

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Doctor of Ministry

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP OF LAY LEADERS IN THE GREATER UPPER NILE FIELD, SOUTH SUDAN

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Date completed: March 2025

There were very few trained and qualified pastors in the Greater Upper Nile Field (GUNF) who could effectively minister to the spiritual and pastoral needs of church members. As a result, the burden of leadership and care fell on lay leaders who lacked formal training in both pastoral responsibilities and discipleship ministry. This lack of preparation led to several challenges within the churches, including the passive involvement of members in evangelism, inadequate nurturing of new believers, and weak organizational leadership in local congregations. Consequently, the overall spiritual growth, vitality, and outreach effectiveness of the churches suffered.

In response to this need, this research project was designed to develop, implement, and evaluate a training program specifically tailored to equip lay leaders for effective discipleship ministry. The research employed a mixed-methods

approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Focus group interviews were conducted to assess the current situation and challenges faced by lay leaders, while questionnaires were used to evaluate the outcomes of the training program. The findings revealed that both lay leaders and church members in the Bentiu District of GUNF urgently needed structured training in discipleship to improve leadership capacity and enhance ministry effectiveness.

The training program was carried out for 29 selected lay leaders representing 10 churches in the Bentiu District. The curriculum of the training emphasized that discipleship is not only biblical and church-sanctioned, but also transformational, rational, relational, and inherently missional. The program provided the participants with essential skills and knowledge to lead effective discipleship efforts within their local churches. Upon completion, several of the trained leaders were able to replicate the program in their respective congregations, leading to increased engagement in evangelism, improved spiritual growth, and broader participation of youth and women in church life.

This study concludes that targeted training in discipleship has a significant positive impact on local church leadership and member engagement. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of expanding similar training efforts to other districts within the Greater Upper Nile Field. The findings underscore the strategic role that well-equipped lay leaders can play in advancing the mission of the church, particularly in regions where ordained pastors are scarce.

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A dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

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by

Mark Igga Mona Odolopre

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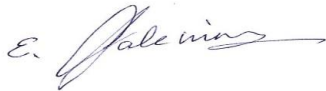


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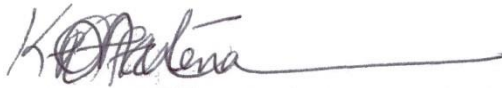


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This Research is dedicated to my late mother Yona Ayuyua and my beloved wife Alice Anduwa and my beloved children Daniel Opinile, Joel Drici, Amos Ayiga, Anna Forogo, Benjamin Achiga, and Jennifer Mundua for their patience and encouragement to me while studying at the Adventist University of Africa

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AD	Anno Domini (The Year of Our Lord).
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency.
AUA	Adventist University of Africa.
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement.
DMin	Doctor of Ministry.
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo.
GUNF	Greater Upper Nile Field.
KJV	King James Version.
NKJV	New King James Version
NT	New Testament.
OT	Old Testament.
<i>PK</i>	Prophets and Kings.
POC	Protection of Civilian Site.
SAWS	Seventh-day Adventist World Service.
SSAT	South Sudan Attached Territory.
SSUM	South Sudan Union Mission.
UK	United Kingdom.
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
USA	United States of America.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank God for sustaining me during my travels and study at the Adventist University of Africa (AUA) in Nairobi, Kenya. All glory and honor be to the Almighty. I also want to appreciate the support I received from my dear wife Alice and my dear children Daniel, Joel, Amos, Anna, Benjamin, and Jennifer. My sincere gratitude also goes to my professors who taught me at AUA for the Doctor of Ministry program. Prominent among them are Professor Samson Nwomah PhD, the former AUA Seminary Dean, Professor Kelvin Onongha DMin, PhD, the former AUA director for the DMin program; Professor Boabakar Sanou DMin, PhD, who taught, supported, and encouraged me in my studies; Professor Ēriks Galenieks PhD, who taught me some courses and advised me during the writing of my dissertation; Professor Nikosiyabo Zvandasara DMin, ThD, who read and advised me during the writing of my dissertation; Professor Risper Awuor PhD who encouraged me and showed the love of a caring mother; Professor Philmon Amanze PhD, who taught me several courses; Professor Jongimpi Papu DMin, PhD, former DMin Program Coordinator, who encouraged me in my writing; Professor Felix Poniatowski PhD, the current AUA Seminar Dean, and Coordinator of the DMin Program.

My heartfelt appreciation and thanks also go to the leaders of the South Sudan Union Mission (SSUM) who awarded me the scholarship that enabled me to study at AUA for the DMin Program. Prominent among these leaders are Dr. Clement Joseph Arkangelo Mawa DMin, SSUM President; Pastor Daniel Ogwok MA, SSUM Executive Secretary; and Elder Dani Harelimana MBA, former SSUM Treasurer.

Further Thanks and appreciation go to the leaders of Greater Upper Nile Field who allocated to me bursaries that contributed positively to my study program at AUA.

CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION

**Description of the Ministry Context**

The Greater Upper Nile Field (GUNF) was one of the three mission fields organized in the Republic of South Sudan in January 2012. It was situated in the northern part of the country covering two and a half states of South Sudan. It bordered the countries of Sudan to the north and Ethiopia to the east. The mission territory had a population of 2,388,238<sup>1</sup> people with a church membership of only 7,160<sup>2</sup> members.

The message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church reached the region of Greater Upper Nile in 1985 by individuals who brought the advent message from Ethiopia and the Equatoria region in the southern part of the country. Nasir, Maiwut, and Malakal were the first churches to be started by these missionaries.

One year after its organization, the Greater Upper Nile Field experienced the brutality of the civil war which started in South Sudan on December 15, 2013. The conflict negatively affected the mission of the church throughout its territory. First of all, it made the two missionaries who were serving in the field as president and treasurer leave the country. Secondly, the war dispersed all the church members in the mission to move away from their original churches with some moving to other

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<sup>1</sup> South Sudan Nation Bureau of Statistics, South Sudan National Census, 2008

<sup>2</sup> Greater Upper Nile Field of Seventh-day Adventist Church, Executive Secretary's Statistical Report, June 2018.

locations within the country while the others become refugees in the neighboring countries. Thirdly, the war caused the destruction of the headquarters of the field in Malakal resulting in the relocation of the headquarters to Juba in the Greater Equatoria region.

Since its inception, the Greater Upper Nile Field had never had enough pastoral staff to run the mission of the church smoothly, hence resulting in leaders such as elders and Global Mission pioneers getting involved in taking care of churches and companies within the field. The Field currently had three ordained ministers and three licensed ministers to take care of the 7,160 members within the eight organized churches and thirty-eight companies.<sup>3</sup> This was because there were not enough pastors who were educated and trained to take care of the church members in the Field.

The Greater Upper Nile Field was still a mission territory with less than one percent of its population having heard of the Seventh-day Adventists' gospel message. Although the Global Mission department of the General Conference was supporting twenty-one projects in the territory, the work of spreading the gospel was still enormously gigantic. This called for the total involvement of every church member to help make a difference in the mission of the church in the field territory.

The researcher of the current study started serving in this field in the year 2005 in various capacities as a district pastor, departmental director, acting mission president, and then, as a mission president. He passed through various challenges and situations thus gaining numberless experiences that had helped him not only to

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<sup>3</sup> Greater Upper Nile Field Executive Secretary's Statistical Report, June 2018.

understand the setting of the mission field, but also to identify problems facing the Mission Field.

