and the best of 3DM remind us of how Jesus disciplined his closest followers, and how they then continued that pattern after his death, resurrection, and ascension to live out the Great Commission in Matthew 28. Three key discipleship practices are evident in scripture and are replicated in the best practices of SLI and 3DM: 1) Jesus had a method for gathering his disciples and introducing them to a life of formation. 2) Jesus had a method for training his disciples in what it looked like to be citizens of the kingdom of God. 3) Jesus had a method for teaching his disciples how to first follow him and then grow to a point where they could then teach others.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

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DISCOVERING AN APPRENTICE MODEL OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary**

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

**By
Judith L. Ransbottom-Stallons
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To God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all honor and power and glory are Yours, now and forever!

CHAPTER 1

NATURE OF THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

Throughout the United States, and specifically within the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, mainline churches are predominately in decline. Regardless of membership size, worship style, education of the lead pastor, or other significant components typically used as a metric for a “healthy church,” churches continue to either lose the number of people who regularly attend worship, or else they are unable to attract new members who are actively involved in the life of the congregation. Church participation, especially among young adults and youth, is in drastic decline in many churches.

The Kentucky Annual Conference exists within The United Methodist Church as both a regional body and a yearly meeting. Each year clergy and lay members from across the Kentucky Annual Conference gather to worship, enjoy fellowship, and conduct the conference’s business. The actions of the Annual Conference include electing delegates to General Conference (which meets every four years), adopting budgets, ordaining clergy, and hearing reports on the work of various Conference agencies. It includes more than 150,000 members in over 800 churches served by 900 active and retired pastors. The Resident Bishop is Leonard Fairley, who serves both the Kentucky Conference and the Red Bird Missionary Conference.^{1, 2}

This chapter will focus on the perceived problem of declining congregations, look at my impetus for tackling the topic of discipleship, and lay out a framework for the type of literature

¹ For additional information, please see The United Methodist website at <http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/annual-conferences>

² For additional information, please see the Kentucky Annual Conference website at <http://www.kyumc.org/pages/detail/955>

reviewed, along with the method of collecting data from relevant sources. Research centered primarily on SLI and 3DM, two organizations³ committed to church vitality and discipleship transformation. The goal was not to compare the previously mentioned organizations, but to see if they complement each other providing a stronger framework of discipleship when used together rather than individually.

Autobiographical Introduction

Encounters with God should come with a warning label: “Warning. The life you are about to lead is no longer your own. Complete surrender is necessary and may include any number of lifestyle changes. Symptoms include radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking mission and service, and extravagant generosity.⁴ Do not embark on this journey alone.” No one told me the warning signs when I decided to follow Jesus.

I grew up in a Christian family within the United Methodist tradition where three generations sat together each Sunday. My mother was in the church whenever the doors were open and was a lifelong member of United Methodist Women. My father was less regular in his attendance, but was still considered an integral part of the church community. My maternal grandmother and an aunt were also part of the church community where I was raised.

The First United Methodist Church of Three Rivers, Michigan was a full and active congregation when I was growing up. There were three generations sitting together for worship, full Sunday school rooms, active youth, and families who regularly camped together as a congregational activity. This congregation not only met together to worship on Sunday, but we

³ SLI refers to Spiritual Leadership Inc. and 3DM refers to 3 Dimensional Movements, formerly 3 Dimensional Ministries.

⁴ For additional information, please see <http://fivepractices.org/resources/bishop-fruitful-congregations-engage-in-five-practices/>

were involved in each other's lives.

One of the families that we were especially close with invited me to attend a weekly Bible study with them. It was an off-campus event which made it all that more intriguing. Rather than meet at the church, we met for this time of devotion and prayer at St. Gregory's Abbey where a small “community of men [live] under the rule of St. Benedict within the Episcopal Church” (Abbey web).⁵ I was twelve years old at the time and, for reasons I no longer remember, I was enthralled with this monastic community.

The time of prayer at St. Gregory's was transformational. At some point in this prayer ritual of monks and lay people, I surrendered my life to Jesus. I had experienced a powerful encounter with God that makes human language inadequate. My whole body felt like it was connected to a TENS machine (Tens Units Web)!⁶ The prayer circle came to an end shortly after my personal encounter with God and we moved to a time of refreshments. I knew something remarkable had happened, but I did not have a clue what to do with it.

After thirty-six years and a variety of complicated life experiences, I entered Asbury Theological Seminary to pursue a Masters in Divinity towards the goal of ordination. As part of that program of study, I met with a small group of other students to create a project that could be carried with us to our first congregational appointments. We decided to focus on the revitalization of small member churches with an average worship attendance of 100 or less. The final project received accolades from other classmates, and our professor said it was one of the

⁵ For additional information, please see <http://saintgregorysthreerivers.org>.

⁶ TENS stands for Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation. It is used primarily for acute and chronic pain conditions by “sending stimulating pulses across the surface of the skin and along the nerve strands.” The purpose behind the electrical pulses is to prevent pain signals from reaching the brain. According to their website, “Tens devices also help stimulate your body to produce higher levels of its own natural painkillers, called ‘Endorphins’.” Additional information may be viewed at <http://www.tensunits.com/aboutus.html>

finest projects he had ever received.

The Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church commissioned me in 2010, and the Bishop appointed me to a small congregation in central Kentucky. With that seminary group project nicely preserved in a three-ring binder, I moved to my new appointment eager to implement each step of the program our group had developed. The online statistics showed that the Midway United Methodist Church had a membership of 100+ people in this congregation, but as with most congregations, I anticipated a much smaller worship attendance. I was not prepared, however, when my first Sunday morning in the pulpit arrived and there were only 12 to 15 people in the pews!

It did not take long to realize that this congregation was not ready for step one of my “well thought out” program. Our group project assumed a certain level of preparedness for following Jesus. The congregation had several Bible scholars, but I am not so sure they had a concept of what it means to actually follow Jesus, to walk in his footsteps, and, in the words of The United Methodist mission statement, “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” In the words of Kyle Idleman, we were a congregation of Jesus fans, but not Jesus followers (Idleman). As I spoke with colleagues around the conference I learned that I was not alone.

Statement of the Problem

As membership dwindles or shows stagnation in both large and small congregations made evident by the End of the Year reports submitted by each congregation, the reports make clear that there is a breakdown in how we teach the Church “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” In a moment of personal conviction, I realized I was in the same boat as the congregation I served. I had an incredible experience as a young person that

caused me to surrender my heart to God through Christ Jesus, but I had no coaching beyond that experience to know how to disciple others.

I realized that we have had generations of people who grew up with no experience of practical discipleship. We celebrated their conversion experience, assured them they had received the proverbial “ticket to heaven,” and then left them to their own devices. As a result, we have both clergy and laity in leadership positions that have no idea how to mentor someone in a discipling relationship. This lack of experience demonstrates a need to explore how specific discipleship programs can fill this missing dynamic in church congregations within the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church and to recover our commission from Christ (Matt. 28:16ff).

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to review two specific strategies currently in use within the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church: Spiritual Leadership, Inc. (SLI) and 3DM. The goal of this project was to see if there were congregations who had experienced revitalization or a culture shift through a discipleship process that led to spiritual and numerical growth other than through factors such as increased population density from new industry or new housing developments. In regard to “spiritual and numerical growth,” I looked specifically at whether SLI and 3DM provided a mentoring model that led to a multiplication process of huddles/cells/etc. that could be replicated across the Kentucky Annual Conference.

Research Questions

Research Question #1

How do those in church leadership positions who have utilized SLI and/or 3DM experience a multiplication of disciples? In other words, what do leaders consider to be the steps or the pathway of that process? My concern in addressing this question is based on the dwindling

membership in a significant number of congregations. If church leadership is utilizing SLI and/or 3DM as a discipleship process, have they experienced measurable growth, such as an increased number of small groups of individuals who have committed to a process that enables them to then lead others through the same process? Where churches have utilized SLI, 3DM, or have incorporated strategies of both organizations, I would like to consider whether they have discovered a framework that led to numerical growth based on the multiplication of covenant groups leading into the second or third generations.

Research Question #2

What is the framework of reference within the organizations of SLI and 3DM that may be applied throughout the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church regardless of congregation/church size and/or demographics? In other words, can this process be replicated, especially in long-time established church cultures regardless of worship attendance? I would like to discover a process that is applicable for the multiplication of discipling making disciples regardless of church size and/or demographics. I am looking for a successful process that has crossed all boundaries: large congregations, small congregations, new church plants, and so forth.

Research Question #3

What gaps and/or successes have leadership teams discovered using SLI and/or 3DM?

I would like to discover whether either of these frameworks is adequate for the multiplication of disciples in and of itself, whether SLI or 3DM employed a third framework, or whether there was a synergy between the two frameworks that made them more complete when used together rather than used separately. As I interviewed lead teams of clergy and laity who participated in SLI, 3DM or an integration of the two, I was interested specifically in whether these two

organizations complement each other in regard to the goal of moving congregations from stagnation or decline to new or renewed vitality. Their processes are distinctly different yet appear to be complementary. I wanted to know whether SLI and 3DM are more likely to increase the number of mentor/apprenticeship relationships when used together rather than as an isolated process or framework. I was also curious about how congregations using SLI and/or 3DM may have redesigned or altered either of these processes to create a more effective tool for multiplying disciples.

Rationale for the Project

Part of the failure to disciple new converts sprang from a shift in culture that began to slowly change following the second world war. Michael Foss describes this as a shift away from membership. “For decades,” Foss says, “the membership model of the church has dominated American Protestantism. That model lingers as an adaptation of the village church system that existed in premodern western Europe” (13). The role of pastor in this model was one of prestige and power as the pastor led worship, served the sacraments and tended to the needs of the membership. Foss continues describing the clergy’s role as functioning like “social glue as well as a source of spiritual solace” for not only the church, but the larger community (13).

Immediately following World War II there was an explosion in the number of congregations within the United States (Foss 14). Membership meant cohesiveness, structure, and a way to meet like-minded people. That is no longer the case. “Civic and social organizations,” Foss continues, “compete for the time, talents, and finances of the citizenry; postmodern pluralism has relativized every belief and value system so that the faith is reduced to a commodity in the religious marketplace” (14). We have moved from a church culture to a missional culture in the United States, and Sunday morning worship is no longer a family

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time.		protected
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Annual		Kentucky Conference
of The		United
Church		Methodist is indicative

of what is happening across the country as it witnesses a steady decline in a majority of churches regardless of size. According to recent statistics, the Kentucky Annual Conference is losing an average of 509 members per year. From the mega-churches to the small rural churches, there does not appear to be a correlation between county growth/decline and church growth/decline. While a majority of the membership loss is in a minority of the churches, 63 percent of the churches are experiencing some degree of loss leaving only 37 percent of the churches showing a 5-year trend of growth. Conference statistics show the need for 8 new church plants a year to maintain current membership numbers and 16 new church plants to grow.⁷ Looking at churches by size, we have witnessed the following statistics during the five-year trend mentioned above:⁸

⁷ Statistical data may be viewed in the Conference Journals published for each year under “Statistical Tables” at <http://kyumc-www.brtsite.com/conferencejournal>.

⁸ Provided by Spiritual Leadership, Inc. (SLI) for the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church based on data from End of the Year Reports submitted by each congregation in the conference. Definition of church size based on membership: Large=>400; Medium=80 to 400; Small=<80. Definition of growth terms: Hi Growth=>13 percent /yr; Med Growth=4 to 13 percent; Low Growth=0.1 to 4 percent; No Growth= -0.1 to +0.1 percent; Low

POOL	CHURCH CATEGORY	GROWTH	
20	Large Churches	0 1 9 8 2	Hi Growth Med Growth Lo Growth No, Lo Decline Hi Decline
140	Mid-sized Churches	1 19 40 66 14	Hi Growth Med Growth Lo Growth No, Lo Decline Hi Decline
534	Small Churches	26 87 113 185 123	Hi Growth Med Growth Lo Growth No, Lo Decline Hi Decline
73	Stagnant Churches	0 0 0 38 35	Hi Growth Med Growth Lo Growth No, Lo Decline Hi Decline

The first reason this study is imperative is directly related to actual statistical evidence that churches regardless of denomination are showing a trend of no growth or decline. The Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church used the statistics collected by each church or multi-church charge in End of the Year Reports during the years 2008-2012 to look at growth trends across the conference. Out of 846 churches total in the conference database, 788 churches have a five-year statistical history. The five-year trend demonstrates that, regardless of church size, the Kentucky Conference churches are suffering a loss of approximately 509 members per year.⁹

Remarkably, this conference is the only one which showed any growth during 2013, yet the bigger picture looks grim. Of the 788 churches with five years of statistical data, 62 percent

Decline=6 to 0.1 percent; Med Decline=18 to 6 percent; Hi Decline=>18 percent loss in average attendance for 5 yrs. Stagnant Churches are defined as having had no baptisms, professions of faith, or growth in the 5 years that statistical data was collected.

⁹ Statistical data may be viewed in the Conference Journals published for each year under “Statistical Tables” at <http://kyumc-www.brtstsite.com/conferencejournal>

or 492 churches are either in the no growth/low decline or high decline categories. Of the 492 churches showing no growth or decline, 42 percent are in high decline. Ironically, large member churches (>400 members), medium churches (80-400 members), and small churches (<80 members) all are experiencing an equal percentage (50 percent, 57 percent, 58 percent respectively) of their congregations in decline.¹⁰

The second reason this study is imperative is the greying of most congregations. While church attendance is declining over all age demographics, it is hemorrhaging among young adults. In the past, most people would give an indication of some sort of church affiliation even though their attendance among a faith community might be sparse or only on major religious holidays such as Christmas or Easter. Today, the number of people who claim no affiliation with any faith community has risen from 5 percent to 20 percent (Barna web). According to the research in David Kinnaman's first publication, while the group of people who are outside the Christian faith continues to grow among all age groups, the number of young people outside the Christian faith is growing the fastest. Kinnaman found that approximately 25 percent of Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) and Elders (born before 1946) are outsiders while more than 30 percent of adult Mosaics (born between 1984 and 1991) and Busters (born between 1965 and 1983) are outsiders. Among sixteen-to-twenty-nine-year olds, that number increases to 40 percent (Kinnaman 18).

The third reason this study is imperative is witnessed by the example of European churches. A friend from England, Mrs. Alison Schaeffer, mentioned that churches there are predominantly museums where people rent space for infant baptisms and weddings, not because

¹⁰ Statistical data was collected for the Spiritual Leadership Incorporated from the Kentucky Annual Conference End of the Year Reports during the years 2008-2012. For additional information on this organization, see <http://spiritual-leadership.org>.

there is any sort of religious sentiment. They simply go because church is where you are “supposed” to go for baptisms and weddings. Mike Breen of 3DM, and an ordained Anglican priest from England, affirmed my friend’s assessment saying, “The only reason people went to church in England was to be hatched (baptisms), matched (weddings), and dispatched (funerals)” (Breen conference).

A 2007-2008 Gallup poll makes one think the situation in European churches and the possible trend in American churches is especially dire if a reverse of current trends does not happen soon. The poll asked the following question: “Does religion occupy an important place in your life?” The number of people who answered “No” is astounding. The top ten results are as follows: Estonia: 84 percent, Sweden: 83 percent, Denmark: 80 percent, Norway: 78 percent, Czech Republic: 74 percent, France: 73 percent, United Kingdom: 71 percent, Finland: 69 percent, Netherlands: 66 percent, and Belarus 65 percent (qtd. in Cruchley-Jones).

An article by Andrew M. Greeley, however, paints a different picture.¹¹ “Religion in a given country,” says Greeley, “is affected by history, social structure and culture; and it affects them. The result, however, is very different religious conditions and not a single, one-dimensional trend” (Greeley web). “Religion—imperfect, troubled, always changing, conflicted, always surviving, always under assault,” says Greeley, “—still manages to hang on.” The problem may not be religion at all, but the way we gather to practice our religion. That leads to the fourth reason for this study.

The fourth reason this study is imperative is that the rate of decline may reach the level where the local church as we know it is no longer sustainable. Most relevant literature talks

¹¹ Rev. Andrew M. Greeley is professor of social sciences at the University of Chicago and the University of Arizona and research associate at the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

about the need to focus on making disciples if we are to grow the church regardless of denomination, but I have yet to hear anyone raise suggestions on what disciple training looks like. The Church needs a process that will lead followers of Jesus Christ to mentor others on what it means to follow Jesus Christ in such a way that the system continues to replicate itself.

Definition of Key Terms

1. SLI – SLI or Spiritual Leadership Incorporated, based in Lexington, Kentucky, is a walk-along-side coaching process with a group of 5-12 leaders and an SLI coach. The purpose of the process is to assist clergy and lay leaders in discovering, developing, and deploying their spiritual leadership for effective ministry.¹²
2. 3DM – 3DM (Three Dimensional Ministries) is an organization originally based in Pawleys Island, SC. 3DM focuses on providing training to church leaders in the areas of disciple making and transitioning from a primarily attractional-based focus to a more missional based focus.^{13, 14}
3. LMI – LMI or Lay Mobilization Institute, sponsored by Asbury Theological Seminary, is a branch of SLI consisting of a 4-part transformational process for pastors and key lay leaders over a period of two years for the purpose of mobilizing disciple-making disciples.^{15, 16}
4. Culture-shift – A shift in culture is apparent when the shared beliefs and values of a group begin to shift to align with a new mission or vision. This shift can be measured by a marked change in behaviors that favor the new mission or vision.
5. Discipleship - Following a pattern of life as a disciple of Jesus Christ with a commitment to

¹² Additional information may be obtained at <http://spiritual-leadership.org>

¹³ Additional information may be obtained at <http://3dmovements.com>

¹⁴ From the Harbor District of the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. <http://harbordistrictnc.org/huddle-info/>

¹⁵ Additional information may be obtained at <http://spiritual-leadership.org/links/>

¹⁶ Additional information may be obtained at <http://laymobilization.seedbed.com>

discipling others in a coaching or apprenticeship manner until they are ready to continue the process of multiplication that was begun with them. This process can be measured by the number of individuals who have a clearly defined relationship with someone who is/was mentoring them and someone they are now mentoring so that there is a continual regeneration of the mentor/mentee relationship.

6. Generations – In the context of discipleship, generations refers to successive mentoring groups that continue to multiply from the formation and work of the original mentoring group.
7. High decline – A five-year trend reflecting a decrease in average attendance greater than 18 percent.
8. High growth – A five-year trend reflecting an increase in average attendance of more than 13 percent per year.
9. Huddle – A term used by 3DM to describe a group of 4 to 10 individuals that offers each other encouragement and accountability with the help of a leader who invited them into this relationship (Breen, Building 171).
10. Large church – Having an average attendance of over 400.
11. Low Decline – A five-year trend reflecting a decrease in average attendance of 6 to 0.1 percent;
12. Low growth – A five-year trend reflecting an increase in average attendance of 0.1 to 4 percent per year.
13. Medium church – Having an average attendance of 80 to 400.
14. Medium decline – A five-year trend reflecting a decrease in average attendance of 18 to 6 percent.

15. Medium growth – A five-year trend reflecting an increase in average attendance of 4 to 13 percent per year.
16. Mega-church – According to the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, a mega-church is a term used (primarily in the United States) to describe a Protestant church having 2,000 or more persons in average weekend attendance.¹⁷–
17. No Growth – A five-year trend reflecting a yearly attendance remaining at -0.1 to +0.1 percent.
18. Church Membership – Refers to the number of people who join the church through a process established by the denomination or church affiliation. Membership status may or may not indicate a level of church involvement.
19. Revitalization – The process of imbuing something with new life. In the case of church growth, this would indicate a reversal of a church in decline to a church growing in worship attendance/participation. New life can be measured by statistical data of average worship attendance and participation in disciple-oriented practices of prayer, studying scripture, participation in the worshipping community, and the ability to mentor others.
20. Small church – Having an average attendance of less than 80.
21. Stagnant Churches – Churches with no baptisms, professions of faith, or growth in the 5 years that statistical data was collected.
22. Worship Attendance – Refers to the number of people who participate in the worship service through their presence, as opposed to membership numbers, which are not as reliable an indicator for church involvement.

¹⁷ From the website of Hartford Institute for Religion Research.
<http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/definition.html>

Delimitations

While the scope of literature reviewed is far more inclusive, the primary focus of this project will be on those churches within the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church who have used the resources of Spiritual Leadership, Inc. (SLI) or 3D Movements (3DM). I have limited the data collection portion to SLI and 3DM as I have participated in some form of each of these organizations and, in the process, I have discovered elements that are distinctive and yet complement each other. I would like to know if SLI and 3DM are more effective when used together than when they are used individually.

I have focused on the Kentucky Annual Conference because it is specifically relevant to my own context of a Wesleyan tradition within the southeastern portion of this country. I attempted to collect enough data to lend credence to this research. To go any broader at this point would not serve the particular purposes of this project.

Within the Kentucky Annual Conference, I have further delimited the research to the lead team in churches, specifically the senior clergy person and their primary leadership team or direct reports. I set this boundary because I want to know specifically how the leadership team is engaged in implementing a process of discipleship using SLI, 3DM, or an integration of the two. I would also like to know more about the decision-making process used by the lead team to choose the framework or process they are currently using.

I am not particularly concerned about rural versus urban, traditional versus contemporary, or large versus small when looking at United Methodist Churches within Kentucky. My primary focus will be on the discipleship process or framework they are using and what results they are experiencing regardless of other factors.

Review of Relevant Literature

Since the focus of this research is on SLI and 3DM, the review of current literature has draw upon resources used or created by these two organizations. I have also reviewed notable authors on the topics of discipleship and mentoring relationships. I am also interested in notable research on educational theory regarding how people learn in such a manner that they are then capable of passing on the information to someone else. Resources have included dissertations, textbooks, journal articles, and popular literature. I am also interested in interviewing individuals who have successfully used a secular apprenticeship/mentoring model.

Research Methodology

Type of Research

The type of research was a post-intervention case study. The research focused on participants who have utilized the systems of SLI and/or 3DM and noted the impact their chosen system had on making disciples in a manner that continues to replicate itself.

Participants

Participants included pastors within the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church who utilized SLI, 3DM, or a combination of these two systems, as a method of making disciples regardless of congregational context, church size, or other demographics.

Instrumentation

The type of instrumentation was a brief survey. The survey addressed such questions as church size, year the chosen system (SLI or 3DM) was begun, number of generations identified who are following the chosen system as a means of qualifying multiplication and replication, and whether there was any adaptation to the preferred system.

Data Collection

Since it is primarily the pastor's responsibility to set the tone of discipleship and serve as a discipleship mentor within the congregation they serve, participants included the senior or solo pastor within the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. Pastors also have the primary input as to which process, program or framework is used. Additional participants may involve other pastors, lead teams or direct reports where applicable. In larger churches, where ministry teams work directly with the pastor in implementing the discipleship process, those teams were also relevant for data collection because of their leadership positions within the congregation and as potentially the first participants in the process the pastor chose to use. Where the pastor who first implemented the process in use is no longer the resident pastor, interviews with current participants were necessary to clarify how the process began and what features or behaviors have kept this process in place.

Since this project centers on churches that have already put a discipleship process in place, the type of research involved a post-intervention study of churches that have utilized the programs or processes of SLI and/or 3DM. As a post-intervention study, the timeline was fairly brief, including only that time needed to distribute the questionnaires and expect a return. For the purposes of this study, I allowed a one-month window for the completion and return of the questionnaire.

Data Collection involved a two-page questionnaire distributed to pastors within the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church who used SLI and/or 3DM. The pastor and/or his or her leadership team completed the questionnaires which align with the research questions and highlight specific information regarding a mentoring process resulting in

the multiplication of disciples using SLI and/or 3DM. Space was provided to indicate how long the church had been involved in the process of choice

Data Analysis

Data Analysis involved color-coding the responses on the questionnaires using the color yellow for SLI and the color blue for 3DM. I flagged those questionnaires that reflected an integration of SLI and 3DM using the color green. These colors were representative throughout the data analysis. I took note of the number of generations, i.e., the number of times a discipleship-mentoring group had multiplied as an indicator of growth. Data is in the form of a graph showing the multiplication of generations of SLI only (yellow), the multiplication of generations of 3DM only (blue), and the multiplication of generations using an integration of these two processes (green).

Regarding generalizability, my unknown was whether SLI and 3DM worked better as an integrated system or whether they functioned better independent of each other with equal results. The comparison was with churches who had used one method exclusively versus those who had potentially integrated the two with greater success. The inference I am looking to support is the greater success of churches that integrated techniques of both SLI and 3DM. If my conclusions are accurate, any person wanting to expand this research should be able to investigate churches in their particular context who also used SLI and/or 3DM and graph the number of generations of mentoring groups in that setting and see a particular pattern or range of success depending on whether these systems are integrated or not.

Generalizability

The significance of this project is its transferability across all contexts, populations, demographics, and geographical locales. Both SLI and 3DM are adaptable for small to large

church settings, regardless of cultural context, where there are people willing to invest in a team system based on a covenant relationship with a high degree of accountability. The implications for a synthesis of these two systems, SLI and 3DM, have the potential of transforming stagnant and/or declining congregations and positively impacting End of the Year statistics for the entire Kentucky Annual Conference.

Project Overview

Most theories of church membership decline focus on the congregation and an academic understanding of what it means to be a “disciple.” The research investigated above offers the general opinion that pastors are responsible for equipping the congregation for leadership either through recognition of their spiritual gifts or the “right” program that will give them the knowledge they need to “grow” the church. I do not entirely disagree. In the area of discipleship, however, we must also not neglect the training of pastors.

According to Tom Clegg and Warren Bird, “We’re losing the game not because we’ve forgotten what to say, but because we’ve forgotten how to love” (qtd in Bickers). My premise is that church membership decline is not so much a matter of forgetting how to disciple others, but never learning. The issue is not a matter of knowing how to love, but how to invite people into our lives so they can witness firsthand how we do in fact love others through the ways we love God.

I am still in the early stages of reviewing different processes that speak to church “revitalization,” but I see a pattern that addresses either discipleship or leadership without acknowledging the relationship or strong correlation between the two. Popular discipleship systems seem to reveal a disconnect between knowledge and praxis. Everything I have seen to date focuses on demographics or other statistical data in order to have the best programs in place

for reaching the unchurched, but there is very little focusing on the flow or direction of the programs that moves people from curious seeker, to baptized believer, to dedicated follower, to disciple maker.

Most importantly, I have not seen any studies that look at whether the pastor is equipped with the skills or experience to coach a congregation in discipleship. This apparent lack of focus on the pastor as discipleship coach could be attributed to one of two reasons: 1) the assumption that the pastoral leadership has experienced a discipleship process and therefore knows how to competently disciple others, and/or 2) the authors of available literature are writing from their own coaching-deprived experiences. If the second hypothesis is correct, then authors of current literature are passing on an incomplete picture of academic understanding without the practical experience.

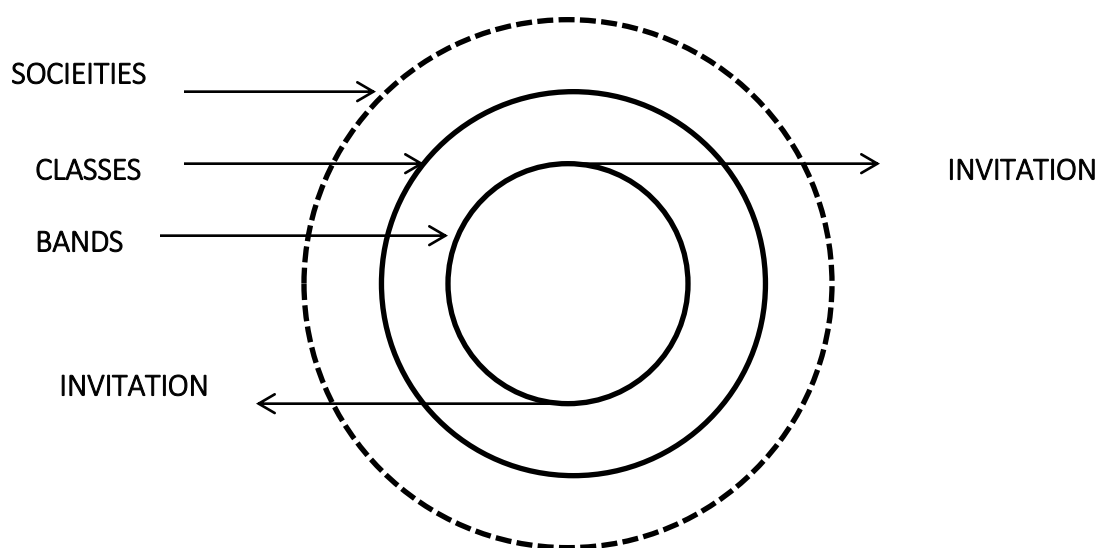
We are missing a step in most of our churches. We invite people to programs, but never invite them into our lives. We invite them to worship and expect that dynamic preaching and great music will introduce them to what it means to follow Jesus. My father-in-law would say a discipleship pathway should always include four “ships” in the water: fellowship, friendship, relationship, and discipleship. If we do not fellowship with others, develop an invitational lifestyle that is not about “rear ends in the pews,” we may grow members and never develop disciples. That may work for a while but, with no process of multiplication, we will eventually be right back where we started.

John Wesley arranged the early Methodists in societies, classes, and bands (Snyder 34). The Society was the largest body which met for prayer, to hear the biblical word exhorted, and to “help each other to work out their salvation” (34). The only condition for membership was “a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins” (35). Bands were smaller

groups of married or single men and married or single women. This organizational system was the primary vehicle of mutual support and accountability, especially for new converts.

The class meeting arose out of necessity to raise funds for the debt of the preaching-house in Bristol and to provide leadership for the growing society. The society was divided into groups of twelve with an assigned leader who was appointed “to secure weekly contributions toward the debt” ...and “to make a particular inquiry into the behavior of those whom he saw weekly” (Snyder 36). Each group had a higher level of accountability regarding spiritual discipline defined by personal piety and works of mercy.

Many times, I have had people draw three concentric circles (see diagram below) to represent these three groups within early Methodism; I do not know the resource or originator behind the concept. I am wondering, however, if somewhere along the line baptized followers of Jesus experienced a disconnect between intellect and praxis. We may be living out our relationship with God in our personal piety and living out our faith through works of mercy, but we have neglected to invite others into the process. People participating in societies, classes, and bands (represented by the three concentric circles) experience a high level of challenge , but often are missing the high level of invitation reflected in the arrows I have added. With the addition of invitation (represented by the arrows), the process is continually multiplying healthy followers of Jesus Christ committed to bringing new followers into the community of believers.



