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Building an Ethos of Discipleship for Transition in the Twenty-First Century

Greg J. Boulton

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

BUILDING AN ETHOS OF DISCIPLESHIP FOR

TRANSITION

IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

LEADERSHIP IN THE EMERGING CULTURE

BY

GREG J. BOULTON

PORTLAND, OREGON

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Greg Boulton

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ABSTRACT

Title: BUILDING AN ETHOS OF DISCIPLESHIP FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Author: Greg L. Boulton

Degree: Doctor of Ministry

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Institution: George Fox Evangelical Seminary

The tension between old and new tears at the heart and soul of the church in the United States. For example, does the church focus on building new churches and allow old ones to die? Do church leaders develop a more effective *ethos* that renews the hearts and minds of Christians in old and new churches? This paper deals with how leaders can develop an ethos that sustains discipleship in the life of its members. It is the thesis of this paper that long-term members of the Christian faith can be revived through a biblical discipleship process.

The paper explores some early history of the Stone/Campbell movement, examines four contemporary leaders from the same movement at various stages of congregational development, and describes their opinions of how disciples are formed effectively for ministry in the twenty-first century. The biblical milieu and its influence on biblical understandings of discipleship are analyzed.

Some of the issues related to discipleship in the post modern culture and the related challenges of transitioning a church to biblical discipleship are discussed, as are the connections between leadership, community and character formation. Based on these analyses and discussion, a discipleship process is proposed that helps a congregation revive its missional impulse and remain faithful to its role as the Body of Christ in the emerging culture. Finally, the implications for churches faced with new challenges that threaten their survival in the emerging culture are presented.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Story

“You know those young people need to show more respect!” “We need to spend more time teaching them good citizenship before we teach them about Jesus.” “How come the ceiling tiles are pushed out?” “If Jesus were here, He wouldn’t let those youth act like that!” These comments from the teachers on the church education team haunted John as he reviewed the morning meeting. He asked, “How can I help them understand the importance of creating an ethos of love and hope grounded in relationship over a system of rules and regulations?”

John was hired as an associate at Mills Creek Church to help revive the evangelistic impulse of the 140-year-old congregation. Mills Creek Church was one of the earliest establishments of a church from the Stone/Campbell tradition in the Northwest. As part of the Stone/Campbell tradition, Mills Creek Church prided itself on its faithfulness to the New Testament and its plea for Christian unity.

The church hoped that John’s prior experience as a church planter could help them become more innovative in their evangelistic efforts. When he was hired, the usual promises were made that the congregants would make the necessary changes, and they understood that the changes would be painful. Either John failed to communicate what he meant by “painful,” or the congregation was less than aware of its willingness to endure

pain. Whatever the case, the stress levels increased, and John began to question his calling.

As a church planter, John understood his role as senior pastor to be apostolic. He believed he was called by God and empowered by His Spirit to start a new church. This meant he was charged with the task of identifying and training a group of people to do ministry. It was his task to identify and train individuals who could serve as elders of the church, and it was the collective responsibility of the elders and pastor to shepherd the church (Acts 14:23).

Saddleback Community Church's purpose-driven model influenced John's view of ministry most significantly. Saddleback states that every church is driven by something, whether it is personality, programs, finances or other factors, but that the only biblically-sound forces to drive Christ's Church are Christ's purposes. Saddleback divides these purposes into five categories; worship, evangelism, ministry, fellowship, and discipleship.

As a new church planter most of John's energy was poured into the task of conversion, but he also developed a system for helping new converts grow into authentic disciples. The system included classes, small groups, and service projects that helped new Christians take ownership of their responsibility to "Go and make disciples." His discipleship system was modeled after Saddleback.

Saddleback's methodology for discipleship uses the illustration of a baseball diamond to represent the process of moving people from one discipleship stage to the next. First base represents the basics of the faith, and the discipleship classes offered are

related to the basics of conversion. These classes include information about the church and explain beliefs and lifestyle preferences. Second base includes classes designed to help new believers develop the spiritual disciplines necessary for growth in the faith. These disciplines include: prayer, Bible study, giving, worship, and service. The main objective of second base is to equip believers to feed themselves.

Third base provides believers opportunity to identify their spiritual gifts. A questionnaire helps individuals ascertain their individual talents and passions, and how God gifted them with special spiritual gifts. The primary emphasis of third base is believers' understanding of their gifts and the importance of service for His glory. Home plate represents the "grand slam" disciple. This is the stage where Christians commit their lives in mission to God. They recognize their roles as missionaries called by God to be His ambassadors in a lost world (2 Cor. 5:20), and they commit to live out Christ's calling on their lives at home, work, and school.

The senior pastor at Mills Creek Church, Stan, had been the senior for three years. He wanted the congregation to move forward, but the techniques he learned in his forty-year ministry proved ineffective. He viewed himself as a good facilitator with the ability to diffuse conflict and persist in long-term ministry. He supported the church's decision to hire John, although the ideas John suggested based on the Saddleback model seemed extreme.

Stan questioned the need for a new service because 120 people attend on Sunday, and the sanctuary holds 300. John believed the new service would allow a different worship style popularized at Saddleback and based on EPIC, an acronym that means

Experiential-Participatory-Image Driven-Connective. Stan had seen many new approaches over the years, and this one appeared to be another in the long line. John talked about “Purpose-Driven, Postmodern, and Experiential” approaches to ministry and worship, and they also discussed vision and values.

The first two years were difficult, but John convinced the elders a second service was needed for young families who did not identify with the styles of the traditional service. The remaining obstacle was Pastor Stan, who feared the new service would divide the church. John suggested some bridge-building events to help ameliorate Pastor Stan’s concerns, but Stan thought that a modified, blended version of the traditional service would reach non-church-attending families. John explained the church had implemented that approach for five years, but the church’s outreach efforts remained anemic. He suggested something more radical was required, and it would work only if the leadership supported it.

Jack had been Chairman of the Board and Chairman of the Elders for four years. He watched the church barely survive a painful split and the loss of a majority of young families. This was Jack’s home church, where he had grown up, was married, and had served as the youth minister for a time after Bible college graduation. He knew something was wrong and that change must come quickly, but he was not sure how to proceed without undermining Pastor Stan’s authority. He thought that with time and analytical discussion Stan would recognize the crisis and help create a new future. At the same time, Jack knew Pastor Stan’s temperament and leadership style would not support these changes.

Pastor Stan was a facilitator, and the church had hired him partly because of his non-confrontational leadership style. The idea of a second service was threatening to many church members. Jack's parents were lifelong church members, and did not see the need or want to invest the time and money for another service. Pastor Stan sought the path of least resistance and made incremental, non-threatening changes.

Stan believed relationships are the key to success because people need to know they are important. They expect their pastors to visit them, know what is going on in their lives, and be available when they have pastoral needs. Stan thought, "I guess it will be good to have John here to help out. We need someone to help with the children's ministry, and the youth can be more involved in the life of the church."

John knew his two years of funding from the endowment account would soon end. He decided to challenge the board, the elders, and Pastor Stan, to encourage them to make changes and move forward. He thought he was hired to use his church-planting experience to help revive a stagnant, declining, traditional church. Unfortunately, he was used primarily to strengthen the children and youth ministries. In this role, however, John was subordinate to long-standing committees that directed the ministries. Some positive changes had occurred over the previous two years, and John was excited about the new, young participants at the Tuesday night pre-teen and Wednesday night high school youth meetings. The young people attended Sunday services infrequently, but they were enthusiastic about their experiences with God in their mid-week services.

Long-standing members asked questions. For example, "It's great that you are getting these kids here, but you need to get their parents here also!" John replied that

some of the parents had visited, but did not relate with the service. John was careful not to disparage the service, but he had heard the parents say that they thought the service was boring and lifeless. This response would have shocked and offended the questioners.

After much discussion, John convinced the board, elders, and a reluctant Pastor Stan to adopt the new service. They approved money for advertising and extended John's funding an additional year. The launch was met with resistance, and some complained about the loud music in the sanctuary. New people attended, and several made first-time confessions of faith. They became excited by the chance to serve. Unfortunately, many of them became discouraged because they encountered roadblocks and were ignored by traditional congregants. John spent much time with them studying the Bible and other literature, and they dreamed about the potential contributions they could make.

They were told, however:

- "You can't put that there."
- "Coffee isn't allowed in that part of the building."
- "We don't do those things here."
- "We've never done it that way."
- "We've tried that and it didn't work."
- "We've always done it this way."

John believed the people wanted to move forward but when he heard thoughts such as these it sounded to him like they were saying "The church is for Christians (not outsiders)"; "We need to protect the building for ourselves (not use the building to reach others)." Or "Adherence to our rules is what's most important (rather than relationships

with visitors).” John wondered, “Why do disciples of Christ appear to have their hearts focused on themselves even after years of involvement in the discipling ministries of the church? They go to Worship services and Sunday school, yet their attitudes and actions still reflect an attitude that it is all about them. They appear to be focused on protecting and preserving the things that they love from their past.” The new people questioned whether it was possible or advisable to try and “save a dying church.” Comments were made about a “spiritual deadness that seemed to hang over the church.” “How much time and energy do you spend in a seemingly hopeless situation?” “When is God saying it’s time to start fresh?” John did not participate in the divisive talk, but he felt that much of what they said was true, and he had struggled with these same thoughts for three years. Issues were coming to a head, and the question continued to be: “How can old Christians find new life?”

Statement of Problem

The tension between old and new tears at the heart and soul of the church in the United States. For example, should the church focus on building new churches and allow old ones to die? How does a church leader develop a more effective *ethos* that renews the hearts and minds of Christians in old and new churches? How do leaders develop a discipleship process that transforms people’s hearts so they are willing to die to their own wants and desires and focus on others? What are some of the challenges to churches for being evangelistic in the emerging culture? How can a church transition from ministry in the modern culture to ministry in the post-modern culture?

Paul's words to the disciples in Corinth describe the Church as consisting of men and women who are new creations in Christ. They have died to themselves and have been called to live their lives for the benefit of others (2 Cor. 5:14-17). Leaders can help churches listen to the Spirit if they develop an incarnational ethos that sustains discipleship in the lives of their members. The incarnational ethos will help leaders and church members overcome the challenges that threaten their survival in the emerging culture. It is the thesis of this study that a theology of new wineskins/new creations can shape the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare churches for incarnational ministry in the emerging post-modern culture.

The challenging characteristics of the emerging culture that threaten the survival of churches include: declining evangelistic impetus, a distrust of claims of certainty about absolutes, and movement from a rational apologetic to a relational apologetic. The rational apologetic that was developed for evangelism in the modern culture needs to be accompanied by a relational apologetic if it is to be effective in the post-modern culture. This is especially challenging to the churches of the Stone/Campbell movement because of their strong roots in the rationalism of the enlightenment. Their plea for biblical unity is a strength in an age when people are concerned with the religious pluralism; however, this plea will be heard only if they are able to reach out and build loving relationships with people in their communities.

Discipleship among leaders and church members is critical to the survival of the church because it will equip them for being witnesses of Christ's transforming power in the emerging culture. The discipleship process in the first century shows that Jesus taught

his followers to be incarnational disciples in a distrustful and rapidly changing culture. The early church remained missional and expanded its influence under the threat of persecution. Discipleship based on a relational apologetic rather than a rational apologetic can be more effective in times when authority and absolutist claims are objects of distrust.

An incarnational ethos informed by a theology of new wine skins/new creations will affect the discipleship of leaders and church members by embedding the mission of Christ into his Church. Chapter 3 expands the definition of disciple as a follower of Jesus. To be incarnational is to be the hands and feet of Jesus in workplaces, schoolrooms, neighborhoods, and communities. Incarnational disciples live their lives to transform the places where God has placed them and to reflect the presence of the living Christ. Craig Nelson founder of Living Forgiven Ministries says,

Although the incarnation first took place 2000 years ago in the life of a young teenage girl [Mary], it continues to happen every time you share His love with others . . . when you speak words of life in His name . . . when you offer a shoulder to cry on...when you offer a helping hand...a touch to heal ...a handshake of welcome and acceptance . . . when you give a cup of water in His name . . . It happens whenever and wherever the name of Jesus is lifted up . . . every time you choose to forgive.¹

An ethos is the character of a group as it is expressed by its beliefs, attitudes, and lifestyle. The combination of these two words, incarnational and ethos, describes a community that lives its Christian calling because being Christ's presence in the world is

¹ Craig Nelson, "Incarnational Living," *Next Wave*, December 2000, <http://www.next-wave.org/dec00/incarnational.htm> (accessed 15 January 2007).

fundamental to the community, not because the community is fulfilling a system of rules and regulations.

Incarnational ethos embodies principles discerned from Scripture relating to new wine and new creations. Individually and corporately, Christians must embrace the idea that their ultimate fulfillment as Christians comes when they die to themselves and become new creations in Christ for the sake of others.

This study addresses the ministry challenges of churches in an emerging culture, the theological and biblical foundations of an incarnational ethos informed by a new wine skins/new creations approach, a proposal for shaping congregational leaders and members for discipleship and sustaining them through an incarnational ethos based on a theology of new wine skins/new creations, and a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed approach.

Proposal

Although nourishment and comfort for the flock is a worthy pastoral task, the author proposes that the creation and maintenance of an incarnational ethos of discipleship is the primary pastoral goal. When this occurs, the church will turn inward less frequently, and it will focus on the transformation and redemption of its community and the world. This happens because the power of ethos shapes the hearts and minds of congregants, and they reflect the church's mission, vision, and values. Ethos shapes the fundamental character or spirit of a culture. Ethos is a corporate-intense mental state that arises subjectively in individuals and in whole communities. When something happens

everyone feels the same way. If one person is violated, all are offended. Ethos creates an environment in which decisions and obedience occur because of the culture rather than a mechanical response to a set of rules and regulations. Ethos comes first from the heart rather than the mind.² In order to address the problem of challenges that threaten the survival of churches in the emerging culture, it is necessary to consider the responsibilities and definitions of Christian leadership. Emerging leaders will be artisans of the environment. They will create and cultivate an incarnational ethos of discipleship. Christ and the Holy Spirit will form this incarnational ethos as they join church leaders and disciples who hear Christ's voice and open the door (Rev. 3:20).

Scope of the Dissertation

This study explores how the formation of an incarnational ethos based on a theology of new wineskins/new creations can help "old Christians find new life." Important to this incarnational ethos is an understanding of the implications of Jesus' demands for disciples. When churches better comprehend the implications of Jesus' call to discipleship, they are better equipped to create an incarnational ethos.

Chapter 2 will discuss certain inherent qualities within the Stone/Campbell tradition that both help and hinder the efforts of churches to have an incarnational discipleship in the emerging culture. This will be demonstrated by observing certain peculiarities that are a part of the DNA of churches in the Stone/Campbell tradition based on the culture of its founders. With these peculiarities in mind the author will interview

² Erwin Raphael McManus, *An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind* (Loveland, CO: Group, 2001), 96-98.

leaders of churches from the Stone/Campbell movement at various stages of congregational development concerning their thoughts regarding discipleship. The following questions will be considered:

- What is a disciple?
- What is the church's role in equipping disciples?
- What is the senior pastor's role in equipping disciples?
- What is the Holy Spirit's role in equipping disciples?
- What specific strategy does your church employ to equip disciples?
- What is the relationship between evangelism and disciple making?
- Do you perceive any challenges that are unique to the emerging (postmodern) culture for the disciple making process?
- Do you have any other thoughts related to disciple making that you think are important?

The answers to these questions will set the stage for further discussion on the role of a church and her leaders in shaping the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare churches for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture.

Chapter 3 will present a synopsis of the biblical milieu and its influence on early understandings of discipleship and how these understandings were expanded upon by Jesus. This is especially important to building an incarnational ethos within the Stone/Campbell movement because of their emphasis on having the Bible as the basis for all things concerning churches. This will also lay the foundation for later discussion

concerning how Jesus' demands of his disciples in the first century continue to apply to churches in the twenty-first century.

Chapter 4 will demonstrate that the post modern culture presents a new set of challenges that churches must overcome if they are to have an incarnational ministry. A natural aversion to transition and change compounds the effect of these challenges. This chapter will discuss the difficulties of transition and what leaders must understand concerning the dangers and peculiarities of existing in a time of cultural change.

Chapter 5 will show that the leader must develop an ethos that immerses the community in the presence of Christ. Some of the factors that affect this are the community's learning structures and hierarchies, the leader, the relationship of the leader with the team and community, and roles of the Spirit and the Word in discipleship formation.

Chapter 6 will propose that many of the struggles and crises detailed in the earlier chapters can be navigated by developing a theology of new wineskins/new creations which will shape the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare churches for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture.

Chapter 7 summarizes and concludes the study, and it discusses the implications for churches faced with new challenges that threaten their survival in the emerging culture.

This study is important to churches because it provides them with guidelines to create an ethos that can result in new life in the emerging culture. This new life will result

in a more impassioned fulfillment of both the Great Commandment of love and the Great Commission of making disciples.

CHAPTER 2

PASTORAL PERCEPTIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP FROM THE STONE/CAMPBELL MOVEMENT

The Stone/Campbell movement represents much of what characterized the church in the modern era. The following overview of the roots of the Restoration movement demonstrates this heritage of churches is deeply rooted in the rationalism of the Enlightenment. Because of their deep roots in modernity, churches from this tradition are particularly useful for a discussion of discipleship processes that equip people for incarnational ministry in the emerging post-modern culture.

Certain inherent qualities within the Stone/Campbell tradition both help and hinder efforts to have an incarnational discipleship in the emerging culture. This will be demonstrated by observing certain peculiarities of the tradition based on the culture of its founders. The information for this chapter derives from author-conducted interviews of church leaders from the Stone/Campbell movement at various stages of congregational development.

The author interviewed the senior minister of a 145 year-old church. He interviewed the leadership of the church in which he has served for the past three years and the leaders of churches planted by the church. One planted church has met for two years, and the other is still developing its launch strategy and will begin regular services

in fall 2006. The investigator asked each of these leaders a series of questions related to their strategies for equipping disciples for ministry in the emerging culture. The questions included:

- *What is a disciple?*
- *What is the church's role in equipping disciples?*
- *What is the senior pastor's role in equipping disciples?*
- *What is the Holy Spirit's role in equipping disciples?*
- *What specific strategy does your church employ to equip disciples?*
- *What is the relationship between evangelism and disciple making?*
- *Do you perceive any challenges that are unique to the emerging (postmodern) culture for the disciple making process?*
- Do you have any other thoughts related to disciple making that you think are important?

Barton Stone and the father son duo of Thomas and Alexander Campbell founded the Stone/Campbell movement, often referred to as the “Restoration Movement” in the early 1800s. The era was one of religious diversity that some felt worked against Jesus’ prayer for unity. In response, Thomas Campbell left the Presbyterian Church of his ordination and wrote a plea for unity entitled the *Declaration and Address*. Two themes occur repeatedly in the *Declaration and Address*: the restoration of the primitive church and the unity of all Christians. The document expressed Campbell’s vision that Christian unity could be achieved through a restoration of the primitive church.

In the *Declaration and Address* states thirteen propositions relating to the unity of the church. Perhaps the best known sentence in the Stone/Campbell movement is in Proposition 1: “That the church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else as none else can be truly and properly called Christians.”¹ The Body of Christ consists of all men and women who profess their faith in Christ. The next clause is important to the purposes of this dissertation; it emphasizes the prominence of the Scriptures and obedience to them, which should be manifested by a change in both “tempers and conduct.” John’s frustration at Mills Creek Church stemmed from his perception that the congregation members’ tempers and conduct focused more on themselves and their own needs than the needs of others. John considered their behavior to be inconsistent with a heritage that prided itself on biblical fidelity. To obey God’s Word in both tempers and conduct is the crux of what it means to be incarnational.

Thomas Campbell’s son, Alexander Campbell was the unofficially acknowledged leader of the Restoration Movement for a quarter of a century prior to the Civil War.² Alexander Campbell was a product of the enlightenment. He was optimistic about human nature and believed that with proper education, spiritual training, and a reasoned

¹ Thomas Campbell, “Declaration and Address,” 1809, *The Restoration Movement Pages*, <http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/tcampbell/da/DA-1ST.HTM> (accessed 3 February 2007).

² Henry E. Webber, *In Search of Christian Unity: A History of the Restoration Movement* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard, 1990), 181.

encounter with the ideas and issues of the day, a person could reasonably be expected to develop mature moral character. “Such character would be rationally competent, morally sensitive, and culturally refined. The educated person would think clearly, construct his life according to the ethics of Christ, and exhibit the grace and refinement of the best of social standards.”³ He believed that faith was a matter of responsible judgment based on a reasonable interpretation of the evidence. Faith and character formation is primarily a rational process.⁴ He was convinced that restoration of Christian unity depended on a rational reading of the New Testament with applied intellect and without all of the encumbrances of the intervening centuries. If people would separate themselves from the accretion of tradition and return to what the Word says, Christians could again realize the unity for which Christ prayed.⁵

The combination of enlightenment-produced optimism and modern conceptualization of how people learn and are transformed into the likeness of Christ both helps and hinders the Stone/Campbell movements’ efforts to engage the post modern culture. Disciples who are informed and transformed by a relationship with Christ are prepared for incarnational living. Modern methodologies grounded in the transfer of information through the written word and lectures often absent relationships may hinder efforts to engage more relationally-based post moderns.

³ Ibid., 184, 185.

⁴ Ibid., 118,119.

⁵ Ibid., 114-121.

The following interviews illustrate the differing degrees of effectiveness of discipleship processes of churches in Stone/Campbell movement churches. The interviews contrast the degree of effectiveness of an old wineskins model firmly rooted in modernity versus some new wineskin models designed to engage the post-modern culture.

Pastor Jim Keefe: The Christian Church of Hillsboro

Hillsboro Christian Church is a congregation nearing its 150th anniversary. Over the last fifteen years, three senior ministers served the church, which also endured a church split. Pastor Jim Keefe has been a minister at Hillsboro for about eight years. During Pastor Keefe's tenure the church has experienced little growth as a result of evangelism and has faced a number of deaths of older members.

1. What is a disciple?

Pastor Keefe believes discipleship is about a relationship with Jesus Christ. The standard Sunday school answer is: "follower of Christ," but individuals are not disciples if they have head knowledge without commitment. Jesus says, "You are my disciples. By this all men will know you, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

2. What is the church's role in equipping disciples?

People come into the church with some knowledge, but many lack education about the Bible. The church must provide general Bible content, expectations about morality, and specialized training about parenting, recovery, and evangelism. Church leaders cannot depend on other institutions for this training; it is the church's

responsibility. For example, Kelly was a junior high school student who was bright, but did not always demonstrate social skills. He attended church youth classes, but the church could not provide the appropriate teacher for the class. Kelly needed a teacher to challenge him and make classes interesting. In this technological age, the church must use these tools to provide the best possible education for participants.

3. What is the senior pastor's role in equipping disciples?

The senior pastor provides leadership. As the church grows, some of this responsibility may shift to associate staff, but ultimately the senior minister is responsible for equipping disciples. The senior minister must know what is happening in the church, show appreciation, and be responsible for setting the direction. The senior pastor must be willing to learn from those who have gone before.

4. What is the Holy Spirit's role in equipping disciples?

Pastor Keefe believes the Holy Spirit convinces individuals of sin, motivates, inspires, and creates an eagerness to learn. The Holy Spirit connects individuals to those who can influence their faith journey such as friends, youth ministers, or work associates. The Spirit orchestrates events to provide opportunities and inspires people to move to greater levels of commitment to God. For example, Bob left the security of his job and took his young family across the country to secure an education necessary to follow God's call. In another case, the Spirit prompted a seventy-three-year-old member of a Sunday school class to buy a Bible dictionary and learn more about the Sea of Galilee. The Holy Spirit provides motivation and inspiration in many different forms.

5. What specific strategies does your church employ to equip disciples?

Hillsboro Christian Church offers the same programs it has always offered including Sunday morning Sunday school classes, age appropriate mid-week activities, Thursday morning men's Gab & Gospel, Women in the Word, and Monday night home group. Pastor Keefe believes this is a discipleship structure rather than a discipleship strategy because he feels more comfortable with a structure than a philosophical point of view.

6. What is the relationship between evangelism and disciple making?

Pastor Keefe believes the relationship is like the difference between pregnancy and birth: evangelism is like conception and discipleship is like birth and the growth process. The current discipleship process impregnates the next generation. For example, Keefe reported he took part in Bob and Emma's coming to Christ, and now they participate actively in the discipling/evangelism process.

Jesus said He is the vine and believers are the branches. Jesus commands His followers to remain in Him and bear fruit, but He will prune branches that fail to bear fruit. At the Christian Church of Hillsboro, the structure/strategy does not work because they often do not complete the circle of the discipling/evangelism process.

7. Do you perceive any challenges that are unique to the emerging (postmodern) culture for the disciple making process?

Pastor Keefe reports he has not encountered this element of culture. He comes closest to the emerging culture in wedding ceremonies. While he attempts to maintain regular contact with the people he marries, this communication does not always translate

into church involvement. While Keefe organizes regular gatherings of some of the couples he marries, this has not contributed significant movement to disciple making, and he believes this trend will lead to a struggle for the church to survive future changes. Keefe imagines when he leaves the Christian Church of Hillsboro his replacement will be someone around forty-five-years-old who can help bridge the generational gap.