A mission analysis revealed that only a few tribes in the Greater Upper Nile region have accepted the Adventist message. Out of the seven tribes in the region, only three of them have a reasonable number of Adventists in their midst. More than seventy percent of the Seventh-day Adventist church members in Greater Upper Nile Field come from the Nuer tribe, one of the largest tribes in the region.

The fact that a few pastors are ministering in the Greater Upper Nile Field has forced lay leaders to shoulder most of the responsibilities of caring for church members and companies in the Field. Some of the challenges that the ministry of these lay leaders faced include a lack of sufficient education and training in leading churches and discipling church members.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There were very few trained pastors in the Greater Upper Nile Field to effectively minister to church members. As a result, most of the responsibilities for caring for and nurturing the congregation had fallen on lay leaders who lack sufficient training in pastoral and discipleship ministries. This had led to several challenges, including passive involvement of church members in witnessing and outreach, a lack of motivation to nurture new members, poor organization of church activities, and more. To enhance the effectiveness of church ministry, the need for a specialized program to train lay leaders was evident.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this research was to develop, implement, and evaluate effective training protocols that focused on the discipleship of lay leaders.

## **Research Questions**

The current research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What were the biblical principles of discipleship that can be applied to training the lay leaders in the Greater Upper Nile Field?
2. What were the current practices for nurturing church members in the Greater Upper Nile Field?
3. What strategies could be implemented to equip lay leaders in the Greater Upper Nile Field for effective discipleship?
4. How could we mobilize the church members of Greater Upper Nile Field, especially the church members in Bentiu district, for effective outreach and witnessing programs?

## **Justification for the Dissertation**

Undeniably, local lay leaders played an important role in caring for many church members in the Greater Upper Nile Field. According to the local lay leaders, they carried more than three-quarters of local church leadership responsibilities, thus, it was obvious that there was a great need for a protocol that would train them in basic elements and skills for effective discipleship, and one that would greatly improve lay leaders' practical effectiveness in caring for the church members in the Greater Upper Nile Field. Moreover, gaining new experience and training would make them become trainers of other church members in discipleship and mentored some of them to become future leaders for the churches within the Field territory and beyond.

## **Delimitation**

Although there were five districts in the Greater Upper Nile Field where lay leaders were mostly involved in leading churches and companies, this research

focused only on the Bentiu District because this was where the majority of the churches were led by lay members. Also, though there were many lay leaders in the Bentiu district, the research would only study the twenty-nine lay leaders who were willing to participate in the study.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of this study included the inability to use random sampling techniques because random sampling requires that each member of the population should have an equal chance of being selected or selected at regular intervals. To mitigate this, the study opted to use a purposive sampling strategy for constituting the focus groups and a convenient sampling strategy for selecting the lay leaders that participated in the training conducted by the researcher. The researcher had to work with the churches in the towns of Bentiu and Robkona due to insecurity and financial limitations for accessing the churches outside these two main towns of the district. Also due to insecurity in some parts of the district, only ten lay leaders out of the twenty-five participated in the training of the ten churches following their training by the researcher because these ten churches had relative peace in their areas.

### **Description of the Dissertation**

In this project, the researcher began by focusing on the biblical concept of discipleship and lay leadership as found in both the Old and New Testaments. This area was studied and the meaning of the major concepts analyzed with how Jesus made disciples and trained them was a major area of discussion. The dissertation also dealt with the question of how lay people were involved in leading churches during the apostolic time and during the New Testament times in general.

The next section of this research focused on the literature that dealt with discipleship and lay leadership. The topics and key concepts were analyzed with regard to their content on the subject.

The study employed a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods of research using a questionnaire and questions for focus group discussions for lay leaders in Bentiu District of Greater Upper Nile Field. The findings from the survey were analyzed and interpreted. After the survey and analysis were completed, a training program on discipleship was developed in readiness for practical training of the lay leaders of the Greater Upper Nile Field. The concrete outcomes of the participation of lay leaders in the discipleship process and the participation of church members in witnessing as a result of this program were evaluated.

### **Expectation**

To begin with, the researcher's expectation (following the development, implementation, and evaluation of the research work) was to see qualified lay leaders in the Greater Upper Nile Field, who were well-trained and equipped to carry out the work of discipleship for church members in the field.

The other expectation was on the practical dimension of the lay leaders who should start the work of training people in discipleship in their local churches; thus, their effort will be blessed by the increase in church membership and increase of lay members who would assume full responsibility as leaders in their local churches. Furthermore, it was hoped that there would be spiritual growth and maturity of the church members in their understanding of the work of the church in spreading the gospel in their mission territory.

Finally, as the result of this project, the researcher expected to learn many new lessons on discipleship, lay leadership development and empowerment skills, and better ways of conducting research through qualitative and quantitative methods.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON DISCIPLESHIP

#### **The Concepts of Discipleship in the Old Testament**

The word “disciple” or “discipleship” was not found in the Old Testament (OT) but the concept was found in various contexts. A disciple was defined as “a follower or a student of a teacher, leader, or a philosopher.”<sup>1</sup> It could also be said to be someone who had accepted to help in spreading the teaching of another person<sup>2</sup> “A follower of a doctrine of a teacher or school of thought.”<sup>3</sup> This concept was seen in the lives of Moses and Joshua, Naomi and Ruth, Elijah and Elisha, and Elisha and the school of the prophets. This section of the chapter examined the interactions between the individuals listed above and how these relationships revealed and constituted the concept of discipleship in the Old Testament time.

#### **Moses and Joshua**

The relationship between Moses and Joshua was that of a leader and a follower. Moses was the leader of Israel while Joshua was his faithful follower who accompanied him on several occasions. One of those occasions was when Moses was going to meet with God on Mount Sinai and Joshua was with him during the six days of preparation. Robert Leo Odom rightly described Moses’ journey with Joshua on

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<sup>1</sup> *New Oxford American Dictionary* found in Apple computer

<sup>2</sup> *Merriam Webster’s Deluxe Dictionary*, 10<sup>th</sup> Collegiate ed. (1998), s.v. “Disciple.”

<sup>3</sup> *Collins Dictionary*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (2008), s.v. “Disciple.”

Mount Sinai when he stated, “As minister of Moses, Joshua accompanied him and other Israeli leaders when they went up on Mount Sinai for the ratification of the covenant made by God with Israel soon after he spoke the Ten Commandments.”<sup>4</sup> Ellen G White acknowledged this visit and said that it involved preparation for six days, eating Manna, and drinking from a brook.<sup>5</sup>

Joshua participated with Moses in the wars against the enemies of Israel including the war with the Amalekites. Robert Leo Odom described Joshua’s participation in this war pointing out that, “Joshua the son of Nun is first mentioned in (Exodus 17:9-13), where he is reported to have been a loyal aide to Moses in directing the Israelites forces in repulsing the vicious attack by the Amalekites a few weeks after Israel had left Egypt.”<sup>6</sup>

Joshua was a loyal associate of Moses. Hence, Moses appointed him as his successor when his leadership was coming to an end. This transfer of leadership took place when Moses ordained Joshua and gave him a charge in front of all people.<sup>7</sup>

The fact that Joshua assumed the responsibility as the leader of Israel after Moses indicated that he had truly been a disciple of Moses. Disciples usually assumed responsibility for leadership when their teacher was not available to carry that duty. Since they had been prepared for such a change, they were not frightened by it. Describing how change might affect a disciple’s life, John Chittister said that

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Leo Odom, *Israel’s Angel Extraordinary* (Bronx, NY, Israelite Heritage Institute, 1985), 75.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), 313.