That process of invitation is indicative of Celtic Christianity described by George Hunter. Like the early Christian Celts, we are now experiencing a world of “New Barbarians” who have “never been substantially influenced by the Christian religion” (96). As Hunter says, few churches would admit it, but the assumption is that these “barbarians” “are not ‘civilized’ enough to become ‘real’ Christians” (97). These 21st century “barbarians”, Hunter concludes, are “the people who are not ‘refined’ enough to feel comfortable with us, and the people who are too ‘out of control’ for us to feel comfortable with them” (97)! For some churches, those “new barbarians” may be people who have never been connected to a church, those who have left the church, or young people who may not feel like they have a voice in the current church culture. Kinnaman’s book describes the latter demographic.

Toward the back of *You Lost Me*, is an appendix of suggestions from other authors and experts in the field on how to reach out to those age groups identified in the book. I do not know whether it was to avoid repetition, but only one suggestion is included that describes a discipling relationship. Jo Saxton, a director of 3DM, writes: “When he walked this earth, Jesus ministered to crowds but invested the majority of his time, energy, gifts—his life—in the next generation of young leaders... His life was accessible.... His life was transparent.... He gave them opportunity to grow, fail and mature” (qtd. in Kinnaman 228).

Somewhere between the original twelve disciples and present-day spiritual leaders we have failed to invest “time, energy, and gifts” into the next generation. Somewhere along the

line, we failed to make our lives accessible and transparent, so that emerging disciples would have the “opportunity to grow, fail, and mature” into those who then make other disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The chapter to follow will examine other resources, including biblical references, that speak to this investment of time, energy, and gifts, as well as other aspects of a discipling relationship, that may be relevant to this study.

CHAPTER 2

A LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

While biblical texts, especially those related to Jesus and his disciples, seem to indicate that a discipleship process is in place, and is obviously effective as the New Covenant through Jesus spread across continents, congregations today seem woefully unprepared to fulfill the Great Commission. Countless texts outside of the corpus of scripture are also available on the dispositions and practices of disciples of Jesus Christ who know how to lead other people to become disciples of Jesus Christ. Yet, clergy and laity alike continue to look for the next book that will give them the steps for making disciples.

As I struggled with the same issues of unpreparedness, despite life-long involvement in the church and a seminary degree, I began to ask questions from church planters and other pastors, specifically: “What is step one?” How does one reach out to those who are unaffiliated with a local church congregation and instill in them the importance of involvement in a process of discipleship that leads to multiplication of other disciples?

Realizing that the process for any active follower of Jesus must align with what is witnessed through the life of the One we follow, this review of relevant literature begins with scripture. I also utilized other theological resources that add significance to the topics of discipleship and/or apprenticeship models that lead to the multiplication of other disciples who feel prepared to then disciple others.

Biblical Foundations

The biblical portion of this literature review looked closely at the ways Jesus developed relationships with Peter, James, and John; the other nine disciples; and the seventy that were sent

out to declare “the kingdom of heaven is near”; and just as important, how Jesus interacted with the crowds. For the purposes of this dissertation, I focused on Matthew’s account of the sending out of the twelve. I also included the last four verses of chapter nine through the first ten verses of chapter ten. I debated whether to work with just the first sixteen verses of chapter ten, but the last part of chapter nine felt like a “cause” for the “effect” of sending out of the twelve. I had never before looked at this last part of chapter nine as connecting with the verses in chapter ten, so it forced me to take a fresh look at a familiar passage.

Old Testament Focus

The word “disciple” is not common to the Hebrew text, but we frequently find references to “following,” “ministering to,” or serving as an attendant. Each of these roles speaks to a discipling or apprentice/mentor relationship that we most often think of when considering the definition of “disciple” as it pertains to the New Testament model demonstrated by Jesus. Typically, there is a direct statement or “calling” of an apprentice to follow a mentor.

One could say that Abram’s response to the LORD God in Genesis 12 is indicative of a discipling relationship. The command to “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you,” begins a process of following as Abram leaves, “as the LORD had told him” to embark on a new journey (Gen. 12: 1ff). Abram’s response to the LORD God sounds remarkably close to the call of James and John, sons of Zebedee, who left their boat and their father as a response to the command of Jesus to “Follow me” (Matt. 4:19).

Moses and Joshua

Moses, another man God called to leave everything, offers an example of both followership and leadership. In his response to God to “go,” he both depends on the direction given him by God and also becomes one who leads others. In a wonderful example of

reproduction of leadership, the father-in-law of Moses, Jethro, observes Moses presiding as judge over the people and questions Moses' action to maintain a top-down leadership style.

What you are doing is not good. You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you.... You should...look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.... So it will be easier for you, and they will share the burden with you (Exod. 18:17-22).

Jethro's advice to Moses depicts a leadership style that knows how to delegate, but more importantly, how to train another generation of leaders.

In chapter 28 of Exodus, Joshua son of Nun takes on the role of "assistant" to Moses. Moses instructs Joshua to come with him as he trudges up the "mountain of God" to have an encounter with the LORD. Joshua witnesses "the glory of the LORD" as it settles on Mount Sinai and Moses' encounter with the LORD as he enters the cloud. For "forty days and forty nights," Moses receives directions from the LORD on everything from the offerings for the tabernacle to the tabernacle itself; from the ordination of the priests to their garments (Exod. 25:1—31:17). Joshua has begun a process of "followership" or apprenticeship that begins a process of leadership development in the pages that follow.

In the book of Numbers, Moses refers to Joshua son of Nun not only as an assistant but as "one of his chosen men" (Num. 11:28). By the end of the Israelite's journey during the wilderness years, the LORD instructs Moses to commission Joshua "before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation" (Num. 27:19), telling him to "give [Joshua] *some* of [Moses'] authority (emphasis added), so that all the congregation of the Israelites may obey. But he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the decision of the Urim before the LORD ..." (Num. 27:20). Joshua's connection with the LORD God will differ from Moses' in that he will have to depend on the priest who will consult the Urim to discern the LORD's will for the people.

Eli and Samuel

The book of 1 Samuel tells the story of an apprentice relationship beginning with the account of a young woman named Hannah who was apparently unable to bear children. As she prayed to the “LORD of host” she made a vow that if she was granted a male child Hannah would “set him before [God] as a Nazarite until his death” (1 Sam. 1:11). When the priest Eli first observed her, he thought she was intoxicated, but after learning from Hannah the substance of her prayers he answered, “Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him” (1 Sam. 1:17).

Hannah conceived a son with her husband Elkanah and named him Samuel. Once he was weaned, possibly at the age of 5 or older (Evans 864) she presented him along with an offering at the house of the LORD at Shiloh (1 Sam. 1:24). Samuel then “remained to minister to the LORD, in the presence of Eli” (2:11). Samuel's relationship with Eli because of his young age, must have been as much parental as mentor/teacher, although he continued to have a close relationship with his mother who made him a new robe each year which she brought to him in Shiloh.

Chapter three begins with “Samuel ministering to the LORD under Eli” with Eli growing old in years as evident by his failing eyesight. The text mentions that Samuel “did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him” (3:7) which seems to indicate that he was still strictly dependent on Eli's guidance for everything he did in his service as Eli's apprentice. When the LORD calls Samuel he requires the tutelage of Eli as to what to do and how to respond. This event seems to be a turning point in the mentor/apprentice relationship moving from Samuel's dependence on Eli to learning to hear God's voice for himself. Even though there is no specific mention of Samuel mentoring someone as he was mentored by Eli, he clearly served as mentor to the men he would anoint, with God's blessings, as kings over Israel.

Elijah and Elisha

Elijah and Elisha also had a mentor/apprentice relationship, a passing of a mantle from teacher to student, that seems to have continued with Elisha as mentor to other prophets. The decision to choose Elisha as his apprentice comes directly from the LORD, an act reminiscent of the LORD God's choice of Joshua to succeed Moses. Elijah then passes by Elisha as Elisha plows the fields with twelve yoke of oxen while throwing his mantle or cloak over him. Elsewhere, the giving of a cloak seems to impart the original owner's identity to the one receiving the cloak, as with Jonathan and David in 1 Samuel 18:4.

On the other hand, as Elisha plows the fields of his father with a yoke of oxen, Elijah's gesture may also be a metaphor for taking on the “yoke” or teaching of Elijah. In the account of Matthew, Jesus is quoted as saying, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:29).

While the purpose of a yoke was to aid the burden of plow animals making it easier for them to pull a heavy load, the meaning of “yoke” for the Israelites came to symbolize subjugation and slavery. One epistle reference uses “yoke” to symbolize an unequal pairing of two people (2 Cor. 6:14). In the Matthew passage, the reference to “yoke” refers to a teaching. While the word “yoke” is not used in the 1 Kings passage regarding Elijah and Elisha, the similarities between the mantle or cloak and the yoke are striking.

After the placing of Elijah's mantle on Elisha's shoulders, Elisha requests permission to return and bid his parents good-bye. From the reading, it is difficult to determine whether Elijah has offered condemnation or approval, but Elisha returns home nonetheless. Elisha uses the yoke to build a fire over which he boils the oxen. He then uses the meat to feed the people before

setting out to “follow Elijah and [become] his servant” (1 Kings 19:21). As biblical notes indicate, Elisha's act is one of “bidding farewell to his past life and [starting] his new one as Elijah's servant” (New Interpreter's Study Bible 515). The gesture may also indicate the destruction of one yoke while accepting a new one, the teaching of a new mentor.

In 2 Kings, just previous to Elijah's ascension “in a whirlwind into heaven,” we find references to “a company of prophets” in Bethel and in Jericho. After Elisha “takes up” the mantle of Elijah, the company of prophets from Jericho declare, “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha,” and they bow to the ground before him, thus seeming to affirm that not only the cloak, but the authority that rests with it has officially been passed on to Elisha. The passage does not make it clear whether these prophets then followed Elisha as his apprentices, but they do seem to show him the respect of one who now has the authority to lead (Mead).

Isaiah

While passages related to the prophet Isaiah do not mention an apprentice by name, they do demonstrate a direct reference to Isaiah having disciples in Isaiah 8:16, the only direct use of the word “disciples” in the Hebrew texts. He refers to his disciples as “the children whom the Lord has given me,” a designation for disciples sometimes used by Jesus throughout the gospel writings. Jesus mentions his own disciples specifically as “children” in Mark 10:24 and as “little children” in John 13:33. A couple of different assumptions may be made regarding this use of a familial term: the presence of an authoritative relationship between the teacher and the disciple such as one would find between a parent and a child; the teacher and the disciple spent a significant amount of time together, much as a parent would spend with a dependent child still in need of parental tutoring.

Jeremiah and Baruch

Baruch's relationship with the prophet Jeremiah is mentioned in Jeremiah primarily in the role of a scribe or secretary. We have no indication that Baruch actually functioned as an apprentice, but then it also was not uncommon for an apprentice to serve as a scribe while under the tutelage of the one mentoring them (Jer. 32:12-13, 16; 36:4-5, 8, 10, 13ff).

New Testament Focus

To understand the significance of the call to “follow me” made by Jesus to his disciples, one must first understand the educational system of ancient Israel. According to a document by Jamé Bolds, a young boys’ education as a Jew involved three particular entry points. The first entry point was as a 6-10 year old. At this age, a boy would enter a school called *Bet Sefer*, literally, “house of the book.” According to Bolds, “The rabbis would pour honey on the boy’s mini chalkboard and ask them to lick it off stating, ‘May the words of God be sweet to your taste, sweeter than honey to your mouth’” (Psalm 119:103). In this school of learning, the boys would study the Torah memorizing Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy (Bolds). Most young men would then return to their families to assume the trade of their father.

The next phase of learning after completing *Bet Sefer* was only for those students who had excelled at this earlier level. The 10-13 year old boy would then attend *Bet Talmud*, or “house of learning.” In the gospel according to Luke, we find a likely illustration of a Bet Talmud as the young boy Jesus “[sits] among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions” (Luke 2:46). At this point, the student entered into a deeper study of the Talmud and learned the art of answering a question with a question. As a former public school teacher, I see a higher form of learning here that transcends rote memorization. Answering a question with a

question requires an ability to think beyond regurgitating what has been “fed” and applying it from a different perspective.

The young men who proved themselves in *Bet Talmud* would then have to muster the courage to approach a renowned rabbi and ask, “Rabbi, I want to become your disciple, your talmudeen, your student. Please let me in your *Bet Midrash*, your house of study” (Bolds). After a period of questioning to determine if this young man was capable of taking on the rabbi’s “yoke,” his philosophy and interpretation of Scripture, and becoming a rabbi himself, he would be presented with a directive every young Jewish boy probably longed to hear: “*Lech Acharai*” – “Come, follow me,” their invitation into *Bet Midrash*, the “house of study.”

The “Come, follow me” directive neither required additional questions nor a response at that time. The response of James and John along the Sea of Galilee is understandable given the enormity of this invitation. The hope of following a rabbi disappeared after a certain age and a young man was usually ensconced in the trade of his father. I have often wondered how Zebedee felt when his two sons “immediately...left the boat and their father, and followed [Jesus].” Understanding the process, I would say that they and their father felt there was no need for words. To receive the directive meant the rabbi knew that they, too, were capable of being rabbis someday. Nothing was left to do but leave home, family, everything they had known, and follow.

The disciples followed their rabbi so closely that they were said “to become covered in the dust of his feet.” It also signified the depth of their pursuit to emulate every part of his life and teaching (Tverberg). Martin Sicker, in *The Moral Maxims of the Sages of Israel: Pirkei Avot* describes the disciple’s experience:

What is the sage attempting to convey by his urging that one “become covered with the dust of their feet?” Some consider this to reflect the imagery of a group

of disciples sitting on the earth at the feet of their master, who is seated on a stool before them. ... Others, however, see it as urging the disciple to follow in the footsteps of his master wherever he goes, figuratively as well as literally. In either case, the teaching may be understood to convey the idea that the disciple should always remain within the ambit of his master's "dust" or influence (Sicker 29).

Dustiness for the disciple, then, does not indicate a good shower is in order. A covering of dust meant complete emersion in the life of the rabbi. This emersion meant table fellowship, teaching, and simply celebrating every aspect of life together in community.

This maxim also adds another dimension to the instructions from Jesus as he sent out the twelve with authority to "[cast out] unclean spirits, and to cure every disease and sickness." If the disciples stopped at a location and did not feel welcome, they were to "shake off the dust from [their] feet as [they left] that house or town" (Matt. 10:14). This ritual seemed to indicate that the resident(s) unwelcoming attitude towards the disciples was less to do with general hospitality and more with their refusal of the disciples' teaching or understanding of Scripture.¹⁸

Passages indicating the importance of house fellowship provide evidence of this immersion in the life of the rabbi. Jesus spent time in Peter's home (Matt. 8:14ff)¹⁹, Levi's home (Mark 2:15),²⁰ and in the homes of religious authorities (Matt. 9:18-28). Along with immersion in the life of the rabbi, a common element found in the time Jesus spent with his disciples is a process of continual learning through discourse, invitation, and challenge.

¹⁸ See also Mark 6:6-13 and Luke 9:1-6.

¹⁹ See also Mark 1:29-34 and Luke 4:38-41.

²⁰ See also Matthew 9:9-13 and Luke 5:27-32.

Intensive Reading of the Passage

Matthew 9:35-10:10 NRSV

³⁵ ***Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness.***

O=Jesus was engaged in teaching, preaching, and healing. Q=What cities and villages did he visit? Is it relevant? What is the “good news of the kingdom?” Is this meant to be a summary statement of the verses that come before this?

³⁶ ***When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.***

O= Jesus recognized the needs of the crowds and compares them to sheep without a shepherd. Q=Why were they “harassed and helpless”? What is causing this state of helplessness? Is the lack of leadership, i.e. no “shepherd”, civic or religious or both? P=Possibility of harassment by a dominant political or religious group.

³⁷ ***Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few,***

O=Jesus compares the “harassed and helpless” crowds to a “plentiful harvest.” There are apparently not enough workers to care for the harvest. Q=Is Jesus referring to the number of his disciples when he says “the laborers are few?”

³⁸ ***therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”***

Q=Who is “the Lord of the harvest?” Is Jesus asking God for additional laborers or just referencing that he is sending out the laborers he has?

¹ ***Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.***

O=The summons appears to be not a question, but a command. Jesus has the authority to give authority. Q=Is Jesus giving authority to the twelve disciples to handle the needs of the crowds that he had been handling previously? Is there significance for authority over “unclean spirits” other than for the purpose of casting them out? What is the significance to including “every” disease and “every” sickness? P=Possibilities include the awareness that the crowds would not hear the message that “the kingdom of heaven is near” if they were dealing with unclean spirits, disease, and sickness.

² ***These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John;***

O=Two sets of brothers are chosen as the first disciples. Two names are mentioned for one of the disciples: Simon/Peter. A father’s name is mentioned with only one set of brothers. Three of these four disciples are the three most closely associated with Jesus at private healings and the transfiguration: Peter, James and John. Q=What is the significance to mentioning these disciples first? Were they chosen first for a particular purpose? Why is Andrew not listed with the other three for set apart events with Jesus? P=Andrew may have been much younger than the others. The brothers may have been chosen at the same time because they were engaged in a family business.

³ Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus

O=The disciples still seem to be listed in pairs although these are not named as brothers. Matthew is the only one named along with his current occupation. This reference is the second James mentioned along with a father's name. Q=Why mention Matthew's occupation?

⁴ Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him;

O=Simon is given an identity of origin. Judas is given a second name as well as naming his future role leading up to the crucifixion. Q=What is the significance of foretelling Judas' betrayal right when he is first called to be a disciple? Is there a significance to naming Simon as a "Cananaean?"

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans,

O=Definitive directions that the message is not for the Gentiles and Samaritans. Q=Why? What is the purpose of limiting where the disciples go and who they talk to at this point?

⁶ but go instead to the lost sheep of Israel.

O=Israel is referred to as "lost sheep." The "sheep" are "lost" but there is no indication what it means to be lost. Q=Why does Jesus send the twelve only to the "lost sheep of Israel?" What is the significance of this shepherding motif? What does it mean here to be "lost?"

⁷ As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'

O=The phrase "As you go" seems to imply that they are preaching/teaching along the way to their intended destination. Q=What is referred to in the phrase "kingdom of heaven?" What does it mean to "come near?"

⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. You have received without cost; give without cost.

O=The passage addresses a wide variety of illnesses/disease processes. The disciples are to give without constraint as they have received. Q= "have received" implies that the twelve have already received something. What could be the significance of this apparently "free gift?"

⁹ "Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts—

O=The items listed may reference a form of currency. Q=What is the purpose of gold, silver, & copper? Is it currency? Why were they not supposed to take any with them?

¹⁰ no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his food.

O=It appears that each disciple was only to take the "shirt on his back." Q=What does it mean to be "worth his food?" What purpose is there in not taking a bag, an extra garment, shoes, or a staff?

¹¹ Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave.

Q=What is considered a "worthy person?" What is the process for determining a "worthy person?"

¹² ***As you enter the home, give it your greeting.***

Q=What greeting was traditionally given when entering a home?

¹³ ***If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you.***

O=This statement appears to imply that the disciples were not to stay at a home where they were not welcome. Q=What determines if a home is “deserving?” How does one’s peace “return?” What is meant by this?

¹⁴ ***If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet.***

O=The implication is that the disciples were not supposed to stay in a town where their message was not received or where they did not feel welcome. Q=What is the purpose of shaking the dust off your feet?

¹⁵ ***Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.***

O=The passage indicates that there will be a stiff judgment against unwelcoming communities and/or households. Q=What is the purpose of comparing the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah with communities/households who do not receive the disciples and their message?

Segment Study

In the middle division of this prose narrative book is a section that focuses on the kingdom of heaven. Within that section is what I believe to be the boundaries of the segment for the verses I have chosen. The segment is defined by the disciples' exclusive time with Jesus in chapter ten, but which I believe also extends into the first verse of chapter eleven.

Before this segment are a series of healing stories preceded by teaching stories. Following the aforementioned segment are a series of parable teachings and more miracle/healing stories. It seems exclusive in its focus on the disciples alone without the curiosity of crowds or interloping scribes and Pharisees.

The last four verses of chapter nine seem to form an introduction for this segment, a transition from the healing and teaching of Jesus to a declaration by Jesus that the harvest is overwhelming compared to the number of laborers, which then moves to the segment which I will refer to as "The Summoning." Jesus summoned the twelve disciples for a period of intense training or instruction. We do not know the length of time beyond the declaration in verse 1 of chapter 11 which, in my opinion, ends this segment: "Now when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and proclaim his message in their cities."

The introductory first verse of this segment is the actual summons of the disciples followed by the authority given to them by Jesus to cast out unclean spirits and to heal diseases and sickness. Matthew then names the disciples, sometimes with additional descriptors of relationship to others, occupation, origin, or future role as in "the betrayer." These verses are preparatory for the instruction that follows.

RECURRENCE OF CAUSATION

<u>CAUSE</u>	<u>EFFECT</u>
8b "You received without payment"	"give without payment"
16 "I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves"	"be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."
37-38 Whoever loves others more than me	is not worthy of me
41 Whoever welcomes a prophet whoever welcomes a righteous person	will receive a prophet's reward will receive the reward of the righteous
42 Whoever gives a cup of water	will not lose their reward

RECURRENCE OF SUBSTANTIATION

<u>EFFECT</u>	<u>CAUSE</u>
9-10 Do not take anything with you	laborers deserve their food
17 Beware	they will hand you over
19 Do not worry about what to say	words will be given to you

COMPARE/CONTRAST

10:13 If a house is worthy, stay there	If not, let your peace return to you
10:20 It is not you that speak	It is the Spirit of your Father speaking
34-35 I have not come to bring peace, but a sword	I have come to set ... (with Generalization)
39 Those who find life will lose it	those who lose their life will find it
40 Whoever welcomes you whoever welcomes me	welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me

INTERCHANGE with COMPARE/CONTRAST

A=disciple not above teacher; B=slave not above master; A2=disciple like teacher; B2=slave like master; B3=malign master and his household

While this is the only interchange in this segment there is a dominant thought throughout the chapter of comparing the work Jesus has and continues to do and the persecutions he has faced with what awaits the disciples.

RECURRENCE - "do not be afraid"

10:26; 10:28; 10:31. While three recurrences may not seem like a dominant structure, the thought of fear from verse 16 to the end of this chapter is a prevailing emotion I believe is worth mentioning.

Book Context

Matthew appears to include three primary divisions with the middle division being the largest. The first division includes material from chapter 1 verse 1 through chapter 4 verse 11. Its focus is on the genealogy of Jesus through his temptation in the wilderness. The middle division includes material from chapter 4 verse 12 through chapter 25 verse 46. The last division includes material from chapter 26 verse 1 through chapter 28 verse 20 and concludes the book of Matthew. Included under "OTHER MATERIAL" towards the end of this document is an outline summary using the following symbols: divisions (arrow bullet), sections (check bullet), and segments (dot bullet).

The first division begins with a section identifying Jesus as the "son of David" and the "son of Abraham." It then moves to the birth narrative of "the one who has been born king of the

Jews” and the perceived threat to Herod’s throne establishing his kingly heritage. The final section of this division is the entrance of John the Baptist and his declaration that “the kingdom of heaven is near.” It concludes with the temptation of Jesus by Satan with the remark, “If you are the Son of God ...” and the final offer of all the kingdoms of the world.

The middle division is by far the largest and is the locus of my focus passage. It begins with a section on teaching and ends with another section on teaching with a focus on the kingdom of heaven and the true identity of Jesus. It creates a chiasmic structure with the following pattern: A1=teaching; B1=miracles; C1=Kingdom talk; C2=His identity; B2=miracles with conflict; A2=teaching.

The third division includes materials from the last three chapters of Matthew, chapter 26:1 through chapter 28:20. Two sections make up this division: chapter 26:1 through chapter 27:31 and chapter 27:32 through chapter 28:20. The first section of this division includes materials from the last days of Jesus. It begins with the declaration by Jesus that “the passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified” (26:1-2) followed by a quick frame depicting the plot to arrest Jesus by the chief priest and the elders of the people.

The segment I have chosen to focus on sits almost in the middle of the book, especially regarding the identity of Jesus and his relationship to the disciples. After introducing the relationship of Jesus through the lineage of King David and Father Abraham, and the establishment of his role as the Son of God in the beginning of his gospel, Matthew then begins a journey through the remainder of the book building on his identity and relationship among his followers. Relationship seems to be one of the primary foci of the book as a whole: the relationship of Jesus to his earthly ancestors, the relationship of Jesus to God as Father, and the relationship between Jesus and those who would pick up their cross and follow him. The first

establishes his humanity, the second establishes his divinity, and the third establishes his anointed/kingship role as Messiah.

The frequent mention of Jesus as Son (Son of Man, Son of God, Son of David) once again picks up his humanity, divinity, and anointed/kingship roles. These descriptors of Jesus and Father language (“your Father, our Father, my Father”) combine to create a major theme throughout the book as a whole. From the first mention of Jesus as “my Son, the Beloved” in Matthew 3:17 to “my Son, my Beloved/Chosen” in 9:35 we hear about a God who loves His Son and invites us to call Him “Father” as well. Jesus the Messiah (the title “Savior” does not occur in Matthew) who addresses God as “my Father” also refers to God in relationship to his followers as “your Father” nearly twice as often.

The passage in Matthew 12:50, “...whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother,” is representative of familial language throughout the book. This language is a focus on family that moves away from birth relationships and moves to the relationships between God and Jesus, and our relationship with God through or because of Jesus. It implies there are many “brothers” and “sisters” and “mothers,” but only one Father (23:9) who is in heaven.

Another major theme in the book of Matthew as a whole focuses on the “teaching,” “healing,” and “preaching/proclaiming” of Jesus (4:23; 9:35). The whole middle division focuses on this theme with frequent references to the disciples and the crowds. The disciples form an inner ring of pupils or apprentices who are privy to exclusive teaching time from Jesus. Within the circle of the twelve is an even smaller inner circle comprised of Peter, James, and John. The crowds, who seem to follow on the periphery, get special teaching time with Jesus as well, yet are mentioned approximately one-third less often than the twelve disciples. All three of these

foci (teaching, healing, proclaiming) receive special attention from the author. They seem to frame the focus on “kingdom” language and questions concerning the identity of Jesus towards the center of this chiastic structure.

A third major theme is the use of kingdom language. The kingship of Jesus is established at his birth by his lineage through King David and the Magi’s search for “one who has been born king of the Jews” (Matt. 1:1; 2:2) and toward the end of the book at his death with the placard placed over his head on the cross reading “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews” (27:37). With over 30 references to “kingdom of heaven,” we get a look at both who/what is present among the disciples and those they are sent with authority to reach and the anticipation of something yet to come.

The segment containing Matthew 9:35—10:10 picks up the major themes of teaching/healing/proclaiming, the familial relationship that transcends earthly parentage, and the proclamation of a kingdom that is counter culture. Toward the end of this segment, the disciples to whom Jesus gave authority to do what they have witnessed him doing, hear for the first time what it means to truly follow Jesus, the Messiah who is Son of God and Son of Man. Their preparation for the Great Commission, which ends the book as a whole, is a preview of the ministry they will carry on following the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.

Canonical Exploration

The target passage focuses on the "harassed and helpless" sheep without a shepherd. Jesus compares these “shepherd-less” sheep to a plentiful harvest with few laborers. Following this assessment, he goes through a process of commissioning and sending for the purpose of healing and proclaiming the good news that "the kingdom of heaven has come near." His call is a healing/teaching/proclaiming commissioning to gather in the harvest as well as to recruit more

laborers. Primary subjects appear to be the topics of shepherd-less sheep, commissioning and the authority to send laborers, and the kingdom of heaven.

Jeremiah references the “lost sheep” who are “led astray” by their shepherds (50:6-7). We hear also of the “sheep without a shepherd” in the gospel according to Mark. As the disciples returned to tell Jesus everything that they had “done and taught,” Jesus drew them away to a quiet place to rest. A great crowd recognized them and arrived ahead of the disciples. Jesus had compassion on the crowds “because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things” (Mark 6:34).

The phrase “kingdom of heaven” is distinct to the gospel according to Matthew, used 32 times in 31 verses. Mark and Luke use “kingdom of God” exclusively. Following the genealogy and birth of Jesus the Messiah, Matthew introduces us to this phrase quoting John the Baptizer in chapter 3, verse 2: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” John’s call is our first glimpse of the Good News that is near, then among us, and ultimately yet to come. Jesus repeats this same phrase a chapter later following his temptation in the dessert and the beginning of his ministry in Galilee.

The phrase is used most often in the fifth chapter of Matthew. Beginning with the beatitudes, the “poor in spirit” and those “who are persecuted for righteousness sake” already appear to have a place in the “kingdom of heaven,” whereas those who break the commandments and teach others to break them will be called “least” in the kingdom of heaven (5:19). Finally, those who are not more righteous than the scribes or the Pharisees will not enter the “kingdom of heaven” (5:20).

The Canon typically uses “kingdom” language in referring to governments or kingdoms of earthly monarchs, particularly in the Hebrew texts of the Old Testament. First and second

Chronicles come the closest to referencing a kingdom not of this world with the use of the phrase “kingdom of the LORD” (1 Chron. 28:5; 2 Chron. 13:8). The first instance is King David's speech to “all the officials of Israel, the officials of the tribes, the officers of the divisions that served the king, the commanders of the thousands, the commanders of the hundreds, the stewards of all the property and cattle of the king and his sons, together with the palace officials, the mighty warriors, and all the warriors” (28:1). In this speech, David announces that the LORD has chosen his son Solomon “to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel” (1 Chron. 28:5).

The second instance is a speech by King Abijah of Judah to King Jeroboam of Israel referencing “the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David” (2 Chron. 13:8). Both references speak of a kingdom that belongs not to David, but to the LORD. The impression is that David and his sons are managing the LORD ‘s kingdom on His behalf until an appointed time.

Previous to the message that the “kingdom of heaven is near” is the authority given to the disciples to not only preach this message but to also do what Jesus had been doing: teaching and healing among the “lost sheep” of Israel. Numbers 27:12-23 provides a wonderful example of both authority given through commissioning and the “lost sheep.” The LORD told Moses that he will not lead the people of Israel into the Promised Land. Moses pleads with the LORD: “Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint someone over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep without a shepherd” (27:16-17). The LORD replies to Moses that he should take Joshua, son of Nun, and “give him some of [his] authority” (27:20).