8. *Do you have any other thoughts related to disciple making that you think are important?*

The bottom line is the command to “Go and make disciples” is not optional. Keefe does not feel comfortable with the current trend to eliminate the Sunday school as a part of the discipleship process. He believes churches need a format that imparts biblical knowledge.

Hillsboro Christian Church emphasizes some of the strengths of the Restoration movement with their emphasis on educating people about the Bible. They communicate well through Sunday school, men’s and women’s groups, children’s ministry, and youth groups what the Bible says is expected of Christians. They fall short in their efforts to connect with the emerging culture because they lack relational instead of institutional systems. Their systems are based upon discipleship structures rather than a discipleship strategy. This results in systems that are more institutional than environmental and relational. Pastor Keefe states that discipleship is more than head knowledge and requires a commitment but the systems he advocates are designed to inform and do not model character transformation.

Ken Bussell: Our Place Christian Church

Ken Bussell is one of the founding pastors of Our Place Christian Church (OPCC). His areas of responsibility include worship and administration. OPCC is an emerging church and is intentional in its desire to engage the post-modern culture. The church was planted with the expectation that it would be a regional church planting center for the Northwest. Since its founding in October of 2001, the church has participated in the birth of three subsequent new churches, two of which are included in this set of interviews.

1. What is a disciple?

Pastor Bussell believes a disciple is a faithful follower of Christ who follows where He leads through His words or example.

2. What is the church's role in equipping disciples?

The church can facilitate opportunities and experiences through which people learn to follow Christ. Ephesians 4:12 refers to the church's responsibility to equip God's people to do His work and strengthen the church. Facilitating opportunities for people to do God's work and to teach them to be servants are effective ways of equipping disciples.

3. What is the senior pastor's role in equipping disciples?

The senior pastor must offer exhortation and encouragement of the body to do Christ's work and cast a vision of where the Body of Christ is going and what it is doing. Equipping disciples requires a teaching component that goes beyond preaching. The senior pastor, Bussell believes, plays a role in the conversion growth of the body by proclaiming the Gospel.

4. *What is the Holy Spirit's role in equipping disciples?*

The Holy Spirit helps people remember everything Jesus taught. The Spirit equips and empowers believers to do good works, and implants the desire within them to follow Christ and seek God.

5. *What specific strategies does your church employ to equip disciples?*

Pastor Bussell reports Our Place Christian Church has committed its resources to conversion, but it did not have a strategy for discipleship. Eventually, the church adopted a solution designed by Bill Hull called Training Network. The approach identifies four stages of discipleship: come and see, come and follow me, come be with me, and remain in me. These are the four ways Jesus disciplined the twelve from the Gospel accounts through the four stages, and every church goes through a process of defining the four stages. The process required the church to develop small groups that disciplined people based on their level of spiritual development. Our Place has since moved from the Training Network approach to a more organic small group based approach.

6. *What is the relationship between evangelism and disciple making?*

Pastor Bussell states the relationship is circular. Evangelism helps people convert and enter into discipleship, and discipleship equips people for evangelism. The term “disciple-making” implies that one is already a disciple and is now making others. The first step in the process is evangelism, which forms an interdependent relationship.

7. Do you perceive any challenges that are unique to the emerging (postmodern) culture for the disciple making process?

Traditional evangelism is less effective or does not work among postmodern people. For example, sharing the four spiritual laws with a stranger makes little sense to a postmodern thinker who questions the existence of immutable laws. Relational evangelism is more effective because postmodern culture requires a long-term approach. Relational evangelism uses strategies such as incarnational and missional living that are more effective in a postmodern context.

8. Do you have any other thoughts related to disciple making that you think are important?

Disciple making, in the traditional sense of providing classes and programs that intellectually educate people about Jesus, is not the ultimate goal of the church. The ultimate goal of the local church is to equip people to serve. Through service, people learn to be true disciples.

Our Place Christian Church occupies a gap between modern and post modern discipleship. Their ministry within the emerging culture forms their thinking. Their desire to facilitate experiences and opportunities through which people can learn to follow Christ is both relational and incarnational. Our Place's attempt to adopt the *Training Network* as their discipleship strategy may be a process with the relational component firmly embedded in its DNA; however, the relational component may be marginalized by the institutional impetus to make everything a program. By programming discipleship the church can stray from the organic, relational nature of incarnational discipleship. Truly

effective discipleship needs to happen in the context of life. Our Place regularly provides its members opportunities to live incarnationally and apply what they learn. Through a number of outreach efforts, encouragement from the pulpit, and small groups Our Place seems to be connecting with the post modern culture in ways that are resulting in transformed lives.

Justin Wolverton: Ethnos Church

Ethnos Church is a two-year-old daughter church of Our Place. Justin Wolverton is the lead church planter. Justin was the first associate church planter to be brought on staff at OPCC. His responsibilities included developing the discipleship processes for OPCC as well as beginning to envision, recruit and launch OPCC's first daughter church.

1. What is a disciple?

Wolverton believes a disciple is a person who is committed to obeying Christ (Matt. 28), is building a relationship with Christ, studies the word, and has a mentor.

2. What is the church's role in equipping disciples?

Ephesians 4 states that Jesus has given the church apostles, prophets, and evangelists to equip the church for ministry. Elders and pastors have a shepherding role and deacons have specific roles in their areas of ministry. The church's primary role is to equip people for ministry service that reflects well on Jesus in the community. Wolverton believes the church must recruit people to serve the church's mission. If believers do not share Jesus with others, the church cannot inform people about Jesus. If the people do not

care for the poor, the church will not care for the poor. Ethnos Church leadership seeks people who feel the weight of Jesus' commands.

3. *What is the senior pastor's role in equipping disciples?*

Pastor Wolverton believes the ideas of the pastor as the leader of the church and the role of the senior pastor is not biblical. The church functions as a plurality of elders, and the closest biblical role to senior pastor is the apostolic role. The apostles and prophets function under the authority of the elders (Acts 15). The elders oversee, shepherd, and direct the church and make certain everything in the church functions correctly. Pastors are responsible to God for the souls they have in their ministry. The pastor is like an apostolic leader, and the unpaid community leaders are responsible for groups of people.

4. *What is the Holy Spirit's role in equipping disciples?*

The Holy Spirit helps believers understand Scripture, convicts them of sin, and guides them to truth. The Spirit helps individuals achieve the things God has commanded them to do. God challenges individuals to do things beyond their own strength, and He is glorified by doing things through His power.

5. *What specific strategies does your church employ to equip disciples?*

Wolverton describes mentors who work with 85 to 90 percent of the people at Ethnos in small groups of one to three persons. Initially, the mentoring relationship welcomes individuals to the faith and teaches the basics. Donald S. Whitney's *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* is the church's primary teaching resource. Mentors teach through interactive experiences such as group service projects that include

discussion about the experience. The community pastor oversees the mentoring process. The church's three primary group activities include: home communities, mentoring, and Sunday gatherings.

6. *What is the relationship between evangelism and disciple making?*

Evangelism and disciple making are not separate efforts because a faithful disciple helps reconcile people to God. This is part of the church's mission. Mentors equip individuals to disciple others in the first year of Christian experience. Twenty-two individuals at Ethnos have dedicated their lives to Christ, and they are discipled by the people who led them to Christ. Apostles, prophets, and evangelists push others into areas of discomfort. Apostles initiate new things constantly and change the status quo, prophets point out areas for repentance, and evangelists bring people into the church's midst.

7. *Do you perceive any challenges that are unique to the emerging (postmodern) culture for the disciple making process?*

Non-committal attitudes are pervasive in this culture, and many men do not have accessible fathers. Many young men are passive-aggressive, cowards, and afraid to take responsibility. Their insecurities create a seemingly insurmountable barrier to spiritual growth.

8. *Do you have any other thoughts related to disciple making that you think are important?*

No.

Ethnos Church is working towards building a community firmly grounded with a discipleship system that encourages its members to live incarnationally. Their belief that

nothing happens unless it is initiated and implemented from the bottom up is a principal that will resonate with authenticity in the post modern culture. Pastor Wolverton's emphasis on mentors, interactive experiences, and group service projects are the kinds of experiences that build an incarnational ethos. The community's attempts to focus on three primary activities (home communities, mentoring, and Sunday gatherings) could help it to connect with the emerging culture in ways perceived as more authentic than the vast array of programs that consume the lives of churches in the modern tradition.

Matt Payne: The Church at Bethany

The Church at Bethany is a daughter church of Our Place Christian Church. The church has not begun public worship gatherings. OPCC hired Pastor Payne as its second church planting associate. His job responsibilities were to build the discipleship strategies for OPCC and envision, recruit, and launch a second church plant.

1. What is a disciple?

Pastor Payne believes someone who as a follower of Christ is in a life long journey of pursuing His will. Most churches promote a destination theology: a disciple is someone who has accepted Christ and "arrived." Payne believes discipleship is a shared journey theology.

2. What is the church's role in equipping disciples?

Equipping disciples occurs in application, and the church provides tools, motivation, and opportunities for people. This is not necessarily telling people certain things, but helping them apply the things they already know. The church can provide

relational growth opportunities through small groups. The Sunday morning will be the “front porch” motivational experience with small groups, and the church can invite individuals to “come and see” then encourage them to “go and do.”

3. What is the senior pastor’s role in equipping disciples?

Pastor Payne believes the senior pastor sets the vision of what a disciple looks like. The pastor helps to frame a path for discipleship and sets the example for discipleship. Often individuals start out with tremendous enthusiasm, but lose energy after a short period. Unfortunately, the culture of the church stifles enthusiasm because of the requirements for participation. Leaders must create an environment that draws people irresistibly to discipleship. A pastor cannot force someone to be a disciple.

4. What is the Holy Spirit’s role in equipping disciples?

The Spirit is active in a disciple’s life if the individual is truly on a journey of discipleship. Payne believes the Spirit is the flame or power that disciples need to encourage and be encouraged to listen to. The Spirit guides and directs, and disciples have learned to listen to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is like the interpreter of God’s mind to the recipient, and vice a versa.

5. What specific strategies does your church employ to equip disciples?

The Church at Bethany invests and invites. Leaders encourage teams to invest in relationships with family, friends, neighbors, and work associates as pre-Christians. Payne describes how small groups and Sunday services provide invitational opportunities for people to experience God. Through an investment in relationships, members earn the right to invite others to share in worship. Since Bethany uses a journey theology, the

strategy ranges in a continuum from saved to unsaved. Through small group relationships disciples help others move forward, and through Life Transformational Groups (LTGs) participants read the Bible and are accountable to each other. LTGs are groups of two or three persons of the same gender that multiply into other groups. Small group's primary purpose is fellowship, and LTG's primary purpose is accountability.

6. What is the relationship between evangelism and disciple making?

Disciple making grows from evangelism. Payne believes evangelism is sharing the Good News, acceptance of Christ, and growth toward Christ. Evangelism is for pre-Christians, and discipleship invites those who have accepted Christ to follow Him. Some people think of themselves as Christians but are not actually growing in a relationship with others or Christ.

7. Do you perceive any challenges that are unique to the emerging (postmodern) culture for the disciple making process?

Payne responded positively. Postmodern individuals do not readily respond to a linear style, and do not move directly from unbelieving to belonging. The challenge continues over a longer period of time; therefore, time and energy investments are important. Individuals are very busy, and it takes a long time to reach them and build sustaining relationships.

8. Do you have any other thoughts related to disciple making that you think are important?

It is important to be intentional about discipleship. The gravity of life and the church draws people away from discipleship toward other priorities. Moving on a simple

path from a starting point to the next step aids discipleship. People learn many things at different stages, and small groups help facilitate this. Small groups help individuals feel connected and provide a sense of belonging.

The Church at Bethany wrestles with what a discipleship process looks like in the emerging culture. It understands the transformational component of discipleship. It encourages people to “go and do” rather than “come and see.” Toward that end, it provides relational growth opportunities such as small groups. It intentionally encourages people to invest their lives in building relationships with “pre-Christians.” Its infrastructure of small groups and Life Transformation Groups seems to be a well thought out solution to challenges of conveying information in a context that encourages transformation.

Analysis and Summary

The primary claim of this chapter is that there are certain characteristics within the Stone/Campbell movement that both help and hinder efforts to have an incarnational discipleship in the emerging culture. The plea of Stone/Campbell churches for Christian unity and their efforts in church planting are especially effective at connecting with the emerging culture. Their being firmly rooted in the rationalistic enlightenment and its modernistic tendencies sometimes keeps them from recreating themselves and finding new identities in the emerging post modern world. Evidence of this comes from the author’s interviews of leaders from within this tradition and the clear shifts in thinking

that exist between those who continue to push for old methodologies and those who are intentionally starting new churches with the emerging culture in mind.

The movement from a modern culture of disciple making to post modern includes a shift in emphasis from informational to transformational. This has been accompanied by a move to a more relationship-oriented process. Where the systems of discipleship at churches that were founded in the modern era such as The Christian Church of Hillsboro are built around Sunday School type structures, the emerging church will find relational mentoring processes used by churches like Ethnos and the Church @ Bethany to be more effective in the post modern culture. A continuing challenge for these churches will be the reproducibility of the process. In the Sunday school system reproducibility and measurability were the responsibility of a select few; however, in the more relational, mentoring style of the emerging culture it is going to more difficult to measure and require the efforts of more individuals. The next chapter will discuss discipleship in the New Testament milieu and its implications for creating an ethos of discipleship today.

CHAPTER 3

THE NEW TESTAMENT ETHOS OF DISCIPLESHIP

The implications of Jesus' demands for disciples are significant for twenty-first century churches. Churches fail Christ's call to discipleship when they turn inward and focus their energies on self-preservation. Existence solely for the sake of self-preservation is antithetical to Christ's call to sacrifice for His sake. Biblical discipleship requires that Christians disregard their concerns for personal comfort and needs, and focus on Christ and His mission of reconciliation. A transition to effective ministry in the emerging culture demands an incarnational ethos of discipleship by which a church dies to its organizational self and serves the culture it is called to reach.

This chapter explores how Jesus used the word "disciple," how his followers became disciples, and what he expected of them to provide a biblical foundation for an incarnational ethos of discipleship in the emerging culture of the twenty-first century. The discussion traces the development of the concept of discipleship from the Sophists, Socrates, and Plato through the Jewish sects prominent during the time of Jesus. The historical perspective clarifies the relationship between Jesus and his disciples and the extent of the commitment Jesus expected from them.

A primary focus of this study is the application of discipleship in its idealized form as related to the twelve followers of Christ. The *Exegetical Dictionary of the New*

Testament expands upon the relational and sacrificial definitions of discipleship, its use in the New Testament era, and its application to the disciples of Jesus (see appendix A). In the Gospels, the term disciple most frequently applies to a narrow circle of people around Jesus. In the book of Acts the use of the term expands to include all who are part of the Church.¹ Although Jesus' commands to the disciples were directed to a narrow group, the requirements expected of disciples can extend to broader communities such as the first century church and the twenty-first century church. The relationship of his disciples to Jesus is that of teacher and pupils in the first century conception of that relationship. The nature of the relationship between teacher and pupils suggests that they learn from him and imitate his example. Jesus' disciples are all called to take up their crosses and follow their master teacher (Luke 9:23).

In spite of the high cost of conversion, early Christianity spread quickly (Acts 2:41).² The incarnational ethos of discipleship initiated by the Holy Spirit overcame the cultural and theological obstacles. N. T. Wright writes, "For a pagan of whatever

¹ Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1 [*Exegetisches Wörterbuch Zum Neuen Testament*] (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 372-374. The relationship between μαθητής and the μανθάνω indicate that μαθητής is understood as a term for someone who stands in relation to another as pupil and is instructed by that person. . . . Usually μαθητής is reserved for the narrower circle around Jesus, a group presumably of modest size, one that could gather in a boat (e.g., Matt 14:22 par.; John 6:17) or a house (e.g., Mark 7:17; 9:28). . . . A long series of sayings indicates how discipleship was understood. In the majority of these sayings it is the narrow circle of disciples that is addressed. But this does not exclude the possibility that these sayings had validity in a wider sense (Best 400f.) . . . In Acts the designation μαθητής is used for all who belonged to the Church, whether in Jerusalem (6:1, 2, 7; 9:26), Damascus (9:10, 19), Antioch—where the term "Christian" was first used for the disciples (11:26, 29; 13:52)—or Ephesus (19:2; 20:1, 30). The term *disciple* here is not dependent on direct knowledge of Jesus, but expresses a relationship of fidelity to him (cf. John 9:28; Matt 22:16 concerning the disciples of Moses or of the Pharisees).

² N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 444.

background, Christianity demanded, and was well known from quite early on to demand, an allegiance that might very well involve not only a previously unimagined self-denial, but also social ostracism, imprisonment, torture and death. Early Christianity [did not] spread because demands were being trimmed to the hearers' expectations or wishes."³ Observations of discipleship in Acts 2:42-47 reveal a commitment to transformational growth that results from intense relational connections.⁴ The text in Acts reveals a high degree of devotion to Christ and to one another. The disciples were committed to the study of God's Word, worship of God, and caring for one another. The early church would not have understood the idea of conversion without accompanying life change.

A study of discipleship and the leadership ethos of the various schools of discipleship prominent in the New Testament milieu such as certain schools within Greek culture, Jewish sects, John, and Jesus' ministry contribute to understanding discipleship among first-century Christians. This study broadens the basis upon which to draw conclusions related to building an incarnational ethos of discipleship which results in effective ministry in the emerging culture of the twenty-first century.

³ Ibid., 445.

⁴ Devotion to the apostles' teaching was accompanied by a devotion to one another (for more see chapter 4).

Greek Culture, Philosophy, and Discipleship

In Greek culture, a noteworthy quality of discipleship is the teacher-student relationship.⁵ The progress of the students was judged less by how much information they gained from teachers, and more by how accurately students imitated teachers. This differs from Western teaching traditions that use informational standards of measurement. A review of several prominent Greek schools of philosophy establishes the importance of this observation and clarifies Christ's intent when he calls upon the original disciples to go and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19). The philosophical schools of the Hellenistic era, during which Christ lived, built on the ideas of the Sophists, Socrates, and Plato.

Sophists

Although they did not found a school of philosophy, the Sophists predated Socrates, and Plato and provided a foundation for their thought.⁶ Towards the end of the fifth century Before the Common Era (B.C.E.), teachers from all over the ancient world came to Athens. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* says Sophists were cosmopolitan persons such as Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, Thrasyarchus, and Hippias who instructed people in various spheres of life, but primarily in public speaking and rhetoric.

⁵ Hans Weder, "Disciple, Discipleship," trans. Dennis Martin, in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 2, D-G, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 209. In Greek culture, the phenomenon of discipleship appears in a number of forms including philosophy students, religious scholarship, and mystery cults. The teacher-student relationship is predominantly characterized by the concept of *mimesis*. Teachers and students are bound together by a certain teaching and practice of life, and students are recognizable by their imitation of the teachings and lives of their teachers.

⁶ A. B. du Toit, ed., *Guide to the New Testament*, vol. 2, *The New Testament Milieu*, trans. D. Roy Biggs (Halfway House, South Africa: Orion, 1998), 7.2.

They traveled from city to city, held community lectures, and impressed listeners with their eloquence. This set the stage for private lessons in rhetoric, for which they received payment. The Sophists' instruction was practical; it focused on how to make a success of life, particularly in the political and forensic spheres.⁷

The Sophists endured a great deal of criticism from Socrates and Plato, chiefly on the grounds that they claimed to teach wisdom, which Socrates and Plato believed could not be taught. Plato discredited their work by critically comparing their rhetoric with philosophy. He maintained that philosophy sets out to discover wisdom by means of conversation, which is based on a sound method, while their rhetoric sought success through vain words. He criticized their knowledge for hire and branded them paid hunters of the wealthy and of youth.

The Sophists' most prominent successor was Isocrates (436-338 B.C.E.). Like them, he stressed the value of rhetoric, but in contrast to them he insisted education must train students to lead a virtuous life in society. For Isocrates, a learned person made correct decisions but did not know everything. The Sophists are credited as pioneers in the realm of higher education, introducing the formal study of rhetoric, logic, and grammar.⁸ The Sophists taught their disciples effective public speaking, and Christ set an example of effective speaking for his disciples. Isocrates, like Christ, conceived of discipleship as transformation rather than mere information.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Socrates

Ancient writers trace all Hellenistic philosophical schools to Socrates.⁹

Philosophers prior to Socrates were primarily nature philosophers, concerned with questions about the origin of the world and with the search for the first principles responsible for it. Aristophanes' caricature of Socrates in the *Clouds* and the autobiography Plato credited to him in the *Phaedo* portray Socrates as having an early interest in the scientific philosophy of his day. Later in life, Socrates abandoned that interest and dedicated himself to the quest for the right way to live and act. "For this he employed what has come to be known as the Socratic Method: he interrogated people concerning the principles by which they lived and which through the years they had unthinkingly accepted as self-evident. He proceeded by a dialectic way of arguing: through questions and answers he would reach accurate conceptual definitions."¹⁰

Socrates' philosophy is essentially moral: it deals with human beings and their obligations, and in this he resembles the Sophists.¹¹ He believed questions about the origin of the world and the nature of ultimate reality should be subordinate to ethical knowledge. Mathematics, physics, and astronomy were not worthwhile forms of knowledge.¹² He claimed to have never walked outside the city since there was nothing to be learned from fields and trees. His ethical teaching was based on a particular theory of

⁹ Ibid., 7.3.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

knowledge. While the Sophists based knowledge on perception and jettisoned all standards of objective truth, Socrates based knowledge on reason.

His epistemology may be expressed succinctly in the statement: all knowledge is knowledge through concepts or ideas.¹³ Du Toit writes:

The central point of Socrates' teaching was his equation or identification of virtue and knowledge. He believed that a person cannot act correctly unless he or she knows what is right, knows the concept of what is right. Moral action is thus based on knowledge and must issue from it.¹⁴

Socrates' philosophical systems influenced his followers, and he formed groups of disciples from all over Greece. Through his indifference to conventional thinking, strong will, and passionate gravity, Socrates exerted a strong influence over his students. "To these qualities we may add his warm interest in and sympathy for all aspects of life and all sorts of characters, his tremendous humanity, humor, and irony, as well as his gift of conversation. This made a profound impression on all who came into contact with him."¹⁵ Socrates was a strong mentor of his disciples. Socrates devoted himself to a quest for the right way to live and act, challenged people to examine principles by which they lived, and believed that people could know what is right. He was a moral mentor to his students, to his disciples. This approach to discipleship influenced teachers and philosophers that followed. Jesus' disciples would have looked to Jesus as their moral mentor, one who expected a transformation in their behavior.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Plato

Among the numerous schools of philosophy that flourished in New Testament times, the one that holds the greatest influence is the “system associated with the great Plato (427-347 B.C.E.), a pupil of Socrates.”¹⁶ Plato learned the dialectical method, which involves questioning common assumptions, from Socrates. “From [Plato’s] teacher’s character he gained the conviction of the indispensable primacy of ethical goodness in all the relations of life.”¹⁷ In his *Seventh Epistle* he tells how, because of the politics of his day, he gradually abandoned his original intention of becoming a statesman. He was driven to the paradoxical conviction that there could be no hope for cities until philosophers became rulers or rulers became philosophers.¹⁸

Plato’s philosophy of reality and learning impacted profoundly the religious thinking of the Hellenistic world.¹⁹ Plato developed a group of students who were included in a formal, continuous learning environment about one mile outside Athens. The location was near the grove of Academus and is known as the Academy. According to *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Plato operated the Academy and drew disciples for about forty years. The dialectical method Plato used continues to influence the modern mind and its desire to pursue truth by rational means, by a rational apologetic. In contrast, the emerging culture of the twenty-first century pursues truth through a relational

¹⁶ Bruce M. Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, and Content* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1983), 62.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ du Toit, *Guide to the New Testament*: vol. 2, *The New Testament Milieu*, 7.4.

¹⁹ Ibid.

apologetic more in keeping with the teacher/pupil relationships seen among the Sophists, Socrates, and the Hellenists. The relational apologetic is more in keeping with the development of an incarnational ethos of discipleship.

The preceding summary of the Sophists, Socrates, and Plato and their ideas and discipleship activities is an important component in the understanding of Jesus' methods of discipleship. It demonstrates the ubiquitous character of discipleship in the ancient world. The next section describes first century Jewish culture as another major influence on the meaning of discipleship to Christ and his followers.

Jewish Sects

According to the Jewish historian Josephus, the three chief religious sects in first century Palestine were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.²⁰ He describes the Jewish cultural setting this way, "For there are three philosophical sects among the Jews. The followers of the first of whom are the Pharisees; of the second the Sadducees; and the third sect, who pretends to a severer discipline, are called Essenes."²¹ The gospel was proclaimed in the first century Jewish culture; therefore, it is important to discuss these sects in order to understand the biblical meaning of discipleship. This section examines the concept of discipleship as understood by the three religious sects.

²⁰ Metzger, *The New Testament*, 39.

²¹ Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 118-119.