<sup>6</sup> Odom, *Israel’s Angel Extraordinary*, 75.

<sup>7</sup> White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 463.

though change would bring fear to us, it would also bring freedom to us. Furthermore, it would usher us into a new beginning as well as into a new birth.<sup>8</sup>

Courage was one of the attributes of a disciple, something that Joshua displayed in his life after spying on the land of Canaan. Commenting on the courage of Joshua and Caleb, Joseph Telushkin said that Joshua and Caleb did not accept the majority report. They encouraged the Israelite Community to move forward.<sup>9</sup>

A disciple should be a person of wisdom, ability, and faith. These were the character traits that Joshua exhibited, and that's why he was chosen to succeed Moses as the leader of Israel. As Ellen White clarified, Joshua's long service with Moses, and his wisdom, ability, and faith made him chosen to succeed Moses<sup>10</sup> Robert Leo Odom concurred with Ellen White when he added, "Shortly before the death of Moses, Joshua was formally installed by the laying on of hands in obedience to God's command, to be the successor of Moses as a leader of the nation of Israel (Numbers 27:18 – 33)"<sup>11</sup>

Joshua was an aide or minister of Moses and had a noble character and unselfish spirit. He was a man of prayer, and the Holy Spirit inspired his prayers. Ellen White described Joshua's prayer life by stating that Joshua was a person who loved prayer and his prayer was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Joshua knew that success

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<sup>8</sup> John Chittister, *The Story of Ruth: Twelve Moments in Every Woman's Life* (Grand Rapids, MI, William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 10.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy: The most Important things to know about Jewish Religion, Its People, and Its History* (New York, NY, William Morrow and Company, Inc., 2001), 30.

<sup>10</sup> White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 462.

<sup>11</sup> Odom, *Israel's Angel Extraordinary*, 75.

could come only if a man united his effort with that of the divine. His life showed that people of prayer were people of Power.<sup>12</sup>

Joshua had all the basic qualifications of a leader for he followed God wholeheartedly. He was neither corrupt nor was he mindful of self-interest. He discharged his duties faithfully especially when he was sent as one of the spies to explore the land of Canaan. He was truly a disciple of excellent character and that qualified him to be a leader of Israel “after the death of Moses”.<sup>13</sup>

### **Naomi and Ruth**

The relationship between Naomi and Ruth was another example of discipleship in the Old Testament (Ruth 1-4). Though Naomi was the mother-in-law of Ruth, Ruth was ready to obey her as a disciple would obey his master. The critical point in this relationship was when Ruth decided to follow Naomi in all things including the worship of her God.

Love was a symbol of true discipleship (John 14:15) and we see Ruth’s love for Naomi showing that she was a true disciple who obeyed her mistress through love. She had a noble character that was full of determination to follow the God of Israel. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary enlightened on Ruth’s character when it stated that, Ruth’s character was noble. Despite the urging of Naomi and Orpah’s departure, she remained faithful to Naomi.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 509.

<sup>13</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 4:156.

<sup>14</sup> “The Lord Do so to Me” [Ruth 1:17], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, rev. ed. ed. Francis D. Nichol (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), 2:432.

The transforming power of divine love as it was seen in the life of Naomi and her family was the reason that made Ruth determined to follow Naomi and her God. Naomi's love for Ruth showed the power of God's love that changed humanity from being sinners to saints. Without such love, all our professions would be meaningless (1 Cor. 13:1).<sup>15</sup>

A disciple worshipped the true God (Matt 22:37) as it was in the case of Ruth. She was determined to worship the true God of Israel instead of the idols of the Moabites. As Ellen White explained, all who turn from the worship of idols to the worship of true God like Rahab who was from Canaanite, and Ruth who was from Moabite will be accepted among God's holy people.<sup>16</sup>

Generally, a disciple grew in spirituality and relationship with God and the master. This was the case of Ruth, the Moabite woman, who became the daughter-in-law of Naomi. John Chittister explained that; "Ruth has changed her mind about what it means to be a woman in the world, about what it means to be spiritual, about what it means to have a relationship with God. ... She has developed for herself a set of ideas upon which she intends to stand. ... She has become a spiritual adult."<sup>17</sup>

Ruth's life was transformed when she joined Naomi in the worship of the true God. This transformation was needed for everyone who chose to become a disciple, especially women who had passed through a situation like that of Ruth. In this matter, John Chittister's advice for women was worth noting. He stated that the example of

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<sup>15</sup> "The Lord Do so to Me" [Ruth 1:17], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, rev. ed. ed. Francis D. Nichol (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), 2:432.

<sup>16</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christ Object Lessons* (Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), 290.

<sup>17</sup> Chittister, *The Story of Ruth: Twelve Moments in Every Woman's Life*, 26.

Ruth was an invitation to women of the world to join godly life and be transformed. Such spirituality, where women were transformed, would bring the fullness of God into their lives.<sup>18</sup>

### **Elijah and Elisha**

The way how Elijah and Elisha were related was that of a student and a teacher since Elisha was learning from Elijah. In other words, Elisha was the disciple of Elijah. In 1 Kings 19:19-21, the Bible recorded the story of Elisha and Elijah. Elisha was a farmer plowing with his oxen when Elijah met him and cast his mantle on him. He immediately left everything and followed Elijah and ministered unto him. He understood his call clearly and was committed to paying the price, as Michael Njaji Mbui explained, “Elisha clearly understood the commitment and the price it required. He slaughtered a yoke of oxen and used the wooden yoke to cook the meat, which he gave to the people, and followed Elijah to become his servant. This was to signify he wouldn’t be turning back from his decision.”<sup>19</sup>

Elisha was a man who courageously followed his master looking unto God alone. However, he realized that his courage could only work through the power of God. Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary recognized this fact by stating that no one was courageous enough to face a difficult situation without depending or trusting completely in God.<sup>20</sup>

The character of Elisha was that of meekness, obedience, simplicity, and integrity. These character traits attracted Elijah to him and thus he invited Elisha to

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<sup>18</sup> Chittister, *The Story of Ruth: Twelve Moments in Every Woman’s Life*, 27.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Njaji Mbui, *Making Discipleship Simple: Becoming a Disciple of Christ* (Grantham, UK, Autumn House Publications Ltd, 2013), 31.

<sup>20</sup> Nichol, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 2:1035.

become his follower or disciple. Elisha took this advantage very seriously and forsook all to follow his master, Elijah. The character Elisha possessed was a result of his parents' effort to bring him up in the simple environment of a farmer. He was a man of integrity and fidelity as well as that of meekness and quiet spirit. He also had a character of leadership and service.<sup>21</sup>

One of the greatest lessons that Elisha learned was that in order to lead, one should serve first. He not only accepted Elijah's invitation to follow him but also to become the servant of Elijah. As the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary stated he learned service first before learning leadership, instruction, and giving of order.<sup>22</sup>

A disciple cooperated with God in executing his duties. This was one of the lessons that Elisha learned as a follower of Elijah, hence he did his work with obedience and contentment. Elisha trusted in God and he was obedient to His commands. He was also obedient to his father and cooperated with him in the work at home. This helped him to learn how to cooperate with God in rendering service to Him.<sup>23</sup>

The influence of Elijah on Elisha was positive and he linked himself with the Holy Spirit, something that brought him success in his ministry. This success did not come through his effort alone. It came as the result of his commitment to the Lord under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and his exercise of living faith in God.<sup>24</sup>

Elijah had trained Elisha in the way of the Lord. When Elijah was being translated to heaven on a chariot, Elisha could ask for nothing other than receiving

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<sup>21</sup> Nichol, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 2:1035.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Nichol, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 2:1036.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 1037.

twice the Spirit of Elijah. God gave him what he asked. He was able to get twice the spirit that Elijah had, which united with the Spirit of God to give him gentleness, mercy, and tender compassion.<sup>25</sup>

Elisha's work was the extension of what Elijah had started. Victor H. Matthews said Elijah did only one-third of the task and left the rest for Elisha. He explained in his own words that; "Elijah performs only the third task and leaves the first two for Elisha,"<sup>26</sup> upon whom he cast his mantle as his designated successor.