Probably the most quoted example of commissioning and sending with authority is the final chapter of the gospel according to Matthew. In this example, the resurrected Christ, before his heavenly ascension, gives the command to “go” to his disciples saying,

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matt. 28:18-20).

The command includes all the elements of the target passage including authority to commission, the need for disciples (aka shepherds/laborers), and the assurance that Christ or the “kingdom of heaven” is near.

In the gospel according to John, the passing of authority proceeds from the Father to the Son, through the Holy Spirit. The resurrected Christ commissions the disciples as he breathes on them saying, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:21-23).

The Canon holds many examples of “sending,” but an additional dramatic commissioning story that directly relates to a sending out among those who need to hear about the kingdom of heaven appears in the book of Acts with the conversion and sending of Saul/Paul. First, Jesus sends Ananias to Saul as a commissioning tool of the resurrected Christ (Acts 9:10-19). Luke gives more detail of Paul’s commissioning in chapter 22 by the laying on of hands of Ananias according to Christ and the words of Christ himself who tells Paul to “Go; I will send you far way to the Gentiles” (Acts 22:7-21).

I would be remiss in a New Testament survey if I did not include Barnabas as an example of a mentor/disciple. Born with the name Joseph, he is given the nickname Barnabas by the apostles, which means “Son of Encouragement” (Acts 4:36). Barnabas then brings the newly

converted Saul before the apostles, tells them about Saul's Damascus Road experience and how he had "preached boldly in the name of Jesus in Damascus" (Acts 9:27). When a large number of Gentiles "turned to the Lord," the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to Antioch to mentor these new converts. He then brought Saul back to Antioch where the two men stayed "for a full year teaching the large crowds of people" (Acts 11:26).

In chapter thirteen, Luke designates Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul as "prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch of Syria." While they were "worshiping the Lord and fasting," the Holy Spirit instructs the men to dedicate Barnabas and Saul for "the special work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:1-2). Sent by the Holy Spirit, Barnabas and Saul sail for the island of Cyprus with John Mark as their assistant. Everywhere they travel they encouraged new believers and spent time teaching and preaching among them. Barnabas lives up to his name as an encourager committed to mentoring those who are new to the faith.

Consultation

Scot McKnight views the division containing the target passage as a "programmatic description of the ministry of Jesus directed toward those who wish to follow him as disciples" (McKnight 531). This whole division of Matthew from 4:12-11:1, according to McKnight, reinforces the commissioning of disciples who will then be able to do what Jesus has done in preceding verses. The beginning of the section I chose forms an *inclusio* with 4:23, the phrasing in each virtually identical. The first acts as an introduction and the second a summary of the events describing the ministry of Jesus, followed by the commissioning of his disciples to do the same.

On the phrase "kingdom of heaven," McKnight notes that this is "Matthew's literal rendering of a Jewish equivalent to 'kingdom of God'" (532). Referencing other uses of this

phrase in the parables of chapter thirteen in the book of Matthew, McKnight notes that the kingdom: (1) effects various responses (13:1-9, 18-23), (2) comes silently and nonviolently (13:24-30, 31-32, 33, 36-43), (3) calls for drastic commitment (13:44, 45-46) and (4) has an ethical call that is rooted in God's final judgment (13:47-50). McKnight considers "the kingdom of heaven" and discipleship as major themes in the book of Matthew.

Both a present and a future reality to the "kingdom of heavens" (literal translation according to McKnight) appear certain. The kingdom's present aspects, to quote McKnight, (1) demonstrates itself in God's strength and power (10:7-8; 12:28; 16:28); (2) is opposed by cosmic powers and their human allies (11:12; 13:24-30; 23:13); (3) demands responsible, righteous behavior (4:17; 5:20; 6:33; 7:21; 13:44-45; 18:3, 23; 19:12, 23-24; 21:31-32; 24:14); (4) is presently (for Jesus) Jewish but includes the unlikely or the marginal and will in the future be universal (5:3, 10; 8:11-12; 13:31-32; 19:14; 21:31, 43; 22:1-14; 23:13; 24:14); and (5) warns of judgment on those who do not respond appropriately (16:19; 21:43). From a future aspect, in McKnight's words, the kingdom of heaven (1) will be brought to consummation at the Parousia of the Son of man (13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50; 16:28; 25:1-13); (2) will begin with a judgment by God (8:12; 18:3; 19:23-24; 20:1-16; 22:1-14; 25:1-13); and (3) will be characterized by God's final approbation of his people (5:19; 8:12; 11:11; 13:43; 18:1, 3, 4; 20:1-16; 25:31-46; 26:29) (536).

Followers commissioned by the authority of Christ are called to multiply others who live by kingdom principles. A disciple (defined by McKnight as one who is baptized and taught to obey the teachings of Jesus), and by association, discipleship, is not an end all, but a process of continually reproducing other disciples. The most convicting statement by McKnight notes that "being a disciple is equivalent to being a Christian and to being in a position of final approval by

God” (539). The standard is high for discipleship including rebuke for failure, but also includes grace that includes “instruction for future improvement” and the restoration of one who is repentant.

In referring to the people of Israel as “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:36), Jesus uses a social context that elevates an occupation at the bottom of the socio-economic structure and demonstrates by the nature of the occupation the care needed for the “harassed and helpless.” Shepherding, says James F. Strange, was ranked at the bottom of the social structure “in terms of wealth and birth, as well as in terms of historical circumstances” (395). Strange ranks shepherding within a range of possible circumstances from tenant farming to slavery and prostitution. The use of the phrase “the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few” would also reference an occupation of low socio-economic status, possibly referencing tenant farmers.

In his article on shepherds and sheep, David H. Johnson underscores the point that sheep and shepherding are a natural motif for biblical literature since the Ancient Near Eastern culture comprised a primarily pastoral setting. The New Testament draws heavily on the motif of sheep found in the Old Testament where “lost sheep” is a metaphor for people who have been abandoned by their leaders and/or have wandered away from God (Johnson 751). Language referencing sheep “without a shepherd” or “no shepherd” may be found in Numbers 27:17; 2 Chron. 18:16; 1 Kings 22:17; and Ezekiel 34:5, 8.

Later in his article, Johnson shifts attention away from Jesus as the “Good Shepherd” to the role of the disciple as shepherd (753). Matthew’s account in chapter 10 verse 6 brings this to the fore when Jesus commissions the disciples to “go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” The Gospel of John underscores Jesus as the Good Shepherd and his disciples as commissioned

shepherds in his dialogue with Peter to “Feed my lambs;” “Shepherd my sheep;” and “Feed my sheep” (John 21:15, 16, 17).

John Aranda Cabrido identifies the division of 9:35–11:1 as a “macro-sequence” and believes that 9:36-38 should be taken separately although not independently of the succeeding material (137-138). He reinforces the conclusions of McKnight that the preceding materials form a “paradigm and source of that of his disciples” (138). Up to this point, Cabrido continues, the needs of the crowds had always fallen to Jesus. Now, however, “he calls the twelve disciples and empowers them” (140). The disciples, however, do not assume the role of shepherd. That role is reserved for the only Good Shepherd, Jesus.

The motif changes as Jesus prepares to call the disciples for commissioning from a pastoral motif to an agricultural motif. The Good Shepherd becomes Lord of the harvest sending laborers out into the field (158). The instructions of Jesus to not go “among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans” (Matt. 10:5) is a repeated restriction in 15:24. It would appear that the mission of Jesus is exclusive until one considers the words of commissioning in chapter 28. Joel Willitts’ article reviewed by Donald Senior asserts that the two missions are “parallel and complementary,” each with its “own goal and validity” (Senior 391).

In Willitts’ original article, he elaborates on the kingdom motif describing the failed kingdom of government that has left the people “oppressed, occupied, and defeated” (127). I would add as well the temple leadership that has failed to shepherd the people over a distorted sense of duty over mercy. Jesus, the Shepherd-King, comes to inaugurate YHWH’s kingdom in the midst of earthly governments and temple praxis. Willitts divides the inauguration of the kingdom into stages with stage one being the mission to Israel and the Gentiles and stage two being the triumphal return of Jesus over the enemies of Israel (127). I would elaborate those

stages dividing them instead into three: the mission of Jesus among the people of Israel (10:5); the commission of the disciples by Jesus to “make disciples of all nations” (28:19); and the triumphal return of the Shepherd-King described in chapter 24 of Matthew.

David Turner’s commentary on Matthew reviews both the “desperation of Israel’s situation” as shepherdless sheep that are “harassed and helpless” (Matt. 9:36) and the “urgency” of the mission expressed in the motif of a harvest ready to be reap, but with not near enough laborers for the task (Matt. 9:37-38) (263). Current leadership not only failed to lead the sheep of Israel, but they are also portrayed as having left Israel in the hands of predators (Ezek. 34:5) (262).

Like Willitts, Turner sees the inauguration of the kingdom coming in stages. The command to avoid the Gentiles and Samaritans is not meant to exclude altogether, but to indicate a missional priority. Scripture provides hints, says Turner, of the global nature of the kingdom mission, especially hinted at in Matt. 8:11-13 (267). The extension of the mission comes in its fullness at the commissioning of the disciples prior to the ascension of Christ in chapter 28.

The prohibition in 10:5 that becomes a command in 28:18-20, implies Turner, is not contradictory:

Although physical descent from Abraham in itself does not merit God’s favor, the Jews remain the foundational covenant people of God, and eschatological blessing amounts to sharing in the promises made to the patriarchs.... Christianity must not be separated from its roots in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism.... gentile Christians must always acknowledge the priority of Israel in redemptive history (269).

Redemptive history, then, describes a progression of ministry that began with the Jews and then moves to an all-inclusive ministry. This ministry is now for Jews, Samaritans, and gentiles everywhere.

Eric Baker focuses on the “Jewishness” of Matthew’s account presenting Jesus as the second Moses come to “deliver Israel from persecution of the Nations” (81). This is the basis of the command to go only to the lost sheep of Israel while avoiding altogether the Samaritans and Gentiles (10:5). The twelve disciples, says Baker, clearly corresponds to the twelve tribes of Israel, “showing that Jesus and the disciples reflect a special relationship with Israel” (81).

While other commentaries view this commissioning as a separate stage from that in chapter 28 with stage one being to Israel and stage two being other non-Jewish nations, Baker sees both accounts as remaining consistent in their command to go only to the lost sheep of Israel. Twice, Baker says, the book of Matthew “mentions going only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (10:6 and 15:24), hence, to disciple according to this teaching might even imply this concept into 28:19” (86). He does not see this as inconsistent with a future mission to all people. “It is the house of Israel,” says Baker, “that is given as a light to the nations so that salvation will reach the world.” Quoting another resource Baker adds: “To Jesus, ‘Israel was a way to a greater goal, a sign of universal salvation’” (87).

In Donald A. Hagner’s opinion, it is clear that the scope of the mission of Christ enlarges throughout this gospel account and is in no way restricted to only Israel (271). Hagner sees these passages as a “move from particularism to universalism.” Hagner emphasizes the other passages, especially in the parable of the wedding banquet that show this movement (22:1-14):

The fact that Jesus came initially to Israel and only to Israel underlined the faithfulness of God to his covenant promises, the continuity of his purposes, and also the truth that the church, and not the synagogue, was to be understood as the true Israel. That is, in Jesus God was being preeminently faithful to Israel; and Jewish Christians, although they are united by faith with gentile believers, have in no way believed in or become part of something alien to Israel’s hope. Jesus is first and foremost Israel’s savior; Israel is saved in and through the church (271).

Jesus is not antithetical to Israel's hope for a Savior, but comes as fulfilment of the law and God's covenant promises; promises that begin with Israel and move to include the world.

Stanley Hauerwas' commentary on Matthew is definitely homiletical as opposed to exegetical providing a synthesis of what it is we are called or commissioned to do under the authority of Christ. In short, the witness of Christ happens through witnesses. "Jesus summons the disciples to him," says Hauerwas, "and, so summoned, they become for us the witnesses who make it possible for us to be messengers of the kingdom" (106).

We must be careful, however, to embody the message that Christ commissions us to carry. An unaccepted message may be due to the carrier and not the content. Hauerwas speaks to the importance of pointing to Christ:

The disciples are not impressive people, but then, neither are we. Their mission, as well as our own, is not to call attention to ourselves but to Jesus and the kingdom.... The gospel is not the gospel until it has been received. [Therefore,] the character of the one witnessing must be consistent with that for which they are witnessing (106).

The focus, then, is not the message or us, but the One to whom we are pointing. Yet, as the person pointing to Christ, our lives must exemplify as best we can both the message and the Messenger.

Most enlightening to me are Hauerwas' words on the outcome of the mission to Israel. We are not told the end of the story. Following the commissioning of the disciples with power and authority, instructing them on how their mission should be carried out, and what to expect along the way, Jesus himself leaves to "teach and preach in the towns of Galilee" (11:1). Jesus is not going to sit idly by waiting to see how the disciples fare, but continues with his own mission in the same cities. "That we do not learn how successful or unsuccessful the disciples may have been indicates that the task is not one determined by success. Rather, to do what we have been told to do by Jesus and to do what we have been told to do in the manner he has instructed is

what is important. Our responsibility is to be faithful to the task God has given us. The result is God's doing" (112).

Interpretive Summary

In summary, this passage in Matthew reflects a continuation of the mission of Jesus to reach out to the twelve tribes of Israel represented by the selection of twelve disciples. The people of Israel are oppressed by the government who occupies their land and misguided by the temple authorities who have been their spiritual leaders and teachers. Like sheep without a shepherd, they are left vulnerable to "predators" and the syncretistic dangers of wandering without direction.

The sending of the twelve does not preclude Jesus' own mission, but compliments it. Jesus remains the Good Shepherd-King, but the shifting motif from pastoral to agricultural demonstrates his desire to reach a greater number of people. Recognition of the "harassed and helpless" sheep expresses both a sensation of "desperation" and "urgency" for the mission at hand (Turner 263). As the disciples go out under the authority of Jesus, he also goes to the same towns in Galilee continuing to "teach and to preach."

The mission of the disciples is unchanged from what Jesus himself has been doing throughout his ministry. Jesus calls, gives authority, and sends his disciples to "the lost sheep of Israel" to "drive out evil spirits," "heal every disease and sickness" and to preach the message that "the kingdom of heaven is near." His command to avoid the Gentiles and "any town of the Samaritans" affirms a God of covenant who is always faithful to His promises and the chosen people of Israel. Jesus is the Savior of the world, but as Hagner says, he is "first and foremost Israel's savior...saved in and through the church" (271).

Reflections on Application/Appropriation

Jesus called disciples and gave them authority to do what he had been doing all along. Regardless of the interpretation of Matthew 28:19, whether it only addresses the diaspora of Israel or is intended to mean all of humanity including the Gentile nations, that call and authority needed and needs to continue if the good news of the kingdom of heaven is to spread. If the disciples were to teach the “new disciples to obey all the commands [Jesus had given them]” (Matt. 28:20) that would involve teaching the new disciples how to make new disciples! If declining membership is an indicator, the church today has not a clue how to do that.

Granted, there are a few individuals who do well at nurturing disciple-making disciples, but most are largely unprepared to follow the Shepherd-King through the leadership of a mature disciple-coach until they are ready to be the coach to another. There are professed followers of Jesus who do not even grasp the most elemental belief that to be a baptized follower of Jesus the Christ means they too are a disciple. I sat in a small group in southern Illinois with people that had professed belief in Jesus for decades who thought the word “disciple” only applied to the original twelve. They had no conception of a disciple as a student-follower of a master teacher. We have an academic understanding of what it is we should be doing, there just seems to be a disconnect between the head, the heart, and the hands.

I believe many professed Christians would say they had a “strange warming of their heart” as John Wesley did at Aldersgate; they had a conversion experience, knelt at an altar and accepted the gift of Christ’s suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension. Apparently, like myself, no one told them step 2. Before the disciples set out under the authority of Christ they experienced some very intentional small group coaching that lasted way past the initial experience of encountering Jesus. Once the Holy Spirit has grabbed hold, a combination of

catechesis and practical in-the-world coaching needs to continue with a new convert so that the heart knows what to do with that “strange warming.”

Other Material

BOOK LEVEL MATERIALS FOR MATTHEW

Reoccurrence of kingship/kingdom/kingdom of heaven:

1. Genealogy centered on King David's line (1:1-17)
2. Magi from the east look for "the one who has been born king of the Jews" (2:2)
3. Reference to Micah's prophecy of a ruler (2:6; Micah 5:2)
4. Kingdom of heaven (3:2; 4:17; 5:3, 10b, 19 x2, 20; 7:21; 8:11; 10:7; 11:11, 12; 13:11, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47, 52; 16:19; 18:1, 3, 23; 19:12, 14, 23; 20:1; 22:2; 23:13; 25:1)
5. Kingdom of God (6:33; 12:28; 21:31, 43)
6. Promise of kingdoms by Satan (4:8)
7. Other occurrences of "kingdom" in regards to Jesus or God (4:23; 6:10; 8:12; 9:35; 13:19, 38, 41, 43; 16:28; 20:21; 24:14; 25:34; 26:29)
8. Other occurrences of "king" in regards to Jesus (21:5; 22:2, 7, 11, 13; 25:34, 40)
9. "King of the Jews/Israel" (27:11, 29, 37, 42)

Reoccurrence of Son of God/Son of Man/Son of David. There are several other referents to earthly sonship within this book as a whole.

1. "Out of Egypt I have called my son" (2:15)
2. "This is my Son" (3:17; 17:5)
3. Son of ...God (4:3, 6; 8:29; 14:33; "...living God" 16:16; 26:63; 27:40)
4. Son of Man (8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8, 32, 40; 13:41; 16:13, 27, 28; 17:9, 12, 22; 19:28; 20:18, 28; 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:2, 24 x2; 26:45, 64)
5. Son of David (9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15; 22:42)
6. Other occurrences of sonship in regards to Jesus (11:27 x3; 24:36; 27:43, 54; 28:19)

Reoccurrence of “righteousness”:

1. Joseph described as a “righteous man” (1:19). Other uses of “righteous” (5:45; 9:13; 10:41 (x3); 13:17, 43, 49; 23:28, 29, 35 (x2); 25:37, 46).
2. Righteousness (3:15; 5:6, 10, 20, 6:33; 21:32).

Reoccurrence of “Father” language for God. There are several other referents to earthly parentage within this book as a whole.

1. “our father” =6:9
2. “my Father/heavenly Father” =7:21; 10:32, 33; 11:27a; 12:50; 15:13; 16:17; 18:10, 19, 35; 25:34; 26:29, 39, 42, 53
3. “your Father/heavenly Father” =5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4; 6:6 (x2), 8, 14, 15, 18 (x2), 26, 32; 7:11; 10:20, 29; 13:43; 16:27; 18:14; 20:23; 24:36
4. Other “Father” referents= 11:26, 27b x2; 23:9; 28:19

Reoccurrence of follower-ship, both those who followed Jesus closely and those who followed from a distance (4:19, 20, 22, 25; 8:1, 10, 19, 22, 23; 9:9 x2, 19, 27; 10:38; 12:15; 14:13; 16:24; 19:2, 21, 27, 28; 20:34; 21:19; 26:58; 27:55). Focus on follower-ship continues through to the last verse as Jesus says, “Surely I am with you always...”.

Reoccurrence of “teaching,” “healing,” “proclaiming/preaching” in regards to Jesus including other forms of these words.

1. “teaching” (4:23; 7:28; 9:35; 11:1; 13:54; 19:11; 21:23; 22:16, 33; 26:55)
2. “healing/miracles” (8:8, 13; 13:15; 14:36; 15:28)
3. “proclaiming” (4:17, 23; 9:35; 10:7, 27; 11:1; 12:18; 13:35; 24:14; 26:13)

Reoccurrences of “law,” as it applies to tradition both from a legal and a theological perspective and as it applies to one who follows Jesus (5:17, 18; 7:12; 11:13; 12:2, 4, 5, 10, 12; 14:4; 19:3; 22:17, 36, 40; 23:23; 27:6). Matthew also includes several teachings that do not explicitly mention “law” in any of its forms but refer to a standard of living that reflects Jewish law). Also, included in this reoccurrence are several areas of contrast and substantiation or causation.

Reoccurrences mentioning the disciples of Jesus (5:1; 8:21, 23; 9:10, 11, 14, 19, 37; 10:1, 24, 25, 42; 11:1, 2; 12:1, 49; 13:36; 14:12, 15, 19 x2, 22, 26; 15:2, 12, 23, 32, 33, 36 x2; 16:5, 13, 20, 21, 24; 17:6, 10, 13, 16, 19; 18:1; 19:10, 13, 23, 25; 20:17; 21:1, 6, 20; 22:16; 23:1; 24:1, 3; 26:1, 8, 17, 18, 19, 26, 35, 36, 40, 45, 56; 27:57, 64; 28:7, 8, 13, 16, 19). Other references to the disciples include those places where they are mentioned by name or relationship: 71x

Reoccurrences of the “crowds” (4:25; 5:1; 7:28; 8:1, 18; 9:8, 23, 25, 33, 36; 11:7; 12:15, 23, 46; 13:2, 34, 36; 14:5, 13, 14, 15, 19, 22, 23; 15:10, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39; 17:14; 19:2; 20:29; 20:31; 21:8, 9, 11, 26, 46; 22:33; 23:1; 26:47, 55; 27:15, 20, 24) 48x

DIVISIONS/SECTIONS/SEGMENTS

▸ Pre-Ministry of a King (1:1--4:11)

✓ Genealogy (1:1-17)

- Abraham to the Babylonian Deportation (1:1-11)
- Babylonian Deportation to Birth of Jesus (1:12-17)

✓ Infancy (1:18--2:23)

- Birth Narrative (1:18-25)
- Magi Visit (2:1-12)
- Via Egypt to Nazareth (2:13-23)

✓ Pre-Ministry (3:1--4:11)

- John the Baptist (3:1-17)
- Temptation (4:1-11)

▸ Ministry of Jesus, the King (4:12--25:46)

✓ Teaching (4:12--7:29)

- News is Spreading (4:12-25)
- Sermon on the Mount (5:1-12)
- Law Teachings (5:13-48)
- Piety and Mercy (6:12-24)
- Worry (6:25-34)
- Fruitful Living (7:1-29)

✓ Miracles (8:1--9:38)

- Faith and Power (8:1-34)
- New Wine (9:1-17)

- More Healings (9:18-34)

✓ The Kingdom (9:35--13:52)

- Calling All Workers (9:35--11:1)
 - A Plentiful Harvest (9:35-38)
 - Authority and Instructions (10:1-16)
 - Preparation for Persecution (10:17-42)
- Are You the One? (11:1-30)
- Sabbath Work (12:1-21)
- A Tree and Its Fruit (12:22-50)
- Parables (13:1-52)

✓ Who Is He? (13:53--14:36)

- Beginning of Questions (13:53-58)
- Death of John (14:1-12)
- 5,000 Fed (14:13-21)
- Water Crossing (14:22-36)

✓ Conflict/Miracles (15:1--23:39)

- What Makes a Man Unclean (15:-20)
- East Side of the Sea (15:21-39)
- Pharisees and Sadducees (16:1-12)
- Identity and 1st Death Prediction (16:13-28)
- Mountain Experience (17:1-21)
- Death and Taxes (17:22-27)
- Kingdom Roles (18:1-20)

- Forgiveness (18:21-35)
- Marriage and Divorce (19:1-12)
- Last Will Be First (19:13-30)
- Equal Pay (20:1-16)
- Son of Man/Son of David (20:17-34)
- Jerusalem and Temple Courts (21:1-27)
- Parables (21:28--22:14)
- Religious Leaders' Questions (22:15-46)
- Teachers of the Law and Pharisees (23:1-39)

✓ Teaching on Mt. of Olives (24:1--25:46)

- Jesus Tells about the Future (24:1-25)
- Jesus Tells about His Return (24:26-35)
- Jesus Tells about Remaining Watchful (24:36-51)
- Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids (25:1-13)
- Parable of Loaned Money (25:14-30)
- Final Judgment (25:31-46)

▸ Post-Ministry (26:1--28:20)

✓ Last Days (26:1--27:31)

- The Plot (26:1-16)
- The Meal (26:17-35)
- The Garden (26:36-46)
- The Arrest (26:47-56)
- Caiaphas' Questions (26:57-68)

- The Denial (26:69-75)
- The Trial (27:1-31)
- ✓ Death, Resurrection, and Ascension (27:32--28:20)
 - Crucifixion and Death (27:32-66)
 - Resurrection (28:1-15)
 - Great Commission (28:16-20)

Early Methodism

John Wesley formed what has been coined as a “three-strand discipleship process” by an online resource known as *Core Discipleship*.²¹ Each strand coincides with a biblical model of how Jesus interacted with those around him. Wesley had no intention of beginning a new denomination, but sought only the spiritual renewal of the Church of England. As such, he did not begin churches, although that is what they later became, but societies. These societies were meetings within a geographical area who, according to Core Discipleship:

...met once a week to pray, sing, study scripture, and to watch over one another in love. There was little or no provision made at this level for personal response or feedback. John described a society as “a company of people having the Form, and seeking the Power of Godliness.”

These societies were the crowds of people who followed Jesus wherever he went. They may not have been ready to fully embrace all that was required to follow Jesus, but they were anxious to hear what he had to say.

John Wesley then divided the society into classes whose purpose was to “bring about behavior change.” The classes had anywhere from 12 to 20 members and could be comprised of both males and females in the same class. These small groups had no distinction based on age, social standing, or spiritual readiness although some classes were made up exclusively of all men or all women. They met weekly with a trained leader for the purposes of confession and accountability. The CORE website describes the purpose of the class arrangement:

This group provided the structure to more closely inspect the condition of the flock, to help them through trials and temptations, and to bring further understanding in practical terms to the messages they had heard preached in the public society meeting.

Classes were the vehicle “that provided the primary context for the Methodists to grow in their

²¹ Additional information may be obtained at <http://www.corediscipleship.com/core-3-strand-discipleship/>

inward and outward holiness” (Werner 69). This group is comparable to the twelve disciples who met regularly with Jesus apart from the crowds. The class meeting was not for the purpose of scriptural study, but truly was a venue for mutual support with the leader being someone from within the group, “the first among equals” (71).

While the classes began as a way to collect a penny to pay off the debt of the New Room in Bristol, Wesley soon realized the important role they played in keeping new converts from slipping back into the ways of the world:

I am more and more convinced, that the devil himself desires nothing more than this, that the people of any place should be half-awakened, and then left to themselves to fall asleep again. Therefore, I determine, by the grace of God, not to strike one stroke in any place where I cannot follow the blow (318).

The classes became a system for follow through with individuals who attended the society meetings. Wesley’s words make it clear that he would not let new converts go unattended and potentially backslide into old patterns of living that were inconsistent with the gospel message.

The third strand was the band. This group most closely relates to the inner circle of Peter, James and John who received more focused attention by Jesus. These are the three disciples who were present with Jesus at his transfiguration (Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28); at the bedside of the little girl who Jesus raised from the dead (Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51); and in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37; Mark 14:33).

Wesley’s bands were composed of 4 members, “all the same sex, age, and marital status” (CORE). While class membership was mandatory if one wanted to be a member of a society, the bands were purely voluntary. According to the CORE website, Wesley “introduced accountability questions which everyone answered openly and honestly in the meeting each week: 1) What known sins have you committed since our last meeting? 2) What temptations have you met with? 3) How were you delivered? 4) What have you thought, said, or done, of

which you doubt whether it be sin or not? 5) Have you nothing you desire to keep secret?”
(CORE).

The first band of Methodists were a small group of students, including John and Charles Wesley, who met at Oxford University “in order to study together and commit to a disciplined practice of their faith” (Watson 17). Later, with strong influence from the Moravian *Banden* and the Anglican Religious Societies, the Father Lane Society began when Peter Böhler “invited a select group to gather at [James] Hutton’s, and after discussion of the Moravian principles of fellowship, they agreed to form a band” (24).

Each of these three “strands”, as CORE describes them, form a Wesleyan process that provides an avenue for the person desiring to go deeper as a follower of Jesus Christ. I am reminded of a metaphor, the origins of which I do not remember, describing such a process using the structure of a house. The front porch becomes the social space where people can come and go without much of a commitment. The front room or parlor is where good friends are invited for tea; and the kitchen is where the hard work is done with the closest of friends.

Without a similar process in place that emphasizes movement from one level to the next, no matter what the model, individuals tend to become “Sunday morning fixtures” that never grow in their own faith development beyond that initial decision to accept Jesus as their Savior and the way to forgiveness of their sins. Without a clear pathway that leads from the front door of church to the intimacy of a small band or huddle that meets for the purposes of mutual spiritual growth and accountability to heading back out the front door in order to make new disciples, stagnation happens. When this stagnation occurs, the people called “Methodists” risk becoming in Wesley’s words a “dead sect, having the form of religion without the power” (1).

D. Michael Henderson's book on Wesley's Class Meeting focuses on both empowering and equipping to lead along with a high degree of accountability to a covenant group. While Martin Luther proclaimed the notion of a "priesthood of all believers" in the sixteenth century, John Wesley literally put it into action. Every member of the Wesleyan societies had a role in which to participate. The classes had no divisions based on education or employment status. Wesley looked for those who earnestly sought to grow in grace and could lead others to do the same.

In Henderson's chapter on why Wesley's system was so effective, he lists eight major concepts that are the foundation of Wesley's educational philosophy. Henderson's eighth concept stands out as key to a discipling process: "The primary function of spiritual/educational leadership is to equip others to lead and minister, not to perform the ministry personally" (Henderson 129). We seemingly have returned to the executive pastor role where the pastor is hired to do all the work of shepherding and leading and members are only passive recipients. We have forgotten how to lead others to lead and the importance of this happening within a covenant relationship where mutual accountability happens not to elicit shame, but to encourage a deepening relationship with God through Jesus the Christ.

Other Sources

Alexander MacLaren, "an English non-conformist minister of Scottish origin" from the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries, brings out a discussion on discipleship with a message that seems to transcend time.²² Discussing Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, both members of the Sanhedrin, MacLaren confronts his original audience on "secret discipleship." With

²² The description of MacLaren comes from the introduction to his work on the Christian Classics Ethereal Library website. Additional information may be found at <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/macLaren>.

regard to their positions as religious leaders in conflict with the life and message of Jesus as Messiah/Christ, MacLaren notes that their fear of openly confessing Jesus as the Messiah came at a time when Christianity was a minority opinion. He thus saw some legitimacy for their actions as “secret disciples” who came in the night or after the death of Christ (187).