The Pharisees

The sources of information about the Pharisees are Josephus, the Qumran scrolls, rabbinical writings, Paul's writings, the gospels, and Acts.²² The Pharisees are believed to be successors of the Hasideans (The Pious). They most likely developed from the Maccabean uprising "in reaction to the Hellenizing process which the Seleucid rulers attempted to impose on the Jews."²³

Josephus describes the Pharisees as "a certain sect of the Jews that appear more religious than others, and seem to interpret the laws more accurately."²⁴ The Pharisees demonstrated a strong interest in ritual laws and Sabbath observance as interpreted from the Mosaic Law. "It was this accurate interpretation of the Mosaic law, and scrupulous adherence to it, that characterized the religiosity of the average Pharisee."²⁵ The Pharisees believed that connection to God consisted of a strict obedience and interpretation of the law. "Pharisaism is the final result of that conception of religion which makes religion consist in conformity to the law, and promises God's grace only to doers of the law. It was the scrupulous adherence to legalistic traditions that created the Pharisaic ethos."²⁶

The Pharisees were meticulous about maintaining the ancient regulations regarding tithing, and they avoided eating food that was subject to the tithe until the tithe was paid. They took seriously the biblical doctrine of God's sovereignty over the entire

²² Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 181.

²³ Metzger, *The New Testament*, 40.

²⁴ Josephus, *The Works of Josephus*, 1.110.

²⁵ Metzger, *The New Testament*, 40.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

universe and His ability to overrule any actions of humanity for the furtherance of His own will. People might disobey His laws and oppose His will, but he would triumph.²⁷

At the height of their influence, they did not function or think of themselves as a secret police force. They were not recognized as an official body. “They were not even the official teachers of the Torah: that was one of the functions of the priesthood, both in Jerusalem and in the local community.”²⁸

“At no time do we learn how one ‘joined’ this group and what was required to stay in it. It may have been like a Hellenistic school, teaching a way of life, or a political, social faction competing for recognition and power within Judaism, or a sect separating itself from the parent body.”²⁹ They obtained power as they colluded with and influenced other groups. “The Pharisees sought to bring moral pressure to bear upon those who had actual power; to influence the masses; and to maintain their own purity as best they could.”³⁰

Like the philosophical schools, the Pharisees influenced their disciples and society through writings and personal influence. They probably had a system that educated its members and was relational in its culture. Josephus writes they “excel others

²⁷ F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (New York: Doubleday, 1969), 72-73.

²⁸ Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 189.

²⁹ Paul J. Achtemeier, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985), 783.

³⁰ Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 189.

in the accurate knowledge of the laws of their country,”³¹ and Joachim Jeremias reports that membership included a probationary period and a community culture.”³²

In contrast to the Pharisees, Jesus chose his disciples, preached to the masses, and spread the good news in a culture that included the Pharisees as prominent members of society. Jesus told the crowds to follow the teachings of the Pharisees, but not to follow their example because the Pharisees set themselves above others (Matt 23:2-7). Jesus’ approach was similar to the Pharisees in that he personally influenced his followers and they developed a community culture.

The Sadducees

Apart from the New Testament, the Jewish historian Josephus is a primary source for information regarding the Sadducees. Unfortunately, his interest was not so much how the Sadducees equipped their disciples but rather furthering his own writing agenda, as he did with the Pharisees. “His presentation of the Pharisees is always subservient to his purposes in writing, which is predominantly an explanation of how God could have allowed the downfall of his own chosen people. His discussion of the religious views of the Jewish sects therefore focuses on fate (or divine providence), predestination and freewill.”³³ Douglas R. DeLacey reports what Josephus says the “[Sadducees], in contrast to the Pharisees and Essenes, gave no place to the overruling providence of God, but

³¹ Josephus, *The Works of Josephus*, 38.91.

³² Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 25.

³³ Douglas R. De Lacey, “Pharisees,” *The Ecole Initiative*, 1995, <http://www2.evansville.edu/ecoleweb/articles/pharisees.html> (accessed 3 August 2006).

emphasized that all that happens to us is the result of the good or evil that we do (*Antiquities* 13.5.9; *War* 2.8.14).”³⁴

The first historical mention of the Sadducees is in the time of Jonathan Maccabeus who led the Jewish struggle against the Seleucids from 160 to 143 B.C.E.: “Josephus (*Antiquities* 13.5.9) said that they were a party at this time, and that when John Hyrcanus was head of the Jewish state (135–104 B.C.E.) there was strife between the Pharisees and the Sadducees (*Antiquities* 13.10.6).”³⁵ No source provides a comprehensive explanation for this early strife. Josephus says that the Sadducees had the support of the rich while the Pharisees had a following among the common people.³⁶ Jeremiahs confirms the association of the Sadducees with the rich.³⁷

This alliance with the wealthy led the Sadducees to be less hostile toward Roman rule. In their efforts to support the Jewish aristocracy, they found cooperation with and support for Roman rule to be advantageous. “At the time of Jesus, these men still

³⁴ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1880. Josephus, in a way comparable to the NT, speaks of the Sadducees’ rejection of “the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades” (*War* 2.8.14). “Souls die with the bodies” was what they said (*Antiq.* 18.1.4). Early Christian writers—Hippolytus, Origen, and Jerome—said that the Sadducees accepted only the Pentateuch and not the other OT books. It would seem, however, that they were not opposed to other OT books as a whole . . . but rather that they opposed the legal regulations introduced by the Pharisees and were saying that only the OT Law should be considered mandatory. In this, as in their stand against belief in angels and in life after death, they appear to have regarded the Pharisees as innovators and themselves as conservatives.

³⁵ Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), 1150.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Jeremiahs, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 230-231.

controlled the high Jewish council, or Sanhedrin, but they had little influence among the common people.”³⁸

Other than these texts, which are of limited value because they were not written by members of the sect and were written by their opponents, little is known about how the Sadducees transmitted their teachings to their disciples. Jeremiahs asserts that entrance into the group was difficult, “Not everyone could gain admission to the tight circle of Sadducees.”³⁹ From the available evidence it is difficult to draw any conclusions from the Sadducees as related to how they disciplined their followers and whether or not this influenced Jesus or the early church. On the other hand, Jesus clearly sought contact with persons from all backgrounds including the wealthy, the outcast, the unclean, and the common people. Jesus stands in stark contrast to the Sadducees because he communicated with and influenced the common people.

The Essenes

The Essenes were a sect of Judaism from the middle of the second century B.C.E. until the war with Rome in A.D. 66-70. While there is no direct reference in the New Testament to the Essenes or to the Qumran community, they had a specific role in the social setting of Palestine.⁴⁰ “They are described by the first-century A.D. authors Josephus and Philo and mentioned by some non-Jewish writers. They have been

³⁸ Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 2d ed. (Dallas, TX: Word, 1995), 5.

³⁹ Ibid., 231.

⁴⁰ du Toit, *The New Testament Milieu*, 12.7.

convincingly identified with the inhabitants of Qumran who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls.”⁴¹

In addition to Old Testament books and other Jewish pseudepigraphical writings, the Essenes developed their own biblical commentaries, hymns, rules, and apocalyptic writings discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁴² Although Josephus compares them to the Greco-Roman Stoics, the Essenes were apocalyptic in their thought and orientation, maintained ritual purity, ethical probity, and spiritual readiness for the intervention of God to destroy evil. No convincing evidence has been produced to demonstrate any dependence on Essene thought by John the Baptist, Jesus, or other early Christian leaders. The similarities that exist are more likely due to their common Jewish background than to any direct relationship.⁴³

Essene activity and beliefs are known through study of the Dead Sea Scrolls. J. P. Sanders describes them as communal in culture involving “extreme steps” and the “pooling of possessions.” They were isolated from contact with outsiders and “limited intercourse with strangers very strictly.”⁴⁴ Josephus describes an entry system that required a year’s probationary system and a slow process of inclusion in the membership. The process involved “tremendous oaths” related to “piety,” “justice,” non-violence, and

⁴¹ Achtemeier, *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, 279.

⁴² John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately after the Execution of Jesus* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1998), 450-451.

⁴³ Achtemeier, *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, 280.

⁴⁴ J. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 22.

“faithfulness.”⁴⁵ Josephus describes a form of discipleship among the Essenes. He notes that the Essenes did not marry or have children, but welcomed others’ children while the children were still “pliable” and able to be educated. The Essenes’ took the children in “to be their own family,” and the children were then “formed according to the Essenes’ manners.”⁴⁶ The available material indicates that discipleship for the Essenes was relational in nature and was a product of living in close community with one another.

The New Testament

In the New Testament the word disciple occurs only in the Gospels and the book of Acts, and this section describes the various uses of the word in these sources. This will frame the later discussion about the conversion process and what outcomes should be considered normative.

The following discussion will show how the New Testament use of the word disciple deepened and expanded its meaning. The Greek philosopher teachers and students were bound together by approaches to teaching and particular lifestyles. Students were recognizable because they immediately imitated their teachers. In the Jewish sects, students or initiates lived in specialized communities to learn the ways of the sects. In the New Testament disciples were bound to the teacher for the purpose of teaching and more importantly were bound and committed to the teacher. In the New Testament, Jesus called the disciples to break with their pasts. The disciples were called to leave their

⁴⁵ Josephus, *The Works of Josephus*, Wars 2.120.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 2.137-142.

families and vocations to be worthy of Jesus (Matt. 37-39). Jesus made it a direct condition of discipleship to give up all possessions (Luke 14:33). The call to discipleship was a call to enter into a life long relationship with an itinerant teacher and experience the suffering and ignominious death of their beloved teacher. “The disciple is as recipient dependent upon what Jesus embodied in his person, not merely upon what he taught.”⁴⁷

Discipleship in the Gospels

The idea of discipleship in the gospels involves a lifelong relationship with Jesus. “Discipleship is characterized by establishing a fundamental life relationship to the person of Jesus (and not merely to his teaching).”⁴⁸ This section includes noteworthy biblical verses that describe the significance of this life relationship with Jesus. The basic demand is summarized by the author of Matthew:

Then Jesus came to them and said, “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 NIV)

Jesus makes the claim of being the ultimate teacher (“authority”). “The basis for the words of commission is the claim of the risen Jesus that all authority has been given to him by God (cf. 11:27). The risen Jesus is pictured as Lord of heaven and earth—the

⁴⁷ Weder, “Disciple, Discipleship,” 208.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

cosmic ruler in God's stead (cf. Phil 2:5-11; Col 1:15-18; Heb 1:1-3), the king in the present-and-coming kingdom of God, the one who represents God's cosmic rule."⁴⁹

Jesus says the priority mission is "to go and make disciples." The nations are to be disciplined. Previously, Matthew had adopted the use in which "disciples" are exclusively the inner group of twelve men who left all to follow Jesus. After the resurrection, the invitation to discipleship is opened to all people of all nations. People are recruited as disciples within the Christian community, whose response to the Christian message in faith must be actualized in their lives. The call to the fishermen (4:18-22), the tax collector (9:9), and the rest of the twelve (10:1-4) is now extended to all, "as an extension of the call to Abraham and in accord with the promise that all nations would finally be blessed through him (Gen. 12:1-3)."⁵⁰

The critical component of discipleship is joining Christ in his mission to go into the world. "Jesus' instructions include an imperative (a command) surrounded by three participial clauses: one should make disciples for Jesus by going, baptizing and teaching. Making disciples involves more than getting people to an altar; it involves training them as thoroughly as Jewish teachers instructed their own students. Most of modern Christendom falls far short on this count."⁵¹ Often the call to discipleship focuses on

⁴⁹ M. Eugene Boring, "Matthew 28:16-20, The Great Commission," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. VIII, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 503.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 503-504.

⁵¹ Craig S. Keener, *Matthew*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series, vol. 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), Matt. 28:18.

conversion and fails to inculcate the new convert with the expectations of discipleship, with the expectation to be like Jesus.

The call to make disciples was a call to a greater commitment and a call to go beyond the normal boundaries. It was a call to disciple the nations. Jesus' call to make disciples of the nations was an expansion of both the Greek schools of philosophy and the Jewish sects. While it is true that both of them thought in terms of conversion, the command to extend their influence to the nations would have been a radical innovation.⁵² Jesus expected his disciples to extend His teachings and way of life beyond the common boundaries to all the nations.

Jesus requires specific actions and commitments from his disciples. He expects more than mental assent to certain teachings; he expects a whole life commitment to his person:

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. (Matt. 16:24-27 NIV)

⁵² Ibid., Matt 28:18. "Unlike other ancient teachers, Jesus' disciples would not raise disciples for themselves but only for Jesus (23:8). Greek tradition could praise those who made many disciples (as in Diog. Laert. 8.1.16) Greek philosophers thought in terms of 'conversion' to philosophy (see Nock 1933), and various pagan religious cults were propagated by travelers in antiquity (Stambaugh and Balch 1986:42; compare Acts 8:4). Judaism also spoke of sages as having disciples (see comment on 4:19; 19:21-22) and sometimes even persuading large numbers of people to become students of Torah (as in *ARN* 26, §54); they also separately recognized the conversion of Gentiles (see comment on 23:15; see De Ridder 1971). But ancient hearers would, and modern hearers should, recognize a drastic innovation in a command to disciple *nations*."

In the earlier descriptions of the disciples of Greek philosophers and the Jewish sects, discipleship was a student-teacher relationship that called upon students to become like the teachers through a significant relationship. In the gospels this is expanded to include self-denial and submission as essential characteristics of Christ's call upon His followers. "Taking up one's cross" . . . meant marching on the way to one's execution, shamefully carrying the heavy horizontal beam (the *patibulum*) of one's own death-instrument. Jesus anticipated literal martyrdom for himself and many of his followers by the Romans' standard means of executing lower-class criminals and slaves."⁵³ This emphasis on self-sacrifice expanded the understanding of what it meant to be a disciple.

The local church can make the necessary changes and become incarnational in its encounter with the emerging culture by submission to the lordship of Christ: "Losing one's life in this age would be a small price to preserve it in the eternal age to come. We must decide whether we 'want' to come after Jesus or 'want' to save our lives; we cannot have it both ways. The cross means death and nothing less."⁵⁴

The New Testament connection of discipleship to Christ's death on the cross introduces a new level of self-denial, and individuals' forfeiture of control over the directions of their lives. The cost of authentic discipleship is a total commitment to Christ's commands. Love for Christ and his mission is primary, and personal alliances to any relationship apart from Christ must take second place. Jesus does not request a hasty

⁵³Ibid., Matt 16:24.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Matt 16:25.

response to these challenges; instead, he urges those who would follow him to think seriously about the cost before making a commitment (Luke 14:25-33).

The church and Christians' ability to move forward in ministry is linked to their submission to the mission of authentic discipleship. When they are committed disciples, they are naturally linked to Christ's passion for world redemption. The author of Luke conveys this message when he gives an account of Christ's conversation with a lawyer. When asked by the lawyer what he must do to inherit eternal life Jesus responds carefully and proposes a question of His own, "What is written in the law?" The lawyer responds with the accepted Jewish summary of the Torah: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:25-28). Discipleship, the building of an ethos, and incarnational ministry are empowered at the core, first by God's love for humans and by the reciprocal love of humans for God. This is what makes it an all consuming cry to the Body of Christ. God's discipleship claim reaches to every area of human experience and no part of life or self can be withheld from God.

Analysis and Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to understand Jesus' use of the term disciple, how his followers became disciples, and what he expected of them to provide a biblical foundation for an incarnational ethos of discipleship in the emerging culture of the twenty-first century. This claim has been substantiated first by establishing a biblical definition of the use of the term disciple. The Greek word from which the term disciple is

derived is *mathētēs*. The basic meaning is pupil or student. An in depth study of *mathētēs* as applied to Jesus reveals a stronger relationship and a greater degree of sacrifice than is normally anticipated in teacher/student relationships.

A study of Greek philosophy and its use of the term disciple contribute to understanding its use in Christ's time. Studies of the Greek schools of philosophy show that they evaluated disciples less by whether they gained information from their teachers and more by how accurately they imitated their teachers. Jesus, however, expanded upon the Greek schools' expectations of discipleship. Jesus called upon his disciples to break with their pasts, leave their families and possessions, and enter into a life long relationship with him.

Observations gained from the study of Jewish sects further confirm the conclusion that a disciple is more than a student or pupil. In sects such as the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes it is clear that a disciple maintains close relationship with a mentor and abides by a strict set of communal standards. This is in contrast to the current understanding of what it means to be a "pupil" which places a greater emphasis on academic acumen.

The use of the word disciple in the Gospels and Acts expands these ideas in significant ways. Discipleship is about having a life relationship with Jesus more than adhering to his teachings. Unlike other teachers, Jesus' followers raised disciples exclusively for Jesus rather than for themselves. Jesus' call to discipleship was characterized by self-denial and submission to his will. An incarnational ethos of

discipleship grows from the expectation that followers of Jesus imitate him, fulfill his teaching, and make disciples of all nations.

Jesus' expansion and deepening of the definition of what it means to be his disciples has important implications for leaders in the emerging culture. Systems in the modern culture placed an emphasis on the communication of information and developed processes such as Sunday schools to transfer this information from teachers to students. Processes that will be more effective in the emerging culture will need to be modeled more like Jesus' processes in the first century. They will be intrinsically more personal and relational with the end goal being a focus on modeling one's life after the teacher rather than just gaining information from the teacher. The discussion in the next chapter addresses some of the challenges of the emerging culture that make it more like the time of Christ than the preceding modern culture.

CHAPTER 4

THE POSTMODERN CONTEXT

Building systematic processes, which reflect Jesus' expansion and deepening of what it means to be a disciple, upon the foundation left by the modern Church presents difficulties to Church leadership. These difficulties are compounded by the emerging post-modern culture which presents its own set of challenges that churches must overcome if they are to have an incarnational ministry. As a result of these challenges churches have suffered an evangelistic decline. Obstacles to incarnational ministry in the emerging post-modern culture include but are not limited to:

- An emerging culture more similar to the first century than the modern culture that preceded it.
- A post modern relational apologetic that focuses on feelings and experiences compared to a modern rational apologetic that had its roots in the Enlightenment.
- A lack of biblical purpose.
- A bondage to unhealthy addictions.
- An entrapment in time and using old wine skins for new wine.
- A hold on life for its own sake rather than forsaking life for the good of future generations.

A natural aversion to transition and change compounds the effect of these challenges. This is a time of transition and leaders must understand the attendant dangers and peculiarities. The next section discusses how some of these challenges have resulted in a decline in evangelistic growth.

Evangelistic Decline

Although the emerging culture presents the western church with both crisis and opportunity, one persistent difficulty is a decline in growth occurring as a result of evangelism. Many view the church as irrelevant. In *Lost in America* Tom Clegg and Warren Bird write, “Churches are going out of business because they refuse to change. Any church that doesn’t shift from ‘ministry as status quo’ to ‘ministry as mission outpost’ will die or become hopelessly irrelevant.”¹ They believe the church at large is failing in its mission:

The way Christians do church today is the equivalent of ignoring millions of desperate, but unrecognized, cries for help. We’re letting an increasing number of our neighbors and friends die without a personal exposure to the life-giving good news of Jesus Christ. Unless we make some drastic changes, many people are likely to perish, and we’ll fail in the mission of what God has called us to become and to do. This world is damned and doomed to a devil’s hell, and in the final analysis, our behavior indicates that we don’t really care.²

In support of this contention Clegg and Bird site what they call “the seven deadly statistics”:

¹ Tom Clegg and Warren Bird, *Lost in America: How You and Your Church Can Impact the World Next Door* (Loveland, CO: Group, 2001), 14.

² *Ibid.*, 15.

Fact #1: The percentage of adults in the United States who attend church is decreasing. U.S. churches are growing, but not enough to keep pace with the population.

Fact #2: Roughly half of all churches in America did not add one new person through conversion growth last year.

Fact #3: No matter how you do the math, current conversion rates still point to one horrible conclusion: lost people lose. In America, it takes the combined effort of 85 Christians working over an entire year to produce one convert. At that rate, a huge percentage of people will never have the opportunity, even once, to hear the gospel from a friend they trust and in a way they can understand it. That's not even running on fumes; it's running on empty.

Fact #4: Some researchers claim that more churches are closing than opening every year. Almost three times as many churches in America are closing (3,750) as are opening (1,300) each year.

Fact #5: Conversions to other religions and dropouts from Christianity are escalating.

Fact #6: The decline in Christianity has been going on for nearly 50 years.

Fact #7: Too many church people believe and behave identically to their unchurched counterparts.³

The next section assesses the nature of the changing culture and some of the church's attempts to minister to that culture. Jesus states the need for the church to remain faithful in its mission: "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. 28:19-20 NIV).

³ Ibid., 25-35.

The Church and the Postmodern World

Bill Joy notes the staggering increase in the rate of cultural change as a factor that negatively affects the church;⁴ however, early Christian practices can impact contemporary issues positively:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47 NIV)

Similar to the twenty-first century church, the first century church in Acts 2 stood at the edge of a culture in transition. The first century church was under assault by both the Roman authorities and Jewish leaders. They depended on the Spirit of Christ and learned how to live in community with one another. At the core of this community was devotion both to Christ and to one another. God honored their devotion with an increase in the number saved.

The contemporary church must also acknowledge dependence upon the power and miraculous outpouring of the Spirit of God. She must reemphasize her devotion to God, His Word, and one another. Contemporary culture is caught in a time of transition between the confident and rational modern era and the postmodern era, characterized by its distrust of claims of certainty. Leonard Sweet states that the contemporary world “has

⁴ Bill Joy, “Why the Future Doesn’t Need Us,” *Wired*, no. 8.4 (April 2000), <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/8.04/joy.html> (accessed 23 October 2006).

more in common with the first century than with the modern world that is collapsing all around us.”⁵ This implies, therefore, that Christians must not embrace a postmodern worldview but exegete the contemporary era to proclaim the redemptive message of the gospel properly. The postmodern culture provides the context for this paper’s thesis that the development of an outward-reaching ethos of discipleship will help redeem and transform the church community and world.

The transition from modern to postmodern is marked by several key cultural changes and differences. In *The End of the World As We Know It*, Chuck Smith writes:

Postmodernity is what comes after we all stop thinking like engineers (i.e., rationalism). Postmodernity is not irrational; it simply does not believe that human reason holds all the answers to life’s questions. There are other ways to know besides human reason. They include story, metaphor, feeling, experience and intuition. Western civilization has given reason a privileged position in the quest for knowledge, but in doing so, other ways of learning-- once characteristic of non western cultures-- have been overlooked and even scorned. . . . Postmodernity is what comes after the cult of science (i.e., scientism). Because it lacks modernism’s allegiance to science, it might seem that postmodernity is antagonistic toward science. But that is not really the case. Postmoderns don’t reject science, they simply don’t view the scientific method as the only way to approach a problem.⁶

Postmodernism presents challenges and opportunities to the church. The challenge comes in the church’s call to proclaim a source of absolute truth to a culture suspicious of such claims. The opportunity, however, is a byproduct of this rejection of absolutes. For example, in the modern culture science was considered infallible and

⁵ Leonard Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21st Century World* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2000), xvii.

⁶ Chuck Smith Jr., *The End of the World As We Know It* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2001), 47-49.

completely trustworthy, but its failures have opened the door for transcendence. The church can embrace this opportunity and translate the failures of the modern world into a hopeful message for the contemporary generation.

Many modern Christians live by the maxim “in our minds we trust” and are skeptical of feelings and experiences. They believe that the rational mind cannot be deceived and that believers need only reason to be considered right before God.⁷ This methodology, however, does not accommodate the fact that both reason and emotion are gifts from God, and both can be tainted by sin. The rational mind can just as easily deceive a believer as one’s feelings. Believers must, therefore, be willing to question their conclusions with humility and perseverance regardless of whether those conclusions stem from a rational thought or an intuitive feeling. This can cause tension for Christians transitioning between the modern and postmodern cultures. Modernity taught people to build their faith on long arguments that “proved” the authenticity of Christian belief. Modernists prefer logical, analytical propositions to feelings and experiences. They have been trained to “distrust our emotions, feelings, and experiences when it comes to matters of faith. We have been warned that feelings can be deceptive.”⁸ In the emerging post modern culture, people question this confidence in rational processes. Is it possible that rational processes can be deceived? Postmodern thought reveals that deception comes in many guises. The rational mind can be deceived as easily as the experiential mind.

⁷ Ibid., 94.

⁸ Ibid., 104.

Leaders in the time of transition between modernity and postmodernity need to learn to work in balanced ways within both of these worlds. They cannot place too much trust in either their ability to reason nor in their experiences. They must acknowledge that both approaches can discern truth or be deceived.

In the postmodern world the church must understand that individuals need a balance between the rational and the emotional worldview. Take, for instance, this view of the authority of Scripture,

There is no question that the Bible is our authority, but is pure reason the only legitimate way we can experience the authority of the Bible? We may also ask, “How do we take the Bible into our hearts and minds in a life-transforming way?” We do not have to say that we either believe the Bible rationally or experience it emotionally (or spiritually). We can legitimately have it both ways.⁹

As the church attempts to bridge the modern and post modern era with incarnational ministry it will be helpful to embrace a theology that acknowledges God’s sovereignty over both mind and emotions. Both mind and emotions, both rational and relational can help lead to truth and both can deceive. Leaders will be better prepared to minister during the transition if they hold the rational and relational in tension and allow them to complement one another. The next section will discuss the observations of prominent leaders who have identified particular obstacles to the church if it is to create an incarnational ethos.

⁹ Ibid., 105.

Obstacles to an Incarnational Ethos of Discipleship

In addition to the aforementioned cultural obstacles, the church has a number of identifiable internal obstacles to an ethos of incarnational ethos of discipleship. Several key leaders have identified some of the most prominent internal obstacles.