### **Elisha and the School of the Prophets**

The school of the prophets was established by Elijah at Jericho (2 Kings 2:1-8). This school continued to be under the supervision of Elisha after Elijah's departure to heaven. The sons of the prophets, as they were called, were disciples of Elijah, who later became Elisha's disciples. In 2 Kings 2:3, we read about the sons of the prophets who alerted Elisha about the departure of Elijah and this made Elisha not leave Elijah wherever he went until he was given a double portion of the spirit of Elijah.

The school of the prophets was for all the faithful children of God who were willing to join. Elijah and Elisha prepared many of the students to participate in the reform movement in Israel. Though the schools of the prophets decayed during Israel's apostasy, Elijah revived them.<sup>27</sup>

Jericho was a strategic location for travelers in the ancient Near East. As a result, Elijah established the school of prophets there so that it could be a center of

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<sup>25</sup> Nichol, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 2:1036

<sup>26</sup> Victor H. Matthews, *The Hebrew Prophets and their Social World: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic, 2012), 63.

<sup>27</sup> "Sons of the Prophet" [2 Kgs 2:3], *SDABC*, 2:850.

light for many travelers passing by. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary once again had given us more light on this when it stated that the school of prophets was established at Jericho because it was an important roadway for travelers across Jordan. The Oasis of Jericho was a stopping place for rest and refreshment.<sup>28</sup>

The ancient school of prophets was a model for us today concerning its simplicity and practical way of applying educational principles learned in classes. Before his ascension, Elijah was able to visit the school and teach the students about major subjects of their studies. He repeated the earlier lessons he gave them thus impressing them upon the minds of the students.<sup>29</sup>

### **Discipleship in the New Testament**

#### **Matthew 28:18-20**

Matthew 28:18-20 contained what Christians call the Great Commission. This text contained the command given by Jesus to His followers to go everywhere in the world and make disciples of all nations. Exegesis of the text helped us to understand more clearly how Jesus wanted us to participate in discipling all the world and how He would be with us to the end of the world. The text stated;

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All, authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen” (Matt 28:18-20, NKJV).

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<sup>28</sup> “Sons of the Prophet” [2 Kgs 2:3], *SDABC*, 2: 851.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 1036.

**The Historical and Literary Context.** Matthew 28:18-20 was written by Matthew, one of the disciples of Christ, before AD 70. It was written in Greek. It was part of the last instruction given by Jesus to His disciples. It took place in Galilee on the Mount of Olives when Jesus was about to ascend into heaven. The Romans were the ruling authority in Palestine, and the Pharisees and the Sadducees were the prominent religious sects in Israel. Greek culture was the dominant culture at that time.

**The Form, Structure, and Movement of the Text.** The genre of this text was that of narrative with an apocalyptic tone. Jesus assured His followers that His presence would attend them to the end of the age. The text was also a command to the disciples to teach all people of the world and baptize those who have accepted to become Christ's disciples. The text had threefold command of Christ: command to make disciples, command to baptize those who believe, and command to teach all who believe so that they could obey all God's commandments.

**Detailed Analysis of the Text.** "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth." Here Jesus was assuring His disciples about the authority He has. It was an absolute authority both in heaven and on earth. By this statement Christ wanted all His disciples to be well informed about who was sending them for the mission of God. God the Father gave Him this authority, and now Christ was also giving it to His disciples for doing the mission He had assigned for them. Donald D. Hagner commented on this authority when he said that Jesus' power after His resurrection remained the same though it had a new aspect in the history of salvation of humanity.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Donald D. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary* 33B (Nashville, TN, Thomas Nelson, 1995), 886.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations”. This was the first of the three commands Christ had given to His disciples in this text. The command was based on two active verbs “go” and “make”. The command was to go to the entire world and make disciples of all nations. Hagner once again given more light on this command when he said that the early church fulfilled Christ's commission to take the gospel to all the world.<sup>31</sup> Ellen White added that as Jesus gave the commission to His disciples, He gave them their work and message.<sup>32</sup>

“[B]aptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit”. This was the second command of the text. It had only one active verb “baptize”. The command was to baptize those who believed in Christ in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In other words, those who were baptized were placed under the authority of the triune God.

“[T]eaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you”. This third command had two active verbs, “to teach” and “to observe”. The first was directed to the disciples and the second was directed to those who will be baptized. Jesus wanted His disciples to be well-fed by the Word of God so that they would not be spiritually malnourished. They were to obey everything Christ commanded them, as Mbui explained, “According to Jesus, only by making the nations become His disciples would they be in a position to obey everything He commanded them.”<sup>33</sup>

“[L]o, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” This final statement of Christ was a promise. After giving His disciples the command to go and make

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<sup>31</sup> Donald D. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary* 33B (Nashville, TN, Thomas Nelson, 1995), 887.

<sup>32</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Washington, DC, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1964), 750.

<sup>33</sup> Mbui, *Making Discipleship Simple*, 8.

disciples, baptize those who believe, and teach them to observe all things He has commanded, He now assured them of His presence to the end of age. This assurance gave hope to the disciples and strengthened them during difficult times such as persecutions by the Jews and the Romans.

**Reflection on the Text.** As Jesus came and spoke to the disciples of old, He still came and speaks to us today. Today, Christ spoke to us through different ways such as the Holy Scriptures, the living preachers, and through the impressions of His Spirit. He still assured us of His authority that was given to Him by the Father. As Christ's mission on earth had not yet finished, He still sent us to go and make disciples of all nations. However, we cannot make disciples unless we were disciples, as Mbui explained, "But before you can make disciples, you first have to become a disciple yourself, as was the case with the first ones Christ called."<sup>34</sup> As we baptized those who believe in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Jesus promised to be with us up to the end of the world.

### **Other New Testament Examples of Discipling**

The major work of discipling was found in the New Testament. This section of the dissertation will examine how Jesus made disciples in the Gospels, and how Barnabas and Paul made disciples of John Mark, and Timothy respectively in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles.

**Jesus and His disciples.** Following His baptism in the river Jordan (Matt 3:13-17) in AD 27 and His temptation for forty days in the wilderness, Jesus started His ministry by attending a synagogue service in Nazareth where He read from the book of Prophet Isaiah (Luke 4:16-30). Here people began to appreciate Him when

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<sup>34</sup> Mbui, *Making Discipleship Simple*, 8.

He read from the book of Isaiah and explained its content to the congregation.

However, some of the worshipers in the synagogue opposed Him and wanted to harm Him but He escaped from their midst unharmed.

Another important event in Jesus' ministry was that of calling His first disciples. This took place at the sea where Peter and his colleagues went fishing (Luke 5:1-11). They toiled the whole night without catching anything. Early in the morning, Jesus arrived at the sea and with Him a great crowd. He asked permission to use Peter's boat to teach the people who followed Him. After dismissing the crowd, He counseled Peter to cast his net in the sea to catch fish. Though resisting, Peter told Jesus about their disappointment, how they had tried to catch fish for the whole night and had caught nothing, but then he agreed to try because Jesus said so. The result was of a great surprise to Peter and his colleagues because he had caught a great number of fish that he and his colleagues could hardly pull into the boat.