He reflects on his era noting that “we” live in a time when Christianity is the majority belief. MacLaren recognized the number of people who lived “like [Christians],” but noted that it is equally important “sometimes that you should say ‘I’m a Christian:’”

Ask yourselves, dear friends! Whether you have buttoned your greatcoat over your uniform that nobody may know whose soldier you are. Ask yourselves whether you have sometimes held your tongues because you knew that if you spoke people would find out where you came from and what country you belonged to. Ask yourselves, have you ever accompanied the witness of your lives with the commentary of your confession? Did you ever, anywhere but in a church, stand up say, ‘I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, my Lord’ (189)?

At the very least, even those who do not profess to be Christians live according to a moral code that aligns with Christianity. Yet, that fear of aligning or openly confessing allegiance with a Christian community and with Christ seems to linger.

Mac Lauren notes that in his own time, while the fear of martyrdom is not what it was in the first century, the fear of ridicule may be as strong: “Ridicule, I think, to sensitive people in a generation like ours, is pretty nearly as bad as the old rack and the physical torments of martyrdom” (190). It fits so clearly with the twenty-first century, the fear of being different, that I am not so sure that it may be a primary reason there is such reluctance to “disciple” others. We are content to “practice” our faith on Sunday mornings and even to live a Christian life throughout the week in our personal Spiritual disciplines. Declaring and confessing that same faith to someone who does not have the same convictions leaves us frozen in our tracks. Even with those faithful followers who feel comfortable discussing their faith and who it is they follow in Christ Jesus, it is the personal invitation extended to others that never comes. We do not seem

to know quite how to invite a non-believer to join us on the journey of learning how to follow Jesus.

MacLaren's advice to his audience may also hold true for us today: "always do what you are afraid to do.... If people would only discount 'the fear of men which bringeth a snare' by making up their minds to neglect it, there would be fewer 'dumb dogs' and 'secret disciples' haunting and weakening the Church of Christ" (190). We should keep the cross in our site which "not only leads to courage, and kindles a love which demands expression, but impels to joyful surrender.... If following Him openly involves sacrifices, the sacrifices will be sweet, so long as our hearts look to His dying love" (192).

In revisiting faith practices of the early church, Marcia Ford looks at the Greek word *didache* that "refers to the training a master tradesman provided to an apprentice" (61). For the purposes of the early church, this mentor relationship was an intense process involving a period of two to three years. Unlike the plethora of resources today, written material was limited for new converts. The mentoring relationship was therefore critical for teaching the doctrine of the church as well as scripture and the creeds.

When my husband, Mark, was going through the certified lay speaking course, his instructor said, "How many of you are ready to adopt a baby?" Most of the people in the class were well past the age of considering adoption, so there were more than a few glances exchanged in the room. The instructor continued (paraphrased): "When you introduce someone to Christ, you must be prepared to adopt this new baby Christian and walk beside them until they are ready to be a disciple who makes disciples." The role of a mentor is summed up well by Ford:

Imagine how different the church would be today if we had retained one simple aspect of this extensive training program: the three-year commitment of a mentor to the life of a new believer. Modify the program in any way you like, abolish the stringent requirements for baptism or eliminate the training altogether—just retain

that one element, that relationship with a mentor who would say to a new believer: “Look, the going may get rough. You’re experiencing joy right now, but you’re likely to face opposition, hard work and even doubts on the road ahead. But I want to assure you that I’ll be right here, walking this path with you, teaching you about God and showing you how to live the way he wants you to. I will not leave you. I will be at your side for at least the next three years.”

The commitment is enormous for our agenda-based culture. The potential implication for the Church, however, may well be transformational. We must refrain from looking at that first confession and justifying moment in a new believer’s life as only a beginning, and move toward the notion of seeing the new believer as an adoptee for a minimum of three years.

Mainstream Focus

The Secular Business World

Robert Kelley explores “seven paths to followership”—apprentice, disciple, mentee, comrade, loyalist, dreamer, and lifeway (50). The apprentice serves at a lower level with the desire of moving up in ‘rank’. Starting at a lower rank within an organization with the hope of rising higher is a requirement in most large bureaucracies, says Kelley, for those aspiring to be leaders. Aristotle is quoted as saying, “Who would learn to lead must . . . first of all learn to obey” (qtd. in Kelley 53). West Point faculty when asked how they go about developing leaders responded, “We begin by teaching them to be followers” (54). This method develops leaders by first giving them the experience of followers at each level of the organization. When they reach

SEVEN PATHS TO FOLLOWERSHIP by Robert E. Kelley	
Apprentice	Seek to master a skill.
Disciple	Represent the leader as missionaries who carry the message to others.
Mentee	Seek personal maturation.
Comrade	Dedicated to a team and its cause.
Loyalist	One-on-one dedication to the leader.
Dreamer	Interested in the message first and the leader second.
Lifeway	An altruistic desire to follow as a personal preference.

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er, they lead as one who understands those (s)he is leading.

The word “disciple,” writes Kelley, comes from the Greek meaning “one who is learning from a teacher” (57). In this original form, a disciple was one of a group of individuals who agreed to live with a teacher for the purpose of passing on information from the teacher to the disciples. It was purely an academic relationship. In later years, it came to mean “one who believes” (58), especially within religious spheres. For Bonhoeffer, the German theologian who was involved in the plot to assassinate Hitler, discipleship involved both faith and obedience. “The psychology behind this form of followership,” to quote Kelley, “is identification ... disciples give up a current persona to take on a new one—one that makes the followers seem to enlarge themselves” (59). This definition is not, however, exclusive to religion. It may be found in every discipline from psychology to economics. Disciples are a valuable tool, Kelley notes, and worth paying attention to because they “represent the leader as missionaries who carry the message to others” (62).

Kelley distinguishes the mentee as someone who seeks transformation. Whereas the apprentice seeks transformation at a technical level, the mentee seeks personal transformation. The personal aspect adds a strong emphasis on the relationship between the mentor and the mentee. The mentee must have a great deal of trust in the mentor in order to “‘surrender’ to the mentor’s influence” (Kelley 64). The mentee may or may not be seeking to become a leader; personal improvement may be the only goal.

The comrade is a member of a group with a strong sense of loyalty to both the group and the group’s cause. The comrade followership may be found in the military, team athletics, or when people are brought together under unusual circumstances such as when the United States united together after 9/11. Kelley describes this sense of ‘team’ as “one of intimacy that comes

from belonging” (70). The individuality of each person is set aside so that the comrade can give their all for the group’s success.

The “loyalist” is similar to the comrade except in one regard. While the comrade is part of a group or team that is bound together by respect for the one who leads them and for a common cause, the loyalist is a one-on-one relationship. Loyalists may group together who are following the same leader, but the focus is not on the team or the cause. The focus, for better or for worse, is solely on the leader. The leader has a great deal of responsibility in a loyalist relationship to value the commitment of the loyalist and not take advantage of this follower. This commitment, says Kelley, is “willingly given and unshakable from the outside,” but can be disrupted when the leader does things “that cause the follower to question the return of loyalty” (73).

The “dreamer” is described as someone who is “interested in the message first and the leader second The dream is the guiding force” (Kelley 75). According to Kelley:

These followers control their ego drives and accept another’s authority in their overriding desire to accomplish the goal. However, when the bond created by the dream withers, these people cease to play the follower role and the leader has no power over them (76).

In this follower, the leader is important, but only so far as they exhibit a shared commitment to the dream. Once the leader compromises the dream, this follower will seek another path to achieving the goal.

Just as the name suggests, the “lifeway” follower practices followership as a way of life. They have made a decision to follow because “they have rationally decided that following is what they want to do” (Kelley 85). They may or may not lead at some point; in fact, they may currently be in a leadership position at some level. The key is that for this moment they have chosen to follow.

While the premise of Kelley's book, as the subtitle indicates, is "how to create leaders people want to follow and followers who lead themselves," it may also be summarized as knowing when to lead and knowing when to follow. It is learning how to be an "exemplary follower" who knows how to think independently or how to be the "exemplary leader" who knows how to equip or train exemplary followers. The exemplary follower exhibits the positive aspects of each of the seven paths of followers mentioned by Kelley without falling prey to the negative aspects.

Kelley uses, at the beginning of his book, the example of Jesus and his disciples. He questions how a man who was only engaged in leading for three years is able to inspire a movement that transcends temporal and geographic boundaries. He credits the followers of Jesus who, in his opinion, "did a lot of work that made the difference" (23). What he does not address is how Jesus chose the right followers and prepared them for the work to which he called them. They were not, for the most part, dynamic individuals who stood out as being worth a rabbi's time. What Jesus did see in these men, we do not know. We do know that they were committed to following Jesus and, when the time came for his death, resurrection, and ascension, they were prepared and committed to leading and to leading others to follow.

Discipleship Models

Greg Ogden's book developed from, incredibly enough, his final project for a doctor of ministry degree. Under the advice of his dissertation adviser, Ogden used a discipleship curriculum he developed as part of his project and then tracked "the dynamics of a discipling relationship." (9). Ogden had originally focused on one-on-one discipleship, but discovered that a triad led to a transformational process that he had not anticipated. Three critical issues developed as part of his research: "First, disciple making is about relational investment

Second, we rightly associate disciples making with multiplication Third, making disciples is a transformative process” (17).

Ogden begins by looking at what he coins “The Discipleship Deficit.” “The first responsibility of a leader,” writes Ogden, “is to define reality” (21). We must know where we are if we are going to develop a plan of where we want to go and that requires taking an honest look at how well we are making “disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” (BOD). Unfortunately, we have grown churches that are “3,000 miles wide and an inch deep” (Ogden 22). “This superficiality,” Ogden continues, “comes into startling focus when we observe the incongruity between the numbers of people who profess faith in Jesus Christ and the lack of impact on the moral and spiritual climate of our times” (23).

Ogden developed “seven marks of discipleships” in his opening chapter as an assessment tool to determine the current reality of one’s ministry as compared to the “biblical standard.” The assessment is not designed as a tool for clergy only, but focuses on the priesthood of all believers. We have pews of laity who come to rate the sermon with a “reviewer’s mentality” with no thought to their role as one who has come to join in community for the worship of God through Jesus the Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit. The “discipleship symptoms” offered by Ogden for assessment on a scale of one to five include: “Passive recipients vs. Proactive ministers;” “Spiritually undisciplined vs. Spiritually disciplined;” “Private faith vs. Holistic discipleship;” “Blending in vs. Countercultural force;” “Church is optional vs. Church is essential;” “Biblically illiterate vs. Biblically informed;” and “Shrinking from personal witness vs. Sharing our faith” (24-37).

The general malaise of the Church towards discipleship, according to Ogden, can be attributed to “eight factors that have contributed to the church’s failure to grow self-initiating,

reproducing, fully devoted followers of Jesus” (40). The first cause of “the low estate of discipleship” can be attributed to the pastors’ failure to fulfill their calling to “equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Eph. 4:12). The second cause Ogden attributes to our transition to discipleship through programming. “The third cause of the low estate of discipleship,” Ogden says (and the one I find most telling of the overall situation), “is that we have reduced the Christian life to the eternal benefits we get from Jesus, rather than living as students of Jesus” (46). The fourth cause is that we have made discipling others the job of people who are employed by the church or of those who are “over-achievers.” The fifth cause (the only one I find disagreement with) states that leaders are “reluctant to restate the terms of discipleship that Jesus laid out.” The sixth cause is a failure to see the church in its proper context as a “discipleship community.” The seventh cause is the total absence of a “clear, public pathway to maturity [in Christ]” (52). The eighth cause, and the one that initiated my interest in this dissertation topic, is that “most Christians have never been personally discipled” (54).

Francis Chan also speaks of a discipleship process and includes in his book a “simple resource that [one] can use to begin making disciples” (9). The premise truly is “simple.” He begins the book with two basic guidelines: 1. Teach what you learn. 2. Share life, not just information (10). He walks the reader through what it means to be a disciple as someone who imitates Jesus, carries on His ministry, and becomes like Him in the process (16). It is more than just taking on the name “Christian,” says Chan. Following Jesus means leading others to follow him as well.

He emphasizes the need to be invitational not just with the message but with one’s life. Relationship is a major component of discipleship that does not end after a prescribed amount of time. The relationship may change, but it does not disappear. While I find this resource to be

insightful, especially his emphasis on relationship, it misses the idea of learning through the four-step process as developed initially by Lev S. Vygotsky. It is a resource, however, in which this four-step process of walking alongside someone until they have developed a level of competency in both skills and confidence could be implemented with someone else, repeating what the teacher/discipler has done with them.

Educational Theory

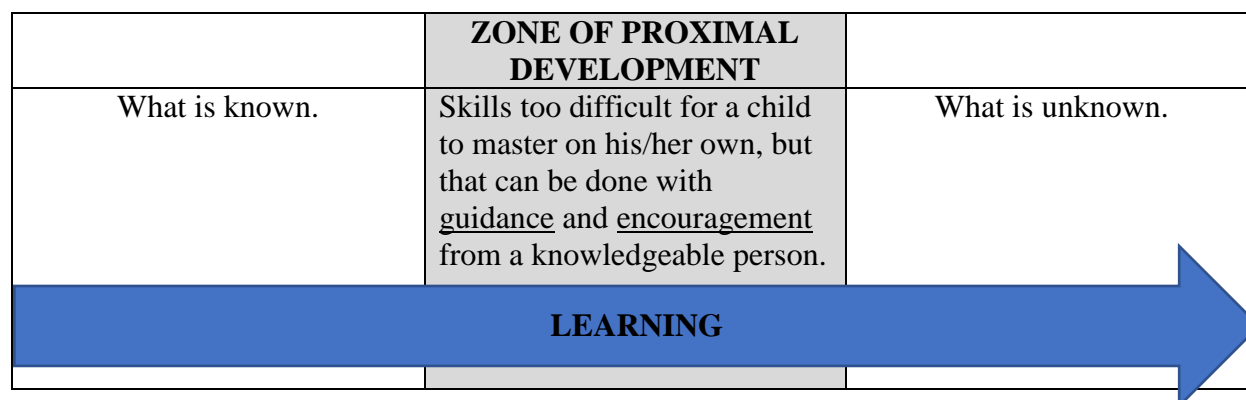
Interestingly, I found several resources referencing some version of the “I do; you watch” model. Those who propounded this method occasionally added either a fifth step (Neil Powell’s diagram below) or the use of “We talk” at the end of each step. No one, however, mentioned the original source of this model or how it came about. What I discovered took me back to my days as an educator and the research of Lev S. Vygotsky.²³ An oft repeated phrase from secondary education students is “Why do I have to learn Algebra? I’ll never use it!” The same holds true for educators when it comes to learning educational psychology and learning theories. As I had to learn these theories for my own instructors I remember thinking, “Just give me a classroom of children and let me teach! Tracing the trail of resources from theological ideas of discipling back to educational theories of how children learn was one of those moments when one realizes that learning the theory behind the practice maybe useful after all!

Vygotsky developed the Zone of Proximal Development²⁴ (hereafter referred to as ZPD) as seen in the model below to describe what he defines as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration

²³ Reprinted in *Readings on the Development of Children*. Edited by Mary Gauvain and Michael Cole.

²⁴ Saul McLeod (2010). “Zone of Proximal Development.” Retrieved from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/Zone-of-Proximal-Development.html>

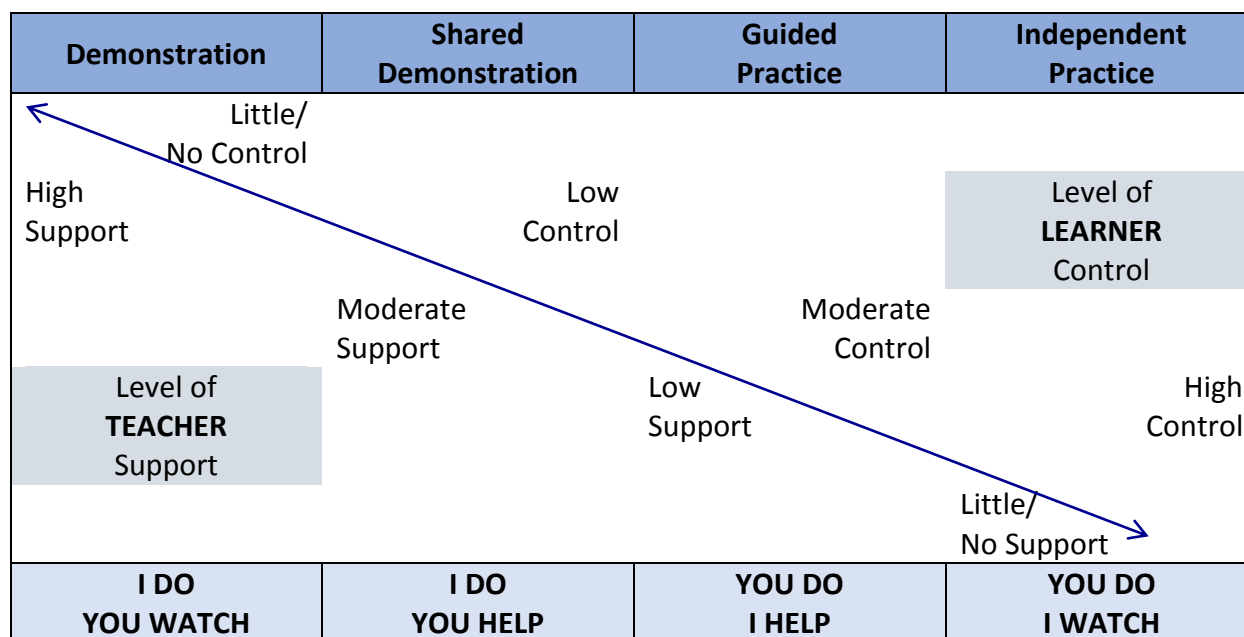
with more capable peers.”²⁵ The ZPD is an educational theory that, rather than look only at those tasks a child can complete independently, judges what a child is able to complete after having a skill modeled by a teacher or peers who are more advanced. What Vygotsky discovered is that what children are able to do with assistance or collaboration with others may be more indicative of their mental age than what they can accomplish independently (79).



Just as children learn from imitation, this theory applies to how discipleship skills may be taught as well. The key is that the student must be provided with good examples or assistance. It speaks of an old adage the origins of which I am unaware: “What is practiced poorly is done poorly; what is practiced well is done well.” To quote Vygotsky, “...only ‘good learning’ is that which is in advance of development” (83).

²⁵ Chart redrawn based on material from McLeod.

GRADUAL RELEASE OF RESPONSIBILITY MODEL²⁶



Educators David Pearson and Margaret Gallagher using the above research as well as the theories of Jean Piaget (1952), Albert Bandura (1965), and David Wood, Jerome Bruner and Gail Ross’s development of the term “scaffolding” (1976)²⁷ developed a model of pedagogy that they titled, “Gradual Release of Responsibility Model” (Pearson) (see chart above) that demonstrates how this learning takes place. Elaborating on Pearson and Gallagher’s use of the above theories, Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher conclude that “learning occurs through interactions with others, and when these interactions are intentional, specific learning occurs” (1).

Leadership Models

Many business and ministry settings have adapted this educational learning tool as a leadership development or mentor/apprentice model for discipleship. Neil Powell’s blog quotes

²⁶ Chart redrawn based on material from McLeod.

²⁷ Additional information may be obtained at http://pdo.ascd.org/lmscourses/PD13OC005/media/FormativeAssessmentandCCSwithELALiteracyMod_3-Reading3.pdf

David Ferguson's book *Exponential* concerning a fifth step to the Pearson/Gallagher model that demonstrates an ongoing process of multiplication:

Five Steps of Leadership Development

I do. You watch.	As an experienced leader leads a team, an apprentice takes time to observe him or her. Within a few days the two should meet to discuss what the apprentice has observed. This debriefing time should include three simple questions: (1) "What worked?" (2) "What didn't work?" and (3) "How can we improve?" This time of debriefing needs to continue throughout the process.
I do. You help.	In this phase of development, the leader gives the apprentice an opportunity to help lead in a particular area. For example, if someone is being developed to lead a student ministry small group, the leader might ask that person to lead the prayer time while the experienced leader leads the remainder of the time together. Again, this experience should be followed up with a one-on-one to talk.
You do. I help. We talk.	Now the apprentice transitions from supporting or helping the leader to taking on most of the leadership responsibilities of the team or group. If a person is being apprenticed to lead a team of sound technicians, he or she will operate the sound system and provide leadership for the other sound technicians. The more experienced leader now begins releasing responsibilities to the new, developing leader. As in the previous steps, the leader and apprentice leader should meet regularly to debrief the ministry experience.
You do. I watch. We talk.	The apprentice process is almost complete as the new leader grows increasingly more confident in his or her role. Consider how this step might look in a children's ministry. A children's group leader, at this point, would give his or her apprentice the opportunity to fulfill all the functions of leadership, with the more experienced leader now looking on and watching the new leader in action.
You do. Someone else watches.	This is where the process of reproducing comes full circle. The former apprentice is now leading and begins developing a new apprentice. Ideally, the leader who has developed and released several apprentices will continue to work with those leaders in a coaching capacity.

Noted author of *Jesus, CEO*, Laurie Beth Jones, wrote another book titled *Teach Your Team to Fish: Using Ancient Wisdom for Inspired Teamwork* that has much to commend it. The

subtitles or section titles group the chapters into four areas referencing how Jesus trained his disciples to do what he did: *He Excited Them*; *He Grounded Them*; *He Transformed Them*; and *He Released Them* (195).

Some of the key elements of Jones' use of Jesus' discipling strategy includes what is probably the most poignant in the first section, "Jesus embodied his mission" (Jones 33). Jesus left doubt regarding his mentorship style while he invested his life in the lives of his closest followers. He had a clear focus which his disciples learned to internalize and eventually to teach to others. In the end of this first section, Jones describes her SQM method that she feels exemplifies the overall strategy used by Jesus: Simplify—get to the essence of what you came here to do; Quantify—determine ways in which progress will be measured; Multiply—ensure that everyone on the team has the ability to multiply the good of the organization through every contact they make (52). He simplified the message by narrowing the hundreds of laws in the Torah and summarizing them with two: Love God; love your neighbors. He gave them a system of measurement to know how they were doing by measuring their actions among those with the lowest status. He taught them the importance of multiplication from loaves of bread to sharing what they had seen and heard.

In the second section, *He Grounded Them*, Jones focuses on Jesus' strategy of internal audits. She quotes the comic-strip character, Pogo, saying "We have met the enemy, and he is us" (76). "I fully believe," says Jones, "that 70 to 80 percent of our problems are due to internal, unacknowledged sin, if you will" (76). We need to learn to internally audit our relationship with God on a regular basis if we are to be affective with our team and in our mission.

In her fourth section, *He Released Them*, Jones describes how Jesus did not just recruit his first apostles; he trained them to also be recruiters and he made training the reward. In other

words, learning never stopped. The role of the disciples changed from “slaves” or “servants” to “friends,” but their new status did not mean they would be left without their mentor/rabbi. Even after the ascension of Jesus, the disciples are promised that the Spirit of truth will come to “guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). He walked with them, taught them, and promised to continue guiding them through the Holy Spirit as he sent them out to continue the mission.

Church Vitality Strategies

ABIDE

Few people have done more in investigating strategies leading to renewed church vitality than Ron Crandall. According to his biography, Crandall has served as the McCreless Professor of Evangelism in the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, and he has worked with small member churches as an evangelism director for the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church. He currently is retired from academia, but continues to work through a process inspired by his research for his book, *Turn Around Strategies for the Small Church*, in cooperation with Spiritual Leadership, Inc. (hereafter referred to as SLI), as Executive Director of a process called ABIDE.

ABIDE, the small church model of SLI, had its earliest beginnings in 2004 with a “two-day consultation on the future of the smaller church” (Crandall 5) held at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky:

The goal of the occasion was not to propose a program or a solution to observed problems, but to prayerfully ask the question ‘What might God be saying to some of us who value these hundreds of thousands of smaller congregations regarding their possible role in the kingdom over the next few decades?’ (5).

Eight persons from a variety of professional and doctrinal backgrounds committed to meeting once a month for a year to explore the issue of revitalization among smaller member churches.

Along with the eight who committed to the monthly meetings were two foundations who offered their support through a gift of \$70,000 over two years for the purposes of travel and housing for the groups gatherings. The group read and discussed books, conducted research assignments, and met “with groups and individual ‘experts’ in various part of the country trying to listen, learn, and propose alternatives” (Crandall, *ABIDE* 5).

Along with reading numerous books, research, and meetings with experts in the field, the group meetings included a shared covenant that included the practice of mutual accountability and the practice of a variation of “what has become known as the ‘L³ Incubator’ (Loving, Learning, Leading) model of leadership development” (Crandall, *ABIDE* 6). Using a combination of the strategies utilized by the Wesleys in the *bands* and the *select bands*,²⁸ the group committed to naming a discipline to which they would be faithful in the coming month that would “help enhance my relationship with Jesus Christ and result in becoming more Christ like and the leader God has in mind” (6). They prayed and worshipped together; they held each other accountable to progress made in the spiritual discipline to which they had committed the month previous, and “came prepared to examine specific areas of research and data related to our smaller congregations and to biblical and historical perspectives” (6).

Out of this process, the group began to draw together around the passage in John 15:1-17 “of intimate relationship, discipleship, fruitfulness, and glorifying God” (Crandall, *ABIDE* 6). They began to see that this Wesleyan model of accountability around their L3 model could “help produce a renewal movement that could both assist in initial *turnaround* and survive the *beyond* of pastoral transitions” that quite often cause a break in leadership momentum when leadership falls exclusively with the pastor (6).

²⁸ For additional information on the terms *bands* and *select bands*, see the section on “Early Methodism” above.

The small member congregation that I served as pastor during the writing of this dissertation made the decision to commit to the ABIDE process in October 2014 and attended the initial retreat event on November 21 and 22 of 2014. Dr. Ron Crandall, Chuck Lord (full time SLI Coach), Rev. Julie Hager Love, Rev. Tami Coleman, and Bob Fortney (Apprentice Coaches for ABIDE) led the retreat for a total of five congregations made up of a clergy person and a representative group of laity from each congregation. Four of the congregations attended from the former Frankfort District and one from the former Lexington District of the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. The five teams began using the L3 model while completing the “First Fruits” ABIDE resource as individual teams during the months of December and January before convening together again for a daylong meeting Saturday, January 24, 2015.

LAY MOBILIZATION INSTITUTE

Dr. Bryan D. Sims, Associate Professor of Leadership and Lay Development and Director of the Center for Lay Mobilization as well as a certified SLI Coach, worked with the Kentucky Campus of Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky to develop a process that would “equip laity in congregations and allow the Seminary to be on the ground with local churches” (Sims Web).²⁹ Beginning in 2011, SLI developed the Lay Mobilization Institute (hereafter referred to as LMI) using the SLI (see description below) operational values of “Loving, Learning, and Leading” or L3.

²⁹ Additional information may be obtained at <http://elink.asburyseminary.edu/the-lay-mobilization-institute-what-is-it/>

LMI is “a four-phase congregational transformation journey that invites pastors and laity to work together in local churches.”³⁰ The key is the development of a covenant group of lay leadership working *with* their pastor as part of a team. Laity are empowered as the “priesthood of all believers” to join the pastor in the work of transformational leadership and the formation of disciples who make disciples.

Meeting together for approximately eight hours once a month, either in a one-day session once a month or split over two sessions (preferably no more than two sessions per month as the longer session of 4 to 8 hours is preferred for the work of team formation), the team uses the structure of L3 (“Loving, Learning, Leading”). L3 provides a format of worship, accountability, along with biblical study and other readings. This format provides a shared culture that I would describe as more of a “framework” than either a “program” or a “process.” Whereas a “program” provides a series of steps with detailed instructions with little room for creative input and a “process” provides the order the steps are to be taken, a “framework” provides the foundational culture which allows for the program or process that best fits the needs of the individual community’s context. It does not say “You must use this discipling technique,” but says “Here is a frame of reference for discerning what God is calling you to do within the context you serve.”

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP INC.

According to the Spiritual Leadership Inc. website, (hereafter referred to as SLI) the organization came about “...when two successful lay persons began a journey with Christ to

³⁰ Taken from the Asbury Theological Seminary webpage, *The Lay Mobilization Institute: What Is It?* Additional information may be found at <http://asburyseminary.edu/elink/the-lay-mobilization-institute-what-is-it/>

follow their calling to become spiritual leaders.”³¹ Out of SLI developed two satellite organizations, the Lay Mobilization Institute and ABIDE which will be discussed separately. I received first-hand experience with this organization over the past year. I first received an opportunity to participate on an LMI Team through Connectional Ministries of the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church as well as a Frankfort District New Church and Congregational Development (NCCD) SLI Team. Just recently, I began the ABIDE Team process with the local congregation to which I am appointed.

According to an article by Bryan Sims and J. Paulo Lopes, SLI has become an “incubator process of leadership development” where 6-12 leaders (both laity and clergy) spend approximately eight hours a month together, typically in one setting, for up to a year or more (66). “Each session,” the article notes, “is structured around the integration of three organizational principles and three operational values that are proving to be transferrable across cultural boundaries. The three organizational principles are defined as a) becoming spiritual leaders, b) creating environments of transformation, and c) developing processes/systems that produce fruit. Each of these principles are characterized by three operational values: Loving, Learning, and Leading (L3)” (66).

The process of designing systems that are fruit-bearing happens through the creation of an action plan (Ministry Action Plan or MAP within ministry settings). The initial SLI team becomes the parent MAP with a “Point Person” for each process or system on the MAP. That point person then creates a “Child MAP” possibly forming another SLI team so that multiplication occurs.

³¹ Spiritual Leadership Inc. website. <http://spiritual-leadership.org/the-sli-story/>

3DM

I first learned about the 3D Movement after a quest that began the day of my first appointment as a solo pastor of a small membership congregation in central Kentucky. For three years, I continually asked the question, “What is step one?” I came out of seminary with what I thought was a “top notch” thesis that I wrote as part of a group project for a class in my master of divinity program and soon realized that the small congregation I was appointed to serve was not ready for even the first step. I was not prepared to lead this congregation from stagnation to vitality. At the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, I ran into a young church planter I had become friends with as part of the ordination process and when I asked him the question he wrote down a title of a book on the corner of his worship program for that day, tore it off, handed it to me and said, “Read this and then give me a call.”