Rick Warren: The Church Lacks Purpose

Rick Warren suggests that the Western church has lost its sense of purpose, and that a force defines every church and helps determine what the church emphasizes. He writes, “Every church is driven by something. There is a guiding force, a controlling assumption, a directing conviction behind everything that happens.”¹⁰ Churches can be driven by tradition, personality, finances, programs, events, seekers, or biblical purpose, but Warren proposes, “What is needed today are churches that are driven by purpose instead of by other forces.”¹¹

In Warren’s paradigm before a church attempts any transition, it must first ask: “Why do we exist?” Warren asserts that churches that have not answered this question have no foundation, motivation, or direction for ministry.¹² The purpose driven church balances among five biblical purposes: worship, ministry, evangelism, fellowship, and discipleship. Warren contends that when a church achieves this balance it will be a healthy, God-honoring Bride of Christ.

¹⁰ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 77.

¹¹ Ibid., 80.

¹² Ibid., 81.

Bandy and Easum: The Church Is in Bondage to Unhealthy Addictions

In *Kicking Habits*, Thomas Bandy asserts that the church has succumbed to a series of debilitating organizational addictions. He writes:

The real hurdle that causes church developments to stumble, however, is not about finance, aging property, or diminishing volunteers; it is not even about articulate mission statements. Even before a congregation confronts the need for a mission statement—and long before it must tackle issues of finances, property, and leadership—the congregation must have a vision.¹³

Bandy uses the language of the addiction recovery movement to discuss the challenges within the church. He suggests the congregation is often unable to distinguish an authentic calling of Jesus Christ because of its “abiding addictions to past ideals, forms, and procedures. Addiction is the right word. Just as an alcoholic, smoker or drug abuser chronically denies the destructive impact of certain habitual behavior patterns, so also congregations simply cannot ‘see’ that the demise of their congregational health is directly connected to their dogged and misplaced loyalty to the ‘sacred cows’ of former ideals, forms, or procedures.”¹⁴

Bandy and William Easum assert that the church can recognize these addictions and make a concerted effort to cleanse itself of them. They refer to controllers as one of the primary obstacles to recovery. Easum recalls an early experience that demonstrates how a desire for control can cause a strong resistance to change:

When I first began consulting, I thought that the sacred cow was “maintaining the status quo.” The more I work with congregations, the

¹³ Thomas G. Bandy, *Kicking Habits: Welcome Relief for Addicted Churches* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 25.

¹⁴ Ibid.

more I realize that keeping the status quo is merely the tip of the iceberg. I arrived at this conclusion after several years of helping congregations start contemporary or alternative worship services. Instead of encouraging churches to gradually change an existing service, I encourage them to begin an alternate service designed for people born after World War II. Thus, no changes have to be made in the existing service, producing a “win-win” situation. I remind them over and over that no one must go to this new service who does not desire it. They can continue to go to their present service. All they need do is give permission for this new service to begin. If change or status quo were the sacred cow, this strategy would work with minimum controversy. However, it still causes conflict. Controllers do not only do not want change; they also want to control everything that happens. If the new ministry is not what they want or need, they make sure it doesn’t happen.¹⁵

Resistance to change is not always related to disagreement over the need for change; it can also be an issue of losing control or influence. If the church desires to “be with Jesus on the mission field,”¹⁶ it must be freed from the addiction of control and release its members to fulfill their individual and corporate gifting. Easum suggests for the children of God to be faithful to their calling they “must be freed up from their slavery to their institutions to live for others on the mission field, freed up to function in a constantly changing world.”¹⁷

Michael Slaughter and Warren Bird: The Church Is Trapped in Time

Michael Slaughter and Warren Bird assert that every combination of pastors, congregation, and community is unique. Church leaders cannot, therefore, transpose the

¹⁵ William M. Easum, *Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers: Ministry Anytime, Anywhere by Anybody* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 31-32.

¹⁶ William M. Easum, *Unfreezing Moves: Following Jesus into the Mission Field* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 10.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

methodologies from the nineteenth and late twentieth centuries into the new millennium and expect similar results. They write, “If we continue to copy the models of the 1980s and 1990s, we’re going to miss the next generation.”¹⁸ A contemporary church cannot take cues and clues from the megachurch movement, small groups, or any other passing fads, but must recognize that this moment presents unique challenges and opportunities to create a model for the future. Slaughter and Bird write:

Every church leader has a specific call and distinguishing gift base of talent. You already have the God-given gifts you need. Your mission is to use them to excel in a local implementation of the overall mission of Jesus Christ. Your effectiveness in the future will be measured by how well your church demonstrates the Kingdom of God in unique ways to your indigenous community and beyond. Your goal is to connect people to an authentic experience of God in this world.¹⁹

Slaughter and Bird propose churches must “unlearn” much of what they thought was right, rethink the way they think and act, and be open to God’s Holy Spirit leading them into an unknown and uncharted future. Churches should not be attempting to put old wine in new wineskins. They should be looking for sources to form new wineskins to connect with the new wine of the emerging culture. An “unlearning church” is possessed by the passion of God for a world that is dying by the millions apart from Christ. “Jesus calls us to self-expenditure, not self-infatuation.”²⁰ Churches can take cues from the next generation. In this time of transition from modern to postmodern, churches can look to the younger demographic to determine what the future holds. “To understand the seismic

¹⁸ Michael Slaughter and Warren Bird, *Unlearning Church: Just When You Thought You Had Leadership All Figured Out* (Loveland, CO: Group, 2002), 22.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

shift in today's changing worldview, we have to focus on the under-thirty-five age group. More than anyone alive today, they tend to connect with what postmodernity is all about."²¹

Ultimately an unlearning church does not take church lightly. An unlearning church defines itself as a redemptive community of God, not a place for good times, good food, and great songs. The unlearning church chooses to allow God to open its eyes to the suffering, hunger, and hurts of the world, and allow Him to work through the church as a healing presence.²²

Erwin McManus: The Church Must Die

Erwin McManus uses the metaphor of ecosystems to demonstrate how the church can achieve its potential. He suggests the pastor must be a "spiritual environmentalist,"²³ and church leaders must help their congregations understand the ecosystem and be fruitful. McManus writes:

For a species to survive and propagate in a given ecosystem, at least five basic characteristics need to be present. One, a balanced ecosystem; two, environmental adaptation; three, spontaneous reproduction; four, the nurturing instinct; and five, life-cycle harmony. These same principles apply to the birth, growth, and multiplication of churches throughout the world. The spiritual environmentalist centers the church around these five areas.²⁴

²¹ Ibid., 36.

²² Ibid., 215-18.

²³ McManus, *An Unstoppable Force*, 14.

²⁴ Ibid., 14-15.

A healthy, fruitful church will not neglect any of these environmental factors. A balanced ecosystem provides the church with a healthy relationship to God, one another, and the world; can adapt to inevitable cultural changes; reproduces; demonstrates a nurturing instinct; and always prepares for the next generation of life. The only way an organism continues through the generations is to live, die, and be born again. The church must be ready to give up its life for the new life of others.²⁵

The contemporary church struggles with giving life to others. Many churches tend to focus inward and believe that what worked at one time will always work among future generations. McManus writes, “If churches wait too long to die to themselves, then they ensure they will die by themselves. . . . The life cycle is a curious thing: no matter how you approach it, you die. If you die to yourself early and celebrate the giving of life, you find celebration and joy, even in death. Our future is not to be found in our preservation but in our investment.”²⁶ The next section will discuss the dangers and difficulties in transitioning to being a Church that can perpetuate an incarnational ethos.

The Dangers of Transition

In times of transitions, many churches must confront tension between those who wish to change and others who resist change. Resistance to change can often be illogical. Alan Nelson and Gene Appel suggest that the “primary resistance to change is 90 percent

²⁵ Ibid., 14-20.

²⁶ Ibid., 19.

social/emotional and 10 percent logical/physical.”²⁷ Emotional resistance causes feelings of sadness and anger, and also affects the way individuals experience and interpret the outside world. It is important, therefore, for those who desire to navigate the seas of change to understand the potential obstacles. Nelson and Appel list seven unchangeable rules of change:

1. People do what they perceive is in their best interest, thinking as rationally as circumstances allow them to think.
2. People are not inherently anti-change. Most will, in fact, embrace initiatives provided the change has positive meaning for them.
3. People thrive under creative challenge but wilt under the negative stress.
4. People are different. No single “elegant solution” will address the entire breadth of these differences.
5. People believe what they see. Actions do speak louder than words, and a history of previous deception octuples present suspicion.
6. The way to make effective long-term change is to first visualize what you want to accomplish and then inhabit this vision until it comes true.
7. Change is an act of the imagination. Until the imagination is engaged, no important change can occur.²⁸

Nelson and Appel also identify five different personalities they claim exist in every church:

1. Creators (2-5 percent): These congregants are out of the box thinkers, artists, inventors, and prophets.
2. Progressives (10-20 percent): They do not necessarily come up with original ideas, but they are able to see an idea they like, refine it, and act on it.
3. Builders (25-40 percent): These congregants are stabilizers. They must have proof that the new ideas will be of benefit to the body.

²⁷ Allen Nelson and Gene Appel, *How to Change Your Church (Without Killing It)* (Nashville, TN: Word, 2000), 71.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

They keep a church steady, and stop change from becoming so top heavy that it tips the ship over.

4. Foundationalists (25-40 percent): This group prefers to keep the status quo. They build up a church's infrastructure, and believe they can strengthen the future by preserving the past.

5. Anchors (10-20 percent): This group loves the church's heritage, routine, and rituals. Anchors keep a church from flying off into the future with no consideration of the past.²⁹

Working together with the Holy Spirit, each of these groups serves as a series of checks and balances that assure the long-term health and growth of the body. When one of these groups acts out of balance or one group sees itself as "right" and the others as "wrong," however, dysfunction and dissension can appear in the church.

Ultimately transition is difficult and sometimes costly, but it can be eased through practical and spiritual preparation. A church must have a clear vision and a persevering spirit. Vision can only develop through the power of God's Spirit. Dan Southerland describes Flamingo Road Church's transition: "There is some tough homework to be done in the school of vision. You must collect information about your community. You must develop a holy discontent with the status quo in your church. You must fast and pray in order to seek God. And you must wait, and wait, and wait."³⁰

A church transition is an act of God whether it is Purpose Driven, EPIC, Permission Giving, True Teams, or Seeker Sensitive. The only successful transition seeks to understand the battle from a variety of perspectives. As leaders improve their understanding of the psychology of transition and the potential obstacles, they can help

²⁹ Ibid., 75-77.

³⁰ Dan Southerland, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church through Change* (Littleton, CO: Serendipity House, 1999), 39.

prevent hurt feelings and misunderstandings inevitable in times of transition. The author of this paper believes churches must understand the spiritual dimensions involved in transition to become better equipped to serve in the power and purposes of God. When the many aspects of transition have been examined, a church can begin to grow into a more outward-looking organism focused on an ethos of discipleship.

Analysis and Summary

This chapter describes a post modern culture that presents a new set of challenges that churches must overcome if they are to have an incarnational ministry. Several factors have led to an evangelistic decline. These factors include but are not limited to:

- An emerging culture more similar to the first century than the modern culture that preceded it.
- A post modern relational apologetic that focuses on feelings and experiences compared to a modern rational apologetic that had its roots in the Enlightenment.
- A lack of biblical purpose.
- A bondage to unhealthy addictions.
- An entrapment in time and using old wine skins for new wine.
- A hold on life for its own sake rather than forsaking life for the good of future generations.

A natural aversion to transition and change compounds the effect of these challenges.

This is a time of transition and leaders must understand the attendant dangers and peculiarities.

All of these factors affect the ability of the church to do incarnational ministry in the emerging culture; therefore, an ethos that breaks down the desire to hold onto the past and builds up the belief that a healthy church is willing to give up its life for the benefit of others will have the best chance of sustaining an incarnational ministry in the emerging culture. Leaders can help churches listen to the Spirit if they develop an incarnational ethos that sustains discipleship in the lives of their members. The incarnational ethos will help leaders and church members overcome the challenges that threaten their survival in the emerging culture. It is the thesis of this study that a theology of new wineskins/new creations can shape the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare churches for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture. The next chapter will examine issues related to leadership in creating an ethos of discipleship.

CHAPTER 5

LEADERSHIP AND CREATING AN ETHOS OF CHRIST-LIKE DISCIPLESHIP

Leaders must develop an incarnational ethos that immerses the community in the presence of Christ. This will result in disciples being Christ's presence in the world. Factors affected by the leader's ethos include the community's learning structures and hierarchies, lay leaders, the relationship of leaders with the team and community, and role of the Spirit and the Word in discipleship formation. Leaders should evaluate all church programs including preaching, meetings, small groups, or Sunday school to determine whether they encourage Christian discipleship among participants. An incarnational ethos of discipleship, an ethos of Christ likeness in congregants' lives, must include a commitment to a lifelong journey of transition and transformation.

In *The Household of God* Lesslie Newbigin writes:

For St. Paul a life of the Christian is life in Christ, and it can at the same time be described as the life of Christ in the believer. It is a participation in the life of Christ who is even now at the right hand of the Father. It is this because it is first a participation in His death. The Christian has died with Christ and his life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3.). He is crucified with Christ and now Christ lives in him (Gal. 2:20).¹

The path to living in Christ is found in our participation in his death. An ethos of Christ-like discipleship results in people living lives of mission because they have died to their

¹ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God* (London: SCM Press, 1953; reprint, Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Paternoster Press, 1998), 84 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

old lives and as new creations they are fully engaged with their lives in Christ. Paul says, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving” (Col.2:6-7 NRSV). The journey into Christ transforms the way people live. The four participles in verse 7 express four significant qualities of the Christian life. The passive voice suggests that these are not acquired by human effort but by God’s grace. The first two, “rooted and built up in him,” are metaphors of growth, envisaging the dynamic nature of Christian discipleship. The second two, “established in the faith . . . and abounding in thanksgiving,” point to worship, where disciples experience the spiritual outcome of dedication to God. “The two couplets are naturally related, since the nurture of Christ’s community is facilitated by corporate acts of worship, when it is taught the faith it has received and offers its thanksgiving to God.”²

Building an Ethos Through Over Learning

An ethos is an environment in which decisions are made and obedience occurs based on the guiding beliefs of a culture rather than a mechanical obedience to a set of rules and regulations. For a leader to influence an environment in this way the discipleship processes must be immersive. Don Shula writes about a concept he calls “over learning”:

Over learning means that the players are so prepared for the game that they have the skill and confidence needed to make the big play. More than anything else, over learning-constant practice, constant attention to getting

² Robert W. Wall, *Colossians and Philemon*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993).

the details right every time-produces hunger to be in the middle of the action. When players have absolutely no doubt about what they are supposed to do or how to do it, they thrive on pressure. If the heat's on they wanted it coming their way. If the player is a halfback, he wants the ball. If he's an end, he wants the pass thrown to him. If he's a lineman, he wants to make the important block or tackle. Over learning for financial professionals means they want to be in the action, talking to prospects, conducting client interviews, asking for referrals, creating financial strategies, coaching clients on implementing financial strategies-doing business instead of sitting on the sidelines.³

Shula's concept of over learning can also apply to a Christian context. Disciples who are immersed in a culture and "over learning" will be better prepared to "make the big play" and live incarnational lives in the emerging culture. Over learning can help Christians to prepare fully to live in Christ likeness.

The first century church in Acts 2 cited in chapter 4 displays the kind of radical commitment necessary to serve as an example of an over learning environment. The community displayed passionate dedication to one another, to the teaching of God's Word, and to their worship of God. Postmodern church leaders must accept personal responsibility for creating an ethos that results in their communities taking corporate and personal accountability for being transformed by the mind and spirit of Christ. The next section discusses how learning structures and hierarchies can enhance or detract from a leader's ability to create an ethos of discipleship.

Learning Structures and Hierarchies

This section addresses the subject of traditional institutional hierarchies and their impact on the discipleship potential of individuals and communities. In the contemporary

³ Ken Blanchard and Don Shula, *Everyone's a Coach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 50.

culture, these structures can be criticized as anti-spiritual or anti-relational.⁴ Newbigin, however, claims that the development of structures within Christian movements is a necessary and even spiritual process that demonstrates Christian life is more than esoteric spiritual wandering, but a visible fellowship of people and God.⁵ Structures can either help or hinder an ethos of discipleship. The challenge lies in developing Christian structures that honor the integrity of the gospel and result in the participants' development of Christ-like character.

Structures tend to develop hierarchically, and hierarchical systems can lead to struggles of power and control. Leaders must heed Paul's words to the church in Colossae:

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all,

⁴ Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 34-45.

⁵ Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 90-91. "We may point first of all to the testimony which Church history bears to the fact that the Church cannot live except as a visibly defined and organized body with a continuing structure. It is not necessary, I think, to illustrate this by a great many examples. We can all call to mind movements which have begun as pure upsurges of fresh spiritual vitality, breaking through and revolting against the hardened structure of the older body, and claiming, in the name of the Spirit, liberty from outward forms and institutions. And we have seen how rapidly they develop their own forms, their own structures of thought, of language, and of organization. It would surely be a very unbiblical view of human nature and history to think-as we so often, in our pagan way, do-that this is just an example of the tendency of all things to slide down from a golden age to an age of iron, to identify the spiritual with the disembodied, and to regard visible structure as equivalent to sin. We must rather recognize here a testimony to the fact that Christianity is, in its very heart and essence, not a disembodied spirituality, but life in a visible fellowship, a life which makes such total claim upon us, and so engages our total powers, that nothing less than the closest and most binding association of men with one another can serve its purpose. And moreover it belongs to the very essence of the Christian religion that the fellowship into which it binds us embraces all men and all generations, and therefore every association of Christians which claims to be the Church necessarily tends to develop the traditional marks of structure and succession, even though it has begun in a revolt against tradition. Things which are repudiated in the act of breaking away are reasserted in the practical business of Church life a generation later."

clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. (Col. 3:12-15 NRSV)

The new clothing Christians are to wear begins with a list of personal attributes: compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Their inclusion suggests the need for patience with others in the group. The entire context calls for harmony in the church. These five attributes are followed by two similar attributes: bearing with one another, and forgiving. To bear with others is to put up with their shortcomings even when they fail to act the way one expects. Believers are called to forgive as Christ has forgiven. Paul admonishes church members to bear with one another and forgive as a prelude for the next virtue in the passage, love. Love brings the community together in a distinctively Christian harmony, and this kind of love can be experienced only within the bounds of community. The end result is peace and the response is thankfulness. Paul uses the plural form of heart to imply the heart of each Christian. Individual hearts had to be at peace for the congregation to be at peace. The rationale for this peace is that the believers were called into one body.⁶ When believers are clothed with these attributes they can better embody the kind of community whose structure will produce new wineskins and whose people will lay down their lives for the benefit of others.

Being in biblical Christian communities suggests hierarchical structures that help churches in their mission (Eph. 4:11-13; Heb. 13:17). The way these structures function, however, should be a testimony to the power of Christ's spirit to transform human

⁶ Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, The New American Commentary vol. 32, electronic ed., Logos Library System (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2001), 299.

character. “The world will always, consciously or unconsciously, judge what the church says by what it is. They will interpret the printed epistle by the living epistle.”⁷ The hierarchical structures which under gird the Body of Christ should enhance its ability to be a people who are known for their love of one another.

People desire true community in order that they might experience spiritual love that transcends understanding. “So this quest for community challenges us to not to seek community as a commodity, but rather to pursue love (which is patient, kind, not rude, etc.) as a practice which yields community as a byproduct.”⁸ Newbigin suggests churches must:

[A]llow the living Christ to do his atoning work in us, to break down our divisions and to knit us into one, we are by that very fact given a new power to go out to the world to invite all men to share in the atonement which is for all, and in the life of the family here on earth which is the fruit of that atonement, the instrument of its furtherance to all nations and all generations, and the sign of its consummation at the end of the world. We cannot be Christ’s ambassadors, beseeching all men to be reconciled to God, except we ourselves be willing to be reconciled one to another and Him.⁹

The Christian community needs structure in order to perform its mission, however, the nature of that structure must enable Christ’s spirit to form and inspire community members and participants. The nature of the structure should be permeated by “compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,” and it can work as the Body of Christ only when held together in love. The character and nature of church leadership

⁷ Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 59.

⁸ Brian D. McLaren, “Emerging Values: How the Next Generation Redefines Spiritual Formation, Community and Mission,” *Leadership* 24, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 38.

⁹ Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 204.

is critical to the emergence of an ethos in the church characterized by the above qualities.

This is the subject of the next section.

The Leader

Modern church leadership often places pastors in chief executive officer (CEO) roles.¹⁰ Postmodern culture, however, requires a significant change in this structure.

Dallas Willard writes,

In our examples and training for Christian leadership, we too often emphasize getting others merely to do as they are told. In this way the church largely conforms to the leadership structures of the world. Indeed, 'leadership' is normally an empty euphemism when applied to our standard communal efforts, whether in a church or outside it.¹¹

Brian McLaren suggests,

I expect that leader-as-scholar, leader-as-therapist, and leader-as-hero/martyr will give way to less dominant styles of leadership but no less important . . . community leaders in the emerging culture will increasingly resemble the lead seeker in a journey, not possessing all the answers, but possessing a contagious passion to find a way home—to bring others along in our common search for love, courage, wisdom and home.¹²

In contemporary culture, manipulation to drive or manage people is not leadership. "The sheepdog forcibly maneuvers the sheep, whereas the biblical shepherd simply calls as he calmly walked ahead of the sheep. This distinction between the sheepdog and the shepherd is profoundly significant for how we think of our work as

¹⁰ E. Glenn Wagner, *Escape from Church, Inc.: The Return of the Pastor Shepherd* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 21-22.

¹¹ Dallas Willard, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 80.

¹² McLaren, "Emerging Values," 38.

leaders of Christ's people. We must ask ourselves frequently which role we are fulfilling and constantly return ourselves, if necessary, to the practice of the shepherd."¹³ Leaders who follow shepherding practices do not drive, manipulate, manage, or rely upon the powers inherent in unassisted human nature. The undershepherds or ministers under God count on their flock to minister the word of God-along with "all good things" (Gal. 6:6) to them. Ministry of the word must be a two-way street.¹⁴

Contemporary business literature frequently discusses leadership principles. In

Leading Teams Hackman writes:

Everyone in an organization is a leader, and everyone is a follower as well. The key to success, is to learn how to simultaneously be both a leader and a follower, to set compelling direction for those you lead even as you are receiving direction from others. But it takes a large measure of skill and personal maturity to do that--to balance between one's leader and follower roles, to attend simultaneously both to one's teams and one's bosses, and to resist the temptation either to ignore collective directions or to mindlessly pass them along.¹⁵

Leading and learning in the contemporary world requires interaction and the exchange of ideas. Leaders must see themselves as fellow sojourners with the people entrusted to their care. In this model, leaders will trust their followers, learn from them, and even submit to them. The leader's relationship to their followers is the subject of the next section.

¹³ Willard, *Hearing God*, 81.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ J. Richard Hackman, *Leading Teams* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 89-90.

The Leader and the Team or Community

Hackman's writings on business leadership can be applied to leading spiritual communities. A significant challenge to creating a true team ethos is the western cultural propensity towards individualism. Society rewards the work of the individual and few contexts encourage effective teamwork. Hackman writes:

The best way to get individuals to behave well in a group is to do a good job of setting up and supporting the group itself. A healthy group promotes competent member behavior; a sick group invites all manner of bizarre individual behaviors-which, ironically, can then be used to explain the problems of the group as a whole. To understand what makes a team effective, then, requires that we become comfortable thinking and acting at the group level of analysis. Because that is not something most of us routinely do in our daily lives, it can take some learning and practice.¹⁶

According to Hackman, real teams have four features: a team task, clear boundaries, clearly specified authority to manage their own work processes, and membership stability over some reasonable period of time. A leader's first, and perhaps most important, task is to make sure that these four essential features are in place.¹⁷ In the church these ingredients are crucial, and can sometimes present difficulties. Areas of authority and stability can frequently create challenges in a church context.

The issues of authority can become a problem when elders, boards, staff, team leaders, and team participants all struggle for control. The leader must, therefore, clearly define where and when the team can operate as an autonomous unit and when it must seek permission. The leader must inform all parties of the team's authority. A team's

¹⁶ Ibid., 38.

¹⁷ Ibid., 41.

performance can suffer when it does not fully understand its mission and authority or when outsiders frequently question the team's boundaries and responsibilities. Structures must be appropriate to the maturity and task of the team.¹⁸

Stability also presents a challenge to teams because of the church's transient and communal nature.¹⁹ In the church context, leaders must establish standards to allow individuals to either join or quit a team. This makes members accountable for their participation and enables trust among members. "The most important contribution that leaders can make to the teams they create is to establish and maintain a handful of organizational conditions that foster and support competent teamwork. Doing that, however, requires that there be a team in place to create those conditions."²⁰

Teams must have both clearly defined tasks and the proper means by which to carry out their functions. Teams that lack compelling directions run two significant risks: the team members pursue their personal preferences without any common focus or the

¹⁸ Ibid., 94-95. "It is true that traditionally designed organizations often are plagued by constraining structures that have been built up over the years to monitor and control the behavior of individual employees. Inappropriate or over-specified task structures, personnel policies, and control systems can indeed impede productivity when work is performed by teams. The question is what leaders should do in such circumstances. . . . The key to good team design is to differentiate wisely between critical and unnecessary structural features."