This great catch of fish brought a great change in the lives of Peter and his friends. Peter recognized the great catch of fish to be a miracle and that Jesus must be a prophet. He came and fell at Jesus' feet and began to confess his sin saying, leave me alone Lord, because I am a sinful person (Luke 5:8). Peter's partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also surprised at the catch of the fish. Jesus' words to Peter and his partners were, don't be afraid, from now on you would fish human beings (Luke 5:10). The Bible said that Peter and his partners landed their fishing boats, left everything they had, and went after Christ (v. 11). This was the background of how Peter and his partners became the first disciples to be called by Christ to follow Him. This call brought a great transformation in their lives, as Mbuyi explained,

“True discipleship was the cause of such radical transformation in the lives of all who followed Christ back then, and it remains the same today.”<sup>35</sup>

By calling the first disciples, Jesus began His special ministry for His disciples, the work of teaching and mentoring them for the future leadership and ministry of the work of the gospel after His departure. He also called Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael among the first disciples who followed Him. Andrew and Philip were John’s disciples before they joined Jesus as disciples. It was Philip who introduced Nathanael to Jesus (see John 1:44-51, KJV).

Jesus’ call of His disciples continued with the call of disciples such as Levi Matthew, who was a tax collector, and the call of the other disciples like Bartholomew, Thomas, James whose father was Alphaeus, Simon who was known as the zealot, Judas whose father was James, and Judas who was also known as the Iscariot and also became Jesus’ betrayer (Luke 6:14-16).

After calling His disciples, Jesus embarked on teaching them about the requirements and ethics of the kingdom of God. He also trained and mentored them concerning the work of the Kingdom. He exemplified purity of heart and meekness, the true meaning of hungering and thirsting for righteousness, peace-making, and mercy as some of the requirements or qualifications for the kingdom of God (Matt 5:3-12). He testified this in His own life, as Mbui explained, “The life of Christ gives the disciple the chance to understand and experience the kingdom of God here and now.”<sup>36</sup>

Jesus taught His disciples in various contexts and at various locations. For example, in the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew chapters 5 -7, He explained

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<sup>35</sup> Mbui, *Making Discipleship Simple*, 8.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

to them various meanings of the teachings of the law. He said that He had come to fulfill the law but not to break it. He taught that murder and adultery all begin in the heart and that marriage is sacred and binding to those who enter into it. He forbade the use of oaths and encouraged Christians to love their enemies and go a second mile when asked to go only one mile. The disciples were eager to learn and embrace the teachings of Christ. Mbui explained the importance of embracing Christ's teaching when he said, "Today, true disciples must embrace, cultivate, and develop the discipline of continual learning about their Master. It is this learning that reveals and brings about the life of Christ in His followers."<sup>37</sup>

Jesus' teachings to His disciples also covered the importance of prayer and fasting. He taught them the model prayer and how fasting should not be a showoff but should only be seen by God. He explained the importance of properly relating to wealth, emphasizing that we should lay up our treasures in heaven rather than on earth. He counseled His disciples to prioritize the service of God over that of riches and not worry about what to eat or drink because God would provide for those who put His kingdom first (Matt 6:33, 34).

Christ concluded His major teachings from the Sermon on the Mount by emphasizing the importance of not judging so that we would not also be judged. He said that before we point out the mistakes of others, we should examine ourselves first. He pointed out the importance of asking, seeking, and knocking as means of receiving what we desire others to do for us, saying, we should do to others what we wanted them to do to us (Matt 7:12). He also pointed out that the Christian life is not a matter of words but actions, saying that, "by their fruits you will know them" (v. 20).

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<sup>37</sup>Mbui, *Making Discipleship Simple*, 45.

He reminded us about the narrowness of the Christian way saying that only few will be able to go through it because it involved sacrifices and obedience to the will and commandments of God. He encouraged all His disciples to build on the rock of His word rather than on the sand of the tradition of men.

**Teaching through Parables.** Jesus also taught His disciples through parables. He gave them parables about agriculture (Matt 13:1-42), social life (Matt 25:1-13), and business-operation (Matt 13:44-46). Concerning teaching His disciples about natural things, Ellen White stated that, Christ's parables help to lead people from understanding things of nature in comparison to the spiritual things of God because they would act as “links of chains that unite man with God, and earth with heaven.”<sup>38</sup>

By presenting the parables on agriculture and nature, Jesus taught His disciples about the importance of planting God’s words into people’s hearts. The hearts of people represented the soil while the word of God represented the seed. People responded to the word of God differently just as seeds germinated differently according to the types of the soil. Some people would accept the word of God and would bear fruits unto eternal life, while others would reject it and would receive eternal condemnation. Jesus encouraged us to be like receptive soil so that we would receive eternal life. Mbuyi concurred with this and said that, “A disciple, upon receiving Christ, comes into immediate possession of eternal life, a life with no end.”<sup>39</sup> He further explained that eternal life is a gift from Christ to His disciples. His own words stated, “Eternal life is a gift to be claimed by His (Christ) disciples. It moves us from judgment and death into the life eternal that God has planned for us.

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<sup>38</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christ Object Lessons* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 17.

<sup>39</sup> Mbuyi, *Making Discipleship Simple*, 62.

Accepting the gift of eternal life sets the disciple free from the fear of death.

Alongside the gift of eternal life is also the gift of new status before God.”<sup>40</sup>

Jesus gave many parables on social life. One of these parables was the parable of Wise and Foolish Virgins found in Matthew 25:1-13. This parable focused on two different types of disciples represented by the virgins. The wise virgins represented true disciples who were always ready for Christ to come again. They were identified as those who studied the word of God, allowed the Holy Spirit to lead their lives, and witnessed their faith. The foolish virgins represented false disciples who were not serious about studying God’s words and allowing the Holy Spirit to fill their lives and did not witness their faith to others. As a result, they were not prepared to receive their Lord and were left out of the wedding feast. The lesson Jesus was teaching us through this parable was that we were to be prepared daily in our Christian Walk for we did not know the time for the second coming of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. The lack of preparation and being filled with the Holy Spirit would result in eternal loss. As Ellen G. White stated, our character would only change if the truth received in the heart was accompanied by the Holy Spirit.<sup>41</sup>

Jesus’ parables concerning the specifics of business life had also important lessons to teach for His disciples. In Matthew 13:44-46, Jesus gave two parables on business life. The first one was that of a hidden treasure found in the field. To acquire this field and the treasure hidden in it, a man had to sell everything he had to buy the field and acquire the treasure that would make him the richest person in the world. The second parable was that of a pearl of great price. For a man to own the pearl, he needed sell everything to buy it. In these two parables, Jesus was teaching His

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<sup>40</sup> Mbui, *Making Discipleship Simple*, 67.