Written on the scrap of paper was the book title, *Building a Discipling Culture* by Mike Breen. That evening, when conference events were finished for the day, I went back to my hotel room and downloaded the book on my iPad. After reading a couple of chapters I thought, “How could I have grown up in the church, graduated with a Master of Divinity, and become ordained without knowing how to disciple others?” The very thought of it made me angry and I began to wonder if a conspiracy was afoot to keep this knowledge tucked away so that a few churches could prosper while the rest of us floundered helplessly with no idea on how to lead the church.

Mike Breen was an Episcopal priest at St. Thomas’ Church in Sheffield in the United Kingdom, and like many new pastors, realized that he no longer served a culture where people would automatically come to church simply because the doors were open. He realized he needed to take the church to the people. With a missional mindset, Mike took to the streets in the

community of St. Thomas and in less than six years, “was the largest church in England.”³²

Breen brought his missional approach to Pauleys Island, SC in the United States and, with a team of missional leaders, began 3 Dimensional Ministries, or 3DM. Now referred to as 3D Movements on their website, the group offers training to church leadership on a mentoring process that is both scriptural and Wesleyan in its approach.

Building a Discipling Culture is the framework of the process that is learned within a covenant group similar to the Wesleyan bands called “huddles.” The huddles meet together weekly with a mentor/leader who has also been through the huddle process. According to Breen,

...effective leadership is based upon an invitation to relationship and a challenge to change. A gifted disciple is someone who invites people into a covenantal relationship with him or her, but challenges that person to live into his or her true identity in very direct yet graceful ways (Breen, *Building* 18).

Through a process of “invitation” and “challenge,” mentor and mentee weave their way through a discipling language using geometric shapes, referred to as “Lifeshapes,” as a tool to remember relevant scripture and stories related to missional living.

One of the facets of the 3DM huddle process that I find interesting is the “dynamic interplay” between the three predominant ways people learn:

- 1) Classroom/Lecture – “passing on facts, thoughts, processes and information” (Breen 22).
- 2) Apprenticeship – “Someone [investing] their time, energy, skills and life into ours, teaching us to do what they do” (23).
- 3) Immersion – “having access to the culture you are hoping to shape you” (24).

What 3DM leadership realized is that clergy have traditionally handed all sorts of literature to people on how to disciple others; in other words, fed people information in a small

³² Book flap of *Covenant and Kingdom: The DNA of the Bible*.

group/classroom situation, but no one knew what to do with the information they received. Breen continues:

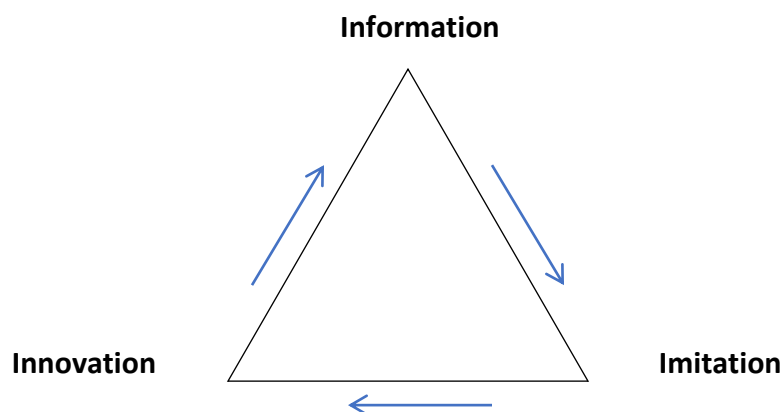
Why are we assuming that simply by giving people information (pray, read the Bible, read doctrinal statements, be a part of a small group) they actually know how to do it or can figure it out by themselves? I can read a book on how to perform open heart surgery. If you go into cardiac arrest, do you want me to operate on you? (BDC 27)

Learning the information without an apprentice relationship and an immersion experience with someone who is fluent in discipleship skills would be equivalent to a plumber taking numerous classes without ever having learned firsthand how to deal with a leaky sink.

While the Huddle is an important part of the process, it is not the most important part. 3DM is not a program to replicate across the board or something that happens only once a week. The Huddle is a vehicle for something far more organic that involves people having access to the leader's life and each other's lives. In order for immersion to happen, says Breen, "you need to give ... four to ten people much higher **ACCESS** to your life than other people get or than you are probably accustomed to giving the people you currently lead" (Breen, *Building* 40). They must be able to see how we follow Jesus as we tackle everyday issues such as grabbing a cup of coffee or running to the grocery store.

Along that same vein, Breen continues, "it is crucial that we have a life worth imitating" (40) "You are inviting someone into your life," he continues, "to learn how you follow Jesus in all aspects of your life" (41). While it is important for this small group of apprentices to witness the life of a disciple committed to living the life modeled by Jesus, it is also equally important to allow them to see how the mentor handles missteps, those times when we all find ourselves slipping below what we would consider the ideal. For instance, learning how one handles a disagreement with a spouse or child, a conflict at work or in church is crucial.

While *Lifeshapes* provides a language culture for the 3DM model, the framework is the interplay of the learning process that is demonstrated by the following diagram:

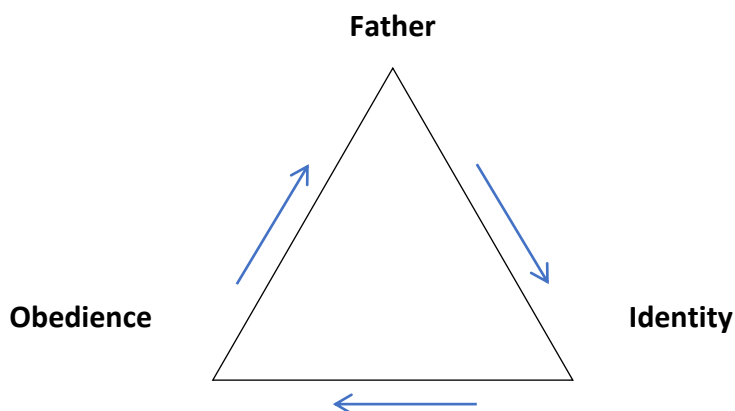


In the church culture of past decades, local congregations survived because people showed up expecting to be told what they needed to do in order to follow Jesus. While information alone did not prepare people to mentor or disciple others, it did not appear to be a critical issue. When church is the dominant culture, people come looking for the information they believed they need in order to live within that culture.

As the western world began to progress more and more towards a secular culture, suddenly those who were immersed in the church culture realized they were proficient in disseminating information about their culture, but they never had modeled for them the components of imitation and innovation. In other words, they knew how to invite people to church, but they did not know how to invite people into an apprentice relationship where the apprentice could then learn to lead others. Through an apprenticeship with an experienced leader, the individual becomes “confident in knowledge *and* practice (emphasis added), ...[with] the capacity to innovate new ways of discipleship and mission” (Breen, *Building* 42).

Another book published by Breen of 3DM titled *Covenant and Kingdom* focuses on the identity of Christians from a biblical understanding. The book is a synopsis of the biblical story in an easy-to-read format that, I feel, plays a foundational role in understanding *what* it is Christian disciples do and *why* we do it. At first glance, it may not appear to play into a theme of discipling or mentoring relationships, but if one does not understand who they are in relationship to God I would question whether they are prepared, spiritually and academically, for the task of leading others to be disciple-makers. The Bible, says Breen, “is riven through with the ‘double helix’ of Covenant and Kingdom” (xv). Using the narrative portions of the Bible, he makes a good case that unless we have a firm grasp of our role from the perspective of these two dominant themes we will be ineffective as disciple-makers.

The theme of Covenant, says Breen, “describes and defines relationship: first our relationship with God and then our relationship with everyone else” (*Covenant* xv) Breen uses a triangle similar to the one diagramed earlier to define this relationship:



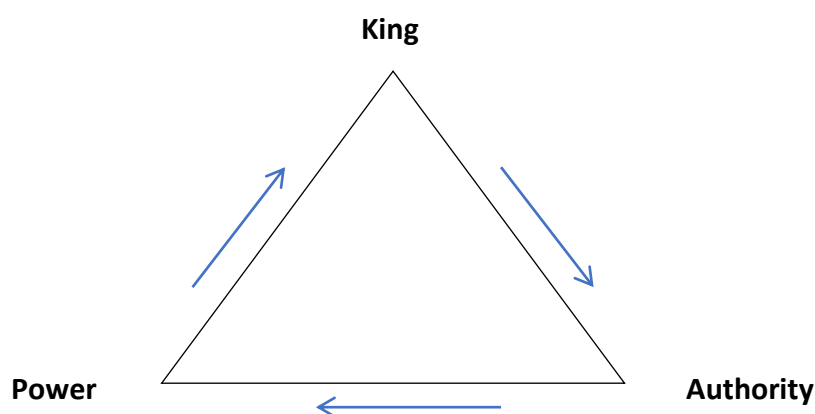
The relationship of covenant is built upon recognition of God as Father, a revelation that is made complete in Jesus. Throughout the gospel account according to John we hear this relationship language: “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you On that day, you will know that I am in my Father and you in me, and I in you” (John 14: 18, 20).

It is not until we understand our relationship with a Father in heaven that we can begin to grasp our identity as children of God. “Our identity is so caught up with God’s,” writes Breen, “that the New Testament is able to say that we are heirs of heaven and co-heirs with Christ” (*Covenant* 226). In the United Methodist tradition, we celebrate that identity through the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion. Holy Communion is meal that Jesus gave to help us “remember who he is and who we are” (226).

The third point of the triangle is “obedience.” Obedience suggests “the Law”—something most Christians find to be an antithesis of a theology of grace. Jesus, however, is recorded in Matthew’s account saying, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill” (Matt. 5:17). The book of John sees obedience not as something separate from grace, but rather as an act of love: “If you love, you will keep my commandments” (14:15). The key is that one must flow from the other: our identity comes from being in relationship with the Father, and our obedience happens as a result of that identity that is founded on love. “Now we are able to obey because as children of God we are empowered to do so” (*Covenant* 227).

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, one finds the theme of Kingdom. In the Old Testament, we see the kingship expressed through the kings appointed by God to lead the people of Israel. In the New Testament, we have the image of Jesus as the servant King who comes to usher in a kingdom of justice and mercy on behalf of the lost, the hungry, the sick, and the downtrodden. At the end of Matthew’s gospel, we hear Jesus quoted as saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples” (Matt. 28:18). The authority of the King has now been given to his disciples. This instillation of authority is where the two themes of Covenant and Kingdom intertwine. The disciples do not act of their

own volition, but only under the authority of the King in whom they have a covenant relationship. The power to live out that authority of disciple-making comes, Breen says, “from the present of the Holy Spirit.” That authority, however, always begins with the King “who exercises authority through us his representatives, and with that authority, he sends power for us to be able to do all that he wants us to do” (*Covenant* 229).



Scholarly Focus (Dissertations and Professional Journals)

In the dissertation titled, “The Effects of a Discipleship Program on the Local Church” by Gary Ball, I found information on discipleship that is consistent with other mainstream literature. The researcher served the purposes of his inquiry, determining whether a discipleship program would produce “strong spiritual leadership within the church” (abstract). I, however, wonder what the effect has been on those individuals within the sphere of influence of the local church yet do not have any church affiliation. The “program” seems to be developing spiritual leaders, but it does not provide a measurement for multiplying disciple-making disciples. In other words, there are no descriptors for how is it expanding the kingdom of God outside the walls of the

bricks and mortar building of the local church, for whether membership increased, or if there was more involvement in the ministries of the local church.

Increasing the spiritual maturity of those who profess a belief in Jesus and a commitment to follow him may well be the proverbial “step one” of a discipleship process. One program, however, I doubt will have the intended impact. I agree with this dissertation’s author that spiritually mature Christians need to be practicing spiritual disciplines of scriptural study, prayer, public worship, fasting, and so forth—the basic model used by John Wesley in his class and bands. What is missing, I believe, is the apprenticeship model that allows the disciple the time to model learning with a mentor, to assist the mentor, and to then lead while still under the tutelage of the mentor.

Final Synthetic Reflection

Appropriation is my new favorite word: “the act of taking something for one’s own use.” Moving beyond application alone, appropriation means one has acquired the ability to synthesize what they have learned in new situations. We do a fine job of obtaining an academic understanding in the United Methodist Church, but I am not so sure we do well at appropriating the Gospel into the core of our being. I do not mean to imply that we must reinvent the gospel, but to take the gospel’s core into our core so that we are able to use it as God intended.

We talk about applying the Gospel, but it does not seem to get from the head to the heart, and on to the hands and feet! The combination of the analytic framework presented in the following chapter of pastors who have used SLI and/or 3DM, the review of relevant literature, and my own experiences with SLI and 3DM may shed some light on what we have appropriated well from scripture and what we are sorely missing.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

Upon my first appointment to serve as a clergy person within The Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, I realized that I was wholly unprepared to lead a small existing congregational culture in the mission of this denomination “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”³³ In the process of searching for a “method” of discipleship that would give me the necessary tools to both lead and serve, I became involved with Spiritual Leadership Incorporated (SLI) and 3DM.

Involvement with SLI came about through an invitation from the Director and Assistant Director of Connectional Ministries within the Kentucky Annual Conference to participate in the SLI process as a means of discerning the mission and vision of the Connectional Ministry Teams. Personal involvement with 3DM, or 3D Movements, resulted from a conversation with a church planter and the desperate questions, “What is step one? What is it I need to be doing with this church of approximately 25 worship attendees?” The church planter referred me to Mike Breen’s book, *Building a Discipling Culture* and that text led to a year of online coaching with 3DM coach, Matt Tebbe.

Through involvement with SLI and 3DM, I began to see ways in which these two organizations complimented each other. They have uniquely different processes, yet both are committed to covenant relationships and a generative format. I then became curious as to whether other church leaders had experienced one or both of these organizations and how they

³³ The United Methodist Book of Discipline.

used each organization's specific strategies as a means of training laity and clergy what it means to "make disciples."

Nature and Purpose of the Project

This dissertation is a post-intervention project with the purpose of exploring processes that train both clergy and laity within the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church to see if there are congregations who have experienced multiplication of small covenant groups leading to involvement of persons previously uninvolved with a church body.

I will be looking specifically at churches that:

- Have exclusively used SLI;
- Have exclusively used 3DM;
- Have experienced both processes (SLI & 3DM).

The nature of this project was to search for a successful method of multiplying covenant groups through a mentoring process. I specifically looked for groups that experienced an increased involvement of persons previously unattached to a congregation. Equally important, however, was to note deeper involvement of current membership in covenant relationships that built disciple-making disciples in an ongoing process of multiplication.

Research Questions

Research Question #1

How do those in church leadership positions who have utilized SLI and/or 3DM experience a multiplication of disciples? In other words, what do leaders consider to be the steps or the pathway of that process? My concern in addressing this question was based on the dwindling membership in a significant number of congregations. If church leadership utilized SLI and/or 3DM as a discipleship process, I wanted to note whether they experienced

measurable growth, such as an increased number of small groups of individuals who have committed to a particular process that enabled them to then lead others through the same process.

Where churches utilized SLI, 3DM, or had incorporated strategies of both organizations, I considered whether they had discovered a framework that led to numerical growth based on the multiplication of covenant groups leading into the second or third generations. This would be demonstrated by a lead group multiplying out into two or more second generation groups, followed by this second generation multiplying exponentially into a third generation. Both SLI and 3DM encourage multiplication through participation in a small covenant group structure. If either or both processes are in place, has that multiplication occurred? Are there now existing at the minimum second-generation covenant groups?

The actual definition of “disciple” describes someone who *follows* a person or idea. Belief in something or someone seems to denote faith based on cognitive understanding. A person may agree with what they understand to be true about someone or something in whom they have belief, but there may be no practical application of what it means to *follow* the person or thing in whom they believe. The question for those who say they are *followers* of Jesus Christ is “How are you following him?” In other words, how does discipleship translate into followership so that disciples are continually made? If a discipleship process that demonstrated ongoing multiplication of other disciples could simply be read and studied from a cognitive frame of reference, the abundance of literature and conference options on what it means to be a disciple would imply that every church would be bursting at the seams so to speak as far as worship attendance and participation are concerned. That, however, does not seem to be the case. One may surmise that there is an obvious disconnect between knowledge and praxis.

Research Question #2

What is the framework of reference within the organizations of SLI and 3DM that may be applied throughout the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church regardless of congregation/church size and/or demographics? In other words, can this process be replicated, especially in long-time established church cultures regardless of worship attendance? I would like to discover a process that is applicable for the multiplication of disciple-making disciples regardless of church size and/or demographics. I am looking for a successful process that has crossed all boundaries: large congregations, small congregations, new church plants, and so forth.

Research Question #3

What gaps and/or successes have leadership teams discovered using SLI and/or 3DM?? I would like to discover whether either one of these frameworks was adequate for the multiplication of disciples in and of itself, whether an additional process was integrated in the use of either process, or whether there was a synergy between the two that made them more complete when used together rather than used separately. As church lead teams of clergy and laity are interviewed who have participated in SLI, 3DM or an integration of the two, I will be interested to note specifically whether these two organizations complement each other in regards to the goal of moving congregations from stagnation or decline to new or renewed vitality. Their processes are distinctly different yet appear to be complementary. I want to know whether SLI and 3DM are more likely to increase the number of mentor/apprenticeship relationships when used together rather than as an isolated process or framework. Within congregations that have used SLI and/or 3DM, I will also be curious to see whether church leadership either altered or redesigned these processes to create a more effective tool for multiplying disciples.

Ministry Context for Observing the Phenomenon

The Ministry Context I utilized for my research is defined by the geographical boundaries of the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. The boundaries currently include all counties within the Commonwealth excluding the counties of McCracken, Calloway, Marshall, Ballard, Graves, Carlisle, Hickman, and Fulton, all of which are in the southwestern corner of the commonwealth. These excluded Kentucky counties are part of the Memphis Conference of The United Methodist Church. The Kentucky Annual Conference is currently divided into nine Districts as of the June 2015 Annual Conference.

The attitudes and values of this Conference have Wesleyan roots with a commitment to the mission of the denomination “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”³⁴ The culture is as diverse as its population with a mix of rural, suburban, and metropolitan areas. The Kentucky Annual Conference, however, is predominantly small membership congregations as may be noted on the chart on page 21 of chapter 1.³⁵

Participants

Criteria for Selection

I chose as my criteria for selection clergy persons or congregational staff persons responsible for discipleship within congregations of the Kentucky Annual Conference who have used SLI and/or 3DM with their leadership team.

³⁴ The United Methodist Book of Discipline ¶120.

³⁵ Provided by Spiritual Leadership, Inc. (SLI) for the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church based on statistical data submitted by individual congregations to the Kentucky Annual Conference in their End of the Year Reports. These reports may be viewed electronically by viewing each year’s Conference Journal under the chapter heading “Statistical Tables” at the following address: <http://www.kyumc.org/pages/detail/1531>.

Description of Participants

Participants were clergy. Clergy are defined as those who are fully ordained, commissioned, licensed or supplied to serve in a pastoral role within a church of the Kentucky Annual Conference. They may or may not be serving that congregation full time. Clergy also included ordained deacons. Since this is looking only at clergy who used the processes of either SLI or 3DM, such issues as ethnicity, gender, marital status, educational level were not factors that were addressed.

Ethical Considerations

Participants were asked to sign a consent form (see attachment) explaining steps to maintain confidentiality, how the material was used, and the overall purpose of this project.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation was a survey with space provided for additional comments as needed by participants. The survey looked at how pastors had implemented either SLI, 3DM, or a combination of the two with a small group of people and how that group had been able to replicate the process with others so that it reflected an ongoing process of multiplication.

Reliability and Validity of Project Design

The questions that were asked of research participants directly addressed their involvement with SLI and/or 3DM as well as the research questions outlined in this document. I was looking specifically for a process or discipleship path that can be utilized within any ministry context as a tool to move a person from the initial commitment to be a disciple or follower of Jesus to a disciple who is then able to mentor others in the discipleship process. Validity of the project, therefore, stems from the analytical framework, i.e. how the survey questions related to the research questions as indicated below:

RESEARCH QUESTION	SURVEY QUESTIONS
<i>How do those in church leadership positions who have utilized SLI and/or 3Dm experience a multiplication of disciples?</i>	How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use.
<i>What is the framework of reference within the organizations of SLI and 3DM that may be applied throughout the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church regardless of congregation/church size and/or demographics?</i>	Which processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting? Average Worship Attendance?
<i>What gaps and/or successes have leadership teams discovered using SLI and/or 3DM?</i>	Which of the above are you currently using? Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation's ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the process. What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either SLI or 3DM resources? To a different resource? Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase in the number of individuals who are both being disciple/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else?

Data Collection

Each participant received a survey that addressed their involvement with SLI and/or 3DM. As Tim Sensing quotes Bell, “The main emphasis is on fact-finding, and if a survey is well structured...it can be a relatively cheap and quick way to obtaining information” (qtd. Sensing 116). Questions asked which of the organizations (SLI and 3DM) the person in charge of discipleship had implemented and how the organization(s) had impacted the participants’ congregation.

If participants were involved with both organizations, questions addressed whether their church had or had not noted any complimentary material between the two, and, if so, what that integration looked like. The goal of this or any survey is to “compare, relate one characteristic to another and to demonstrate that certain features exist in certain categories” (Sensing 116). This tool was designed to take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

According to Richard E. Davies, "survey research is the basic counting and tabulation of opinions, knowledge, and objective facts" (Davies 20). That process will be precisely what I will be doing: tabulating opinions, knowledge and objective facts" surrounding involvement in the organizations of SLI and/or 3DM. Surveys as a research tool involves "four methodological concerns: questionnaire design, sampling, adequate questionnaire return, and data analysis" (20).

As Davies rightly notes, the success of a survey as a research tool is only as good as the survey questions. If the survey does not adequately address the research questions proposed in the dissertation, the researcher will have only collected a pile of data that does nothing to answer the heart of his or her research. Just as important, says Davies, is investing in the survey tool. It is an investment of time to assure it is properly designed to fit the needs of the research question. It is, however, also an invention of time and effort on "getting the completed questionnaires

back,” whether that is through self-addressed stamped envelopes, follow-up phone calls, or personal visits.

It would be unrealistic to expect a 100 percent return on surveys, which means the researcher will have to be particularly attentive to bias in the selection of participants. That would allow for generalizations to at least be as representative as possible. One area I took into consideration was the original launch of SLI in Kentucky that had a less than favorable response according to SLI founder, Greg Survant. Participants who participated in SLI during this pilot phase of the organization will have a very different response to survey questions than those who may have begun participation with this organization at a more recent time. To address that concern, the survey will include a space to indicate the date each survey participant began using the process of either SLI or 3DM to note if any negative responses are indicated by the year participation in the organization began.

While sampling is not a major concern of research, Davies does note that attention should be paid to 1) how the sample is drawn (random or otherwise), 2) profile of the sample, and 3) profile of those who failed to return the questionnaire (22). The group who fails to return the survey, according to Davies, also supplies note-worthy information and is worth analysis, i.e. what makes them stand out as a group (23).

The sampling process will be representative of the total number of participants who have utilized SLI and/or 3DM. Since I am familiar with both organizations and the total number of participants within the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church is relatively small, the number surveyed may best be described as a “multi-stage stratified proportion” as mentioned by Edward S. Balian. Referred by Balian as a “more sophisticated approach,” this method uses “known characteristics of the population subjects and select[s] a

sample ... based upon these known strata” (145). Since the survey tool will address participation in SLI, 3DM or a combination of the two, this survey falls under “multi-stage” due to the multiple strata.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the evidence collected involved color-coding the upper right hand corner of returned questionnaires using red for those churches that had used only SLI; blue for those churches that had used only 3DM; orange for those churches who had used both, but returned to an SLI-only approach; green for those churches who used both, but returned to a 3DM-only approach; and purple for those churches who had integrated SLI and 3DM. Each response on returned questionnaires was marked in the right-hand margin with a (+) indicating a favorable response and (-) indicating a negative response.

Review of the Chapter

The sampling group for this study was small. Out of 846 total churches in the Kentucky Annual Conference database, thirty (30) participants were identified who had used at some point either Spiritual Leadership Inc. or 3DM. My hope was that the returned surveys would show conclusively either a slant towards one process, SLI or 3DM, or an adaptation of the two that led to a mentoring process of discipleship with a clear generative process regardless of church size. Every attempt was made to get as high a response to the surveys as possible through repeated invitations as needed to get the best sampling from those identified.

CHAPTER 4

EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

For data collection purposes, I used a survey to explore the processes of Spiritual Leadership, Inc. (SLI) and 3 Dimensional Ministries (3DM) as experienced by clergy persons in the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. I chose SLI and 3DM as the focus for obtaining answers to the research questions due to my involvement with both organizations approximately three years ago. Approximately 13 out of 30 participants invited to complete a survey responded with their input. Of the returned surveys, 23 percent (3) had only affiliated with 3DM; 46 percent (6) had exclusively been affiliated with SLI; 31percent (4) had some affiliation with both SLI and 3DM. Of these participants, two (2) were District Superintendents with the remaining 11 serving at the local church level as a pastor within the Kentucky Annual Conference.

The Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted SLI as a strategic process for revitalization in 2012. SLI was first utilized within the Bishop's Cabinet which, along with the resident Bishop, consists of nine District Superintendents and other Directors of ministries within the conference. District Superintendents may be defined as regional pastors who provide oversight of the churches in the region to which they are appointed. After its beginning with the Bishop's Cabinet, the district superintendents (twelve at the time³⁶) used the SLI process as a tool for creating leadership teams committed to both covenant and a process of strategic planning that leads to measurable results.

³⁶ In 2016, the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church reduced the number of Districts from twelve to nine.

I became involved with 3DM following a conversation with a young colleague who was involved in church planting in northern Kentucky. While attending our Kentucky Annual Conference I asked him these questions: “What is step one? How do you help an existing congregation recapture what it means to be disciples who make disciples?” This colleague introduced me to *Building a Discipling Culture* written by Breen.

Breen, an Anglican priest from England, “pioneered Missional Communities: mid-sized groups of people on mission together” (*Building Inside flap*). His approach turned around the St. Thomas’ Church in Sheffield in the United Kingdom where it became one of the “fastest growing churches in the whole of Europe” (inside flap). Breen brought his missional movement, which he named 3DM, to the United States and made his headquarters in Pawleys Island, SC.

Shortly after my involvement, 3DM officially disbanded as an organization. According to an article published on a blog by Andy Rowell,³⁷ Ben Sternke, Director for Content for 3DM, resigned his position in October 2014. Matt Tebbe, Coaching Associate for 3DM and my coach, left his position in October 2014. Mike Breen, founder of 3DM, stepped down from 3DM and its affiliated organization, The Order of Mission, in January 2015.

The Order of Mission was led by Breen who took the title Senior Guardian of the Order of Mission. Adherents to The Order of Mission vowed to uphold a rule of life that included Breen’s “Lifeshapes” as described in his book, *Building a Discipling Culture*. In a discussion with one survey participant for this dissertation who had utilized both the principles of 3DM and SLI, I asked what happened with 3DM that caused its apparent collapse. The participant’s response was, “3DM needed SLI.”

³⁷Rowell earned his Doctor of Theology at Duke Divinity School, Nov 2016 and is instructor of Ministry Leadership at Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Additional information may be found at http://www.andyrowell.net/andy_rowell/2015/05/notes-on-3dm-and-the-order-of-mission.html

Even with the disbanding of 3DM's headquarters and its primary leadership, the organization's system of missional communities as a form of discipleship formation continues. Learning Communities, large churches that train pastors and their key leadership on 3DM principles, still operate in central Kentucky. As of the writing of this document, there is one of these Learning Communities functioning within the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. I primary purpose in writing this dissertation was to investigate how clergy persons had utilized either or both processes developed by the organizations mentioned above as a tool(s) to develop disciples who were then able to disciple others.

Participants

Clergy who volunteered to participate in this post-intervention case study represented a variety of church sizes ranging from 51-100 in worship attendance to 500-999 in worship attendance. Aside from one predominantly Latino congregation, the remaining participants were primarily made up of people representing Northern European descent. Only one female clergy person participated. Three churches were in the 51-100 range for average worship attendance. Three churches were in the 101-250 range. One church was in the 250-500 range. Two churches were in the 500-999 average worship attendance range. Additionally, two participants were no longer serving in a church setting but were serving as District Superintendents.

The mix of clergy who had utilized either SLI or 3DM or both was homogenous. Three had utilized SLI. Three had utilized 3DM. Four had experienced both SLI and 3DM. The year each church team began implementing either SLI or 3DM varied from the year 2004 to 2016. The average number of generations, groups of people who were replicating the system that church had chosen to implement, was two. One survey was experiencing success to the point that they mentioned "[losing] count" of generations. This survey participant had an average worship

participation in the 251-500 range yet had more than the double the number of leaders/mentors of the next highest response in a church with an average worship attendance of 500-999.

Statistical chart 4.2 is included in the appendices for additional information.

RESEARCH QUESTION #1

How do those in church leadership positions who have utilized SLI and/or 3DM experience a multiplication of disciples? In other words, what do leaders consider to be the steps or the pathway of that process? My concern in addressing this question is based on the dwindling membership in a significant number of congregations. If church leadership is utilizing SLI and/or 3DM as a discipleship process, have they experienced measurable growth, such as an increased number of small groups of individuals who have committed to a process that enables them to then lead others through the same process?

Where churches have utilized SLI, 3DM, or have incorporated strategies of both organizations, I would like to consider whether they have discovered a framework that led to numerical growth based on the multiplication of covenant groups leading into the second or third generations. This would be demonstrated by a lead group multiplying out into two or more second generation groups, followed by this second generation multiplying exponentially into a third generation. Both SLI and 3DM encourage multiplication through participation in a small covenant group structure. If either or both processes are in place, has that multiplication still occurred? Are there now existing at the minimum second-generation covenant groups?

The actual definition of “disciple” describes someone who *follows* a person or idea. Belief in something or someone seems to denote faith based on cognitive understanding. A person may agree with what they understand to be true about someone or something in whom they have belief, but there may be no practical application of what it means to *follow* the person

or thing in whom they believe. The question for those who say they are *followers* of Jesus Christ is “How are you following him?” In other words, how does discipleship translate into followership so that disciples are continually made?

If a discipleship process that demonstrated ongoing multiplication of other disciples could simply be read and studied from a cognitive frame of reference, it would seem with the abundance of literature and conference options on what it means to be a disciple that every church would be bursting at the seams so to speak as far as worship attendance and participation. That, however, does not seem to be the case. One may surmise that there is an obvious disconnect between knowledge and praxis.