¹⁹ Ibid., 44. "To work well together, team members need to know who they are. Members are sure to run into difficulties if there is so much ambiguity about who is actually on the team that they cannot reliably distinguish between the people who share responsibility and accountability for the collective outcome and others who may help out in various ways but are not team members. Having a clearly bounded team does not mean that members must do all their work in the same place at the same time, nor does it mean that membership cannot change as circumstances change. It merely means that members know who is actually on the team--a seemingly simple matter but one that trips up a surprising number of teams."

²⁰ Ibid., 59.

team gradually fades into the woodwork.²¹ Leaders must specify teams' goals and procedures and give sense to the overall purpose of their efforts.²²

Setting a team's direction requires the presence of authority. Direction setting can, therefore, create anxiety. When a leader exercises authority, team members tend to react in one of two ways: they either view the leader as an omniscient person on whom they can depend or as a controlling person who must somehow be repelled, subverted, or replaced. In the most extreme cases, group members initially adopt the first view and then change to the second when they discover that their leader actually is flawed and imperfect.²³

Effective team building systems allow for teams and individuals to evaluate their performance:

Feedback makes team learning possible. . . . Learning requires knowledge of results. When a team task is structured so the trustworthy feedback about performance comes not just to individual members but also to the team as a whole, learning opportunities expand. If there are others with whom members can compare their own reactions to feedback, individuals can make better sense of it and more productively probe its implications for their own work activities. Moreover, if the team has become a setting in which members feel psychologically safe to explore the reasons for team successes and failures, considerable collective learning can occur--learning that would be far less likely if feedback were exclusively about performance of individual members.²⁴

²¹ Ibid., 80.

²² Ibid., 80.

²³ Ibid., 82.

²⁴ Ibid., 102-103.

Members should be able to feel psychologically safe in the church. Ideally, a church atmosphere with grace and forgiveness as core values provides a safe environment for groups and individuals to discover weaknesses and work cooperatively towards solutions. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. In the author of this paper's experience, often efforts are marred by insecurities, jealousies, and other sins. Teams must, therefore, work collectively towards an ethos where the Spirit of Christ readily transforms spaces to reflect a team's calling in Christ.

Conflict is an unavoidable aspect of teamwork and sometimes team members confuse the idea of acting in a Christ like manner with avoiding disagreements entirely. The tendency to desire harmonious interactions with others, to be approved rather than rejected by teammates, and to keep anxieties as low as possible can hinder teambuilding efforts. This pitfall can, however, be avoided and kept in check by clearly defining acceptable behavior within the team structure. A clear set of expectations defines the line team members should not cross and the collectively enforced agreement that that line will be respected.²⁵

Hackman explores various efforts towards team building which may result in short-term benefits, but have long term negative consequences:

One way to get it wrong is to mislead or lie to those who are in a position to provide teams with the structures, resources, or supports they need in their work. Beyond the moral problems of lying, disingenuous strategies destroy the credibility of those who use them when, as inevitably happens, others discovered that what is claimed cannot be trusted. . . . Another way to get it wrong is to ape someone else's style, or to follow prescriptions from a textbook or training course that specify how good leaders are

²⁵ Ibid., 109.

supposed to act. It always is embarrassing to observe someone trying to enact a leadership style that is not the person's own—such as the junior manager who admiringly adopts the style of the charismatic chief executive but succeeds only in calling attention to the enormity of their difference in competence. The junior manager would be better advised to cease practicing in front of a mirror and instead to spend that time and effort identifying and honing his or her own best style of leading. . . . The third way to get it wrong is to relentlessly enact one's preferred manner of leading even in the face of data that it is not working very well, to keep on keeping on with a style that is indeed one's own and with which one may be quite comfortable but that consistently yields unanticipated and unfavorable results.²⁶

While the leader's responsibilities are many and multi-nuanced, Hackman asserts a “leader cannot make a team be great, but a leader can create conditions that increase the chances that moments of greatness will occur—and, moreover, can provide a little boost or nudge now and then to help members take the fullest possible advantage of those favorable conditions.”²⁷ The roles of the Word of God and His Spirit are important to a discussion of the leader in relation to the formation of an ethos of discipleship in Christian community.

The Leader, the Word, the Fellowship, and the Spirit

One of the major components of the Reformation, *Sola Scriptura*, took hold to such an extent in the modern period that some have accused Protestant churches of bibliolatry.²⁸ Many viewed the Word as the primary, or even sole, source of character

²⁶ Ibid., 220.

²⁷ Ibid., 253.

²⁸ Hierodeacon Gregory, *The Church, Tradition, Scripture, Truth, and Christian Life: Some Heresies of Evangelicalism and an Orthodox Response*. (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1995), 54.

formation. This viewpoint, however, neglected the study and application of fellowship and Spirit in formation of Christian character. Newbigin writes:

It is true that Christ gave to His disciples His word and sacraments. But He did not give them naked. He left no written code which should keep inviolate for all time the essential message, and the essential requirements for the do observance of His sacraments. A vast amount of scholarly labor has been spent in trying to discover precisely that thing which the Lord Himself did not choose to provide. What He left behind was a fellowship, and He entrusted to it the task of being His representative to the world. "As the Father hath sent me," He said, "even so send I you." They were to be His representatives, His plenipotentiaries. He endowed them with His own spirit to be His witnesses. They were given His authority to cast out sickness and evil. To receive them was to receive Him, and to reject them was to reject Him. We are not here considering how far these words refer to the apostles alone and how far to the whole body. The point is that if we ask, what was the explicit provision which Jesus made for the extension of His saving power to the whole world, we must answer that it was the fellowship which He called, trained, endowed, and sent forth. And if, in the light of that unquestionable fact, we go on to ask again our fundamental question—how is Jesus present to us today?—it is surely clear that at least a very central part of the answer must be: He is present in His people, His apostolic fellowship.²⁹

The Bible is at the core of Christianity, and Christians believe that nothing further will be said by God to expand or contradict those principles. Christians, however, are more than persons who hold certain beliefs about the Bible. They also follow the kind of life demonstrated in the Bible including personal, intelligent interaction with God. "Anything less than this makes a mockery of the priesthood of the believer."³⁰ In the context of fellowship with God and with one another, the Bible's truths are passed down, learned, and applied. Without all of these elements, the message is in danger of

²⁹ Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 59-60.

³⁰ Willard, *Hearing God*, 104.

corruption or heresy. Human efforts and exertions alone cannot make true character transformation. “When we consider a life of participation in God’s kingdom rule, we are not looking at anything that we must make happen. The extent of our obligation is to be honestly willing and eager to be made able.”³¹

Contemporary systems of proclamation and education are undergoing change from a modern sensibility to suit the emerging culture. Many people no longer ask if Christianity is the perfect belief system or “How can I get my beliefs right so I can get into heaven?” Instead they ask: “How can we have a life so filled with God’s grace that we are living out heaven on earth?” Instead of an exercise in transferring information so that people have a coherent well-informed, worldview, preaching and teaching in the emerging culture must aim at inspiring transformation.³² This realization again reflects what was explored in chapter 3 regarding Jesus expectations of discipleship in the first century. He was not content with imparting information alone; he required His followers to be transformed by his presence.

While the contemporary church can provide a community of spiritual formation for believers, too often, church communities merely busy people with church activities “frustrating Jesus’ prayer that his followers would remain in the world.”³³ Through the modern era, the church called believers to go into the world and invite people to come inside and receive the blessings of God. The conviction of the emerging church, however,

³¹ Ibid., 136.

³² McLaren, “Emerging Values,” 35-36.

³³ Ibid.

must be to go into the world and be a blessing. McLaren identifies this as missional Christianity. “Missional Christianity says God is expressing His love to all outsiders through our acts of kindness and service. You’re invited to leave your life of accumulation and competition and self-centeredness to join us in this mission of love, blessing, and peace.”³⁴

Dallas Willard writes, “If we are to exercise the word and rule of God in ways regarded as spectacular by human beings, Jesus is our model, as always. And that means above all that there will be nothing forced or hysterical about it and that we can count on God himself to lead us into whatever we are to do. He will do this in a way that is suitable to our lives and his calling for us.”³⁵

Analysis and Summary

Leaders must develop an ethos that immerses their communities in the presence of Christ, and a key to building an incarnational ethos is over learning. Some of the factors that affect leaders’ building of an incarnational ethos are the communities’ learning structures and hierarchies. The learning structures and hierarchies must themselves be filled with an ethos permeated by compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Leaders are neither bosses nor CEOs, they are fellow sojourners who trust their followers, learn from them, and even submit to them. Leaders should understand the western cultural propensity towards individualism and create contexts that promote

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Willard, *Hearing God*, 136.

community and teamwork. The Bible is an indispensable tool for building an ethos of discipleship. Leaders should not neglect the role of the Spirit and the fellowship in spiritual formation. Human efforts, when prompted by God's Spirit, are essential components to growth but God's Holy Spirit prompts and finishes all meaningful life transformation. Leaders should evaluate all programs including preaching, meetings, small groups, or Sunday school to determine whether they encourage Christian discipleship and spiritual formation among participants. An incarnational ethos of discipleship, an ethos of Christ likeness in congregants' lives, must include a commitment to a lifelong journey of transition and transformation, and a theology of new wineskins/new creations can shape the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare churches for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture. Leadership and an ethos of Christ-like discipleship is essential to the impetus for the subject of the next chapter, new wineskins/new creations.

CHAPTER 6

NEW WINESKINS/NEW CREATIONS

This chapter will present components of a discipleship process that leaders should observe as they seek to help their congregations revive their missional impulses and remain faithful to their roles as the Body of Christ in the emerging culture. Based on the study of the Scriptures and sources for this paper, the five key components necessary for shaping the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare churches for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture are:

1. Emphasize following Jesus as his disciples above all else.
2. Develop a relational Christian community.
3. Create a sense of loving concern for the unchurched.
4. Develop a humble appreciation for God's grace and acknowledge human fallenness and need for God.
5. Encourage the creation of new wineskins to embrace and further the present workings of the Spirit.
6. Be willing to die to self, personally and programmatically, and to live as new creations in Christ.

When a church is led through a process that shapes the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to embody these values it will be better prepared to engage in incarnational ministry in the emerging post-modern culture.

Emphasize Following Jesus As His Disciples Above All Else

In chapter 3 the high cost and relational nature of discipleship was discussed. The local church can make the necessary changes and become incarnational in its encounter with the emerging culture by emphasizing following Jesus as his disciples above all else. The church, both individually and corporately, must decide whether it wants to follow Jesus or wants to maintain its traditions; it cannot have it both ways. The cross means death to self and nothing less.

The New Testament connection of discipleship to Christ's death on the cross introduces a new level of self-denial, and individuals' forfeiture of control over the directions of their lives. The cost of authentic discipleship is a total commitment to Christ's commands. Love for Christ and his mission is primary, and personal alliances to any relationship apart from Christ must take second place. Jesus does not request a hasty response to these challenges; instead, he urges those who would follow him to think seriously about the cost before making a commitment (Luke 14:25-33).

The church and Christians' ability to move forward in ministry is linked to their submission to the mission of authentic discipleship. When they are committed disciples, they are naturally linked to Christ's passion for world redemption. The author of Luke conveys this message when he gives an account of Christ's conversation with a lawyer. When asked by the lawyer what he must do to inherit eternal life Jesus responds carefully and proposes a question of his own, "What is written in the law?" The lawyer responds with the accepted Jewish summary of the Torah: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love

your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:25-28 NIV). Discipleship, the building of an ethos, and incarnational ministry are empowered at the core, first by God’s love for humans and by the reciprocal love of humans for God. This is what makes it an all consuming cry to the Body of Christ. God’s discipleship claim reaches to every area of human experience and no part of life or self can be withheld from God.¹ The next section will connect this expanded definition of discipleship to the importance of a commitment to being a unified relational Christian community with a loving concern for the unchurched.

Develop a Relational Christian Community and Create a Sense of Loving Concern for the Unchurched

A second component in shaping an ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship that helps prepare a church for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture is creating a loving concern for the unchurched and developing a relational Christian community. Paul writes of the importance of the Body of Christ being undivided: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:23-30, NRSV). This environment of unity provides an ideal to emulate in times where conflict related to change could be divisive.

Examining certain qualities of the revolutionary character of New Testament faith can help clarify the contemporary transitional period. Paul’s letter to the Galatians provides an early example of the radical action required in times of rapid change. James

¹ For this discussion in its entirety please refer back to chapter 3.

Dunn asserts, “Paul’s letter to the Galatians is one of the fiercest and most polemical writings in the Bible. . . . [It] comes from the early morning of a vigorous new movement (Christianity), when basic principles were first being formulated, and when the whole character of a movement was at stake.”²

Paul’s letter to the churches of Galatia demonstrates an ideal reconciliation. Paul received the message that Jewish-Christian missionaries were undermining his own apostolic work in Galatia by preaching a different gospel and attempting to persuade the Gentile Galatians to be circumcised. Richard Hays asserts these “missionaries were not non-Christian Jews trying to induce the Galatians to abandon their newfound Christian faith; rather, the conflict portrayed in Paul’s letter is an intra-Christian dispute.”³ The “missionaries” argued that these “Gentiles who believed in Jesus should take the next step into full covenant membership by being circumcised,”⁴ but Paul argues that belonging to Christ is the way to enter into covenant membership, rather than circumcision.

The cross liberated all who accept Christ as Lord and Savior. The Spirit of God released Christians from the enslavement of sin and gave them new lives. He empowered

² James D. G. Dunn, *New Testament Theology: The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1.

³ Richard B. Hays, *2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 184.

⁴ *Ibid.*

believers to live in community in ways that are pleasing to God.⁵ Cultural, racial, or gender distinctions, once thought to hold sway, have been cast away. Anything that excludes a person from fellowship that is not based on the gospel of Christ is an anathema.⁶

Paul expresses the importance of unification; however, the church has failed many times to support a borderless faith. Issues of ethnicity, gender, economic-class, and generation continue to divide the church. The cross of Christ is an instrument of reconciliation. “The cross not only marks the transition from old world to new creation (Gal. 1:4; 6:14-15), not only stands absolutely opposed to anything which limits the grace of God or persists in setting division between peoples (Gal. 2:21; 3:13-14), but also sets the pattern for Christian conduct as self-giving love (Gal. 2:20).”⁷

Building and maintaining communities committed to unity often conflict with traditional church methods that seek to maintain homogeneity. The church must allow the Spirit of Christ to overcome these impulses if it is to experience the spirit of unity amidst diversity that is demanded by God. For the sake of building community, for the sake of

⁵ Ibid., 187. “[Paul’s response] focuses on the cross as a liberating event (Gal 2:20-21; 3:1, 13-14; 6:14-15). In Galatians, the cross is interpreted not primarily as an atoning sacrifice for forgiveness of sins but as a cataclysmic event that has broken the power of forces that held humanity captive, brought the old world to an end, and inaugurated a new creation. . . . As a result of Christ’s death and resurrection the spirit of God has been released to all who are in Christ (3:13-14). The spirit gives us new life (5:24-25), confirms our status as children of God (4:6-7), and transforms the character of our community life so that it can be pleasing to God (5:22-25).”

⁶ Ibid., 195-196. “Paul holds forth the vision of a community of faith in which all are one in Christ (Gal 2:11-21; 3:26-39). This is not merely a matter of an isolated slogan in Gal 3:28; it is a central theme of the letter as a whole. Jews and Gentiles are no longer to be divided, because Christ’s death has brought us together. Therefore, all manifestations of racial and ethnic divisiveness are betrayals of “the truth of the gospel.” Galatians is one of the canon’s most powerful witnesses against a cultural imperialism that excludes anyone from fellowship on the basis of criteria not rooted in the gospel.

⁷ Dunn, *New Testament Theology*, 120.

living missionally, for the sake of being Christ in the emerging culture, Christians are called to set aside bias and prejudice so that only Christ remains.⁸

These changes will come with difficulty and they will be opposed by well meaning keepers of the gate of orthodoxy. Leaders must remain on guard against the abuses of structures, hierarchies, and institutions. Structures, hierarchies, and institutions imbued with the Spirit of Christ can accomplish great things, but they are susceptible to corruption by power, manipulation, and control. Leaders and communities who are aware of the potential abuse can better guard themselves against it.⁹

This change in traditional institutions will be difficult and will require creativity, patience, and humility. Church leaders must rethink issues of community, membership, and what it means to participate in a Christian church. Joseph Myers writes, “If there is one conversation with which the emerging church must wrestle in new ways, it is the

⁸ Kosuke Koyama, *Waterbuffalo Theology*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974), 24. “It is that crucified mind that can meaningfully participate in authentic contextualization. It is the mind of Christ. It is not a neurotic mind. It is not a morbid mind. It does not have a persecution complex. It is a positive mind. It is a healthy mind. It is a mind which is ready to crucify the self . . . for the sake of building up a community. This mind is a theological mind. It is a free mind. And it is the missionary mind in contrast to the “crusading mind.” This mind does not live by itself. It lives by constantly creating the life that practices such a mind. It lives with constant frustration and a sense of failure. Yet, it is joyous. It is resourceful. It is accommodational and prophetic. It knows that only by the grace of God can it be, and remain, accommodational and prophetic at all.”

⁹ Ibid., 189-190. “Our Christian life is surrounded by institutions and establishments. And their number is legion. Some institutions are sacred and others are less sacred. Some institutions are more useful to the good of the community of man than others. Institutions have their respective histories. They tend to become rigid and inflexible. They die hard. Their self-denial occurs only very rarely. The real danger of institutions must be located, not in the institutions themselves, but in the “theology” that surrounds them. The penetrating analysis of the deceptive theology is summarized by Jeremiah as “this is the temple of the Lord!—therefore we are safe!” . . . On this basis, Christians can and must be critical about institutions related to the church. We are not called to serve institutions as our end. That would be idolatry. Institutions are only humble means by which we may participate in God’s work in history. We are called to serve God and humanity, sometimes upholding and sometimes demolishing institutions, sometimes within and sometimes without institutions.”

question, ‘Who is my neighbor?’ Who belongs? For whom am I responsible? And who is responsible to me? How can we help people develop a healthy experience of belonging and community in their lives?’”¹⁰

The church must ask some difficult questions in order to seize the opportunities to reach the community presented by the emerging culture. An article in a local newspaper draws attention to a trend of communal spaces opening up in the Portland, Oregon area. “These are not just businesses their owners say, but hubs for community and social interaction. They are new forms of the ‘third place,’ a term defined by sociologist Ray Oldenburg in 1989 as places that are neither home nor work, but public places to gather in the community.”¹¹ The church can create opportunities in and out of church buildings for “third place” meetings that encourage reconciliatory conversations. These places can allow individuals to discuss cultural, gender, and even theological differences openly and work on building bridges of understanding.

Persons affected by the emerging culture observe relationships among believers and see how Christ has made a difference. When believers spend time in “third spaces” living Christologically transformed lives in community, the witness of the church will be more compelling and authentic than doctrinally correct apologetics.¹² In these spaces the

¹⁰ Joseph R. Myers, *The Search to Belong: Rethinking Intimacy, Community, and Small Groups* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 6.

¹¹ Su-Jin Yim, “Communal Activity Spaces Come into Vogue,” *The Oregonian*, 15 January 2004, Inside E:4.

¹² Koyama, *Waterbuffalo Theology*, 234. “When we are Christologically discomfited, we share Christological comfort and not theological advice or theological formulations with our neighbors. In particular, we will be bypassing Christ’s discomfort if we approach our people with doctrinal statements. The realism of Christ’s comfort and the comfort of our human doctrinal statements, no matter how accurate

church can “establish the biblical mission of seeing Christ formed in individuals as the foundational mission of biblical community.”¹³ In these contexts the church can best be used as an instrument to reconcile humanity to Christ. In *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis insists that the church exists for no other purpose but to draw humanity into Christ. Absent that purpose, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became man for no other purpose. Lewis wonders whether the whole universe was created for any other purpose.¹⁴

This section demonstrated that creating a loving concern for the unchurched and developing a relational Christian community is important to the shaping of an ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship that helps prepare a church for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture. The next section will discuss the challenges of building this incarnational ministry in light of the fallen nature of humans. A key factor to overcoming the effects of this fallen nature is the power and grace of God.

Develop a Humble Appreciation for God's Grace, and Acknowledge Human Fallenness and Need for God

It is important to acknowledge the truth of human fallenness and the need for God. When Christians acknowledge their brokenness and the potential selfishness of their motives and agendas they can begin to have spiritual conversations that transform and

and profound they may be, cannot be treated on an equal footing. Doctrinal persuasion is a falsely comparable way to come to the hearts of our neighbors. Quest after the right doctrinal formulation is extremely important, but to share the comfort which is in Christ is far more imperative and crucial.”

¹³ Randy Frazee, *The Connecting Church: Beyond Small Groups to Authentic Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 66.

¹⁴ C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1943), 170.

create character. In blunt and straightforward language, two passages from the Scriptures describe the human condition as being significantly marred by its fallen state: first, “The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is” (Jer. 17:9 NLT), and second, “There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one” (Rom. 3:11-12 NIV).

Human beings live in a constant tension of un-reconciliation. This tension often creates destructive patterns of divisiveness that can result in individuals who create rationalizations and doctrines that provide a false sense of control and order. Humankind is at the same time created in the image of God, fearfully and wonderfully made, and “desperately wicked” and “worthless.” This amazing complexity and tension keeps people from being able to reduce the human experience to a set of doctrines. Humanity reduced to a set of doctrinal propositions threatens to erase the image of God in humanity.¹⁵ Efforts to create an ethos of incarnational discipleship will be opposed by sin

¹⁵ Koyama, *Waterbuffalo Theology*, 130-132. “Man has many needs and drives: emotional, physical, intellectual, spiritual—all combined in a wonderful kind of unity. This “wonderful kind of unity,” however, becomes from time to time seriously sick. Then man [*sic*] is paralyzed. Man is *homo aeger* (sick man), says Augustine. Yes, he is sick, yet he is unusual, wonderful and inspiring! What a great complex creature he is! Because he is so complex, man has always been a puzzle to himself. There are many doctrines, both helpful and harmful, about man. But even the best of all doctrines is not identical with the living man whom we see every day everywhere. If one of the doctrines on man had been adequate to explain him to himself, then, to use theological terminology, the incarnation would not have been necessary. Instead of the costly incarnation, God becoming man and dwelling amongst us, God might just as well have sent some wonderful doctrine about man. The best of all the good doctrines cannot compete with the one fact of God’s incarnation in Jesus Christ. . . . We are bound by all kinds of doctrines. Our interest is always on the side of *ism* rather than *ist*. Excessive interest in *ism* brings forth a disastrous situation, which may be called the tyranny of doctrines. We tend to look at other persons through “doctrinally-trained” eyes. So we become experts in quick pronouncements of judgment upon others. When “doctrinally-trained” eyes say, “Now, master, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act. According to the law, Moses commanded us to stone such a woman to death!” (John 8:4), the “incarnate

but it is important that leaders are able to hold in tension the both/and of human existence; that humans are simultaneously representations of the image of God and desperately wicked. When leaders are able to do this they are better able to see people with Christ's eyes and can help them both individually and corporately to experience the process of becoming new creations in Christ.

The Spirit commands and empowers followers of Christ as the Bride and Body of Christ to live incarnationally. "To Paul the point of being Christ's follower was not just to help people be absolutely certain they are going to heaven after they died. Paul's goal was to help them become fully formed, mature in Christ, here and now—to experience the glorious realities of being in Christ and experiencing Christ in themselves (Matthew 9:16-17 (NIV))."¹⁶

Chapter 5 noted that structures can either help or hinder the building of discipleship processes. Struggles for power and the pursuit of personal agendas can undermine efforts to implement a theology of new wineskins/new creations that shapes an ethos of discipleship. Pursuing a theology of humility and weakness that emphasizes setting aside personal agendas can help the church move beyond viewing people as programs and projects. Scazzero and Bird write, "In emotionally healthy churches, people live and lead out of brokenness and vulnerability. They understand that leadership in the

eyes" look in the different direction. "Jesus stooped down and began to write with his finger in dust on the ground" (John 8:6). *Ism* and *ist* are related. Don't let *ism* walk alone!"