<sup>41</sup> White, *Christ Object Lessons*, 408.

disciples the cost of the kingdom of God. It would cost us all that we have, including our lives, to own the kingdom of God just as Jesus paid for His own life in order to redeem us back to God. So, these two parables taught us, as His disciples, that there was a very high cost to pay to remain faithful disciples of Christ and obtain the eternal life He has prepared for us. As Mbui explained it, “Discipleship is costly, and anyone who is not ready to pay the true price cannot be the disciple that Christ intended. Jesus demonstrated this in His instructions to the rich ruler, as well as during conversations with His disciples on various occasions.”<sup>42</sup>

To meet the cost of discipleship, we must be committed to Christ. This commitment involves thoughts, words, and actions as Mbui further explained, “Being a disciple of Christ is a way of life for the total person. There is an inseparable connection between thoughts, feelings, and actions. What we think affects how we feel, which in many cases influences what things we do and how we do them.”<sup>43</sup>

**Teaching through Healing.** Jesus also taught His disciples through the healing ministry. He was with His disciples when He healed the woman who was bleeding for twelve years (Matt 9:18-26). He was with Peter, James, and John when He healed the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8:50-56). He was with His disciples when He raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:11-44). Through His healing ministry, Jesus was teaching different lessons on discipleship.

For example, in the healing of the twelve-year-old bleeding woman and that of Jairus' daughter, Jesus was teaching the lesson of faith and trust in God. He told to the woman, Cheer up! Because of your faith, you are healed. (Matt 9:22). To Jairus, when the news of the death of his daughter was brought to him, Jesus said to him

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<sup>42</sup> Mbui, *Making Discipleship Simple*, 30.

<sup>43</sup> Mbui, *Making Discipleship Simple*, 42.

“Only believe” (Luke 8:50). When He came to Lazarus' grave, Jesus said that He was the one who raised people and gave life to them (John 11:25). So, all of Jesus healing ministry was a way of teaching His disciples to trust God and obey Him if they want God to act on their behalf. As Mbui stated, “Discipleship is about trusting your life to God.”<sup>44</sup> It was a continual process of depending on Christ for everything a disciple might need. As Mbui further explained, “Discipleship is not a one-off event, but a ceaseless process that leads to Christ having His way in every area of the disciple’s life.”<sup>45</sup>

**Teaching by Examples.** Jesus also taught His disciples by using examples. He was present at the wedding in Cana (John 2) where He taught His disciples the importance of attending social occasions such as weddings. He also supported the wedding program by turning water into wine; thus, by His action, He showed the importance of contributing to supporting social events. Jesus also taught His disciples the importance of prayer by His example. The Bible said that He got up before sunrise and departed to a solitary place to pray. Since Jesus the Savior of the world prayed, we too needed to take prayer seriously. As Mbui stated, “Prayer is also central to a successful devotional life. It prepares the disciple to hear and respond to the Spirit as He reveals Christ through the words of the Scripture.”<sup>46</sup>

An important lesson that Jesus taught His disciples by example is that of visitation. Jesus was a good visitor. He visited the homes of Zacchaeus, Peter’s mother-in-law, and that of Lazarus and his sisters. Through these examples, Jesus showed us the importance of visitations for His disciples.

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<sup>44</sup> Mbui, *Making Discipleship Simple*, 42.

<sup>45</sup> Mbui, *Making Discipleship Simple*, 79.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

Jesus also taught humility to His disciples at the Lord's Supper (John 13). When supper was ready, none of the disciples were willing to humble themselves and wash the feet of others including that of Jesus Christ. So, Jesus got up, held a basin and a towel poured water in it, and began to wash the feet of His disciples. This action affected Peter to the extent that he refused to be washed by Jesus. But Jesus told him that if he refused to allow his feet to be washed by Him, he would cease to be one of His disciples. This made Peter surrender to Jesus' requirement and thus he allowed Jesus to wash his feet. Consequently, "A disciple of Christ is different from other disciples in the sense that he does not just learn from his Master and chooses what to take or leave. He learns, loves, and takes up the whole life of the Master."<sup>47</sup>

**Barnabas and John Mark.** The relationship between Barnabas and John Mark was that of a mentor and a student. John Mark's relationship with Barnabas, as far as the mission work of Christ was concerned, began during the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas. John Mark, a kinsman of Barnabas, accompanied Paul and Barnabas during this journey.<sup>48</sup> It was John Mark's proposal that led him to become part of the missionary team of Paul and Barnabas.<sup>49</sup>

Barnabas' sole mentoring of John Mark began during their plan to go on the second missionary journey. Having abandoned the apostles during the first missionary journey, Mark regained his zeal and wanted to rejoin the apostles in the second missionary journey, but Paul objected to this plan though Barnabas was in favor of it. This resulted in a sharp dispute between the two apostles and the resultant

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<sup>47</sup> Mbui, *Making Discipleship Simple*, 50.

<sup>48</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Acts of Apostles* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), 166.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

separation between them. Paul decided to take Silas and went to Syria and Cilicia but Barnabas went with John Mark as his companion to Cyprus (Acts 15:36-41).<sup>50</sup>

Mark's separation from Paul was a temporary one. After some years, Paul invited Mark to join him in the ministry again. According to Ken Wade, though Paul earlier lost respect for John Mark, Mark regained Paul's respect again. Hence, towards the close of Paul's life, the two people he most desired to see were his spiritual son, Timothy, and Mark<sup>51</sup>

Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary had given more light on Mark's labor with Paul in Rome. It said that "After working with Barnabas in Cyprus, Mark apparently returned to Peter, and was with him in Rome (1 Pet 5:13). It might have been in connection with this stay at Rome that Mark labored once more with Paul."<sup>52</sup>

Paul's years of separation from Mark did not mean that Mark was not serving the Lord. Instead, he was serving God differently. Wade's suggestion indicated that Mark continued to serve the Lord in his ways by ministering to his neighbors as well as making his effort of soul-winning far or near.<sup>53</sup>

Wade encouraged us to follow the examples of Paul and Mark when he said, "Whatever your mission, whatever adventure God is calling you to, go to it with the courage of Paul – or Mark – and see what the Lord can do through you."<sup>54</sup>

**Paul and Timothy.** The way Paul and Timothy related to each other was like between a teacher and a student. Timothy received the gospel message that changed

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>51</sup> Ken Wade, *Paul: A Spiritual Journey* (Nampa, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2011), 69.

<sup>52</sup> "Contention" [Acts 15:39], *SDABC*, 6: 317.

<sup>53</sup> Wade, *Paul: A Spiritual Journey*, 69.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

his life from Paul and Barnabas in the town of Lystra. He joined Paul's team during the second missionary journey and became one of the most important followers of the way.<sup>55</sup>

Paul took time to train Timothy in the work of the gospel ministry. In other words, he disciplined and mentored him in the work of the gospel before assigning him the responsibility of leadership. According to Ellen G. White, Timothy loved the gospel ministry. He was not afraid to suffer and be persecuted for the gospel work. "Hence the apostle gave him the work of gospel ministry."<sup>56</sup>

Timothy received the first impressions concerning God's work from his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice who were Jewesses, though Timothy's father was a Greek. These two godly women shaped his character through the word of God and encouraged him to accept God's call to the work of the ministry through the apostle Paul. The lessons of these godly women, who cooperated with God, kept Timothy protected from evils surrounding him.<sup>57</sup>

A disciple needed to be 'faithful, steadfast and true' and this was the character that Timothy exemplified in his life. This character trait attracted Paul and he decided to make Timothy his companion in the gospel ministry. According to Ellen White, Timothy was appointed to the ministry at a young age. But his early education had given him the ability to minister with Paul as his helper. Despite his young age, he was able to bear the responsibility with meekness.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> White, *The Acts of Apostles*, 166.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

Paul related to Timothy in a fatherly way. He treated him tenderly. He taught him about the scriptures and showed him how to labor for the lost. Mrs. White stated that Timothy's association with Paul and Silas helped to deepen his impression of sacred things and the seriousness of the gospel ministry.<sup>59</sup>

Timothy recognized the importance of Paul and regularly sought his advice and instructions. He was not an impulsive person, but always, calmly, inquired about the way of the Lord. The Holy Spirit effectively used Paul and molded him for the indwelling of the divine presence. Paul's good knowledge of the Scriptures and his godly life set him apart from other believers and made him influential among them.<sup>60</sup>

Through Paul's discipleship, Timothy became a minister and pastor of the church of Ephesus. Paul wrote him two letters where he further gives instructions to Timothy about being a good minister of Jesus Christ. He also warned him against false teachers who might infiltrate churches and lead some members away from the truth. In 1 Timothy chapter two, he gave guidelines for the churches with special emphasis on women's adornment. In chapter three, Paul gave instructions regarding qualifications for church leaders, elders, and deacons. He also gave instructions on conducting church services and dealing with believers in the church. These instructions were found in chapters four and five of the first letter. He concluded his first letter to Timothy by giving guidelines for godly living as well as godliness with contentment in chapter six. He encouraged believers to be contended with what they have and "fight a good fight of faith" (1 Tim 6:12).