DESCRIPTION OF EVIDENCE

3DM has discipleship as its sole focus. As one survey participant described:

Discipleship involves developing greater relationships with the purpose of the mentor multiplying their life into another. That does not mean making a copy of the mentor, but rather a (sic) the disciple living out a set of priorities for life that are the same and that can be manifested in many different ways, thus helping the church care for its members in different ways and reach out to the world in different ways.

Most of the survey participants answered this question in general terms rather than focus on the specific process used by the organization with which they most identified. Some of the responses that were more specific indicate that within 3DM, “the next generation of disciples is disciples having a living example who shares not only the passion for making disciple-makers but also a way of life and the practical know-how about how to make it happen.”

Participants who affiliated with SLI noted the following characteristics of multiplication of disciples: “Multiplication happens as values are passed from one person to another.”

Participants indicated an emphasis on the creation of mission and vision within a team. One participant noted, “In the SLI process of which I’ve been a part, we begin with the understanding

that each participant will create his or her own team. So multiplication is part of the DNA of SLI.” Another participant notes:

At _____ (left blank to honor confidentiality of the research participants) we have been using the SLI process as a way for me (pastor) to invest deeply in the lives of 4 lay leaders. Each of these lay persons have begun and/or attempted to start small groups of their own with varied success, as well as helping teach our Board members what we are learning together. I have seen wonderful growth in each person involved.”

RESEARCH QUESTION #2

Is there a framework of reference within the organizations of SLI and 3DM that may be applied regardless of congregation/church size and/or demographics? In other words, can this process be replicated, especially in long-time established church cultures regardless of worship attendance? The goal will be the discovery of a process that is applicable for the multiplication of disciple-making disciples regardless of church size and/or demographics. I am looking for a successful process that has crossed all boundaries: large congregations, small congregations, new church plants, and so forth.

DESCRIPTION OF EVIDENCE

Survey participants were either Pastors or District Superintendents. Pastors who responded served churches ranging in size from 51-100 to 500-999. Each group, regardless of whether they had affiliated with SLI or 3DM, felt that the organization they chose to use had a process that could impact their congregation’s ability to multiply disciples. In other words, their organization of choice had a usable framework for multiplying disciple-making disciples.

SLI participants mentioned in their process the formation of a Ministry Action Plan or M.A.P. The M.A.P. includes the following for each organization: a mission, core values, current context (perceived and actual), vision, and strategies. The strategy sections also include indicators that the strategy has been met, a point person who will be responsible for seeing that

the strategy is met, and a completion date. Other key structures during team meetings for the formation of ministry leaders is what is referred to as L3 (Loving, Learning, Leading). Glory sightings, a time of sharing impactful encounters with God during the team meeting was also mentioned.

3DM participants included in their process the importance of “huddles” or small groups. A key resource for 3DM leaders appears to be the *Huddle Leader’s Handbook* and *Building a Discipling Culture*, both written by Mike Breen. 3DM survey participants also mentioned Missional Communities, small groups of individuals involved in a mission activity.

RESEARCH QUESTION #3

Have leadership teams discovered gaps and/or successes using SLI and/or 3DM? The primary area of discovery will be whether either one of these frameworks was adequate for the multiplication of disciples in and of itself, whether an additional process was integrated in the use of either process, or whether there was a synergy between the two that made them more complete when used together rather than used separately. As church lead teams of clergy and laity are surveyed who have participated in SLI, 3DM or an integration of the two, it will be interesting to note specifically whether these two organizations complement each other in regards to the goal of moving congregations from stagnation or decline to new or renewed vitality.

Their processes are distinctly different yet appear to be complimentary. A key component for observation of survey data will be whether SLI and 3DM are more likely to increase the number of mentor/apprenticeship relationships when used together rather than as an isolated process or framework. Within congregations that have used SLI and/or 3DM, I will also be

curious to see whether either of these processes were redesigned or altered to create a more effective tool for multiplying disciples.

DESCRIPTION OF EVIDENCE

All participants, other than the two District Superintendents who submitted a survey, altered the process they used in some regard. One participant mentioned utilizing the M.A.P approach to ministry choices and teams from SLI and discipling leaders through the creation of priorities for small group life from 3DM. Those who were currently using SLI mentioned shortening the length of team meetings.

One 3DM participant mentioned not requiring huddle participants “to lead something at the conclusion.” To quote the survey participant’s remarks: “I tell them that that is a primary goal, but not a requirement.” Other 3DM participants mentioned pulling in other disciple-making strategies. Other organizations or resources used by survey participants include: *Introducing Discipleship* by Greg Ogden and *DiscipleShift* materials,³⁸ and materials created by SOMA.³⁹

The ALPHA Course was mentioned by one participant “for creating an environment for seekers and unbelievers to feel safe in asking tough questions and freely expressing doubts with the opportunity for Christ-followers to intentionally form discipling relationships with seekers. Also, Celebrate Recovery,⁴⁰ which has an expectation of discipleship, has been very successful at making new and growing disciples as well as developing new leaders.”

³⁸ *DiscipleShift* is comprised of a collection of materials, but the primary text is authored by Jim Putman, Bobby Harrington, and Robert Coleman.

³⁹ SOMA is a group of churches committed to disciple making and planting churches of missional communities. According to Strong’s Concordance, the Greek word σῶμα, transliterated as *soma*, means “body” often used to refer to the body of Christ.

⁴⁰ Celebrate Recovery was developed by Saddleback Church, a multi-site, multi-national congregation. It uses the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and similar programs along with a relevant scripture and incorporates eight principles based on the Beatitudes. The purpose is to “offer participants a clear path of salvation and discipleship; bringing hope, freedom,

Summary of Major Findings

A summary of major findings is an accumulation of literature and biblical review as well as information gleaned from surveys:

First Finding

Jesus had a method for gathering his disciples and introducing them to a life of formation that is reproducible regardless of church size or other demographics. Congregational size did not seem to impact which system or framework was utilized (SLI or 3DM); although survey participants of the two largest congregations used exclusively 3DM. District Superintendents used SLI exclusively. Follow-up questions to ask these two larger congregational pastors are if they have: 1) an overall strategy/framework for understanding culture/context/mission/vision; 2) a process for strategy development and execution; 3) a model that is top down (clergy driven) or bottom up (laity driven); 4) lead/lag measures to track success; and 5) a system/process to address continuous improvement.

Second Finding

Based on a biblical review, Jesus clearly had a method for training his disciples in what it looked like to be citizens of the kingdom of God. Each organization felt they had a workable model for training participants to be disciple-making disciples, yet (other than the District Superintendents) several participants mentioned a need to modify or add to the framework of the process they most used. What interested me here is that none of the organizations mentioned a specific step-by-step process or pathway that they implemented. Nothing that they revealed in the surveys is prescriptive, yet they are inherently doing what Jesus did.

sobriety, healing, and the opportunity to give back one day at a time through our one and only true Higher Power, Jesus Christ” (CR web). Additional information may be found at <http://www.celebraterecovery.com/index.php/about-us/twelve-steps>

Very few participants who had experienced both SLI and 3DM merged the two processes. Those participants who had used 3DM, however, sometimes pull in other resources. SLI participants, while they did not use 3DM, did implement some form of discipleship process as part of their Ministry Action Plan or M.A.P. In other words, the two organizations in question were not, in most instances, merged by the churches who used them, but they did merge other similar processes.

Third Finding

Jesus had a method for teaching his disciples how to first follow him and then grow to a point where they could then teach others. The fastest growing congregation used SLI exclusively with only cultural adaptations to the process. Yet, during a follow-up interview, I learned they had a clear method for training disciples to multiply other disciples. The pastor had discovered Lev Vygotsky's "Gradual Release of Responsibility" model from another source other than 3DM and was not aware of the original source. This congregation adapted only to address their Hispanic context, such as less slides in the power point presentations provided by SLI, "more intensive prayer and fasting, as well as the use of Spanish books for literature reading." This is now a congregation of 60 house churches utilizing the SLI process with 50 percent of their congregation somehow involved in this specific discipling process.

Review of the Chapter

The implications seem to be that SLI and 3DM are both strategies that clergy are using with some degree of success to train disciple-making disciples in the Kentucky Annual Conference for fulfilling the United Methodist mission: “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” The utilization of both organizations as a process or framework, either prescriptive or adaptive, seems to be yielding results for the churches using them. Participants, however, had a distinct preference for the process or framework they implemented.

The sampling group was small, in part because implementation of either SLI or 3DM was fairly recent for a majority of survey participants. Once a process has been adapted that yields results for making disciples and has time to seep into the culture of the church, it appears to yield results which reinforce the chosen process. It will be interesting, however, to compare this sampling group with other churches in the Kentucky Annual Conference to see whether there is a measurable difference in growth between those churches who use either SLI or 3DM with those who have no specific framework or process in place or who use something entirely different.

A question I did not ask of the survey participants is if they felt the process they used was prescriptive or adaptive. If they identified their process as prescriptive, did it provide a system for understanding culture/context and mission/vision, or are these elements built in to the prescription? If they identified their process as adaptive, was there any system in place to assure that a process of training disciple-making disciples was in place? Having participated in both SLI and 3DM coaching, between personal experience and what I have read for the literature review, I believe I will be able to address these questions in the content included in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

SLI had both the oldest starting date and the earliest starting date with 3DM beginning mostly in 2013. If the dates are an indication, SLI apparently had a period in Kentucky when it was less well received and is now making a comeback. Now that all the District Superintendents are immersed in SLI, it may be that it has begun to filter down into the local churches. Questions to ask the two District Superintendents who participated are if they feel the reception of SLI is improving in this Annual Conference and if it is dependent on church size or whether they already have a system for strategic planning in place.

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of Chapter

I clearly remember the first funeral I was asked to officiate. The grandfather of a young lady we knew had died and no member of the family regularly went to church. Other members of the family had been affiliated with a church at different points in their life, and the widow was “fairly certain” her husband had been baptized within the Lutheran denomination, but there was not a pastor around who knew the deceased on a first name basis. They did not, however, want just anyone to do his service; and since I had met him and knew the rest of the family, I was asked to preside over his memorial service.

As a new pastor, however, I was in a quandary. Getting wet with the waters of baptism is one thing. It is an outward symbol that testifies to an inward change demonstrated by a living faith, a desire to follow Jesus and live as a citizen of the kingdom of God. What sort of memorial sermon does one preach when there is no way of knowing what the deceased person believed? I called one of my favorite mentors, the Rev. Dr. Jack Brewer, and asked that very question. His response: “You can’t preach someone into heaven, and you can’t preach them into hell. All you can do is give them Jesus.” What I did not realize was how this mentor’s advice for preaching a funeral would end up being the reason I made the decision to head back to seminary.

When I arrived at my first appointment I would say I arrived as a decent preacher. I was trained well to exegete scripture by looking at the cultural and historical context of the text, listening to the unique voice of the biblical author, as well as listening to the voices of other biblical authors throughout the entire grand narrative of scripture we refer to as the Old and New

Testaments. I naturally have a pastor's heart; so hospital visits and visits with shut-ins were an easy fit in my new vocation. What I have never had is a sense of direction.

Probably my biggest fear in becoming an ordained pastor was not weekly sermons; it was getting lost on my way to a hospital visit! Fortunately for me, this new vocation and portable global positioning systems came into being at the same time! As long as I had my Garmin, I was fine. I am, without a doubt, GPS dependent! That worked fine for visiting people at a set geographical destination. What I soon discovered as a new pastor was that I also needed a GPS device for helping people arrive at a predetermined *spiritual* destination.

The people sitting in the pews of this first appointment all had been baptized. They showed up for church on Sunday morning. They gave generously for the church's offering. A few of them occasionally came to midweek bible studies. They did not, however, have a clue how to live as disciples of Jesus Christ who helped lead others to becoming disciples of Jesus Christ. No system of multiplication was in place, no map that told them how to get from point A to point B. As Pastor Jack said, I could not preach them into heaven and I could not preach them into hell. I had to give them Jesus.

As Jesus prepared his disciples for his death and resurrection, he assured them that while they could not follow him right now, they would one day come to join him in his Father's house where he was preparing a place for them: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" (John 14:2-5).

Thomas' question was the same as mine and, I am sure, of countless other people sitting in church pews around the world. If we were all sitting at point A and Jesus is waiting to connect with us at point B, we need a global positioning device that will show us how to get there. Jesus told the disciples they already knew the way: Jesus said to Thomas, "I am the way, and the truth,

and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him” (John 14:6).

“I am the way.” Thomas a Kempis paraphrased these passages from the book of John in his book, *The Imitation of Christ*: “Follow Me. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Without the Way, there is no going. Without the Truth, there is no knowing. Without the Life, there is no living. I am the Way which you must follow, the Truth which you must believe, the Life for which you must hope” (219).

The “way” is doing what Jesus does, going where Jesus goes, and that frightens most people just a tad. So, we began to hire pastors to do that “Jesus stuff” for us. We were fine with Jesus in our hearts, as long as he stayed out of our social calendars and work places and our homes. We became comfortable meeting up with Jesus on Sunday morning or Sunday evening; we even sacrificed our Wednesday evenings for a season, but what we became accustomed to doing was allowing Jesus to follow *us* to the places we chose to invite him. We were not following Him!

Give that system of belief and practice to permeate the DNA of individuals and churches over enough generations and before long there is a well ingrained system in place and few people left who remember what it means for us to follow Jesus rather than Jesus following us. Pastors become professionals trained in that same dysfunctional system of belief. They preach the word, visit the sick, and tend to the administrative tasks of the church. The people in the pews become very comfortable with these “professional Christians” who serve them. They become consumers of the goods and services provided by the church.

Somewhere along the line, people have their hearts, as John Wesley described, “strangely warmed.” We come to the realization that something more is involved to this believing in Jesus,

but no one knows what that “something more” entails. When I arrived at my first appointment with what I thought was a well-laid plan for church growth, I realized that it was not growth in numbers that they needed. They needed someone to show them what it looked like to follow Jesus. I put my master’s thesis on a shelf and began asking the following questions: What is step one? What is the first thing I need to do to help this church reclaim what it means to follow Jesus by making disciples who make disciples?

The first person I approached was a young church planter in the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. We were at our Kentucky Annual Conference when I asked the questions mentioned above. He wrote something on the corner of a service bulletin and handed to me. It said, *Building a Discipling Culture* by Mike Breen. The young church planter said, “Read this and then call me.” I went to my hotel room at the end of the day, downloaded a digital copy of the book and read it straight through, and then I called my young colleague. I felt as if all the answers I had been looking for were in this text. My initial reaction was partially correct.

That text led to a coaching relationship with 3DM⁴¹ and, eventually, a coaching relationship with SLI.⁴² Both happened right before I began a doctoral program for the sole purpose of discovering “step one” and the steps following for leading people on the same path Jesus took his disciples before he ascended into heaven. This document is a summary of that journey.

⁴¹ 3DM is an abbreviation for *3 Dimensional Ministries*, most recently changed to *3 Dimensional Movements*. For additional information, please see <https://3dmovements.com/>

⁴² SLI is an abbreviation for *Spiritual Leadership Inc.* For additional information, please see <http://spiritual-leadership.org/>

Major Findings

First Finding

Jesus had a method for gathering his disciples and introducing them to a life of formation that can be implemented regardless of church size or other demographics.

The strength of Spiritual Leadership Incorporated is its method of team formation and process of strategic planning. After 3DM collapsed as an organization a couple of years ago,⁴³ I asked a colleague who was familiar with both SLI and 3DM what he thought the reason was for their organizational failure. His response was: “3DM needed SLI.” SLI emphasizes teams over committees or small groups as a place “where people live life deeply with one another in pursuit of Christ and in pursuit of a common mission or purpose.”⁴⁴ Each participant on the team shares the responsibility and ownership of the produced results.

Individuals become part of a team that will, initially, commit to meeting eight hours a month. During that eight-hour meeting, the team will: (1) form a team covenant which includes confidentiality, prayer, participation, and other elements that speak specifically to each team’s make-up; and (2) commit to the L3 process of Loving (worship, glory sightings,⁴⁵ spiritual formation⁴⁶), Learning (building community and covenant within the team. reading and discussing relevant texts, benchmarking, and discovering “best practices”), and Leading (developing a Ministry Action Plan, communicating the message to the organization/church, homework).

⁴³ For additional information, see letter from Mike Breen regarding the changes in the structure of 3DM at <https://3dmovements.com/decentralization-3dm/>

⁴⁴ Quote attributed to Greg Survant, founding member and managing partner of SLI.

⁴⁵ “Glory sightings” is a time of sharing personal experiences of God by individuals on the team. The phrase is based on John 17:22.

⁴⁶ Formation question: “What action(s) do I intend to take to grow deeper into the likeness of Jesus Christ?” PowerPoint presentation provided by SLI as part of their training process for participants receiving coaching or those going through training to be an SLI coach.

After building a team covenant, the team begins the work of describing their context and values. Values are those things they feel are important and the values the organization or church inadvertently holds, both negative and positive, through specific practices. The team then completes substantive work on demographics that helps provide accurate information on context. With covenant, context, and values in place, the team focuses on answering the questions, “Why do we exist?” (mission) and “How do we envision our world in the future” (vision)? With those elements in place, the team focuses on the strategies that will best help them close the gap from mission to vision. The primary goal is always the team formation, abiding by a covenant, and working towards a generative plan that will make disciples of Jesus Christ.

3DM also has a strategy for building teams through a process called a “huddle.” The huddle is the term they give to a team of people invited by a leader who has previously experienced being in a huddle. The primary aim is not the huddle itself, but the process of spiritual formation within the context of a huddle that emphasizes sharing life together with high challenge/accountability and invitation/living into our identity as a child of God.

The huddles spend time orienting themselves around the idea of *kairos*.⁴⁷ 3DM defines *kairos* as a moment “when the eternal God breaks into your circumstances with an event that gathers some loose ends of your life and knots them together in his hands....” *Kairos* events can be positive or negative [and]...can be recognized by the impact they leave on you” (Breen 120-21). These impactful moments, revealed by God, open up spaces for huddle participants and the leader to offer challenge and/or invitation to move towards a higher level of discipleship.

What we can learn from the model presented by Jesus is how to choose our team or huddle. Jesus did not choose the most experienced person of the current theological teachings.

⁴⁷ *Kairos*, according to Merriam Webster, is a Greek word meaning “opportunity.” (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/kairos>).

He did not choose the person who tithed the most to the church coffers. He chose people who had been revealed to him by the Father. He went up on a mountain alone and he prayed (Luke 6:12-16).

Once he chose his disciples, Jesus spent an incredible amount of time investing in his “team.” They did not meet for an hour once a month. They did life together. They dined together in each other’s homes (Matthew/Levi: Matt. 9:10; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32; Capernaum: Matt. 18:1-5; Mark 9:33; Luke 9:46-48). They had time away from the crowds to sit at the feet of Jesus for focused times of teaching on mountainsides (Matt. 5:1ff; 6:19; Luke 11:1ff) and in the temple (Mark 12:41ff; Luke 10:45-47). Their times together were not legislative meetings; they were times to follow in the footsteps of their Rabbi, who just happened to be the Savior of the world, and begin to learn how to abide in him as he abided in the Father.

The best strategies can go horribly wrong if we have the wrong people on the team. Not only do we end up with a dysfunctional team, but our primary goal will be sidetracked as we deal with the issues of dysfunction. Patrick Lencioni provides an excellent resource on team building. It is not a theological text or even a Christian text, however, Lencioni’s business model for team formation is foundational for identifying who should be on one’s team. Lencioni identifies the ideal team player as someone who is “humble, hungry, and smart.” It is important to note, however, that no one stays in the mode of “humble/hungry/smart” 100 percent of the time.

The author describes these traits as characteristics that are “developed and maintained through life experiences and personal choices at home and at work” (Lencioni, *Ideal* 165).

When team members are adequately strong in each of these areas...they’ll be more likely to be vulnerable and build trust, engage in productive but uncomfortable conflict with team members, commit to group decisions even if they initially disagree, hold their peers accountable when they see performance

gaps that can be addressed, and put the results of the team ahead of their own need.⁴⁸

Team members who do not have all three traits will take more energy from the leader and the team.

The Ideal Team Player is an offshoot of one of Patrick Lencioni's earlier books on team dysfunction. This text is another one of Lencioni's leadership fables dealing with the complexity of teams and why even the best of teams often struggle. Dysfunctional teams have: 1) an absence of trust; 2) a fear of conflict; 3) a lack of commitment; 4) an avoidance of accountability; and 5) an inattention to results. The opposite side of the coin includes: 1) trust, 2), engagement in unfiltered conflict around ideas, 3) commitment to decisions and plans of action, 4) ability to hold each other accountable for delivering against those plans, and 5) a focus on the achievement of collective results (*Five* 188-90). As Lencioni admits, the process sounds simple, however, "it is extremely difficult because it requires levels of discipline and persistence that few teams can muster" (190).

Both SLI and 3DM include similar elements in their team building models either through the development of a covenant (SLI), or through regular times of sharing in *kairos* moments with high challenge and high invitation (3DM). The language 3DM uses for identifying its "ideal team player" is the "person of peace" (Breen, *Building* 376). The key scripture here is found in the gospel according to Luke: "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you" (Luke 10:5-6). In Breen's words, the Person of Peace is: 1) "one who is prepared to hear the message of the kingdom and the King;" and, 2) "someone God has prepared for that specific time" (381).

⁴⁸ Graphic is provided on *The Ideal Team Player* in section titled "Charts."

The epistles also demonstrate this principle of identifying the person willing to hear the message whom God has prepared in advance. In the account of Paul's travels from the book of Acts, he mentions walking on his way to a place of prayer when he encounters a group of women praying by the river. A woman from Thyatira by the name of Lydia was there among the women and stayed to listen to Paul, Silas, and Timothy. "The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said" and "she and her household were baptized" (Acts 16:14-15). She was specifically prepared by God "for that specific time" to "hear the message of the kingdom and the King" (Breen, *Building* 376)

Sometimes an extraordinary event prepares the "person of peace" to "hear the message of the kingdom and the King" (Breen, *Building* 376). This was the case of the jailer in the story following Lydia's. After Paul exorcized a slave girl from a spirit of divination, her angered owners had Paul and Silas thrown into prison and the jailer was given strict instructions "to keep them securely" (Acts 16:16ff). At midnight as Paul and Silas led their fellow prisoners in a time of worship, there was an earthquake that "shook the foundations of the prison." The jailer found the prison doors opened and everyone's chains unfastened, and understandably thought everyone had escaped. He was prepared to throw himself on his sword rather than face the magistrates who had charged him with overseeing that nothing went awry.

"But Paul shouted in a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.' The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, 'Sir, what must I do to be saved?'" (Acts 16:28ff). Paul's proclamation moved Lydia. The power of God moved the jailer. Opportunities, such as with Lydia and the jailer, also happen when we are present in the ways we model how Jesus would act and speak, in passing relationship, in permanent relationships (family and close friends), as we prepare people

who have previously responded as a person of peace, and as we are “spiritually perceptive to situations and circumstances, as well as to individuals” (Breen, *Building* 389-400).⁴⁹

SLI uses different language, but the same biblical examples apply. SLI focuses on identifying the person with “shining eyes,” a phrase borrowed from conductor Benjamin Zander in his work with young instrumentalists.⁵⁰ Zander inspires excellence and looks for shining eyes that lets him know there is an inner passion waiting to be unleashed. In making ourselves available, using any of the examples 3DM poses for identifying persons of peace (Presence, Passing relationships, Permanent relationship, Proclamation, Preparation, Power, Perception), we will note people whose eyes seem to light up in the course of conversation. Somewhere along the line, a seed was planted; God has prepared them for this moment in time. They are ready to be part of a team.

In sum, Jesus had a method for gathering his disciples and introducing them to a life of formation. Jesus not only understood the importance of building the right team, but how vitally important it was to teach his disciples what it meant to be in relationship to God. He taught them how to pray (Matt. 6:9ff; Luke 11:2-4). He taught them how to live the law not as a means unto itself, but as an expression of their relationship with God as Father (Matt. 12:1-8; Mark 2:23–28; Luke 6:1–5). He taught them how to treat their neighbor (Luke 10:29ff) and each other (John 15:12-17). A committed team grounded in practices of spiritual formation is necessary before moving on to the next step.

⁴⁹ For additional information, see Breen’s chapter 13 on “Relational Mission: Perceiving the Person of Peace.”

⁵⁰ The TED talk of Benjamin Zander may be viewed at http://www.ted.com/talks/benjamin_zander_on_music_and_passion

Second Finding

Jesus had a method for training his disciples in what it looked like to be citizens of the kingdom of God.

In April of 2011, Eric Foley, blog author of *Do the Word*, wrote the following entry:

Jesus had 12 disciples, but guess what he never did? He never divided them up into specialties. He does not say, ‘Andrew, you will cook the meal and John will do the evangelism and Peter will do the healing.’ He trains them *all* to do evangelism and healing and each of the other works of mercy. And the reason why he trains them this way is so that each of them can serve as a picture or an image of Him.⁵¹

Somewhere along the line we devolved into the role of pastor as professional Christian. The role of congregants, at least within the United Methodist tradition, became a process of baptism as the ticket to heaven, and confirmation (if our youth ever make it that far) as an end of the journey—proclamation that we have arrived at full maturity as a member of the Church.

We put seasoned adults through spiritual gift surveys to discover their strengths and weaknesses, and completely forget to remind them that *every* follower of Jesus Christ is called to go forth announcing, to those who do not yet know it, that the kingdom of God is in their midst. The reminder is in the membership vows of the denomination, but over the centuries a vow has lost its power. Every person, who chooses to follow our Savior-Rabbi, is responsible to reach the point where we can be a rabbi to someone else, to be the person who mentors them to the point where they are then ready to multiply the followers of Christ along the same path taught to us by our Savior.

The process in both SLI and 3DM is similar. SLI uses terms like “engage” and “connect,” part of the discipleship strategy of the United Methodist Church in Kentucky along with “equip” and “send.” 3DM uses phrases like “missional communities” and “families on mission.” The

⁵¹ For additional information, see post by Eric Foley at <http://dotheword.org/2011/12/09/specialist-discipleship/>

goals of both are the same: spiritually formed people living missionally as citizens of the kingdom of heaven rather than as consumers (Rendle 31). If we are to regain the mission of Jesus Christ, we will have to make the transition from consumers to citizens.

Gil Rendle focuses on this quality of citizenship:

Consumers are passive and dependent. They wait for the community to meet their needs. They follow the rules because accommodating what has been and receiving what is offered is the safest path, no matter where it is going. Citizens are different. Citizens are those people who serve and hold themselves accountable for the whole of the enterprise. Rather than seek their part of the resource pie, they focus on the need, the intent, and the purpose of the whole community, the whole organization, or the whole institution. Citizens hold themselves accountable to move the community, organization, or institution ahead even, if need be, with personal discomfort, risk, or cost (31).

Our church pews and, yes, our pulpits, are seemingly filled with well-intentioned consumers rather than citizens. The transition from consumer to citizen, however, may need to begin at an even higher level, the Annual Conference structure.

Jesus immersed his disciples in kingdom living through continual teaching moments about who will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:1ff)⁵², and through the ways we love God and love others. He summarized all of this in the Great Commandment. When a lawyer trained as a Pharisee questioned Jesus as to which of the laws was the greatest, Jesus responded, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matt. 22:34ff).⁵³ In sum, Jesus had a method for training his disciples in what it looked like to be citizens of the kingdom of God.

⁵² See also Mark 9:50 and Luke 4:34-35.

⁵³ See also Mark 12:28-34 and Luke 10:25-28.

Blogger Eric Foley summarizes the Greatest Commandment in this manner: “Hearing the word – loving God – is about our own internal spiritual development. Doing the word – loving neighbor – is about our external ministry or the ways we act in the world” (blog). John Wesley referred to these as Means of Grace, “ways God works invisibly in disciples,” divided into works of piety and works of mercy (UMC web). Both works of piety and works of mercy each have a communal (things we do as a faith community) and an individual (things we do on our own) component.⁵⁴

Works of piety include the individual practices of reading, meditating and studying the scriptures, prayer, fasting, regularly attending worship, healthy living, and sharing our faith with others. Communal practices include regularly sharing in the sacraments, Christian conferencing (accountability to one another), and Bible study. Works of mercy include the individual practices of doing good works, visiting the sick, visiting those in prison, feeding the hungry, and giving generously to the needs of others. Communal practices include seeking justice, ending oppression and discrimination, and addressing the needs of the poor.⁵⁵

The United Methodist website states in its article “Our Legacy” the following:

Methodism started as a movement to inspire and train disciples for Christian living and to spread scriptural holiness across the land. John Wesley, our founder, taught that Christian living was to practice the means of grace and that scriptural holiness was the combination of personal holiness (a transformation of the heart) and social holiness (a transformation of the world) (UMC web).

Based on current congregational statistics, our training may need to be revamped.

⁵⁴ Graphic provided in index.

⁵⁵ For additional information, please see The United Methodist Church website article “The Wesleyan Means of Grace” at <http://www.umc.org/how-we-serve/the-wesleyan-means-of-grace>

Third Finding

Jesus had a method for teaching his disciples how to first follow him and then grow to a point where they could then teach others.

What 3DM does well is to name the process of leadership development and provide a language for discipleship that is simple enough for the least skilled person and profound enough for the academic. “Simple profundity” is the term my 3DM coach, Matt Tebbe, introduced me to when he first described the language of shapes. I doubt, in the instance of the leadership development process, that Mike Breen fully understood what it was he had “borrowed.”

The language of shapes created by 3DM is a teaching tool that incorporates a key piece of scripture with a strategy in their spiritual formation process and then connects that scripture with a geometric shape. The purpose of the shape is to help the huddle⁵⁶ participant remember the scripture and the connected teaching. The scripture is primary with the shape being the tool used to reinforce the learning. What it can be, however, is a bit too geometric for some people. One survey participant mentioned in a private conversation that a person they introduced to the shape language of 3DM said it felt too much like high school geometry and they never liked geometry!

One particular shape, however, is noteworthy: the leadership square. The leadership square describes both the leader’s style and the disciple’s style as the relationship matures in the level of dependency by the disciple upon the leader. Breen’s square is divided into four stages. The first stage of the disciple is defined by a high level of confidence, but a low level of competence. They have been called to follow Jesus without any experience for what they will be doing.