¹⁶ Brian D. McLaren and Tony Campolo, *Adventures in Missing the Point: How the Culture-Controlled Church Neutered the Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 20.

kingdom of God is from the bottom up, not a grasping, controlling, or lording over others.”¹⁷ Paul expresses a similar view:

⁵ You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. ⁶ Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. ⁷ Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross. Philippians 2:5-8 (NLT)

Human lives can be authentically reconciliatory when led from places of failure and pain with questions and struggles to compliment personal victories. Believers must recognize that strength comes from Christ’s presence. Unfortunately, “It is a noticeably different way of life from what is commonly modeled in the world and, unfortunately, in many churches.”¹⁸

A theology of humility and weakness is grounded in humanity’s fall. Scazzero and Bird describe the story of Adam and Eve’s sins and explain how in spite of their actions, God “lovingly pursues them and makes a way for them to come back to him and to one another.”¹⁹ God cursed relationships with one another and even with the rest of creation as a result of our disobedience in the garden. This breaking of relationships can manifest itself in a multitude of ways which are harmful to the building of an ethos of discipleship. Selfishness, manipulation, struggles for power, defensiveness etc. can all

¹⁷ Peter Scazzero and Warren Bird, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 110.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 112.

undermine our efforts at creating a harmony which could be fertile ground for the birth of new wineskins and new creations.²⁰

According to Scazzero and Bird, humans respond to the curse in one of three ways: flee, fight, or hide. Individuals flee by burying pain in addictive behavior. Some people flee by obsessing over seemingly good careers or ministries. Those who fight become angry, bitter, and violent. They live with the pretense that theirs is a righteous indignation and rationalize their anger through a biblical justification. Fighters may even direct their anger and bitterness at God and blame Him for the injustices in their lives. Lastly, some choose to hide behind a false bravado. These individuals construct their lives to cover their pain.²¹ “Everyone is broken, damaged, cracked, and imperfect. It is a common thread of all humanity-even for those who deny its reality in their life.”²² Under

²⁰ Ibid., 112-113. “After Adam and Eve sin in the Garden of Eden, God lovingly pursues them and makes a way for them to come back to him and to one another. He goes out looking for them, “walking in the garden in the cool of the day” (Genesis 3:8). He provides them with clothes to cover their shame (Genesis 3:21). He promises that one day he will overcome the serpent whose lies they have believed (Genesis 3:15). . . . Because of the fall, God also builds the curse of “thorns and thistles” (Genesis 3: 18) into the fabric of life as we know it even today. God explains how all of life, from that point forward, will be painful, difficult, and frustrating. He[God] breaks the curse down into two primary areas: our relationships (Genesis 3:16) and our work (Genesis 3:17-19). . . . Relationships, God says, will now be marked by pain and misunderstandings. We will be disappointed with people in our marriages, families, churches, and workplaces. Intimacy will be replaced with manipulation, power struggles, put downs, seductions, defensiveness, and withholding of relationship. Loneliness will reign. . . . We may have been built to engage the earth and to work, but now frustration and failure will be our lot. In essence, the ground will be hard. Thorns and thistles will mark our work. We may reach our goals and accomplish things, but we will never feel completely satisfied. A sense of restlessness and incompleteness will always accompany our work on earth. In this life all symphonies remain unfinished. . . . Why does God do this? He releases the curse in order to drive us to our knees and to seek him, to recognize our need for a savior (Galatians 3: 21-25). The problem is rather than be broken by the thorns and thistles of life we flee, fight, or hide.”

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 114.

these circumstances disciples of Christ must recognize their own wounds and use them in powerful ways as agents of reconciliation for God and His Kingdom.

This section shows that the fallen state of humanity has seriously damaged our ability to live in a unified harmonious community together. People must humbly ask for and receive God's help if they are to develop the kind of community that can engage in incarnational ministry in the emerging culture. This humble acceptance of God's help will prepare and inform the creation of new wineskins to further the present workings of God's Spirit.

**Encourage the Creation of New Wineskins to Embrace
and Further the Present Workings of the Spirit**

Christ's illustrations of using unshrunk cloth on an old garment and pouring new wine into old wineskins provide the church with cautionary lessons about the difficulty of mingling the old with the new. Churches that encourage the creation of new wineskins to embrace and further the present workings of the Spirit can shape the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare themselves for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture:

No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved. (Matt. 9:16-17 NIV)

The two illustrations in Matthew assert basically the same truth: what is new cannot be superimposed or controlled by the traditions of the old.

In order for the reader to appreciate the force of Jesus' comparisons, one must understand the common elements between unshrunk cloth and an old garment, and new wine and old wineskins. Essentially, the elements are incompatible, and any attempt to unite them results in disastrous consequences: the patch will pull away from the garment making the tear worse; and the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined.²³

This metaphor of old and new wineskins has much to say to the church today.

"History reveals a massive tendency in the church to confuse the wine with the wineskins. This confusion still exists, especially in the churches of North America but also globally because of North American influence. Christians continue to confuse the dynamic life of the gospel with the human-made structures that contain and often constrict it."²⁴ Where do church leaders and churches go to find the material for new wineskins? Much of the following analysis relies on Snyder and Runyon's excellent work on wineskins.

Snyder and Runyon observe, "There is fresh ferment in the twenty-first-century church, causing the new wine to spill out as old church structures fail."²⁵ It is paramount for those interested in church revitalization to develop the skills to recognize and discern the potential of these emerging wineskins of this young century.

The first place many will go to identify "new wineskins" is places where they perceive the church is growing. The thought here being if "it is successful God must be

²³ Larry Chouinard, *Matthew*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1997), Matt 9:16.

²⁴ Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, *Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ's Body* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002), 61.

²⁵ Ibid.

blessing it and we should make every effort to understand it and replicate it.” Three avenues that are frequently cited are megachurches, microchurches, and the business model.²⁶ For several sound reasons these may not be the best sources for insights into new wineskins.

Megachurches

Whatever good things can be learned from the megachurches, they may not be the best primary source for new wineskins.

1. Megachurches are too limited in cultural context to be a primary source for wineskins.
2. A second reason that megachurches are not primary sources for new wineskins is simply a matter of size and scale.
3. Another substantial reason for not using megachurches as models is that many megachurches fail to emphasize the gospel to and for the poor.
4. Finally, megachurches do not provide good material for new wineskins because though some megachurches have good ecclesiologies, there is no good megachurch ecclesiology.²⁷

²⁶ Ibid., 62.

²⁷ Ibid., 62-67. 1. *Megachurches are too limited in cultural context to be a primary source for wineskins.* Most megachurches are composed primarily of middle-class, professional, young to middle aged, upwardly mobile people who live either in suburbs or in relatively affluent urban neighborhoods. Though megachurches may be heterogeneous in other ways, they tend in this sense to be homogenous. 2. *A second reason that megachurches are not primary sources for new wineskins is simply a matter of size and scale.* Focusing on congregational size is too one dimensional. . . . We know that healthy things grow. If the church is a healthy organism, it will grow. But growth is not always a sign of health. Cancer and other diseases tell us that growth may signal serious illness. 3. *Another substantial reason for not using megachurches as models is that many megachurches fail to emphasize the gospel to and for the poor.* Scripture in both the Testaments stresses God’s particular concern for the poor. If this essential biblical note is missing from megachurch models, those models are dead ends as sources for new wineskins. 4. *Finally, megachurches do not provide good material for new wineskins because though some megachurches have good ecclesiologies, there is no good megachurch ecclesiology.* In fact their existence as megachurches can sometimes be in tension with their articulated ecclesiology.

Demographically megachurches tend to be homogenous. As stated earlier, an important quality in the emerging culture is the breaking down of class, ethnic, and gender lines of division, and the discipleship of the emerging culture must reflect this value. The size of a church does not in and of itself qualify it as material for new wineskins.

Microchurches

Some people, in reaction to the megachurch, have made the claim that house churches are the true biblical model for the church. House churches (microchurches) can teach some important things about church vitality; however, yet for several key reasons microchurches do not offer the best material for new wineskins:

1. Microchurches are too biased against “traditional” churches.
2. In many cases microchurches are ingrown and have little evangelistic witness.
3. Microchurches often lack a theology of the “great assembly.”
4. For these reasons, microchurches generally have a one sided theology of the kingdom of God.²⁸

Microchurches in some ways reflect the first century church as described in Acts 2:42-47. They tend to be tightly knit communities that share a deep concern for one

²⁸ Ibid., 68-69. 1. *Microchurches are too biased against “traditional” churches. Thousands of people who have wounded in traditional churches find comfort in intimate, relatively unstructured environment of the house church.* Because of this bias against traditional churches, microchurches often miss some essential elements of a faithful and effective ecclesiology. 2. *In many cases microchurches are ingrown and have little evangelistic witness.* Microchurches can teach us much about community, but often their sense of community is not matched by apostolic vision. 3. *Microchurches often lack a theology of the “great assembly.”* Healthy churches maintain a creative balance between small group and large group. Microchurches are often good at *koinonia* but slight the large group. 4. *For these reasons, microchurches generally have a one sided theology of the kingdom of God.* The kingdom is too internalized and is divorced from sociopolitical and economic spheres. This is not always the case; some house churches do have a strong sense of kingdom values. But others have developed “a spirituality that is essentially dualistic when it comes to the church’s witness to the world.”

another. The challenge to these groups is they frequently are born out of a reaction against the more traditional western style churches. A church that defines itself by what it isn't detracts from what it is. The intent behind defining oneself as a small group is to retain intimate community, authentic relationships, and an environment of accountability. A church birthed in an environment of discontent can be blind to participating in visionary cultural transformation. The Scriptures provide examples of larger, visionary assemblies that embrace cultural transformation. From the account of the assimilation of the 3000 new believers added to the Body of Christ in Acts 2:41, in verse 46 we learn that they met in both homes and the temple courts. It was important to have both the home environment and the larger assembly. The larger assembly demonstrated here, is confirmed in the Old Testament as well, especially in the Psalms (Ps. 22:25; 26:12; 35:18; 40:9-10; 68:26).²⁹ New wineskins need to be made of a material that is both/and not either/or in relation to small groups and large assembly.

Business Models

Another source of materials for new wineskins is the world of business. Business models are relevant to the extent they are biblical; however, they are poor source materials for new wineskins:

1. Business enterprises operate on the basis of secular presuppositions.
2. The fundamental model of business is in tension with Scripture.
3. Like megachurches, business models are too limited in cultural context to provide fundamental material for new wineskins.

²⁹ Ibid., 69.

4. Finally, Business enterprises do not make community a primary consideration.³⁰

Business models' motives may be inconsistent with a Christian ethos. Business models may be more oriented towards developing systems that are measurable by a standard of "success" rather than service and sacrifice. Business models are more interested in the bottom line and whether organizations are profitable and efficient than whether they encourage growing relationships with God and community.

So if these popular destinations for source materials prove to be misguided, where are church people to look for the base material for church structure that fits the church's DNA? Snyder and Runyon cite three sources that are useful for helping churches recover the vitality of the early New Testament church: the Bible, renewal movements, and ecology.

The Bible

The Bible is the primary source for effective church structure. Sometimes Christians resist going to the Bible for answers to church structure questions. Some claim the Scriptures have nothing to say about the structure question, and others claim biblical

³⁰ Ibid., 70-72. 1. *Business enterprises operate on the basis of secular presuppositions.* The primary basis of business is the profit motive, though sometimes this is moderated by other considerations such as the welfare of employees or (occasionally) social justice or environmental concerns. 2. *The fundamental model of business is in tension with Scripture.* If we take the New Testament seriously, we must conclude that business enterprises are part of "human traditions and the basic principles of this world" rather than of Christ (Col 2:8)...Christians are aware of a fundamental tension and must be careful not to confuse business with the Church. 3. *Like megachurches, business models are too limited in cultural context to provide fundamental material for new wineskins.* Often the church imitates business (or other dominant social structures) in its life and forms. 4. *Finally, Business enterprises do not make community a primary consideration.* Interestingly, some of the most effective, cutting-edge businesses today have discovered community as a means towards greater business effectiveness. But establishing community is not there reason for existence. In contrast, community is a primary consideration for the church.

structures are irrelevant. Snyder and Runyon suggest four reasons why the Bible must be the primary source for church structure:

1. The Bible is God's unique revelation both of Jesus Christ and of his body, the church.
 2. Ecclesiology is a primary focus of Scripture.
 3. A third reason we should turn to Scripture for new wineskins is the example of the early church that we find there.
 4. Finally, we should go first to Scripture for guidance on church structure because Scripture uniquely combines church and mission.³¹
- The Bible is the starting point for source material for new wineskins primarily

because it is God's Word. It makes sense to build His church based on His Word. The Bible offers examples of first century churches that maintained a discipleship ethos in a culture antagonistic to their message. The antagonistic culture of the first century is similar to the culture emerging around the church in the twenty-first century. As cited earlier, the emerging culture seeks to distill truth from multiple sources. Simultaneously, it denies as the existence of a source for truth. This is in many ways similar to the culture that existed in the first century. The study on discipleship in the third chapter identified

³¹ Ibid., 77-80. 1. *The Bible is God's unique revelation both of Jesus Christ and of his body, the church. The Bible is God's unique revelation as to what the church is it's very DNA-and how it's to function.* But much church practice, especially in North America, would suggest that we don't really believe this. 2. *Ecclesiology is a primary focus of Scripture. Much of the Old Testament focuses on what it means to be the people of God.* Most of the New Testament highlights the new community of the spirit formed around Jesus. But evangelical theology often misses this biblical emphasis. . . . Culturally, the Protestant tradition has been so marked by individualism that it is largely neglected the corporate nature of Christian experience. . . . It is not that the Bible has little of practical relevance to say about the church and its structures. It is rather that we have not taken seriously, what is clearly there. 3. *A third reason we should turn to Scripture for new wineskins is the example of the early church that we find there.* The New Testament church, for all its imperfections, was the most dynamic embodiment of the gospel that history has yet seen. So we need to delve into the experience of these early Christian communities (not just be explicit biblical teachings about the church). When we face the issue of wineskins we can learn much from the experience of the earliest Christian communities. 4. *Finally, we should go first to Scripture for guidance on church structure because Scripture uniquely combines church and mission.* There is very little distinction between "church" and "mission" in the New Testament. Someone is once said, "The church does not have a mission; the mission has a church." What can we learn to help us develop the kind of Christian communities in which it becomes unnecessary to put the word missional before the word church?

sources for understanding of the processes of discipleship that also competed as sources for truth. The Greek schools of philosophy and various Jewish sects all taught disciples and made claims of truth. The first century church illustrates processes that thrived under these adverse conditions.

Lessons from Renewal Movements

Much can be learned from the ways in which God's Spirit has renewed the church repeatedly throughout history:

1. Renewal movements set the issue of church structure within the broad sweep of history.
2. The history of renewal teaches us about the renewing work of the Holy Spirit.
3. Renewal movements, show us the deep renewal often begins at the periphery, or the margins, of the church.
4. Finally, renewal movements help restore a Trinitarian balance in the church.³²

³² Ibid., 80-82. 1. *Renewal movements set the issue of church structure within the broad sweep of history.* Renewal movements raise the question of history, including a theology of history. They remind us of the relativity and variety of cultural contexts and that the church has survived and thrived in radically diverse social, political, and economic settings. 2. *The history of renewal teaches us about the renewing work of the Holy Spirit.* How does the spirit renew the church? Key patterns can be found. The book of Acts has been called "the acts of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit is the real agent in the significant and startling growth and witness of the early church. But the spirit did not work alone—or magically, like some impersonal force. The Spirit worked through people, through the flesh-and-blood church of Jesus Christ. . . . The church will never outgrow the Holy Spirit, because God is always a step ahead of us. . . . Since Pentecost, the church is continuously been in the age of the Spirit. But Spirit-guided renewal never points to the Spirit himself. Rather, it lifts up Jesus, always helping the church to be Christ-centered and to carry on Jesus' work. . . . The Holy Spirit is the renewing Spirit who convicts, cleanses, gives gifts, and reshapes the church for faithful mission. The Spirit works to restore the church to biblical faithfulness, often by bringing biblical truth to the forefront of the church's focus--truth that has sometimes been eclipsed by tradition, institutionalism, or sin. The Holy Spirit brings people to faith in Jesus Christ, renews the church, and moves out ahead of the church to waken people to their need of Christ. . . . We can discern what the Holy Spirit will do in the future by looking at what he has done in the past. Examining the history of renewal, we find helpful principles for the life and structure of the church today. 3. *Renewal movements, show us the deep renewal often begins at the periphery, or the margins, of the church.* Seldom does it begin from its center or from established church leadership. . . . Today, in our quest for effective wineskins, we should look at what God is doing at the margins of the church. 4. *Finally, renewal movements help restore a Trinitarian balance in the church.* Renewal movements typically stress the "new work" of the Spirit. Renewal generally breaks forth at times when the church has forgotten the renewing work of the Spirit, and

An observation of how God's Spirit has worked through renewal movements through history can help the church recognize where God is moving during this time of transition. The Spirit uses times such as this to refresh and renew Christ's church. One historical example can be drawn from the heritage that is the context of this paper, the Stone/Campbell movement. It is frequently referred to as the Restoration movement or the Nineteenth Century Reformation movement. God used this effort to guide the church past certain human-made institutions and creeds and return its focus to His Word.

Lessons from Ecology

Scripture and the renewal activity of God's Spirit serve as sources for new wine skins. Ecology offers another source of ideas in contemporary culture. Ecological models operate at a deeper conceptual and metaphorical level than business models and are, therefore, more promising as a resource for new wineskins.

An ecosystem is the most complex level of organization in nature. It is made up of communities and their physical environments. In the same way, the church as the body of Christ is the most complex social organization. Its complexity includes both spiritual and physical dimensions and potentially incorporates everyone from the least to the greatest, from the poor to the rich. The church includes all people of every race and every time and place who believe in Jesus Christ.³³

Following are some reasons for viewing the structure of the church ecologically in the quest for better wineskins:

no longer expects God to do a new thing. . . . A key to vital church life is the recovery of a biblically based Trinitarian theology that takes its primary cues from God's action in Jesus Christ and from Jesus' continuing work in the church through the Spirit.

³³ Ibid., 83.

1. Ecology is more in tune with the way God created the world than are commonly excepted organizational and institutional models.
2. The ecological model is more consistent with systems theory than are other models.
3. The ecological model is more in tune with where today's culture is headed than are other models³⁴

Ecology is an excellent source for seeing God's hand in the birth of new

wineskins. The science of ecology recognizes that systems must be viewed dynamically.

They cannot be studied in isolation, instead complex and interrelated factors must be studied in relationship to one another. An ecology of culture attempts to understand the interrelationship of subcultures within subcultures within larger cultures, up to and including within the universe. This approach takes a Kingdom of God perspective and sees God's handiwork in all things. It affords the opportunity to move outside usual constraints to see God's work beyond local churches, local communities, denominations, and national boundaries. It allows observers to see the broader workings of God

The church needs to read Scripture in search of the DNA for church structures.

Church leaders must intensify their study of the communal experiences of the first century church, observe renewal movements for a better understanding of how God has

³⁴ Ibid., 77-84. 1. *Ecology is more in tune with the way God created the world than are commonly excepted organizational and institutional models.* The key insight of ecology is that all creation (and particularly all life forms) is made up of complex, highly interdependent relationships. It is not possible to touch any one element in the system without affecting the whole. 2. *The ecological model is more consistent with systems theory than are other models.* Systems theory studies patterns in complex interrelationships. . . . Ecology take systems theory a step further, revealing that every system operates within a larger system that constitutes all of culture and in fact, the whole universe. We are part of a highly complex creation marked by interrelationship and interdependence. . . . Because ecology is much closer to biblical revelation and of the nature of God as Trinity, the church should seriously consider its implications in order to understand itself and to form faithful wineskins. 3. *The ecological model is more in tune with where today's culture is headed than are other models.* Rather than taking its cues from business, the church should note the business itself, at the cutting edge, is thinking ecologically. As the church starts to think ecologically—provided it keeps Scripture primary—it will discover a host of insights about the wineskins through which it may effectively serve as agent of God's mission in the world.

revived His Body in the past, and take cues from ecology to understand the organic nature of the Body of Christ. The church can be fertile ground for the new wineskins of the emerging culture by applying principles gleaned from these sources. Related to this need to identify material for new wineskins is the subject of the next section, becoming new creations in Christ. The Body of Christ must be willing to die to itself if it is to be the fertile soil upon which Christ can give birth to new creations that are equipped for incarnational ministry in the emerging post-modern culture.

**Be Willing to Die to Self, Personally and
Programmatically, and Live As New Creations in Christ**

If churches intend to live as Christ's presence in the world, they must be willing to die to self, personally and programmatically, and live as new creations in Christ. When this becomes the reality of churches' communal life, their testimony to the world will be authentic and true:

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Cor. 5:14-17 NIV)

"For Christ's love controls us." In this phrase, Paul explains why he was devoted to the service of God and the Corinthians (v. 13), and why a life of selfishness was impossible for him.³⁵ Believers are driven by God's sacrificial love for them as portrayed

³⁵ Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 418.

through Christ's death. Their personal agendas must be put to death and be replaced by God's plans and purpose.

The next verse re-emphasizes the notion of death to self: "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again." From the time of his conversion, or shortly thereafter, Paul had two convictions about the crucifixion of Christ. The first related to the outcome of his death, the "death" of the whole human race (v. 14b). The second involved the purpose of his death: that those enjoying new life "in Christ" should also live "for Christ" (v. 15). An exclusive devotion to the crucified and resurrected Messiah replaces the slavery to self, the trademark of lacking a relationship with Christ. "The intended result of the death of Christ was the Christian's renunciation of self-seeking and self-pleasing and the pursuit of a Christ-centered life filled with action for the benefit of others, as was Christ's life. . . . This, it seems, is the essential thrust of v. 15."³⁶ Apart from Christ, humans are in bondage to their flesh and its desire for self-fulfillment. In Christ believers are freed from this slavery and empowered to a life lived for the benefit of God's kingdom.

"So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view." Christ's love frees believers to see people from the Creator's point of view. Believers are freed from the eyes of their flesh and able to see others with spiritual eyes. For Paul, "The heart of the matter goes to himself. Is he evaluating people according to the flesh, with his eyes powered by his own sinful nature, which could lead him to envy, competitiveness, and self-pride? His answer is, 'No!'" The typical human approach to personal relationships is

³⁶ Ibid., 422.

disgustingly insufficient. Like 5:12, he seeks to know people “in the heart,” to allow the Spirit of Christ within him to help him know the true spiritual condition of others. That’s the only thing that matters in a life prioritized by commitment to Christ.”³⁷

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” Being in Christ results in our becoming a new creation.³⁸ “When Paul says that a believer is a “new creation” he means that the transformation of the believer initiated at baptism is part of a general transformation of all creation which is part and parcel of the new age to come.”³⁹ The realization of God’s promise in Isaiah 65:17–25 to make a new heaven and a new earth begins in the hearts and minds of believers. It is here that the power and presence of God manifests itself in the hearts and souls of believers. Believers are empowered by the Spirit of God to live their lives as new creations.

Church leaders must come to terms with the necessity of death for the newness of God’s Kingdom to take hold in the twenty-first century church. Believers and, by extension, churches must die to themselves so others may live. God’s design is a life cycle harmony. Humans and churches are born, live, and die. Humans dedicate a

³⁷ William R. Baker, *2 Corinthians*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1999), 230.

³⁸ Ibid., 433. The theology of the NT—or indeed Pauline theology—could be written around this theocentric concept of “newness” (καινότης, Rom. 6:4; 7:6), which is summed up in the statement, ἰδοὺ καινὰ ποιῶ πάντα (Rev. 21:5; cf. Isa. 43:19, LXX), “See! I make everything new!” In the new era brought by Christ, there is the new wine of the new age (Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37–38), the new covenant (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8, 13; 9:15; 12:24), the new creation/creature (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15), the new man/humanity (Eph. 2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10), the new song of redemption (Rev. 5:9; 14:3), the new name for believers (Rev. 2:17; 3:12), and the new commandment of love (John 13:34; 1 John 2:8). In the consummated kingdom there will be the new wine of the heavenly banquet (Mark 14:25), a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21:1; cf. 2 Pet. 3:13), and a new Jerusalem (Rev. 3:12; 21:2).

³⁹ Baker, *2 Corinthians*, 232.

significant portion of the resources of their lives to the well being of those who will follow, their children. Investment in the lives of children enables them to have lives of meaning and purpose. Likewise churches willing to give their lives for the benefit of the next generation can gain meaning, purpose, and new life by dying to their traditions, programs, and structures.⁴⁰ The death of traditions that have lost their meaning to the contemporary culture fertilizes the soil and gives birth to new life that will redeem the emerging, post modern generation.

Jesus says that unless a seed dies it cannot produce life. He says that humans must lose their own lives if they are to truly live. Leaders are called to build an ethos where this principle permeates a culture in which God can replicate a life cycle harmony that gives birth to new life, generation after generation. Studies from biblical passages regarding believers' responsibilities to "one another" offer further insight for realizing the biblical ideal of dying to self.⁴¹

The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with His death—we give over our lives to death. . . . When Christ calls a man, He bids him come

⁴⁰ McManus, *An Unstoppable Force*, 18-19. The final dynamic in God's design is lifecycle harmony. This is simply the realization and embracing of one's own birth, life, and death. It can be sobering to realize that a major portion of our lives is given to preparing the next generation for life. Each generation is connected to the generation before it and the generation that follows. In the prime of our lives we begin the process of replacing ourselves. When a healthy relationship exists within the lifecycle, a selflessness of giving oneself away is created. The more one focuses on one's own living, the less one is concerned about giving life to others. The only way church buildings stay filled through generations is if the church lives and dies and is born again over and over. Soon we realize that the church is not the same church it was 20 years ago, or even four years ago. To make the kind of impact in human history that God desires, we must find our fulfillment and the rightness of this lifecycle. In the end, it is not so much about prolonging or perpetuating our own life as about giving new life to others.