Paul's second letter to Timothy started with greetings. Then he gave some advice to Timothy including some information about Paul's coworkers. In the second

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>60</sup> White, *The Acts of Apostles*, 205.

chapter of the letter, Paul exhorted Timothy to persevere in the work of the ministry then gave guidance to God's ministers urging Timothy to depart from the life of youth that was full of lust and obeyed what was right, faithful, lovely, and peaceful among believers (2 Tim 2:22, KJV). In chapter three, he warned Timothy about stressful times that were coming in the last days. He closed his letter in chapter four by outlining the duties of a minister by charging Timothy to convey the message of God to the people by rebuking them as well as instructing them in the doctrine with patience (2 Tim 4:2).

### **Ellen White's Perspective on Discipleship**

Ellen White shared many comments on discipleship. She had repeatedly pointed out that Christ's disciples worked hard in the church and the community. This section of the chapter examines how disciples positively influenced the church and community.

#### **Discipleship and the Church**

The role disciples played in the church was to reveal Christ in their lives through witnessing and teaching. As the Holy Spirit gave disciples various gifts such as apostleship, prophesy, pastoring, evangelizing, and teaching (Eph. 4:11), the disciples used these various gifts for witnessing to those within and without the church. They were to use powerful words that attract people to Christ so that those who did wrong may be saved through their faith in Christ who was merciful and forgiving.<sup>61</sup>

The gifts of the Spirit to the disciples were the main source of unity and edification in the church (Eph 4:12-13). As the church was trained and taught the

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<sup>61</sup> White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 28.

gospel message, the members of Christ's body grew in the faith and knowledge of Christ. This enabled them to stand for Christ and resist the temptations of the devil. Their teachings and life should be as simple as that of Christ. According to Mrs. White Christ's disciples were to preach simple messages like that of Christ so that their hearers would be impressed with the lessons of Christ.<sup>62</sup>

One of the disciples' roles in the church included reminding the believers about the soon return of Christ. They were to convey this message through their lives and words. As Ellen White stated, Christ's disciples were preachers of the truth that prepared people for Christ's second coming. Their message contained life eternal and the future of humanity depended on their acceptance or refusal of the message.<sup>63</sup>

The disciples encouraged Christian fellowship in the church. This fellowship helped God's people to come closer to one another and Christ. (Acts 4:36-42) told us that the disciples fellowshiped in the word of God as well as in breaking bread together in their homes. This kind of fellowship helped to cement their love for one another and their determination to witness Christ. It also helped them to become closer to one another with the realization that they had been allowed to associate closely with Jesus.<sup>64</sup>

### **Discipleship and the Community**

The work of disciples in the community was of vital importance. They proclaimed Christ's message in the community in which they lived and, like Peter and the apostles on the day of Pentecost, their influence could lead to the baptism of

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 28, 29.

<sup>63</sup> White, *The Acts of Apostles*, 352.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 37.

thousands of new believers into the kingdom of God. Their missionary charter was the gospel commission found in Matthew 20:18-20. According to Ellen White the great missionary order of Christ's kingdom was the gospel commission. His disciples should extend the invitation to everyone to come and enter the kingdom. They should go to the people with the message and earnestly invite them to come.<sup>65</sup> She further clarified the gospel commission by adding that Christ gave to the world the treasures of eternal life and the disciples were the executors of this will.<sup>66</sup>

The disciples were to break down the walls of separation in their community. They were to show to the world that in Christ, all people were equal, whether Jew or Greek, slave or free person, male or female. (Gal 3:28). The disciples were to carry messages of love and unity that break the wall of separation between nations.<sup>67</sup>

The work of the disciples was second to that of Christ. They were to go and witness in the name of Jesus just as Jesus came to this earth and witnessed in the name of the Father, proclaiming what they have seen and heard of Christ. The disciples were to work together with Christ for the salvation of humanity. Their responsibility was second to that of Christ.<sup>68</sup>

The work of preaching the gospel was not an easy one. It was a battle against the forces of evil and required faith to succeed. The disciples were to fight against all the forces of darkness that rule this world as well as against all spiritual wickedness that raised itself high (Ephesians 6:12). Jesus promised to go with the disciples when they went to fight against the forces of evil. His power would accompany them in this

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<sup>65</sup> White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 28

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>67</sup> White, *The Acts of Apostles*, 19.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

battle.<sup>69</sup>

Christ's followers could do many things in the community that could exalt the name of Christ. Like Dorcas of old in Joppa, they could carry out community services by helping the poor, widows, orphans, and the disabled by providing life's necessities to them. Such work of charity would make the gospel shine brighter in the community in which God had placed the disciples. The favors shown to the needy and the poor were considered by Christ as shown to Himself (Matt. 25:31-46). He had revealed to us our duty concerning the needy and the poor in different ways and He wanted us to implement it to the glory of His name.<sup>70</sup>

### **Models of Training Disciples**

Many models of discipleship training were portrayed in the Word of God and the history of the Christian church. This section dealt with discipleship training as described in the New Testament in the life of Christ and His disciples, in the book of Acts of the Apostles, and in the Pauline epistles. It also dealt with contemporary discipleship training in the church particularly in the Greater Upper Nile Field of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>70</sup> Ellen G. White, *Welfare Ministry* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), 23.

## New Testament Models

### Jesus and His Disciples

One of the ways of training disciples in the New Testament (NT) was that of Jesus and His disciples. This model began with the way Jesus chose His disciples and was indeed a unique way of choosing disciples. According to Hull Jesus made a wise choice in choosing His disciples because He chose men who were interested in religious things. They were not involved in the religious system of the time. Though they had much to leave, they were not to leave their religious upbringings.<sup>71</sup>

Jesus' call to discipleship was a call to mission and relationship. This mission was to take the gospel to all parts of the world (Matt 28:18-20). Jesus also wanted His disciples to have a good relationship with one another as they went on His mission. Hull added to this call to discipleship by claiming that we were called by Christ into discipleship for a similar reason. Jesus desired that we should have a relationship with Him and others we associate with. He desired to change us to fit the work that He has assign us to do.<sup>72</sup>

Jesus and His disciples practiced a discipleship model that was uniquely based on friendship and common respect. The disciples of Christ were not to take the role of a master or to raise disciples for themselves. They were to recognize Christ as their only Master and raised disciples for Him only.<sup>73</sup>

Discipleship relationship involved a two-way submission. Both the teacher and the disciple submitted to Christ and each other. Hull clarified this by saying that