⁵⁶ A “huddle” refers to a small group of individuals in an intentional relationship with a coach/leader in the 3DM process of discipleship.

Stage one is not a “consensus-style leadership.” Jesus is not trying “to get any of these fishermen to agree with his strategy and tactics. He simply tells them to “follow him” (Mark1:15-20). He does not call for a vote on his teaching of the kingdom” (Breen, *Building* 235). In sum, Jesus had a method for teaching his disciples how to first follow him and then grow to a point where they could then teach others.

Leadership, at this point, is completely by example. This stage takes both firmness and confidence on the part of the leader: “Resist the urge to endlessly explain what you are doing or to get feedback from those following. Lay out your plan and stick with it. If people want to follow you, they will. If not, they can get on board somewhere else” (Breen, *Building* 240). The leader/disciple relationship is categorized as “I do. You watch.” The chart below, based on Breen’s work, shows the level of dependence by the disciple:

STAGE 1	
DISCIPLE STYLE D1: Confident and Incompetent	LEADER STYLE⁵⁷ L1: Directive
High enthusiasm	High direction
High confidence	High example
Low experience	Low consensus
Low competence	Low explanation

The stage two disciple is beginning to feel some apprehension about the mission or the skills being modeled. This stage is the point where Jesus continues to be primarily a leader, but he begins to offer opportunities to the disciples to help; he moves to a coaching role: “Do not be afraid, little flock...” (Luke 12:32ff).

Stage two leadership takes a larger investment of the leader’s time to combat the low confidence of the disciples. The disciples are overwhelmed and vulnerable. Many disciples, says,

⁵⁷ Each of the following charts on the respective roles between a leader and a disciple are built upon information taken from Breen’s text, *Building a Discipling Culture*, chapter 9.

Breen, will continue to bounce between stage one and stage two. Until they can allow God “to take [them] through the vulnerability of D2, [they] choose to ignore it and go back to the feelings [they] had in the D1 phase.”

Leadership at this juncture is extremely important. Without a “Visionary/Coach” the disciples will end up in a cycle of enthusiasm and despair, “with the two coming at ever closer intervals” (Breen, *Building* 247). The leader must themselves be grounded in the stages and be prepared to offer increasing amounts of “time, vision, and grace.” Otherwise, the disciples will never progress to the next stage. The leader must descend into the pit of despair with the disciples that are going through D2 and guide them to the next stage. The leader/disciple relationship is categorized as “I do. You help.”

STAGE 2	
DISCIPLE STYLE D2: Unenthusiastic and Incompetent	LEADER STYLE L2: Visionary/Coach
Low enthusiasm	High direction
Low confidence	High example
Low experience	High consensus
Low competence	High explanation

Each stage represents a crucial turning point in the leader/disciple relationship. Stage 3 is critical, however, in its need to begin preparing the disciples to do the work of the leader without the leader’s presence. The disciples are feeling a special camaraderie with the leader. The relationship is much more informal. The group, leader and disciples, is functioning like a team with lower direction from the leader and a focus on consensus.

In John 15 Jesus says, “I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father” (John 15:15). The disciples’ feelings of renewed confidence may take on a certain level of anxiety. The difference is they have had experience

with the leader that has demonstrated measurable success. They know what to do, but they will have to become comfortable living what they have learned with less direction from the leader. This stage is a turning point if they are to ever progress to the level of disciples who make disciples.

“When disciples are in stage three,” Breen says, “the concept that sets them free is ‘God is in charge’” (256). The mistake many leaders make is beginning in this stage of high consensus. The disciples must go through the first two stages “before they have the experience and vision to make their opinions worth considering” (260). The leader/disciple relationship is categorized as “You do. I’ll help.”

STAGE 3	
DISCIPLE STYLE D3: Growing Confidence	LEADER STYLE L3: Pastoral/Consensus
Increasing enthusiasm	Lower direction
Growing experience	High consensus
Intermittent confidence	High discussion
Growing competence	High accessibility

Stage four is characterized by an ever-increasing reduction in the presence of the leader. Jesus is taken from the disciples. He is brutally crucified. He is buried. He is miraculously raised from the dead. He is back, but as the resurrected Lord. He is not hanging around with the disciples in times of intense leadership training; he is popping up from time to time in unexpected places. “He is reducing their hours of contact with him,” says Breen, “because he is now delegating authority. He is giving them the job he had done; they are to become his representatives” (261).

Before Jesus ascends into heaven, he gives his closest followers their commission: “All authority has been given me ... go” (Matt. 28:18-20). Their job is to now go out into the world and do what he has done, what he has taught them to do with decreasing dependence on his presence. The leader/disciple relationship is categorized as “You do. I’ll watch.”

STAGE 4	
DISCIPLE STYLE D4: The End Is in Sight	LEADER STYLE L4: Delegation
High enthusiasm	Low direction
High confidence	High consensus
High experience	Low example
High competence	High explanation

When I read this chapter, I was captivated by its “simple profundity,” the phrase I first heard from my 3DM coach, Matt Tebbe. It had been there all along, modeled by Jesus, preserved in scripture. My question became, “Did Breen come up with this on his own? Who, other than Christ, was the originator of this leadership plan that so closely mirrors the way Jesus related to his disciples.”

In Breen’s four stages of leadership development, the concept of “I do. You watch;” “I do. You help;” “You do. I help;” “You do. I watch” popped up in internet searches by numerous pastors describing either their leadership model or their process for developing disciples who are then prepared to disciple others.⁵⁸ No one, however, quoted a source. No one credited, in the references I could investigate, the developer of this method of learning or teaching that matches so well with scriptural accounts of the interactions Jesus had with his disciples. Then I reached into a reservoir I had not tapped since becoming a pastor—my background in education, specifically, educational theory on how children learn.

The model of “I do. You watch;” “I do. You help;” “You do. I help;” “You do. I watch” comes directly from the research of cognitive psychologist, Lev S. Vygotsky, on the *Zone of Proximal Development*. “The Zone of Proximal Development,” according to Vygotsky, “defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will

⁵⁸ See post by Powell and his review of the book *Exponential* by Dave Ferguson at <http://www.afaithtoliveby.com/2011/02/07/the-five-steps-of-leadership-development/>

mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state The actual developmental level characterizes mental development retrospectively, while the ‘zone of proximal development characterizes mental development prospectively’ (33).

Vygotsky’s research helped to define three definitive stages of learning: what children are both developmentally and mentally incapable of doing, what they can do with assistance, and what they are able to do independently. What they are capable of doing with assistance is what Vygotsky terms the “Zone of Proximal Development.” “Learning,” says Vygotsky, “is not development; however, properly organized learning results in mental development and sets in motion a variety of developmental processes that would be impossible apart from learning” (35). Learning and development are never accomplished in parallel fashion nor in equal measure. It is far more complex than that notion suggests. This process of learning “awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child’s independent developmental achievement” (35).

Pearson and Gallagher expanded on Vygotsky’s research and developed the framework known as “the gradual release of responsibility” for reading comprehension. The components of this practice involve four steps: 1) The teacher models all four tasks of reading comprehension; 2) the teacher poses a question and answers it while allowing the students to discover the evidence and give the reasoning for how to get from the evidence to the answer; 3) the teacher takes responsibility for posing the question and finding the evidence while encouraging the

students to provide the answer and give the reasoning for how to get from the evidence to the answer; and 4) the students are responsible for all the steps except for posing the question.⁵⁹

Ministry Implications of the Findings

The ministry implications have the potential to transform not only churches, but also districts and conferences within The United Methodist Church. The linchpin⁶⁰ is alignment of mission, regardless of size or scope of ministry. The United Methodist Church Book of Discipline states that our mission is “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (BOD ¶120). Conferences, districts, or individual churches need no other mission statement. The strategies and the wording of the vision (“Where we want to be”) may change depending on context, but the mission has already been given to us. This is our “wildly important goal,” the “war” we are all striving to win (4DX).

This goal will take a culture shift across the conference. Every district, every church, will have to begin the strategic work of focusing on building teams after the model of Christ. It sounds simplistic, but in this technology driven culture we will have to learn to be invitational; we will have to invite people into our lives and begin modeling, as Jesus did, what it looks like to live as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. “I do. You watch; I do. You help; You do. I help; You do. I watch” is an intentional mentoring model gradually releasing responsibility from the mentor to the mentee.

⁵⁹ The four tasks of reading Comprehension posed in the article by Pearson and Gallagher are: (a) Posing a question, (b) answering it, (c) finding evidence, and (d) giving the reasoning for how to get from the evidence to the answer. See Pearson and Gallagher’s article, “The Instruction of Reading Comprehension,” page 38.

⁶⁰ A “linchpin” is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as either “a person or thing vital to an enterprise or organization” or “a pin passed through the end of an axle to keep a wheel in position.”

In a conversation with my father-in-law, Noble Stallons⁶¹, I learned that this “gradual release of responsibility” is the preferred model of organizations that utilize apprentices, such as ALBAT.⁶² ALBAT describes apprenticeship as “an opportunity for inexperienced individuals to learn a career skill through actual ‘hands-on’ training – not just reading about it in a book” (ALBAT Web). Classroom learning is still part of the process, but skills are primarily honed through practical application with an experienced journeyman lineman.⁶³ ALBAT Apprentices, according to their website, “learn ‘how’ on the job and ‘why’ in the classroom” (Web). According to Mr. Stallons, this is a “hear, see, do” approach that recognizes the advantages of both classroom experience and field experience under the tutelage of an experienced mentor.

Considering that the “gradual release of responsibility” noted by educational theorists and the process of apprenticeship used by industries around the globe are strongly comparable to the method Jesus used in teaching his disciples, the Church may want to pause and take note. Using this strategy first recorded in scripture across the Annual Conference as a tool to focus others on developing the dispositions of abiding in Christ, kingdom living, and pointing others to God through Christ may lead to the renewal for which the Church has been praying. I believe it would be transformational.

⁶¹ Mr. Noble Stallons carries his journeyman ticket signifying he has gone through the 4-year apprenticeship training and is certified as a journeyman lineman. He served 4 years as an instructor of apprentices with American Line Builders through NCEA (National Electrical Contractors Association); 4 years as Training Coordinator for ALBAT and 4 years with ALBAT as their Director.

⁶² ALBAT is an acronym for *American Line Builders Apprenticeship Training*. Their primary function is to train “individuals in the skills of performing outside electrical construction and utility work.” For additional information, please see their website at <http://www.albat.org/aboutalbat.html>.

⁶³ According to an interview with Noble Stallons, a “journeyman lineman” is someone who has previously served as an apprentice and is now able to perform the required work without a mentor.

Moving to a team framework would also mean moving our congregations from the mindset of a consumer to the mindset of a citizen with full responsibility in fulfilling the mission. It would transform the role of pastor as employee/professional Christian to pastor as team member. It would return our denomination to its roots as a movement rather than an institution. Our pastors would have to coach their leadership on how to name their team dysfunction or do the tough work of prayerfully discerning the identity of the “humble, hungry, smart” person better suited to be an ideal team player, people who know how to honor covenant and hold each other accountable with hearts at peace (Anatomy of Peace) with the team’s overall goal in mind.

It would mean a transformation of the clergy evaluation tool. Using the example of the Ministry Action Plan of SLI or the “Wildly Important Goal” of 4DX, every employee/clergy person/volunteer would have clear measures of success that have the potential of radically changing the statistics collected for End of the Year reports submitted each year by pastors throughout the denomination. Rather than waiting until the end of the year to see what the numbers indicate (lag measures), we would focus on the benchmarks (lead measures) that would lead us to success as disciple-making disciples of Jesus Christ. With a process of covenant and accountability to the lead measures, there would be no surprises at year’s end, only celebrations!

Limitations of the Study

Due to my interest in SLI and 3DM in the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, the fact that the research sampling would encompass a limited demographic was always apparent. Adding to a small resource pool the statistical probability that on average the number of responses to any survey tool is typically 30 percent, I was fortunate to receive a 50 percent response rate. Other limitations are the natural biases that any one organization has for its preferred method. I saw, after the fact, where I might have had a different response or a more

specific response had I phrased the question in a slightly different manner. As with any study, the limitations also offer opportunities for additional research.

Unexpected Observations

One observation I should have anticipated is that most participants strongly favored the method they currently used. Participants who had used both SLI and 3DM and now leaned more heavily towards 3DM may have used tools or strategies similar to SLI, but they were left unnamed.

I also discovered that most of the survey participants provided very general responses to the survey questions. No one gave specific answers to the discipleship pathway or process they used. They revealed no sequential steps. That may be a reflection on the way the question was phrased or it may be that the participants do not view discipleship through a lens of steps regardless of their chosen discipleship tool.

One survey stood out among the rest. They indicated they had only utilized SLI as their discipleship model, but their growth is exponentially greater than any other group, whether 3DM or SLI. In a personal conversation with that survey participant before this research began, the pastor used the language of 3DM's leadership model, or what has been revealed through literature review as the "gradual release of responsibility." A follow-up discussion revealed that this pastor discovered this method of gradually releasing responsibility through the writings of David Yonggi Cho, pastor of the largest church in South Korea. Whether Yonggi Cho borrowed from the research of Lev Vygotsky or whether they developed these ideas simultaneously is unknown.

Recommendations

Future directions for this study may be one-on-one interviews where there is identifiable success through numerical growth of people who are actively discipling or being disciplined. A key, I believe, will be whether these individuals can name the path or process they use as well as why they feel it is successful. Once there is a generation where a process can no longer be named or the steps described, replication becomes increasingly difficult. Teaching the strategies of discipleship or the dispositions of a disciple must be in conjunction with modeling the process of teaching itself: the gradual release of responsibility used by Jesus.

Another direction worth considering is implementation of this model within a cluster of churches with intentional measurement of the results. There would need to be clear involvement by the District Superintendent and Bishop's Cabinet to allow full implementation: less itinerancy, a change in clergy evaluation, and focused coaching of the participating clergypersons/church teams. With full implementation, the results could potentially be transformational.

Postscript

Both SLI and 3DM used, in part, the same strategy of discipling modeled by Jesus. As shown in the findings:

Jesus had a method for gathering his disciples and introducing them to a life of formation. Jesus not only understood the importance of building the right team, but how vitally important it was to teach his disciples what it meant to be in relationship to God. He taught them how to pray (Matt. 6:9ff; Luke 11:2-4). He taught them how to live the law not as a means unto itself, but as an expression of their relationship with God as Father (Matt. 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5). He taught them how to treat their neighbor (Luke 10:29ff) and each other (John

15:12-17). SLI modeled this through their process of team building with covenant accountability and L3 (loving, learning, leading). 3DM modeled this through their process of discovering the “person of peace,” practicing team accountability, and learning to recognize and discern the *kairos* moment. A committed team grounded in practices of spiritual formation is necessary before moving on to the next step.

Jesus had a method for training his disciples in what it looked like to be citizens of the kingdom of God that can be implemented regardless of church size or other demographics.

The process in both SLI and 3DM is similar. SLI uses terms like “engage” and “connect”, part of the discipleship strategy of the United Methodist Church in Kentucky along with “equip” and “send”. 3DM uses phrases like “missional communities” and “families on mission.” The goals of both are the same: spiritually formed people living missionally as citizens of the kingdom of heaven rather than as consumers (Rendle). If we are to regain the mission of Jesus Christ, we will have to make the transition from consumers to citizens.

Jesus had a method for teaching his disciples how to first follow him and then grow to a point where they could then teach others. This is the linchpin. No amount of strategies, textbook knowledge or verbiage will make any substantive change if there is not a clear method of training the mentee/disciple to mentor/disciple others. The process Jesus used was brought to the forefront unknowingly by educational psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, who developed a system of “gradual release of responsibility” to describe how children experience the most formative learning. It is one of the key components of the 3DM model referred to as their “leadership square.”

Each of these methods, spiritual formation, living as a citizen of the kingdom of God, and knowing how to mentor others with intentionality towards releasing them to disciple others, are

dependent on the other two. Churches have been ingrained in spiritual formation for decades, maybe centuries, and yet there is decline in membership. Social service agencies have taken over the role of behaviors that reflect “kingdom living” without the King showing the urgency for reorienting our works of mercy with both corporate and individual acts of piety. Any organization, Christian or otherwise, can adopt a successful model of learning as did Vygotsky. The three need to be incorporated together within the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church and within the Church universal.

The primary activity of the Church must be a single mission of making disciples who can make disciples; and disciples must point those they mentor to God through Jesus the Christ. When we are immersed in what it is we are supposed to practice (spiritual formation) and supposed to model (kingdom living), and can proficiently teach it to others in a way that passes on the authority to do likewise, then we are living out the Great Commission: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:18-20).

I never dreamt this journey would take me on the path it did. Two years into the doctorate program, I ended up taking a sabbatical from research, classroom requirements and writing to walk beside my sister and her husband as she struggled through the last five weeks of her life following the discovery of a glioblastoma, the most aggressive form of brain cancer. She died the same weekend our oldest son was married, All Soul’s Eve. The next fifteen months following her death were a series of personal trials from family deaths and colleague deaths to the traumatic deaths of pets.

It was also a time of professional trials from congregational times of mourning to a breakdown of team covenant that brought me to the brink of clergy burn-out. I had poured myself into this process of team-building and discipling, but failed to notice that my “team” was not following the same M.A.P. or Ministry Action Plan that I was following. Due to an overwhelming year, I had made some key mistakes as a leader in communication and implementation of that component of gradual release of responsibility.

The best things that happened were the incredible opportunities to meet with colleagues from around the world: Nigeria, New Zealand, Poland, China, Kenya, South Korea, Cameroon, Brazil—I am sure I missed a country or two! I built solid friendships in a couple of those countries that I know will endure past the completion of this dissertation and graduation. I had an adventure in Beijing, China in October of 2016 that I will never forget and will be traveling to Kenya in May of 2017 that, hopefully, will be less eventful but equally memorable.

Through it all, I have had my strengths and weaknesses brought into sharp relief. I have a clearer vision of how this research can benefit not just a small church, but an entire denomination; and, with the completion of advanced training this spring as an SLI Coach, I am in a process of discernment that just may lead me on a path I would not have taken had it not been for this project. Yes, it has been an interesting journey.

My hope is that this project will be used by SLI to explore areas where they can have greater influence; and by the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church to bring this denomination into alignment from the local church to the top of conference leadership. In short, to make the best of United Methodism’s greatest strength: our connectional structure.

In *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*, the authors mention hitting a roadblock in the earlier work they were doing in training teams. The book describes seeing pockets of success which

they refer to as *campfires* as organizations they had trained rolled out these four disciplines for “achieving your wildly important goals” (McChesney 251). The campfires happened when individuals caught the vision of what these principles could mean for their team and had commitment to implement them to their fullest extent. The authors then began to ask the question: What would happen if these campfires turned into wildfires?

They had figured out a process for teams, but they were missing how it could be implemented throughout an entire organization. The problem, they discovered, was that they had developed a topnotch training program. I know, that does not sound like a “problem.” It is, however, if you want change to become organic, a culture shift that leads the entire organization towards the same mission and vision.

With training events, they discovered that “embracing a problem is not the same as applying it.” At the completion of the training, the event participants found the “whirlwind”⁶⁴ that exists for any organization still waiting for them upon their return. What the authors learned to do was to help organizations identify their whirlwind and use 4DX as not just another training event, but as an ongoing process, the culture change any organization needs when there is stagnation or decline (McChesney 252).

Cultural change is, I believe, what also needs to happen in the church. If 3DM in Pawleys Island, SC had the tools that are such an integral part of the SLI model, it may have survived as a prominent leader in discipleship training. If SLI were to integrate “gradual release of responsibility” into their coaching model along with a unified mission within United Methodism they just may well experience an incredible bonfire, an unprecedented revival.

⁶⁴ Whirlwind is defined by 4DX as the “urgent activity required to keep things running day-to-day” (McChesney Loc 7).

Until churches, districts, annual conferences, and ultimately, the denomination can align with a single purpose of “making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,” and not get lost in the whirlwind of daily activities that steal time from our most “wildly important goal,”⁶⁵ at the worst we will be a ship without a sail. At the best, individual campfires. If we can focus on a common mission *and* train our clergy and lay leaders how to implement the “gradual release of responsibility” model by Christ with his disciples, we have the potential to become a great wildfire that could impact the world. We can relive Acts 2 and rekindle the movement John Wesley began 250 years ago.

⁶⁵ A “wildly important goal” is the one thing that matters most. “Failure to achieve it will make every other accomplishment seem secondary, or possibly even inconsequential” (McChesney 10).

APPENDICES

FORMS

3.1 Email Cover Letter

Dear _____,

You are being asked to take part in a research study of how clergy use either SLI/ABIDE or 3DM as a process of multiplication of small covenant/discipleship groups. You are being invited to take part because: 1) you expressed an interest due to your involvement with 3DM or SLI/ABIDE, or 2) your name was referred by someone else as someone who had participated in either 3DM or SLI/ABIDE.

In order to participate:

1. Upon reading the attached Consent Form, address any questions you may have.
2. Once you are comfortable with the Consent Form, please sign and return the form by your preferred method.
3. Read carefully and answer any survey questions that are relevant to you and your organization.
4. You have the option of submitting the consent form and survey questions electronically via email or, with receipt of your mailing address, a copy of the consent form and survey questions will be mailed to you along with a self-addressed stamped envelope for your completed documents. If you choose to print the forms and return them by snail mail, they may be sent to: Judy Stallons, PO Box 4531, Midway, KY 40347.

Thank you for taking such an integral part in this research process.

Sincerely,

Judy Ransbottom-Stallons

3.2 Research Consent Form

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Judy Ransbottom-Stallons. Any questions may be directed to Judy by email at anamcaraky@gmail.com or by phone at 502-514-6952.

What the study is about: This is a post-intervention project with the purpose of exploring processes of multiplication (ie. disciples who make disciples) with clergy within the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church to see if there are congregations who have experienced multiplication of small covenant/discipleship groups leading to involvement of persons previously uninvolved with a church body or to a commitment by existing members to a small covenant group that has as its purpose the continued multiplication of persons previously uninvolved with a church body.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study and have no questions, you will find attached a survey that includes questions specifically addressing SLI and 3DM. Questions will ask which of the aforementioned organizations you have implemented and how they have impacted your congregation. If you have been involved with both organizations, questions will address whether you have or have not noted any complementary material between the two, and, if so, what that integration looks like. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Risks and benefits:

I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life.

There are no direct benefits or compensation to participants. I do hope, however, to learn from congregational leaders who have experienced successful discipleship processes in a way that ultimately benefits the entire Kentucky Annual Conference and the whole Body of Christ.

Your answers will be confidential. Individual responses to this survey will be kept private. In any sort of report we make public we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Survey responses will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records. All records will be shredded once this project is published.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your current or future relationship with the Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature: _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed) _____

Signature of person obtaining consent

Date

Printed name of person obtaining consent

Date

The researcher will keep this consent form for at least three years beyond the end of the study.

3.3 Survey

Where a box is provided, please indicate your choice by placing an "X" in the box.

What is your current average worship attendance? If you are a multi-site or have multiple worship services, average the combined attendance at all services and/or sites.

☐ 0-50 ☐ 51-100 ☐ 101-250 ☐ 251-500 ☐ 500-999 ☐ >1,000

Which of the following processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting?

☐ SLI/ABIDE only ☐ 3DM only
☐ Have experienced both SLI/ABIDE & 3DM ☐ Other discipleship process _____

Which of the above are you currently using? _____

Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation's ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the process.

SLI/ABIDE Year: _____	3DM Year: _____	OTHER Year: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> More than expected	<input type="checkbox"/> More than expected	<input type="checkbox"/> More than expected
<input type="checkbox"/> About what you expected	<input type="checkbox"/> About what you expected	<input type="checkbox"/> About what you expected
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than expected	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than expected	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than expected

How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use. Feel free to use the back of this page if additional space is needed:

What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either SLI or 3DM resources? To a different resource?

SLI/ABIDE	
3DM	
Other	

Have you found that you needed to redesign or alter the process you currently use to make it more effective? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If your answer above is "yes," what changes were made? _____

(There are questions are on the back along with space for additional comments.)

Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase in the number of individuals who are both being disciplined/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else? ☐ Yes ☐ No

_____ Number in leadership/mentoring positions.

_____ Number participating but not leading.

Since the inception or adoption of the process you currently use, how many new people (not including the original group or team) are now engaged in any one step of the process? _____

Labeling your original group or team as “Generation 1” in the discipling process you have chosen, how many other generations are now actively participating in this process?

If leadership were to change (reappointment/staff changes), would this process continue among the laity with or without the new pastor/staff person? ☐ Yes ☐ No

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Thank you for your participation!
Your responses are greatly appreciated.

4.1 Survey Responses

SURVEY #1	
SURVEY QUESTIONS	SURVEY RESPONSE (Direct quote)
Average worship attendance	51-100
Which processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting?	Have experienced both SLI and 3DM
Which of the above are you currently using?	3DM and a basic small group model.
Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation's ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the process.	SLI: Began over 10 years ago; Less than expected. 3DM: Began 2013; More than expected. Other: Year 2003 on; Less than expected.
How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use.	“Multiplication happens when we see God transform an individual's understanding of both their identity in Christ and their Kingdom responsibility as a disciple to make more disciples. Discipleship occurs best when a person is learning by ‘mentorship’, watching, copying, doing what their mentor is doing in their life to be close to God, close to their brothers and sisters in Christ and close to the world that doesn't know God yet. If discipleship remains simply a small group undertaking, then growth is limited and multiplication is slow and sometimes non-existent. Discipleship involves developing greater relationships with the purpose of the mentor multiplying their life into another. That doesn't mean making a copy of the mentor, but rather a (sic) the disciple living out a set of priorities for life that are the same and that can be manifested in many different ways, thus helping the church care for its members in different ways and reach out to the world in different ways.”
What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either SLI or 3DM resources? To a different resource?	SLI: We have used a MAAP approach to all our ministry choices and teams. 3DM: Discipling leaders of discipleship & creating priorities for small group life.
Have you found that you needed to redesign or alter the process you currently use to make it more effective?	Yes

<p>If your answer above is “yes,” what changes were made?</p>	<p>“We made changes to our small group model using 3DM modifications. We didn’t modify 3DM a lot because of it’s (sic) light huddle and family on mission structure. We are still trying to use the missional community model with possible adaptations. With a change in leadership our work with that and huddles stalled for over a year when the new pastor had not a lot of experience with either small groups and had none with 3DM.”</p>
<p>Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase in the number of individuals who are both being disciple/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else?</p>	<p>Yes 7 - Number in leadership/mentoring positions. 34 - Number participating but not leading (in discipleship).</p>
<p>Since the inception or adoption of the process you currently use, how many new people (not including the original group or team) are now engaged in anyone step of the process?</p>	<p>4 new leaders being huddled.</p>
<p>Labeling your original group or team as “Generation 1” in the discipling process you have chosen, how many other generations are now actively participating in this process?</p>	<p>2nd generation</p>
<p>If leadership were to change (reappointment/staff changes), would this process continue among the laity with or without the new pastor/staff person?</p>	<p>Yes. The lead pastor has to understand how it works to support it however.</p>
<p>Other comments</p>	<p>Our community is going through an unusually (sic) time, trying to sell our property, having to move out of our building and off our property, gaining a new pastor, moving to a temporary location in another UM congregation in town, using space from them to have our own worship service and space for some discipleship activities. All of that happened in the last two years.</p>

SURVEY #2	
SURVEY QUESTIONS	SURVEY RESPONSE (Direct quote)
Average worship attendance	101-250
Which processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting?	3DM only
Which of the above are you currently using?	3DM and to a much lesser extent SLI
Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation's ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the process.	SLI: 2016; too early to say 3DM: 2012; About what you expected.
How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use.	Multiplication happens when people catch the vision of multiplication and sense the urgency of the need to multiply disciple-makers. What leads to the next generation of disciples is disciples having a living example who shares not only the passion for making disciple-makers but also a way of life and the practical know-how about how to make it happen.
What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either SLI or 3DM resources? To a different resource?	SLI: Loving-Learning-Leading weekly meeting structure for ministry leaders. 3DM: Their paradigm and teachings are foundational in many ways for how we do discipleship.
Have you found that you needed to redesign or alter the process you currently use to make it more effective?	Yes.
If your answer above is "yes," what changes were made?	One alteration would be not to require that participants in my huddle be willing to lead something at the conclusion. I tell them that that is a primary goal, but not a requirement.
Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase in the number of individuals who are both being disciple/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else?	Yes. 10 – Number in leadership/mentoring positions. 26 – Number participating but not leading.
Since the inception or adoption of the process you currently use, how many new people (not including the original group or team) are now engaged in anyone step of the process?	Because I am in a campus ministry setting it is always new folks every year.
Labeling your original group or team as	2 nd generation.

“Generation 1” in the discipling process you have chosen, how many other generations are now actively participating in this process?	
If leadership were to change (reappointment/staff changes), would this process continue among the laity with or without the new pastor/staff person?	No
Other comments	(none)

SURVEY #3	
SURVEY QUESTIONS	SURVEY RESPONSE (Direct quote)
Average worship attendance	101-250
Which processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting?	(none)
Which of the above are you currently using?	None
Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation’s ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the process.	(none)
How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use.	Multiplication happens in the Body of Christ when believers invest themselves in the lives of others that are themselves searching for a deeper relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either SLI or 3DM resources? To a different resource?	(none)
Have you found that you needed to redesign or alter the process you currently use to make it more effective?	(none)
If your answer above is “yes,” what changes were made?	(none)
Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase in the number of individuals who are both being disciple/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else?	(none)
Since the inception or adoption of the process you currently use, how many new people (not	(none)

including the original group or team) are now engaged in anyone step of the process?	
Labeling your original group or team as “Generation 1” in the discipling process you have chosen, how many other generations are now actively participating in this process?	(none)
If leadership were to change (reappointment/staff changes), would this process continue among the laity with or without the new pastor/staff person?	(none)
Other comments	In 2013 I was invited to be part of the District Operations Team in the _____ District. I learned a lot about the SLI Process. I am not familiar with 3DM. I don’t think I would use the SLI Process as a discipleship program, even though some parts of it lend themselves to that type of initiative.