⁴¹ Mac Brunson and Ergun Caner, *Why Churches Die: Diagnosing Lethal Poisons in the Body of Christ* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2005), 2-4. See appendix D for list.

and die . . . death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call. Jesus' summons to the rich young man was calling him to die, because only the man who is dead to his own will can follow Christ. In fact, every command of Jesus is a call to die, with all our affections and lusts. But we do not want to die. . . . The call to discipleship . . . means both death and life. . . . [It] sets the Christian in the middle of the daily arena against sin and the devil. Every day he encounters new temptations, and every day he must suffer anew for Jesus Christ's sake. The wounds and scars he receives in the fray are living tokens of this participation in the cross of his Lord.⁴²

Analysis and Summary

Many of the struggles and crises detailed in this paper can be navigated by developing a theology of new wineskins/new creations that will shape the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare churches for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture. This chapter discussed that a theology of new wineskins/new creations will include components of a discipleship process that leaders should observe as they seek to help their congregations revive their missional impulses and remain faithful to their roles as the Body of Christ in the emerging culture. Five key components of a theology of new wineskins/new creations that can shape the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare churches for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture are:

1. Emphasize following Jesus as his disciples above all else.
2. Develop a relational Christian community.
3. Create a sense of loving concern for the unchurched.

⁴² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Collier Books, 1937), 99.

4. Develop a humble appreciation for God's grace and acknowledge human fallenness and need for God.
5. Encourage the creation of new wineskins to embrace and further the present workings of the Spirit.
6. Be willing to die to self, personally and programmatically, and live as new creations in Christ.

Leaders who shape church discipleship processes with these five factors deeply rooted in the DNA of the discipleship ethos will better prepare the church for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture. The next chapter will discuss how these processes could have changed the outcome for Mills Creek Church and her leadership. It will then summarize the major points of this dissertation and discuss their implications for other churches.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Every body of believers has unique and special DNA. Conversations about revival and renewal must be tailored to the unique circumstances that form and face a congregation. Quick fixes and universal answers are ineffective when superimposed upon an existing congregation. Many of the struggles and crises detailed in this paper can be navigated by developing a theology of new wineskins/new creations that will shape the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare churches for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture.

As noted in chapter 5, the leader is an important component of a revival of an incarnational ethos of discipleship. The change required to establish an ethos that will impart an incarnational discipleship is revolutionary. “A revolution is about changing what exists. Change requires leaders who intentionally introduce a new direction.”¹ Revolutionary leaders see the necessity of creating an ethos of discipleship that perseveres against the natural inclinations of living for oneself. They are more than spiritual entrepreneurs, they are spiritual catalysts. Spiritual catalysts recognize the desperate nature of the status quo and mobilize others in a movement of common

¹ George Barna, *Revolution: Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2005), 83.

mission. Spiritual entrepreneurs moves quickly; spiritual catalysts move others quickly with them.²

The inspiration behind this project was my concern for the prospects of traditionalistic Stone/Campbell churches and whether they have a future in the emerging culture. Should the church focus on building new churches and allow old ones to die? How does a church leader develop a more effective *ethos* that renews the hearts and minds of Christians in old and new churches? Paul's words to the disciples in Corinth describe the church as consisting of men and women who are new creations in Christ. They have died to themselves and have been called to live their lives for the benefit of others (2 Cor. 5:14-17). Leaders can help churches listen to the Spirit if they develop an incarnational ethos that sustains discipleship in the lives of their members. The incarnational ethos will help leaders and church members overcome the challenges that threaten their survival in the emerging culture. It is the thesis of this study that a theology of new wineskins/new creations can shape the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare churches for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture.

Mills Creek Church could have developed an incarnational ethos if it had applied the principles outlined in this dissertation. John mistakenly thought he could take a philosophy of discipleship developed at Saddleback and apply it at Mills Creek Church.

² McManus, *An Unstoppable Force*, 77. "The entrepreneur can find total satisfaction in the uniqueness of his [*sic*] own endeavor. If he accomplishes his personal dream, there's a sense of contentedness and satisfaction. The catalyst on the other hand, begins with the knowledge that what God is calling him to accomplish cannot be done alone. It is critical that he win the hearts and capture the imagination of others. He doesn't see people as a hindrance to accomplishing his goals. He doesn't find a way to go around people because they slow him down. His entire calling is wrapped up in the calling out of God's people to fulfill God's purpose."

He placed too much emphasis on worship style without working to change the culture of the church. Before discussions of style can be beneficial, conversations need to occur among key leaders about what it means to be a disciple of Christ. These leaders must have personal ownership of the processes of life change necessary to be transformed by the person and teaching of Christ. They must seek more than merely learning more information about Christ. The following section will describe a course of action that each of the respective parties at Mills Creek Church could have taken to shape the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship and prepare the church for incarnational ministry in the emerging post-modern culture.

John

As the associate pastor John was in a position to help implement the vision that Pastor Stan had for Mills Creek Church. John's first responsibility was to understand that vision. Second, he needed to understand the current ethos of the church, and third, he needed to find ways that his gifts and experience could help the church accomplish its mission.

Once John had a good understanding of these variables he could begin to implement a discipleship program that helped people revisit the Scriptures and understand Christ's expectations for their personal transformation. He could supplement the current teaching systems, which consisted of Sunday school programs, with one-on-one discipleship that held personal accountability as a high priority. As these relationships develop John could multiply these one-on-one encounters into life transformation groups (LTGs) similar to the ones discussed by Matt Payne from the

Church at Bethany in chapter 2. A key ingredient in these LTGs would be accountability related to character transformation and an emphasis on personal evangelism.

John's experience in church planting would be helpful to expose Pastor Stan to new ideas related to new wineskins/new creations. In his encounters with Pastor Stan he could suggest a variety of "field trips" to acquaint him with the culture developing around him. These field trips might include encounters with different ministry models, business models, and entertainment options. The purpose of these trips would be to plant in Pastor Stan's mind the seeds of sources by which Mills Creek Church could develop New Wineskins/New Creations to become incarnational in the emerging post-modern culture.

Pastor Stan

One of the components of developing an ethos of incarnational ministry noted in the introduction of this chapter is "revolutionary" leadership. While Pastor Stan's leadership style would not be characterized as revolutionary, his gifts as a facilitator could be helpful in the team building described in chapter 5. Pastor Stan could proactively set up teams of key individuals who could begin the process of seeking to understand the emerging culture and what role Mills Creek Church might play in it. These teams would work closely with existing teams so as to build a culture of trust and openness.

From the pulpit and all other teaching spaces Pastor Stan would need to "champion" the work that John is doing. He would need to encourage the members to join LTGs and he would need to question his own adherence to the notion that information equals transformation that characterizes the roots of the Stone/Campbell

movement. Crucial to this process would be Pastor Stan leading his own one-on-one accountability groups. The success of changes depends on the congregation's perception that the senior pastor is fully engaged in the process.

Pastor Stan must be prepared to deal with members who are going to react negatively to changes that might result from this process. Some of this negative reaction will be the normal fear of change spoken about in chapter 4; however, some opposition is going to be less benign in its intentions. For purposes of protecting acquired power, loss of comfort, and impulses to control, some members will resist any change and will remain recalcitrant despite Pastor Stan's efforts to help them understand the need for change. If these persons refuse to be engaged by the new discipleship processes and actively work to undermine its efforts, they must be dealt with in a loving but firm manner. Ideally, over time, the Body of Christ can help these persons recognize their own emotional wounds and act as agents of reconciliation for God and His Kingdom.

Mills Creek Church

Ultimately, for any process to change the ethos of Mills Creek Church so that it is incarnational in the emerging post-modern culture it is critical that the congregation be willing to be engaged by the Spirit of God. There must be a remnant of people who are pained enough by the decline in witness to want to "relearn" and "over learn" what it means to be disciples of Christ. This group can then be led through a process by which they learn how an incarnational ministry reflects what it means to be faithful to the New Testament. As they gain ownership of the sacrificial nature of discipleship and allow God's Spirit to transform their character through the pastoral leadership of Pastor Stan and

John they will be the soil upon which God can build a new ethos of incarnational ministry which will be able to engage the emerging post-modern culture.

Dissertation Summary

The narrative illustrated the difficulty in reviving the missional impulse of an older congregation and asked the question “How can old Christians find new life?” To answer this question a thesis was proposed that a theology of new wineskins/new creations can shape the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare churches for incarnational ministry in the post modern culture.

The ministry context for the narrative involved a church from the Stone/Campbell movement. Chapter 2 examined certain characteristics within the Stone/Campbell movement that both help and hinder efforts to have an incarnational discipleship in the emerging culture. The plea of Stone/Campbell churches for Christian unity and their efforts in church planting are especially effective at connecting with the emerging culture. Their being firmly rooted in the rationalistic enlightenment and its modernistic tendencies sometimes keeps them from recreating themselves and finding new identities in the emerging post modern world. Evidence of this comes from the author’s interviews of leaders from within this tradition and the clear shifts in thinking that exist between those who continue to push for old methodologies and those who intentionally are starting new churches with the emerging culture in mind.

The movement from a modern culture of disciple making to post modern includes a shift in emphasis from informational to transformational. This has been accompanied by a move to a more relationship-oriented process. Where the systems of discipleship at

churches that were founded in the modern era such as The Christian Church of Hillsboro are built around Sunday school type structures, the emerging church will find relational mentoring processes used by churches like Ethnos to be more effective in the post modern culture. A continuing challenge for these churches will be the reproducibility of the process. In the Sunday school system reproducibility and measurability were the responsibility of a select few; however, the more relational, mentoring style of the emerging culture measurement is going to more difficult and will require the efforts of more individuals.

Chapter 3 sought to understand Jesus' use of the term disciple, how his followers became disciples, and what he expected of them to provide a biblical foundation for an incarnational ethos of discipleship in the emerging culture of the twenty-first century. This understanding was substantiated first by establishing a biblical definition of the use of the term disciple. The Greek word from which the term disciple is derived is *mathētēs*. The basic meaning is pupil or student. An in depth study of *mathētēs* as applied to Jesus reveals a stronger relationship and a greater degree of sacrifice than is normally anticipated in teacher/student relationships.

A study of Greek philosophy and its use of the term disciple contribute to understanding its use in Christ's time. Studies of Greek schools of philosophy show that they evaluated disciples less by whether they gained information from their teachers and more by how accurately they imitated their teachers.

Observations gained from the study of Jewish sects further confirm the conclusion that a disciple is more than a student or pupil. In sects such as the Pharisees, Sadducees,

and Essenes it is clear that a disciple maintains a close relationship with a mentor and abides by a strict set of communal standards. This is in contrast to the current understanding of what it means to be a pupil, which places a greater emphasis on academic acumen.

The use of the word disciple in the Gospels and Acts expands these ideas in significant ways. Discipleship is about having a life relationship with Jesus more than adhering to his teachings. Unlike other teachers, Jesus' followers raised disciples exclusively for Jesus rather than for themselves. Jesus' call to discipleship was characterized by self-denial and submission to his will. An incarnational ethos of discipleship grows from the expectation that followers of Jesus imitate him, fulfill his teaching, and make disciples of all nations.

Chapter 4 discussed how a post modern culture presents a new set of challenges that churches must overcome if they are to have incarnational ministries. Several factors have led to an evangelistic decline. These factors include but are not limited to:

- An emerging culture more similar to the first century than the modern culture that preceded it.
- A post modern relational apologetic that focuses on feelings and experiences compared to a modern rational apologetic that had its roots in the Enlightenment.
- A lack of biblical purpose.
- A bondage to unhealthy addictions.
- An entrapment in time and using old wine skins for new wine.

- A hold on life for its own sake rather than forsaking life for the good of future generations.

A natural aversion to transition and change compounds the effect of these challenges.

This is a time of transition and leaders must understand the attendant dangers and peculiarities.

All of these factors affect the ability of the church to do incarnational ministry in the emerging culture; therefore, an ethos that breaks down the desire to hold onto the past and builds up the belief that a healthy church is willing to give up its life for the benefit of others will have the best chance of sustaining an incarnational ministry in the emerging culture. Leaders can help churches listen to the Spirit if they develop an incarnational ethos that sustains discipleship in the lives of their members. The incarnational ethos will help leaders and church members overcome the challenges that threaten their survival in the emerging culture. It is the thesis of this study that a theology of new wineskins/new creations can shape the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare churches for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture.

Chapter 5 showed that leaders must develop an ethos that immerses their communities in the presence of Christ, and a key to building an incarnational ethos is over learning. Some of the factors that affect leaders' building of an incarnational ethos are the communities' learning structures and hierarchies. The learning structures and hierarchies must themselves be filled with an ethos permeated by compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Leaders are neither bosses nor CEOs, they are fellow sojourners who trust their followers, learn from them, and even submit to them. Leaders

should understand the western cultural propensity towards individualism and create contexts that promote community and teamwork.

The Bible is an indispensable tool for building an ethos of discipleship. Leaders should not neglect the role of the Spirit and the fellowship in spiritual formation. Human efforts, when prompted by God's Spirit, are essential components to growth but God's Holy Spirit prompts and finishes all meaningful life transformation. Leaders should evaluate all programs including preaching, meetings, small groups, or Sunday school to determine whether they encourage Christian discipleship and spiritual formation among participants. An incarnational ethos of discipleship, an ethos of Christ likeness in congregants' lives, must include a commitment to a lifelong journey of transition and transformation, and a theology of new wineskins/new creations can shape the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare churches for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture.

Chapter 6 discussed the importance of a theology of new wineskins/new creations which includes components of a discipleship process that leaders should observe as they seek to help their congregation revive its missional impulse so as to remain faithful to its role as the Body of Christ in the emerging culture. Five key components of a theology of new wineskins/new creations that can shape the ethos of congregational leadership and discipleship to prepare churches for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture are:

1. Emphasize following Jesus as his disciples above all else.
2. Develop a relational Christian community.
3. Create a sense of loving concern for the unchurched.

4. Develop a humble appreciation for God's grace and acknowledge human fallenness and need for God.
5. Encourage the creation of new wineskins to embrace and further the present workings of the Spirit.
6. Be willing to die to self, personally and programmatically, and live as new creations in Christ.

Leaders who shape their discipleship processes with these five factors deeply rooted in the DNA of their ethos will better prepare the church for incarnational ministry in the emerging culture.

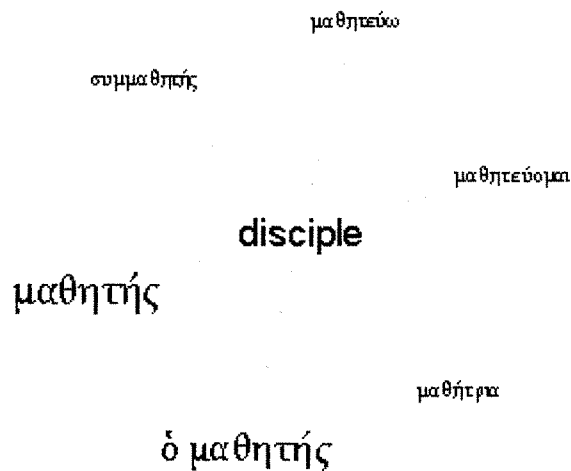
Implications for the Church Universal

Although the churches included in this dissertation were all from the Stone/Campbell tradition, its findings have wider implications for the catholic church. Churches from the Western tradition are deeply rooted in modernity. The rationalism of the enlightenment has affected its discipleship processes, structures, hierarchies, and ministry approaches. Churches that are struggling with their ministry to the post-modern emerging culture will be helped if they revisit their definition of what it means to be a disciple. As they begin to refocus on the sacrificial nature of Jesus' call to discipleship they will be more prepared to begin the process of building an ethos which prepares their church for incarnational ministry in the emerging post-modern culture. The qualities of an incarnational discipleship process proposed in chapter 6 will be helpful to these churches as they try to break free from a ministry model that was built to connect with

the modern culture. It will help them to develop an ethos of discipleship that will prepare their people for incarnational ministry in the emerging post-modern culture.

APPENDIX A

OCCURRENCES OF *mathēté* IN THE NEW TESTAMENT¹



μαθητεύομαι (2)

Verb, aorist, deponent, indicative disciple

Matt 27:57 • When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also • was a **disciple** of Jesus.

Verb, aorist, passive, indicative disciple

Matt 27:57 • When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also • was a **disciple** of Jesus.

μαθητεύω (2)

Verb, aorist, active, nominative disciples

Acts 14:21 • When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many **disciples**, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

¹ Compiled using Libronix Digital Library System, 1313 Commercial Street Bellingham, WA 98225-4372.

Verb, aorist, active, imperative

disciples

Matt 28:19 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,

μαθητής (261)

Noun, accusative

disciple (3), disciples (39)

Matt 10:1 And he called to him his twelve **disciples** and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.

Matt 12:49 And stretching out his hand toward his **disciples**, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!

Matt 14:22 • Immediately he made the **disciples** get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

Matt 15:32 Then Jesus called his **disciples** to him and said, "I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

Matt 16:13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his **disciples**, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

Matt 20:17 And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve **disciples** aside, and on the way he said to them,

Matt 21:1 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Beth-phage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two **disciples**,

Matt 22:16 And they sent their **disciples** to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are * not swayed by appearances. *

Matt 26:40 And he came to the **disciples** and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour?

Matt 26:45 Then he came to the **disciples** and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. * See, the hour is at hand, * and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Mark 6:45 • Immediately he made his **disciples** get into • the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.

Mark 8:1 In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his **disciples** to him and said to them,

Mark 8:27 And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his **disciples**, • • "Who do people say that I am?"

Mark 8:33 But turning and seeing his **disciples**, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

Mark 9:14 And when they came to the **disciples**, they saw a great crowd around

- them, and scribes arguing with them.
- Mark 9:31 for he was teaching his **disciples**, • saying to them, “ The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.”
- Mark 12:43 And he called his **disciples** to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, • this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box.
- Luke 5:30 And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his **disciples**, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”
- Luke 6:13 And when day came, he called his **disciples** and chose from them twelve, whom • he named apostles:
- Luke 6:20 And he lifted up his eyes on his **disciples**, and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
- Luke 9:14 For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his **disciples**, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.”
- Luke 9:43 And all were astonished at the majesty of God. But while they were all marveling at everything • he was doing, Jesus said to his **disciples**,
- Luke 10:23 Then turning to the **disciples** he said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see!
- Luke 11:1 Now • Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his **disciples**.”
- Luke 12:1 In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his **disciples** first, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.
- Luke 12:22 And he said to his **disciples**, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on.
- Luke 16:1 He also said to the **disciples**, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions.
- Luke 17:1 And he said to his **disciples**, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come!
- Luke 17:22 And he said to the **disciples**, “The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.
- Luke 22:45 And when he rose from prayer, he came to the **disciples** and found them sleeping for sorrow,
- John 4:1 Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more **disciples** than John
- John 19:26 • When Jesus saw his mother and the **disciple** whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!”

John 20:2	So she ran and went to Simon Peter and • the other disciple , the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.”
John 21:20	Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who • had been reclining at table * close to him * and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?”
Acts 9:1	But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest
Acts 11:26	and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. • • For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.
Acts 18:23	• After spending some time there, he departed and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples .
Acts 19:1	And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. • There he found some disciples .
Acts 19:9	But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.
Acts 20:1	• After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples , and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia.
Acts 20:30	and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.
Acts 21:4	And having sought out the disciples , we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.
Noun, dative	disciple (3), disciples (41)
Matt 9:10	And • as Jesus reclined at table in the house, • behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples .
Matt 9:11	And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples , “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”
Matt 9:37	Then he said to his disciples , “The harvest • is plentiful, but the laborers are few;
Matt 10:25	It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.
Matt 11:1	• When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples , he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.
Matt 14:19	Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples ,

- and the disciples gave them to the crowds.
- Matt 15:36 he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the **disciples**, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.
- Matt 16:20 Then he strictly charged the **disciples** to tell no one that he was the Christ.
- Matt 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show his **disciples** that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.
- Matt 16:24 Then Jesus told his **disciples**, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.
- Matt 17:16 And I brought him to your **disciples**, and they could not heal him."
- Matt 19:23 And Jesus said to his **disciples**, "Truly, I say to you, • only with difficulty will a rich person enter • the kingdom of heaven.
- Matt 23:1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his **disciples**,
- Matt 26:1 • When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his **disciples**,
- Matt 26:26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the **disciples**, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."
- Matt 26:36 Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his **disciples**, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray."
- Matt 28:7 Then go quickly and tell his **disciples** that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you."
- Matt 28:8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his **disciples**.
- Mark 2:15 And • as he reclined at table in his house, • many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his **disciples**, for there were many • who followed him.
- Mark 2:16 And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his **disciples**, " Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"
- Mark 3:9 And he told his **disciples** to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him,
- Mark 4:34 • He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own **disciples** he explained everything.
- Mark 6:41 And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the **disciples** • to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all.
- Mark 8:6 And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his **disciples** to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd.

- Mark 8:34 And he called to him the crowd with his **disciples** and said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.
- Mark 9:18 And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your **disciples** to cast it out, and they were not able."
- Mark 10:23 And Jesus looked around and said to his **disciples**, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter • the kingdom of God!"
- Mark 14:32 And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his **disciples**, "Sit here while I pray."
- Mark 16:7 But go, tell his **disciples** and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you."
- Luke 9:16 And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the **disciples** to set before the crowd.
- Luke 19:39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your **disciples**."
- Luke 20:45 And in the hearing of all the people he said to his **disciples**,
- John 6:12 And when they had eaten their fill, he told his **disciples**, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost."
- John 6:22 On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been • • only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered • the boat with his **disciples**, but that his disciples had gone away alone.
- John 11:7 Then after this he said to the **disciples**, "Let us go to Judea again."
- John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his **disciples** across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, • which he and his disciples entered.
- John 19:27 Then he said to the **disciple**, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.
- John 20:18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the **disciples**, "I have seen the Lord"— and that he had said these things to her.
- John 21:1 After this Jesus revealed himself again to the **disciples** by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way.
- John 21:14 This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the **disciples** after he was raised from the dead.
- Acts 9:26 And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the **disciples**. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple.
- Acts 14:28 And they remained no little time with the **disciples**.
- Acts 18:27 And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the **disciples** to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed,

Acts 21:16	And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple , with whom we should lodge.
Noun, genitive	disciple, disciples (45)
Matt 8:21	• Another of the disciples • said to him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”
Matt 10:42	And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is * a disciple , truly, I say to you, he will by no means * lose his reward.”
Matt 11:2	Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples
Matt 26:18	• He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house * with my disciples .’”
Mark 3:7	• Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and • Judea
Mark 7:2	• they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed.
Mark 8:10	And immediately he got into • the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.
Mark 10:46	And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving • Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.
Mark 11:1	Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples
Mark 13:1	And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!”
Mark 14:13	And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him,
Mark 14:14	and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, ‘ The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples ?’
Luke 6:17	And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon,
Luke 7:19	calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”
Luke 9:40	And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.”
Luke 11:1	Now • Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”
Luke 19:29	• When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is

- called Olivet, he sent two of the **disciples**,
- Luke 19:37 • As he was drawing near— already on the way down the Mount of Olives— the whole multitude of his **disciples** began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen,
- Luke 22:11 and tell the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my **disciples**?’
- John 1:35 The next day again John was standing with two of his **disciples**,
- John 3:25 Now a discussion arose between some of John’s **disciples** and a Jew over purification.
- John 6:3 • Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his **disciples**.
- John 6:8 One of his **disciples**, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him,
- John 6:60 When many of his **disciples** heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?”
- John 6:66 After this many of his **disciples** turned back and no longer walked with him.
- John 11:54 Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the **disciples**.
- John 12:4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his **disciples** (he who was about to betray him), said,
- John 13:5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the **disciples**’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.
- John 13:23 One of his **disciples**, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to * Jesus,
- John 16:17 So some of his **disciples** said to one another, “What is this that he says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’; and, ‘because I am going to the Father’?”
- John 18:2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his **disciples**.
- John 18:17 • The servant girl at the door said to Peter, “You also are not one of this man’s **disciples**, are you?” He said, “I am not.”
- John 18:19 The high priest then questioned Jesus about his **disciples** and • his teaching.
- John 18:25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You also are not one of his **disciples**, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.”
- John 20:30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the **disciples**, • which are not written in this book;
- John 21:2 Simon Peter, • Thomas (called the Twin), • Nathanael • of Cana in Galilee, • the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his **disciples** were

together.

John 21:12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the **disciples** dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew • it was the Lord.

Acts 6:1 Now in these days when the **disciples** were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.

Acts 6:2 And the twelve summoned the full number of the **disciples** and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.

Acts 6:7 And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the **disciples** multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Acts 9:19 and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the **disciples** at Damascus.

Acts 11:29 So the **disciples** determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.

Acts 14:20 But when the **disciples** gathered about him, he rose up and entered • the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.

Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the **disciples**, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter • the kingdom of God.

Acts 15:10 Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the **disciples** that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

Acts 21:16 And some of the **disciples** from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.

Noun, nominative

disciple (20), disciples (109)

Matt 5:1 Seeing • the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his **disciples** came to him.

Matt 8:23 And when he got into the boat, his **disciples** followed him.

Matt 9:14 (2) Then the **disciples** of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, • but your **disciples** do not fast?"

Matt 9:19 And Jesus rose and followed him, with his **disciples**.

Matt 10:24 "A **disciple** is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.

Matt 12:1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. • His **disciples** were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.

Matt 12:2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your **disciples** are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."

Matt 13:10 Then the **disciples** came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?"