SURVEY #4	
SURVEY QUESTIONS	SURVEY RESPONSE (Direct quote)
Average worship attendance	51-100
Which processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting?	Have experienced both SLI & 3DM.
Which of the above are you currently using?	Some SLI
Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation’s ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the process.	SLI: 2014; About what you expected. 3DM: 2015; Less than expected.
How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use.	Multiplication happens as values are passed from one person to another. Organizational multiplication only happens if the organization is valuable and that value is communicated. That communication requires identification of values and contextual understanding of how to communicate with a new generation of leaders. I don’t know that this is possible on a macro level if it is not happening on the micro level.
What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either SLI or 3DM resources? To a different	SLI: Value identification (non-negotiables) Context work, Mission/Vision, L3 model of leading teams.

resource?	3DM: Evangelistic emphasis in missional community rather than worship service. Other: DiscipleShift, Introducing Discipleship by Greg Ogden.
Have you found that you needed to redesign or alter the process you currently use to make it more effective?	Yes
If your answer above is “yes,” what changes were made?	Team recruitment was made arbitrarily rather than by application. Time was shortened to 3 hours/month.
Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase in the number of individuals who are both being disciple/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else?	Yes 4 – Number in leadership/mentoring positions. 4 – Number participating but not leading.
Since the inception or adoption of the process you currently use, how many new people (not including the original group or team) are now engaged in anyone step of the process?	4
Labeling your original group or team as “Generation 1” in the discipling process you have chosen, how many other generations are now actively participating in this process?	2
If leadership were to change (reappointment/staff changes), would this process continue among the laity with or without the new pastor/staff person?	No
Other comments	My operational team disbanded officially after 1 year. The mentoring process continues on an individual basis but I am presently waiting for the church to articulate a need for more leadership training. We are reaching this point after almost 2 years with our local Covenant Team of pastors in ____ County. I think the process pieces are incredibly valuable but they almost need to be introduced one at a time so the congregation recognizes their value and does not get hung up on the whole process and brand itself.

SURVEY #5	
SURVEY QUESTIONS	SURVEY RESPONSE (Direct quote)

Average worship attendance	See note at bottom of this table. *
Which processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting?	(none)
Which of the above are you currently using?	(none)
Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation's ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the process.	(none)
How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use.	(none)
What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either SLI or 3DM resources? To a different resource?	(none)
Have you found that you needed to redesign or alter the process you currently use to make it more effective?	(none)
If your answer above is "yes," what changes were made?	(none)
Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase in the number of individuals who are both being disciple/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else?	(none)
Since the inception or adoption of the process you currently use, how many new people (not including the original group or team) are now engaged in anyone step of the process?	(none)
Labeling your original group or team as "Generation 1" in the discipling process you have chosen, how many other generations are now actively participating in this process?	(none)
If leadership were to change (reappointment/staff changes), would this process continue among the laity with or without the new pastor/staff person?	(none)
Other comments	*Thank you for your request and interest about our involvement with SLI. We have just begun the SLI process at _____ and are not far enough along to have have (sic) measurable data for your study. However,

	<p>after 6 months, I can say it has been an extremely healthy introduction to the team concept and to spiritual formation and accountability. We have church leaders who are now reading the Bible, praying, fasting and growing immensely in Christ. Most of them gave little attention to this previously. We meet for three hours monthly- Monday 5:30-8:30 PM. I am in the process of moving to a new appointment in _____ and I grieve leaving our Operational Team. The SLI process has radically changed the way I relate to God in my devotional life and in the ways I lead as a pastor. I wish you all the best in your work on this exciting study. I'd love to be able to read your DMin dissertation on which system/structure comes out on top for making healthy discipleship groups.</p>
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SURVEY #6	
SURVEY QUESTIONS	SURVEY RESPONSE (Direct quote)
Average worship attendance	(none)
Which processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting?	SLI only
Which of the above are you currently using?	SLI
Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation's ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the process.	SLI: 2013; About what you expected.
How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use.	We used the four step approach of engage, connect, nurture, send. In our context it took us about three years to fully grasp the process and begin closing the gaps that existed in our disciple-making process. I have since left this appointment so I am not sure how they have continued in the process.
What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either SLI or 3DM resources? To a different resource?	SLI: L3-Loving, Learning, and Leading approach
Have you found that you needed to redesign	Yes

or alter the process you currently use to make it more effective?	
If your answer above is “yes,” what changes were made?	The only adjustment has been adjusting to the groups ability to move forward in the process. Sometimes slower
Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase in the number of individuals who are both being disciple/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else?	(none)
Since the inception or adoption of the process you currently use, how many new people (not including the original group or team) are now engaged in anyone step of the process?	(none)
Labeling your original group or team as “Generation 1” in the discipling process you have chosen, how many other generations are now actively participating in this process?	(none)
If leadership were to change (reappointment/staff changes), would this process continue among the laity with or without the new pastor/staff person?	(none)
Other comments	I stopped answering the questions when it was clear since I was no longer involved in the ministry setting where I started using SLI, I could not answer the questions relative to their current status. I can say that I am getting ready to begin the process in my district and am in the first stages of creating my MAP, which will be our plan for developing leaders in our district. This will include clergy and laity. My end goal is that through effective leadership development we will begin to design, develop and implement generative disciple-making systems in many of the local congregations in the district. I have a lot of remedial work to do in order to begin leadership development through an intentional system.

SURVEY #7	
SURVEY QUESTIONS	SURVEY RESPONSE (Direct quote)

Average worship attendance	101-250
Which processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting?	Have experienced both SLI & 3DM
Which of the above are you currently using?	3DM
Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation's ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the process.	SLI: 2008; Less than expected. 3DM: 2013/2015-16; More than expected.
How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use.	Multiplication happens when a leader disciples, actively and personally, other leaders or potential leaders, who then go and disciple others.
What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either SLI or 3DM resources? To a different resource?	3DM: "Building a Discipling Culture", Huddles, "Huddle Leader's Handbook"
Have you found that you needed to redesign or alter the process you currently use to make it more effective?	No. The process is flexible and organic.
If your answer above is "yes," what changes were made?	(none)
Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase in the number of individuals who are both being disciple/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else?	Yes. 11 – Number in Leadership/mentoring positions. 1 – Number participating but not leading.
Since the inception or adoption of the process you currently use, how many new people (not including the original group or team) are now engaged in anyone step of the process?	5
Labeling your original group or team as "Generation 1" in the discipling process you have chosen, how many other generations are now actively participating in this process?	1 Generation. However, at my earlier appointment there are more.
If leadership were to change (reappointment/staff changes), would this process continue among the laity with or without the new pastor/staff person?	Yes.
Other comments	The process has continued in an earlier appointment, and that has even been in the fact of resistance by the new senior leader.

SURVEY #8	
SURVEY QUESTIONS	SURVEY RESPONSE (Direct quote)
Average worship attendance	500-999
Which processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting?	3DM only
Which of the above are you currently using?	3DM (Everyday Mission is the name we are calling an adapted discipleship mission emphasis. SLI is only used with our appointed clergy.)
Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation's ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the process.	3DM: 2013; More than expected.
How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use.	After a critical mass of leaders have been disciple and trained, they are challenged to disciple others through missional communities or leadership huddles. Coaching continues with the first generation of huddles to help them in the process and to offer continual training. As communities are formed with a similar missional vision, people with leadership potential are identified to be huddled (disciple the leaders) and then to multiply the community at some point in the near future. The challenge is for disciples to always be prayerfully looking for people they connect with that they can invest in and disciple. If people understand the vision of the church and understand their personal call, multiplication will happen.
What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either SLI or 3DM resources? To a different resource?	3DM: Many are 3DM but some have been adapted from other discipleship organizations. Other: SOMA is one resource we have tapped into for materials in our communities.
Have you found that you needed to redesign or alter the process you currently use to make it more effective?	Yes.
If your answer above is "yes," what changes were made?	We worked with a few other local churches to adapt and change materials as we continue to grow and move forward.
Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase	Yes. 40-50 – Number in leadership/mentoring

in the number of individuals who are both being disciple/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else?	positions. 210-230 – Number participating but not leading.
Since the inception or adoption of the process you currently use, how many new people (not including the original group or team) are now engaged in any one step of the process?	270
Labeling your original group or team as “Generation 1” in the discipling process you have chosen, how many other generations are now actively participating in this process?	3
If leadership were to change (reappointment/staff changes), would this process continue among the laity with or without the new pastor/staff person?	Yes
Other comments	This is a monumental change that is starting to really get deep roots in our congregation. We realize that we are still a long way from it being a vision that our entire community is focused on and is chasing after but we are getting closer. It is by far the best discipleship and mission tool that I have seen used in 20 years of ministry.

SURVEY #9	
SURVEY QUESTIONS	SURVEY RESPONSE (Direct quote)
Average worship attendance	500-999
Which processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting?	3DM only
Which of the above are you currently using?	3DM
Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation’s ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the process.	3DM: 2013; About what you expected.
How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use.	Huddles are a key vehicle. Missional Communities provide a broader exposure and a deeper opportunity to connect with people.
What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either	3DM: Huddles, Missional Communities.

SLI or 3DM resources? To a different resource?	
Have you found that you needed to redesign or alter the process you currently use to make it more effective?	Yes.
If your answer above is “yes,” what changes were made?	We have employed other disciple making strategies as well, e.g. SOMA.
Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase in the number of individuals who are both being disciple/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else?	Yes. 25 – Number in leadership/mentoring positions. 200 – Number participating but not leading.
Since the inception or adoption of the process you currently use, how many new people (not including the original group or team) are now engaged in anyone step of the process?	175
Labeling your original group or team as “Generation 1” in the discipling process you have chosen, how many other generations are now actively participating in this process?	2 others
If leadership were to change (reappointment/staff changes), would this process continue among the laity with or without the new pastor/staff person?	Yes
Other comments	We are thankful for the focus 3DM has offered. Disciple making has become fundamental to our common life together. Our vision and values revolve around this important task. We have 3DM to thank for that.

SURVEY #10	
SURVEY QUESTIONS	SURVEY RESPONSE (Direct quote)
Average worship attendance	101-250
Which processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting?	Have experienced both SLI & 3DM
Which of the above are you currently using?	3DM
Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation’s ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the	SLI: 2004; Less than expected. 3DM: 2011; About what you expected Other: 2000; More than expected.

process.	
How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use.	Multiplication of disciples is a life on life process. It requires an “incarnational missional impulse: (Alan Hirsch) characterized first by a passion for the lost and a willingness to invite persons into your life before they will be ready to invite Jesus into theirs. The concept of forming Missional Communities, defined by 3DM as spiritual families on mission together, is the most effective process for that to happen where the seed of the gospel is intentionally sown into every crack and crevice of our culture. My experience with SLI did not seem to include an expectation of reproduction which is necessary from the start if we are to be effective at making new disciples. 3DM can tend to complicate things (too many shapes!) but is definitely more intent on multiplication, in my opinion and experience.
What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either SLI or 3DM resources? To a different resource?	SLI: None currently. 3DM: Missional Communities, value of “low control, high accountability: over the form an MC takes, 3 of the Life Shapes (as opposed to 8) to create a discipleship language, leadership huddles. The Alpha Course for creating an environment for seekers and unbelievers to feel safe in asking tough questions and freely expressing doubts with the opportunity for Christ-followers to intentionally form discipling relationship with seekers. Also, Celebrate Recovery which has an expectation of discipleship has been very successful at making new and growing disciples as well as developing new leaders.
Have you found that you needed to redesign or alter the process you currently use to make it more effective?	Yes.
If your answer above is “yes,” what changes were made?	Without going into a lot of specifics there is always a need to contextualize your approach for the culture you are seeking to engage. Currently, I’m on a college campus so it’s a very different context than the local church. I also planted what many would refer to as a “recovery church” that serves a very transient

	and very broken population. I've also pastored a rural town church that transition from a traditional declining congregation into a more missional church.
Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase in the number of individuals who are both being disciple/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else?	Yes. 23 – Number in leadership/mentoring positions. 75 – Number participating but not leading.
Since the inception or adoption of the process you currently use, how many new people (not including the original group or team) are now engaged in anyone step of the process?	(none)
Labeling your original group or team as "Generation 1" in the discipling process you have chosen, how many other generations are now actively participating in this process?	(none)
If leadership were to change (reappointment/staff changes), would this process continue among the laity with or without the new pastor/staff person?	Yes.
Other comments	My responses and experiences need to be taken with the understanding that they are spread over a significant span of years and in varied contexts. I am no longer at the church where both SLI and 3DM were used. In that church plant neither were (sic) extremely successful but I was not directly involved in either. One, SLI, was scheduled to benefit the SLI leaders at a time when key staff could not participate, which I felt was a major mistake. As a result it never took off from the initial team of persons and multiplication was non-existent. I had one other experience with SLI while serving on the conference New Church Development Team and there was never an expectation of multiplication of new disciples which, in my opinion, doomed it to failure from the start for a new church plant. As for 3DM, my involvement has taken place on a college campus with very positive results. We continue to use the basic concepts of 3DM, although it has been adapted for a college campus ministry. We continue to see fruit as we develop a culture of discipleship

	with a missional approach to campus ministry vs. the traditional programmatic, attractional approach of the past. During that same time the church I planted and continued to serve part-time engaged in 3DM but without the desired results. Many, myself included, felt like that was the failing of pastoral leadership from the person serving full-time during that period. Well-intentioned but poorly executed.
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SURVEY #11	
SURVEY QUESTIONS	SURVEY RESPONSE (Direct quote)
Average worship attendance	(none)
Which processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting?	SLI only
Which of the above are you currently using?	SLI
Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation's ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the process.	SLI: 2011; More than expected
How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use.	In the SLI process or which I've been a part, we begin with the understanding that each participant will create his or her own team. So multiplication is part of the DNA of SLI.
What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either SLI or 3DM resources? To a different resource?	SLI: All are out of the SLI process.
Have you found that you needed to redesign or alter the process you currently use to make it more effective?	No
If your answer above is "yes," what changes were made?	(none)
Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase in the number of individuals who are both being disciple/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else?	Yes. 20 – Number in leadership/mentoring positions. 8 – Number participating but not leading.
Since the inception or adoption of the process you currently use, how many new people (not	15

including the original group or team) are now engaged in anyone step of the process?	
Labeling your original group or team as “Generation 1” in the discipling process you have chosen, how many other generations are now actively participating in this process?	3
If leadership were to change (reappointment/staff changes), would this process continue among the laity with or without the new pastor/staff person?	Yes
Other comments	Judy, My answers were a combination of my use of SLI at _____ and now _____. I have found SLI to be a healthy, clear, process for church growth and leadership development. That’s a rare combination.

SURVEY #12	
SURVEY QUESTIONS	SURVEY RESPONSE (Direct quote)
Average worship attendance	51-100
Which processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting?	SLI only
Which of the above are you currently using?	SLI
Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation’s ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the process.	SLI: 2014; More than expected.
How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use.	At _____ we have been using the SLI process as a way for me (pastor) to invest deeply in the lives of 4 lay leaders. Each of these lay persons have begun and/or attempted to star small groups of their own with varied success, as well as helping teach our Board members what we are learning together. I have seen wonderful growth in each person involved.
What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either SLI or 3DM resources? To a different resource?	SLI: L3 process at different congregational levels. Critically looking at context and basing any/all decisions in light of our Mission and Vision statements. WE are also sharing Glory Sightings in every meeting and worship.
Have you found that you needed to redesign	Yes.

or alter the process you currently use to make it more effective?	
If your answer above is “yes,” what changes were made?	We have slightly altered the time frame of our meetings to allow for leading “outside” of our typical 8 hour meetings. Allowing a couple hours a month to be devoted to us leading in our various contexts instead of meetings.
Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase in the number of individuals who are both being disciple/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else?	Yes. 4 – Number in leadership/mentoring positions.
Since the inception or adoption of the process you currently use, how many new people (not including the original group or team) are now engaged in anyone step of the process?	15
Labeling your original group or team as “Generation 1” in the discipling process you have chosen, how many other generations are now actively participating in this process?	Currently we have two (4) second generation groups. Our Administrative Board has been doing the L3 process with ABIDE team members helping lead the Loving and Learning. We are also integrating this into our SPPRC, Children’s, Hospitality and Outreach Teams.
If leadership were to change (reappointment/staff changes), would this process continue among the laity with or without the new pastor/staff person?	Yes.
Other comments	<p>We have been slowly integrating L3 at every level we are able to. We have even begun looking at how we can start using this language in our Worship bulletins. While the 2 small groups we started have not take off like we hoped, we are continuing to RAD them and adjust them into the various Teams we have meeting.</p> <p>One of the benefits of this process that I have really enjoyed is how it has enabled me to share the burden of change that is necessary in our context. There are others who are starting to see the possibilities of what could happen if we continue to be faithful to the process.</p> <p>This L3 SLI process has helped give language and outlets for us to begin initiating change. The current SLI team will be helping bring</p>

	<p>the new pastor into the process upon their arrival in July 2016. I can already see how they are beginning to take more ownership of this process as they attempt to multiply upwards with the new pastor.</p> <p>While changing the culture is a difficult task, I believe that _____ is in a far better place than they were before. The new leadership across the board is beginning to focus on the possibilities rather than the limitations. It is extremely exciting!</p>
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SURVEY #13	
SURVEY QUESTIONS	SURVEY RESPONSE (Direct quote)
Average worship attendance	251-500
Which processes have you been involved in with your leadership team or key leaders within your ministry setting?	SLI only
Which of the above are you currently using?	SLI
Has the process (or processes) indicated above positively impacted your congregation's ability to multiply disciples? Please also indicate the year you began the process.	SLI: 2005; More than expected.
How does multiplication happen? What leads to the next generation of disciple? Please describe the basic steps in the process you currently use.	Ministerial Process: New Comers, Missionaries, Disciples, Leaders Discipleship Process: Evangelize, Equip, Disciple, Send
What features or steps in the process you currently use are connected directly to either SLI or 3DM resources? To a different resource?	Ministry Action Plans and Incubators for all ministries in our church; including house churches. We have 60 house churches under the L3 Model (loving, learning, leading).
Have you found that you needed to redesign or alter the process you currently use to make it more effective?	Yes
If your answer above is "yes," what changes were made?	I just contextualized it to fit our Hispanic context. For example, less slides, more intensive prayer and fasting, as well as the use of Spanish books for literature reading.
Through the process mentioned above, has your ministry context experienced an increase in the number of individuals who are both	Yes. 120 – Number in leadership/mentoring positions.

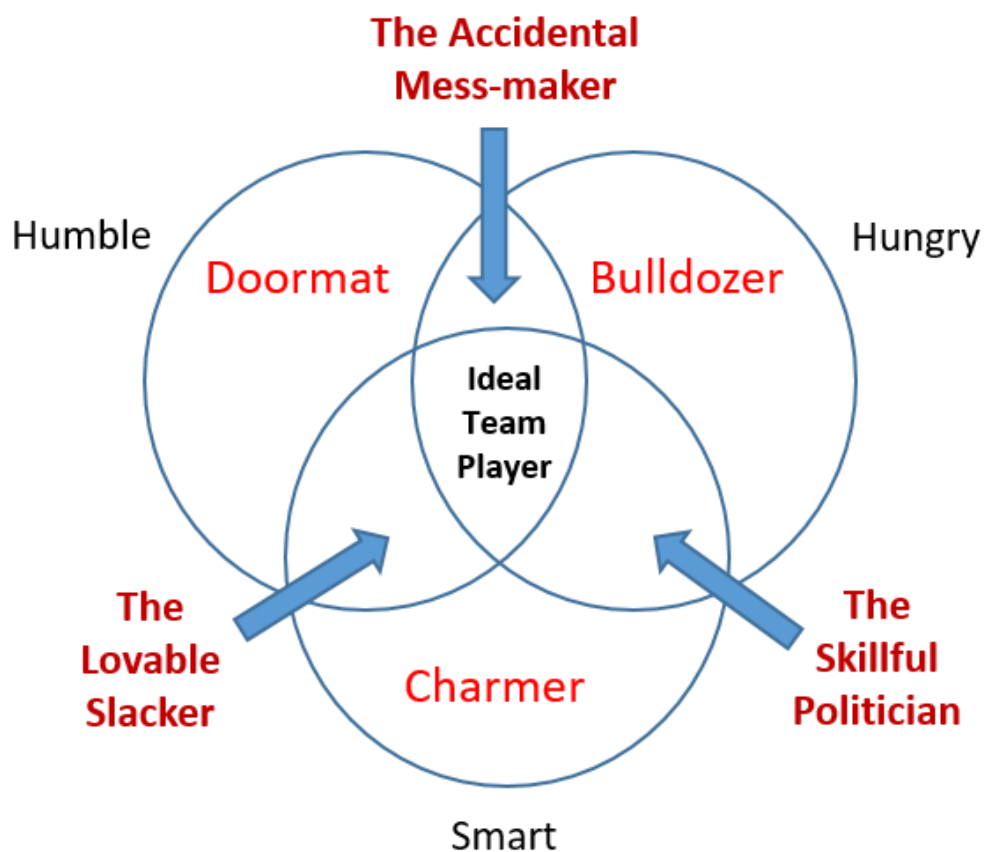
being disciple/mentored and are actively involved in discipling/mentoring someone else?	250 – Number participating but not leading.
Since the inception or adoption of the process you currently use, how many new people (not including the original group or team) are now engaged in anyone step of the process?	all
Labeling your original group or team as “Generation 1” in the discipling process you have chosen, how many other generations are now actively participating in this process?	We lost count ☺
If leadership were to change (reappointment/staff changes), would this process continue among the laity with or without the new pastor/staff person?	Yes.
Other comments	

4.2 Survey Results

SLI/3DM	YEAR BEGUN	CHURCH SIZE	GENERATIONS	LEADERSHIP/ MENTORS	PARTICIPANTS
BOTH	SLI: ~2006 3DM: 2013	51-100	2	7	34
3DM	2012	101-250	2	10	26
BOTH	SLI: 2014; 3DM: 2015	51-100	2	4	4
BOTH	SLI: 2008 3DM: 2013/2015- 2016	101-250	1	11	1
3DM	2013	500-999	3	40-50	210-230
3DM	2013	500-999	2	25	200
BOTH	SLI: 2004 3DM: 2011	101-250	-	25	75
SLI	2011	-	3	20	8
SLI	~2014	51-100	2	4	-
SLI	2005	251-500	“We lost count”	120	250

CHARTS

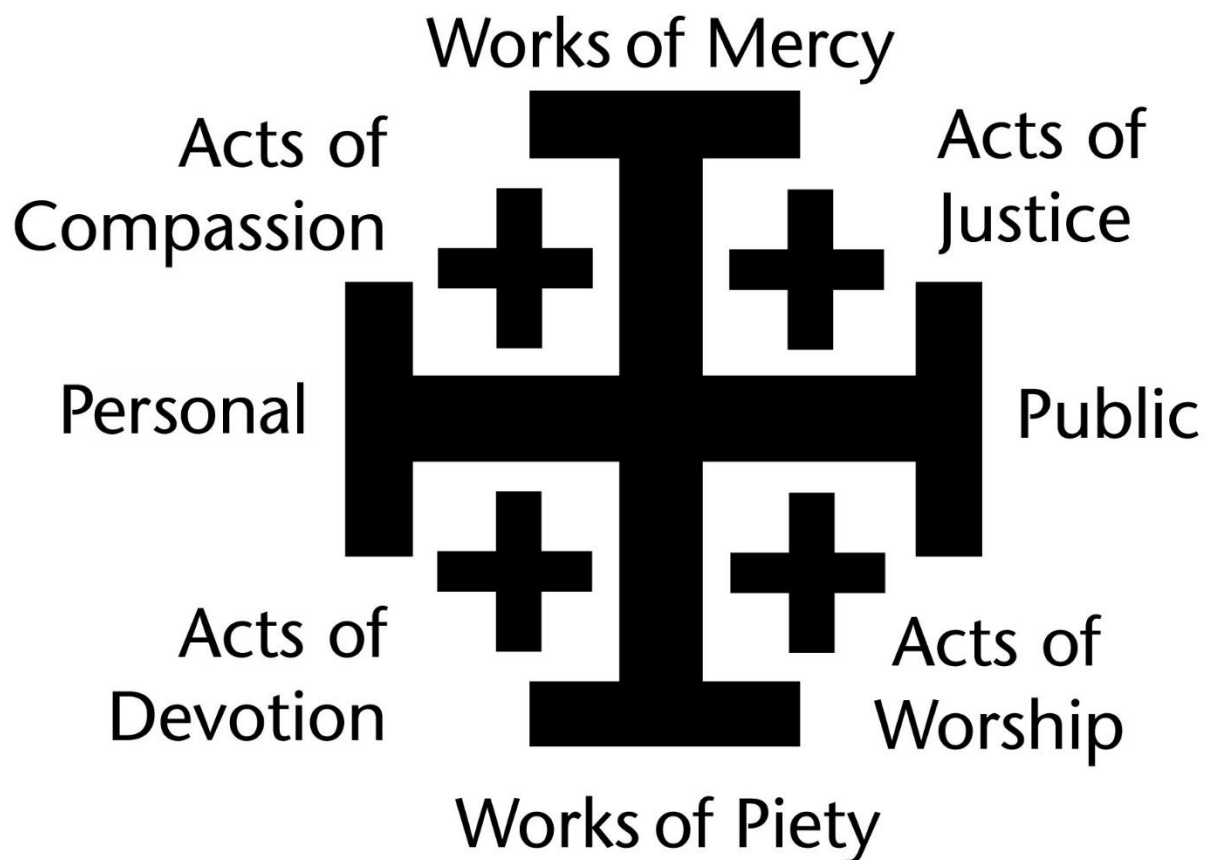
5.1 Ideal Team Player



(Ware blog)⁶⁶

⁶⁶ For additional information, visit Ware's webpage at <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/lessons-leadership-lol-ideal-team-player-jim-ware-cfa>.

5.2 Works of Piety and Works of Mercy



(UMC Web)

5.3 Gradual Release of Responsibility

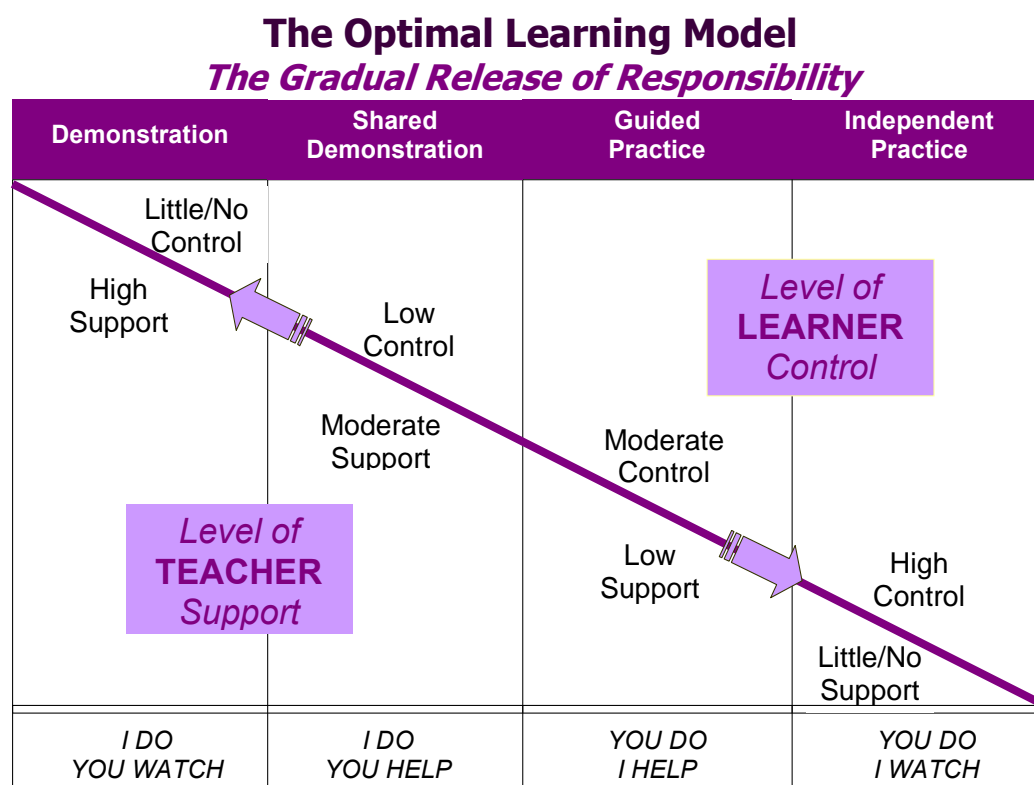
What does the *Gradual Release of Responsibility Model* look and sound like?

Research shows that optimal learning is achieved when teachers use the *Gradual Release of Responsibility Model* of instruction.

Teaching Phase	Teacher Behavior	Learner Behavior
Demonstration 	<input type="checkbox"/> Initiates <input type="checkbox"/> Models <input type="checkbox"/> Explains <input type="checkbox"/> Thinks aloud <input type="checkbox"/> Shows “how to do it”	<input type="checkbox"/> Listens <input type="checkbox"/> Observes <input type="checkbox"/> May participate on a limited basis
Guided Practice 	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates <input type="checkbox"/> Leads <input type="checkbox"/> Suggests <input type="checkbox"/> Explains <input type="checkbox"/> Responds <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledges	<input type="checkbox"/> Listens <input type="checkbox"/> Interacts <input type="checkbox"/> Questions <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborates <input type="checkbox"/> Responds <input type="checkbox"/> Tries out <input type="checkbox"/> Approximates <input type="checkbox"/> Participates
TEACHER HANDS OVER RESPONSIBILITY		
Teaching Phase	Learner Behavior	Teacher Behavior
Independent Practice 	<input type="checkbox"/> Applies learning <input type="checkbox"/> Takes charge <input type="checkbox"/> Practices <input type="checkbox"/> Problem solves <input type="checkbox"/> Approximates <input type="checkbox"/> Self-corrects	<input type="checkbox"/> Scaffolds <input type="checkbox"/> Validates <input type="checkbox"/> Teaches as needed <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluates <input type="checkbox"/> Observes <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages <input type="checkbox"/> Clarifies <input type="checkbox"/> Confirms <input type="checkbox"/> Coaches
Application 	<input type="checkbox"/> Initiates <input type="checkbox"/> Self-monitors <input type="checkbox"/> Self-directs <input type="checkbox"/> Applies learning <input type="checkbox"/> Problem solves <input type="checkbox"/> Confirms <input type="checkbox"/> Self-evaluates	<input type="checkbox"/> Affirms <input type="checkbox"/> Assists as needed <input type="checkbox"/> Responds <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledges <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluates <input type="checkbox"/> Sets goals

*Source: Routman, R. (2003). *Reading essentials*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

5.4 Optimal Learning Model



(Pearson and Gallagher, 2009)

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