- Matt 13:36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his **disciples** came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field."
- Matt 14:12 And his **disciples** came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus.
- Matt 14:15 Now when it was evening, the **disciples** came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the day is * now over; * send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves."
- Matt 14:19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the **disciples** gave them to the crowds.
- Matt 14:26 But when the **disciples** saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear.
- Matt 15:2 "Why do your **disciples** break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when • they eat."
- Matt 15:12 Then the **disciples** came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"
- Matt 15:23 But he did not answer her a word. And his **disciples** came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us."
- Matt 15:33 And the **disciples** said to him, "Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?"
- Matt 15:36 he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the **disciples** gave them to the crowds.
- Matt 16:5 • When the **disciples** reached • the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread.
- Matt 17:6 • When the **disciples** heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified.
- Matt 17:10 And the **disciples** asked him, "Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?"
- Matt 17:13 Then the **disciples** understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.
- Matt 17:19 Then the **disciples** came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"
- Matt 18:1 At that time the **disciples** came to Jesus, saying, "Who is • the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"
- Matt 19:10 The **disciples** • said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."
- Matt 19:13 Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. • The **disciples** rebuked the people,
- Matt 19:25 • When the **disciples** heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

- Matt 21:6 • The **disciples** went and did as Jesus had directed them.
- Matt 21:20 • When the **disciples** saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither at once?"
- Matt 24:1 • Jesus left • the temple and was going away, when his **disciples** came to point out to him the buildings of the temple.
- Matt 24:3 • As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the **disciples** came to him privately, * saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?"
- Matt 26:8 And when the **disciples** saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste?"
- Matt 26:17 Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the **disciples** came to Jesus, saying, "Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?"
- Matt 26:19 And the **disciples** did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.
- Matt 26:35 Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!" And all the **disciples** said the same.
- Matt 26:56 But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the **disciples** left him and fled.
- Matt 27:64 Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his **disciples** go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first."
- Matt 28:13 and said, "Tell people, ' His **disciples** came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.'
- Matt 28:16 Now the eleven **disciples** went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.
- Mark 2:18 (4) Now John's **disciples** and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came and said to him, "Why do John's **disciples** and the **disciples** of the Pharisees fast, but your **disciples** do not fast?"
- Mark 2:23 • One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his **disciples** began to pluck heads of grain.
- Mark 5:31 And his **disciples** said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'"
- Mark 6:1 • He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his **disciples** followed him.
- Mark 6:29 • When his **disciples** heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.
- Mark 6:35 And when it grew late, his **disciples** came to him and said, " This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late.
- Mark 7:5 And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your **disciples** not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat • • with defiled hands?"
- Mark 7:17 And when he had entered • the house and left the people, his **disciples**

- asked him about the parable.
- Mark 8:4 And his **disciples** answered him, “ How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?”
- Mark 8:27 And Jesus went on with his **disciples** to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, • • “Who do people say that I am?”
- Mark 9:28 And when he had entered • the house, his **disciples** asked him privately, “ Why could we not cast it out?”
- Mark 10:10 And in the house the **disciples** asked him again about this matter.
- Mark 10:13 And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the **disciples** rebuked them.
- Mark 10:24 And the **disciples** were amazed at his words. But Jesus • said to them again, “Children, how difficult it is to enter • the kingdom of God!
- Mark 11:14 And • he said to it, “May no one ever * eat fruit from you again.” * And his **disciples** heard it.
- Mark 14:12 And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his **disciples** said to him, “Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?”
- Mark 14:16 And the **disciples** set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.
- Luke 5:33 And they said to him, “The **disciples** of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do * the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.”
- Luke 6:1 • On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, • his **disciples** plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands.
- Luke 6:40 A **disciple** is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.
- Luke 7:11 • Soon afterward • • • he went to a town called Nain, and his **disciples** and a great crowd went with him.
- Luke 7:18 • The **disciples** of John reported • all these things to him. And John,
- Luke 8:9 And when his **disciples** asked him what this parable meant,
- Luke 8:22 • One day • he got into a boat with his **disciples**, and he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side of the lake.” So they set out,
- Luke 9:18 Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the **disciples** were with him. And he asked them, “ Who do the crowds say that I am?”
- Luke 9:54 And when his **disciples** James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?”
- Luke 14:26 “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my **disciple**.
- Luke 14:27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be

- my **disciple**.
- Luke 14:33 So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my **disciple**.
- Luke 18:15 Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the **disciples** saw it, they rebuked them.
- Luke 22:39 And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and • the **disciples** followed him.
- John 1:37 • The two **disciples** heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.
- John 2:2 • Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his **disciples**.
- John 2:11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his **disciples** believed in him.
- John 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his **disciples**, and they stayed there for a few days.
- John 2:17 His **disciples** remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”
- John 2:22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his **disciples** remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.
- John 3:22 After this Jesus and his **disciples** went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing.
- John 4:2 (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his **disciples**),
- John 4:8 (For his **disciples** had gone away into the city to buy food.)
- John 4:27 • Just then his **disciples** came back. • They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?”
- John 4:31 Meanwhile the **disciples** were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”
- John 4:33 So the **disciples** said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?”
- John 6:16 • When evening came, his **disciples** went down to the sea,
- John 6:22 On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been • • only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered • the boat with his disciples, but that his **disciples** had gone away alone.
- John 6:24 So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his **disciples**, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.
- John 6:61 But Jesus, knowing in himself that his **disciples** were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this?”
- John 7:3 So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your **disciples** also may see the works • you are doing.
- John 8:31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my **disciples**,
- John 9:2 And his **disciples** asked him, • “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his

- parents, that he was born blind?”
- John 9:27 He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? • Do you also want to become his **disciples**?”
- John 9:28 (2) And they reviled him, • saying, “You are his **disciple**, but we are **disciples** of Moses.
- John 11:8 The **disciples** said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?”
- John 11:12 • The **disciples** said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.”
- John 12:16 His **disciples** did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and • had been done to him.
- John 13:22 The **disciples** looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke.
- John 13:35 By this all people will know that you are my **disciples**, if you have love for one another.”
- John 15:8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my **disciples**.
- John 16:29 His **disciples** said, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech!
- John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, • which he and his **disciples** entered.
- John 18:15 (2) • Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another **disciple**. Since that **disciple** was known to the high priest, • he entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest,
- John 18:16 but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other **disciple**, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in.
- John 19:27 Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the **disciple** took her to his own home.
- John 19:38 • After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a **disciple** of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body.
- John 20:3 So Peter went out with • the other **disciple**, and they were going toward the tomb.
- John 20:4 • Both of them * were running together, but the other **disciple** outran Peter and reached • the tomb first.
- John 20:8 Then • the other **disciple**, who had reached • the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;
- John 20:10 Then the **disciples** went back to their homes.
- John 20:19 • On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, * • the doors

- being locked where the **disciples** were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."
- John 20:20 • When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the **disciples** were glad when they saw the Lord.
- John 20:25 So the other **disciples** told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."
- John 20:26 • Eight • days later, his **disciples** were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."
- John 21:4 • Just as day was breaking, * Jesus stood on the shore; yet the **disciples** did not know that it was Jesus.
- John 21:7 That **disciple** whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" • When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea.
- John 21:8 • The other **disciples** came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards * off.
- John 21:23 So • the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this **disciple** was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"
- John 21:24 This is the **disciple** who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.
- Acts 9:10 Now there was a **disciple** at Damascus named Ananias. • The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord."
- Acts 9:25 but his **disciples** took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.
- Acts 9:26 And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a **disciple**.
- Acts 9:38 Since Lydda was near Joppa, the **disciples**, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, "Please come to us without delay."
- Acts 13:52 And the **disciples** were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.
- Acts 16:1 • Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. • • A **disciple** was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek.
- Acts 19:30 But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the **disciples** would not let him.

μαθήτρια (1)
Noun, nominative

disciple

Acts 9:36 Now there was in Joppa a **disciple** named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity.

ó (127)

Definite Article, accusative

disciples (19)

- Matt 10:1 And he called to him his twelve **disciples** and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.
- Matt 12:49 And stretching out his hand toward his **disciples**, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!
- Matt 15:32 Then Jesus called his **disciples** to him and said, "I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."
- Matt 16:13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his **disciples**, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"
- Matt 22:16 And they sent their **disciples** to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are * not swayed by appearances. *
- Mark 6:45 • Immediately he made his **disciples** get into • the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.
- Mark 8:27 And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his **disciples**, • • "Who do people say that I am?"
- Mark 8:33 But turning and seeing his **disciples**, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."
- Mark 9:31 for he was teaching his **disciples**, • saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise."
- Mark 12:43 And he called his **disciples** to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, • this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box.
- Luke 5:30 And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his **disciples**, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"
- Luke 6:13 And when day came, he called his **disciples** and chose from them twelve, whom • he named apostles:
- Luke 6:20 And he lifted up his eyes on his **disciples**, and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
- Luke 9:14 For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his **disciples**, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each."
- Luke 9:43 And all were astonished at the majesty of God. But while they were

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| Luke 11:1 | all marveling at everything • he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples , Now • Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples .” |
| Luke 12:1 | In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. |
| Luke 12:22 | And he said to his disciples , “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. |
| Luke 17:1 | And he said to his disciples , “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! |
| Definite Article, dative | disciples (26) |
| Matt 9:10 | And • as Jesus reclined at table in the house, • behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples . |
| Matt 9:11 | And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples , “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” |
| Matt 9:37 | Then he said to his disciples , “The harvest • is plentiful, but the laborers are few; |
| Matt 11:1 | • When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples , he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities. |
| Matt 16:21 | From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. |
| Matt 16:24 | Then Jesus told his disciples , “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. |
| Matt 17:16 | And I brought him to your disciples , and they could not heal him.” |
| Matt 19:23 | And Jesus said to his disciples , “Truly, I say to you, • only with difficulty will a rich person enter • the kingdom of heaven. |
| Matt 23:1 | Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples , |
| Matt 26:1 | • When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples , |
| Matt 28:7 | Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” |
| Matt 28:8 | So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples . |
| Mark 2:15 | And • as he reclined at table in his house, • many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples , for there were many • who followed him. |
| Mark 2:16 | And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples , “ Why does he |

eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

Mark 3:9 And he told his **disciples** to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him,

Mark 8:6 And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his **disciples** to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd.

Mark 8:34 And he called to him the crowd with his **disciples** and said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Mark 9:18 And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your **disciples** to cast it out, and they were not able.”

Mark 10:23 And Jesus looked around and said to his **disciples**, “How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter • the kingdom of God!”

Mark 14:32 And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his **disciples**, “Sit here while I pray.”

Mark 16:7 But go, tell his **disciples** and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”

Luke 19:39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your **disciples**.”

Luke 20:45 And in the hearing of all the people he said to his **disciples**,

John 6:12 And when they had eaten their fill, he told his **disciples**, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.”

John 6:22 On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been • • only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered • the boat with his **disciples**, but that his disciples had gone away alone.

John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his **disciples** across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, • which he and his disciples entered.

Definite Article, genitive disciples (28)

Matt 11:2 Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his **disciples**

Matt 26:18 • He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house * with my **disciples**.’”

Mark 3:7 • Jesus withdrew with his **disciples** to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and • Judea

Mark 7:2 • they saw that some of his **disciples** ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed.

Mark 8:10 And immediately he got into • the boat with his **disciples** and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

- Mark 10:46 And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving • Jericho with his **disciples** and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.
- Mark 11:1 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his **disciples**
- Mark 13:1 And as he came out of the temple, one of his **disciples** said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!”
- Mark 14:13 And he sent two of his **disciples** and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him,
- Mark 14:14 and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my **disciples**?’
- Luke 7:19 calling two of his **disciples** to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”
- Luke 9:40 And I begged your **disciples** to cast it out, but they could not.”
- Luke 11:1 Now • Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his **disciples** said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”
- Luke 22:11 and tell the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my **disciples**?’
- John 1:35 The next day again John was standing with two of his **disciples**,
- John 3:25 Now a discussion arose between some of John’s **disciples** and a Jew over purification.
- John 6:3 • Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his **disciples**.
- John 6:8 One of his **disciples**, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him,
- John 6:60 When many of his **disciples** heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?”
- John 6:66 After this many of his **disciples** turned back and no longer walked with him.
- John 12:4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his **disciples** (he who was about to betray him), said,
- John 13:23 One of his **disciples**, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to * Jesus,
- John 16:17 So some of his **disciples** said to one another, “What is this that he says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’; and, ‘because I am going to the Father’?”
- John 18:2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his **disciples**.
- John 18:17 • The servant girl at the door said to Peter, “You also are not one of this man’s **disciples**, are you?” He said, “I am not.”

- John 18:19 The high priest then questioned Jesus about his **disciples** and • his teaching.
- John 18:25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You also are not one of his **disciples**, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.”
- John 21:2 Simon Peter, • Thomas (called the Twin), • Nathanael • of Cana in Galilee, • the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his **disciples** were together.

Definite Article, nominative

disciple (3), disciples (51)

- Matt 5:1 Seeing • the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his **disciples** came to him.
- Matt 8:23 And when he got into the boat, his **disciples** followed him.
- Matt 9:14 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, • but your **disciples** do not fast?”
- Matt 9:19 And Jesus rose and followed him, with his **disciples**.
- Matt 12:1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. • His **disciples** were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.
- Matt 12:2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, “Look, your **disciples** are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.”
- Matt 13:36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his **disciples** came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.”
- Matt 14:12 And his **disciples** came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus.
- Matt 15:2 “Why do your **disciples** break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when • they eat.”
- Matt 15:23 But he did not answer her a word. And his **disciples** came and begged him, saying, “Send her away, for she is crying out after us.”
- Matt 24:1 • Jesus left • the temple and was going away, when his **disciples** came to point out to him the buildings of the temple.
- Matt 27:64 Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his **disciples** go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.”
- Matt 28:13 and said, “Tell people, ‘ His **disciples** came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’”
- Mark 2:18 (3) Now John’s **disciples** and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came and said to him, “Why do John’s **disciples** and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your **disciples** do not fast?”
- Mark 2:23 • One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his **disciples** began to pluck heads of grain.
- Mark 5:31 And his **disciples** said to him, “You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’”

- Mark 6:1 • He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his **disciples** followed him.
- Mark 6:35 And when it grew late, his **disciples** came to him and said, “ This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late.
- Mark 7:5 And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your **disciples** not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat • • with defiled hands?”
- Mark 7:17 And when he had entered • the house and left the people, his **disciples** asked him about the parable.
- Mark 8:4 And his **disciples** answered him, “ How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?”
- Mark 8:27 And Jesus went on with his **disciples** to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, • • “Who do people say that I am?”
- Mark 9:28 And when he had entered • the house, his **disciples** asked him privately, “ Why could we not cast it out?”
- Mark 11:14 And • he said to it, “May no one ever * eat fruit from you again.” * And his **disciples** heard it.
- Mark 14:12 And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his **disciples** said to him, “Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?”
- Luke 6:1 • On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, • his **disciples** plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands.
- Luke 7:11 • Soon afterward • • • he went to a town called Nain, and his **disciples** and a great crowd went with him.
- Luke 8:9 And when his **disciples** asked him what this parable meant,
- Luke 8:22 • One day • he got into a boat with his **disciples**, and he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side of the lake.” So they set out,
- John 2:2 • Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his **disciples**.
- John 2:11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his **disciples** believed in him.
- John 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his **disciples**, and they stayed there for a few days.
- John 2:17 His **disciples** remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”
- John 2:22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his **disciples** remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.
- John 3:22 After this Jesus and his **disciples** went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing.
- John 4:2 (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his **disciples**),
- John 4:8 (For his **disciples** had gone away into the city to buy food.)

- John 4:27 • Just then his **disciples** came back. • They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?”
- John 6:16 • When evening came, his **disciples** went down to the sea,
John 6:22 On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been • • only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered • the boat with his disciples, but that his **disciples** had gone away alone.
- John 6:24 So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his **disciples**, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.
- John 6:61 But Jesus, knowing in himself that his **disciples** were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this?”
- John 7:3 So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your **disciples** also may see the works • you are doing.
- John 9:2 And his **disciples** asked him, • “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”
- John 12:16 His **disciples** did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and • had been done to him.
- John 16:29 His **disciples** said, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech!
- John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, • which he and his **disciples** entered.
- John 18:15 • Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that **disciple** was known to the high priest, • he entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest,
- John 20:26 • Eight • days later, his **disciples** were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.”
- John 21:7 That **disciple** whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” • When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea.
- John 21:23 So • the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this **disciple** was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?”
- Acts 9:25 but his **disciples** took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

συμμαθητής (1)
Noun, dative

disciples

John 11:16 So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow **disciples**, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

APPENDIX B

TRADITIONAL AND EMERGING CULTURE
LEADERSHIP SKILLS

In a discussion concerning the decline in the vitality of some traditional churches in the emerging culture as related to the skills of leadership Bill Easum says, “One of the reasons is because the skill set has changed dramatically over the years.”¹ Here is my comparison:

Traditional Skills	Emerging Skills
Expository Preaching	Motivational Story Telling
European Theology	Apostolic Faith
Confirmation Class Teaching	Core Leadership Coaching
Congregational Programming	Culture of Equipping
Institutional Administration	De-centralized Administration
Strategic Planning	Ministry Mapping
Hierarchical Accountability	Congregational Identity Building
Committee Development	Mission Team Development
Sacramental Uniformity	Discernment of Spirit in Culture

¹ William M. Easum, email message to the author, 20 December 2006.

Traditional Skills	Emerging Skills
Ability to Use 16 th Century Technology	Comfortable with Constantly Updateable Technologies
One-to-one Ministry	Multiplication of Ministry
Large Group Management	Multiplication of Groups
Teaching	Mentoring
Property management	Community Development
Ecumenical Cooperation	City Reaching Movements
Professional Development	Faith Models
Evangelism Programs	Lifestyle Evangelism
Membership Assimilation	Gifts Discernment

APPENDIX C

CHURCH TRANSFORMATION AND DISCIPLESHIP
THROUGH SMALL GROUPS

A conversation with Phillip Longmire resulted in this description of a way of structuring a church organization to expedite the process of discipleship using small groups as the vehicle for transformation: “This is the process we use to move people from the streets to our groups. . . . They are all connected and don’t work in solos. . . . One division can not survive without the other.”¹ The following notes are from Phillip Longmire.

Clarification

- We are UMC in Texas.
- We have only one purpose: to move people from the streets to discipleship.
- Our method of discipleship is through small groups.

We define disciples as people working on these areas:

- Intimacy: My relationship with God
- Involvement: The church/body of Christ
- Inviting: The lost and hurting

Our core values are:

- Worship
- Reach more people through multiplication
- Build disciples and leaders through small groups
- Serve according to our gifts
- Participate in authentic community

¹ Phillip Longmire, email message to the author, 28 December 2006.

In order to make this reality:

- We divided the adult ministry into eight Ministry Divisions.
- Five of these divisions are our assimilation process, and the other three strictly support the process.

The five ministry divisions are all connected . . . and either feed the next step in the process or support the process.

Ministry divisions are:

- Outreach: Local/Global
- Sunday Morning
- Connection points
- Discipleship

These are our steps of assimilation. . . . All four are connected . . . and can't work without the other.

Short Description of Divisions

Outreach/Missions: This is broken down into two separate Ministry divisions: local and global.

Local outreach:

Goals:

- Move people from the street to a weekend service
- Provide opportunities for people at Parkway to serve
- Build bridges from the church to the community

Global outreach:

Goals:

- To provide ways for Grow Groups to get involved in global mission either in taking a mission trip or adopting a people group
- To ensure we don't only focus on our community but that we have a global impact
- To expand the kingdom of God by developing long term mission opportunities
- To take care of the missionaries we support around the globe
- To remind Parkway people of the needs we have in this department

Outreach moves people from the streets to our weekend service . . . keep in mind we don't believe it is an incarnation or attractional . . . we incorporate both.

We measure the success of our outreach by:

1. How many servants we had (we do not use the phrase volunteer)
2. How many non-Parkway people attend the outreach . . . or how many it served
3. How many came to a weekend service, which we are still fleshing out on how to measure

Sunday Morning

I am strictly speaking of the Ushers, greeters, tear and set up teams, Hospitality, information table . . . not the other elements of the worship.

The whole Sunday morning is to have great worship and move guest from the pews to connection points.

Goals:

- To remove any barriers people may have when they arrive on Sunday Morning so they will be more receptive to hear the gospel. We do that making sure guest know where to take their kids, receive the right information about the morning, know what building to go to, and see people who truly care that they are there
- To provide a place of worship for those we reach out to
- A place that we can invite people to in order to hear the gospel
- To move people from the pews to our connection points

Connection Point

The connection Point ministry is the method we use to move people from Sunday morning worship into small groups. This is the first step of someone moving from being a casual attendee to a place of discipleship. At parkway our discipleship happens in small groups. Parkway believes Grow groups are the most effective way people can live out their lives for Christ.

We do two events:

1. Parkway Connection—a casual gathering of new guests
2. Discovering Parkway—our membership class

We do not allow anyone to become a member until they prove to us that they are in a Grow Group . . . even if they attend the class.

The connection point division is the link that ties our Sunday Morning to our small groups.

Goals:

- Provide opportunities for guest to meet the staff
- Allow people to know more about parkway
- Give an opportunity for people to become more committed to Parkway in the way of membership
- To move people from weekend service into Grow groups

Grow Groups

Everything we do at Parkway is geared to move people into these groups. We believe it is in Grow groups that we fulfill what it means to be a disciple.

Intimacy: My relationship with God

Involvement: The church/body of Christ

Inviting: The lost and hurting

It is also our goal to use Grow groups as a place to grow future leaders.

Grow Groups allow Parkway people to:

- Experience worship
- Reach more people through multiplication
- Build disciples and leaders
- Serve according to our gifts
- Participate in authentic community

Supporting Divisions

Communication:

In this division is all our marketing. Our print, web design, and overall image for the church. This division will ensure that we are communicating not only to the church but also to the community. They will hold the system accountable in making sure the events and programs we launch are communicated the most effective way.

Administration:

With all these tasks come a lot of administration duties. Database management, Small group participation management, tracking new comers through the process, generating

reports, Connect Card info, Rally day administration, Internal communication, marketing communication, press releases, and details. This department needs to remain accessible to all the divisions.

Care:

Our care department provides care for those not plugged into groups . . . basically five different ministries operate out of this ministry.

Last Point

- We do not have men's ministry, women's ministry, or any other type of ministry. We hire only Ministry Division leaders . . . their sole purpose is to ensure we move people through the process.
- Every event or outreach is targeted towards a certain group and is designed to move them from where they are to where we want them to be . . . in a grow group.

The way we determine whether or not we do an event is to measure it by:

Who is the target?

1. Unchurched-those who really don't know we are here
2. Guest-first time visitors
3. Uninvolved-attendees but not plugged in
4. Active-the faithful servants
5. Leaders- Those that lead others

Does it move people from where they are to where we want them to be . . . in groups.

Sorry for the length . . . all this breaks down into smaller pieces . . . and each division leader meets with me once a month . . . I ensure they are holding true to overall DNA of Parkway.

All division leaders at this point are lay leaders. . . . but in the future will be paid staff.

But they have freedom in how they accomplish the goal.

APPENDIX D

THE ONE ANOTHER'S OF BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP¹

1. Be in agreement with one another.

Romans 12:10: Show family affection for one another with brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor. . . . 16: be in agreement with one another. Do not be proud; instead, associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

2. Pursue that which builds up one another.

Romans 14:13: Therefore, let us no longer criticize one another, but instead decide not to put a stumbling block or pitfall in your brother's way. . . . 19: so then, we must pursue what promotes peace and what builds up one another.

3. Accept one another.

Romans 15:5: Now, may the God of endurance and encouragement grant you agreement with one another, according to Christ Jesus. . . . 7: therefore accept one another, just as the Messiah also accepted you, to the glory of God. . . . 14: now, my brothers, I myself am convinced about you that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another.

4. Show courtesy to one another.

1 Corinthians 11:33: Therefore, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

5. Carry one another's burdens.

Galatians 6:2: Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

6. Tolerate one another.

Ephesians 4:2: with all humility and gentleness, with patience, excepting one another in love...

7. Forgive one another.

Ephesians 4:32: And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you.

¹ Mac Brunson and Ergun Caner, *Why Churches Die: Diagnosing Lethal Poisons in the Body of Christ* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2005), 2-4.

8. Submit to one another.

Ephesians 5:21: submitting to one another in the fear of Christ. 1 Peter 5:5: likewise, you younger men, be subject to the elders. And all of you clothe yourselves with humility towards one another, because God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

9. Admonish one another and wisdom.

Colossians 3:16: Let the message about the Messiah dwell richly among you, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, and singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God.

10. Comfort one another.

1 Thessalonians 4:9: About brotherly love: you don't need me to write you because you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. . . . 18: therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:11: Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing. . . . 15: See to it that no one repays evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good for one another and for all.

11. Promote love and good works in one another.

Hebrews 10:24: And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works.

12. Love one another.

1 Peter 1:22: by obedience to the truth, having purified yourselves for sincere love of the brothers, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

1 Peter 4:8-9: Above all, keep your love for one another at full strength, since love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining.

1 John 3:11: For this is the message you have heard from the beginning: we should love one another. . . . 23: Now this is His command: that we believe in the name of His son Jesus Christ, and to love one another as He commanded us.

1 John 4:7: Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. . . . 11: Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another. 12: No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God remains in us and His love is perfected in us.

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