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<sup>71</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 66.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

discipleship was like a two-way street because both the discipler and the disciple were the servants of Christ and benefit greatly from their relationship with Christ and with each other.<sup>74</sup>

Humility and submission were another aspect of discipleship that Jesus taught his disciples. His teachings indicated that in relating to others, we should show humility to one another. We should also submit to one another because it is the proof of our humility in the community in which we live. As I committed my life to Christ, I leaved my self-rule by the door and give room for others to assist me in my relationship to God.<sup>75</sup>

Jesus taught His disciples to obey. He said that obedience was a sign of expressing true love (John 14:15). It should be noted that Hull concurred with this point by stating that love was evidence of true obedience. It showed itself by benefiting others as we responded to their love. As Jesus loved us first, we show our love to Him by our obedience.<sup>76</sup>

Obedience helped us know Christ and our mission better. This happened only if we took the step to follow Jesus and learnt about Him and our work for Him. If we waited in one place thinking that we would get the full instruction for our journey, we would wait in vain. “That knowledge is found only en route.”<sup>77</sup>

Discipleship had two primary goals according to Hull. These goals involved imitating Christ and others who imitated Him. Imitating Christ required that we observed him constantly as He taught in various cities and villages. Imitating others

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<sup>74</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 70.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 124-125.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 125.

meant that we observed their lifestyles that corresponded with that of Christ and applied them in our lives.<sup>78</sup>

Jesus taught transformational discipleship and his disciples also practiced it. This brought a real change in the disciple-making process of a church. As Hull wrote, living the life of transformational discipleship required that we did not drift like immature converts but chose to live “a life of great meaning and fulfillment.”<sup>79</sup>

The foundation for transformational discipleship was a relationship of trust. This helped us to work out successfully the obstacles that hindered us from growing spiritually in Christ.<sup>80</sup> As Hull explained, transformational discipleship involved a relationship of trust to deal with barriers that held us back from spiritual growth.<sup>81</sup>

Success in discipleship or disciple-making required relational interdependence that resulted in the real growth of the community, emerging of teamwork, and the building of mutual trust and commitment. It involved developing a collective vision about the church and its mission. However, people had to play specific and individual roles if the mission is to succeed.<sup>82</sup> Davis further explained that, in the church, the relationship between individuals and the church should be clearly stated so that the church will function properly. “To grow, disciples must develop relational interdependence.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 115.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Charles A. Davis, *Making Disciples Across Cultures* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015), 77.

<sup>83</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 88.

Making disciples was a process. It was making others learn, follow, and love Jesus so that they could become part of Christ's family and increase their understanding of Christ and His family, the church. “How we do that is often a reflection of the cultural context in which we grow up.”<sup>84</sup> Davis stated that one who has learned to walk after Jesus and trust Him, joined others in their walk as disciples, and they became followers of Christ. As the number of people increased in the pilgrimage, they grew closer together to each other and still closer to the ultimate goal – the day when Christ and the Church were married together.<sup>85</sup>

Contemporary discipleship required courage like that of Martin Luther in which he put his life in danger by defending the truth by himself all alone. He was the model for disciples of today to follow.<sup>86</sup> Commenting on the courage of Martin Luther, Hull encouraged us to imitate Luther and Calvin by taking our stand and dedicating ourselves to Christ thus giving practical example for people to follow.<sup>87</sup>

Disciple-making involved several steps. The first of these steps was “introducing people to Christ.” The second step was that of building them up in their faith, and the third one was that of letting them go and harvest in the field. According to Hull, this way was called the three ways of making disciples: release them from Satan’s power, train them to work for God, and lead them to work in the harvest field.<sup>88</sup> We could only reproduce more disciples by making healthy disciples who reproduced themselves wherever they live. As new leaders were developed among

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<sup>84</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 112.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

them, they were then deployed to new areas for the mission work.<sup>89</sup> He concluded that Discipleship required the exercise of grace in our relationship to each other. As Hull explained, grace treated others better than they deserve. It overlooked the past and treated others with respect and concern.<sup>90</sup>

Discipleship involved transformed services or ministry. Those who had become Christ's disciples would minister to others in the spirit of Christ as He stated that His kingdom was not of this world. He came to serve others but not to be served. Those who wanted to be great should be servants of others. Since Jesus existed for others, his disciples should exist for others too. Their ministry should be for exalting humanity just as Jesus did.<sup>91</sup>

Jesus' model of discipleship training also included various areas of ministry such as preaching, exorcism of demons, healing diseases, ministry to the needy, and stewardship. On one occasion, He sent the twelve and gave them power to preach the gospel, heal the sick, exorcise devils, and even raise the dead (Matt 10:5-8). On other occasions, Christ Himself preached the gospel, cast out devils, and raised the dead but He did these things in the presence of His disciples to give them job training. Newton discussed Jesus' discipleship training model referring particularly to three areas;

Jesus assigned various areas of ministry to His disciples: preaching, exorcising demons, healing diseases, and ministry to the needy. He taught them how to handle money, receptivity, and rejection. The thorough debriefing after the ministries of the twelve and the seventy indicates that Jesus offered feedback in coaching His disciples for future ministry (Luke 9:10; 10:17-24). Three areas surfaced as a priority in Jesus' training of the twelve and seventy: relationships, proclamation, and focus.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 42.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>92</sup> Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 36-37.

## **Discipleship in the Book of Acts**

Several publications explained the work of discipleship as depicted in the book of Acts of the Apostles. One such book was written by David J. Williams where he explained how the term disciple was used in the book of Acts. According to him, the term disciple made “its first appearance in the book of Acts as a title for Christians”. This indicated that the followers of Jesus were the central part of the church and had a relationship with Christ that became the way Christ related with the church today.<sup>93</sup>

Williams also explained how some new disciples regarded themselves as Christians in the Book of Acts, though they did not fully understand the Christian faith. He indicated that some believers considered themselves Christ followers, though they had little understanding of the Christian faith. However, Paul placed his hand on them and considered them members of the ‘apostolic succession’.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, the disciples also spoke in tongues showing that heaven had recognized them as part of the apostolic church.

Aubrey Malphurs also discussed discipleship as depicted in the Acts of the Apostles. He stated how the disciples assumed primary leadership in the early church as apostles. He said that even though they were apostles, they were representatives of all the disciples of Christ. So, what Christ commanded to them, He commanded to all those who follow Him.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> David J. Williams, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series – Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1990), 116 – 117.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 330.

<sup>95</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Strategic Disciple Making: A Practical Tool for Successful Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 16.

Another author who concurred with Malphurs was Newton, who stated that the apostles were leaders who trained other workers in doing the Lord's work and strengthening Christian congregations. The disciples were filled with zeal to train leaders who would engage in the work of mission and that of making local churches strong. "Nurturing in the faith within the fellowship of the church prompted a missionary heart in the early church."<sup>96</sup>

Newton further explained that the church in Jerusalem became the center for training pastoral leaders who in turn went out into the world to establish new communities of disciples. He wrote that the Jerusalem church became prominent in the work of training the pastoral leaders who were later sent to the other nations to preach salvation through Jesus and establish congregations of new believers who also did the same thing.<sup>97</sup>

Philip the Evangelist was one of the disciples of Christ who established many Christian communities. Newton describes his ministry of gospel proclamation and establishing of new congregations from the practical viewpoint as working in new territory where he planted new congregations of believers that were able to instruct, baptize, and nurture the new believers.<sup>98</sup>

Following his conversion, Paul became a prominent disciples-maker and Christian leader. Newton described how Paul became a Christian leader and a missionary to the Gentiles. He wrote;

Ten to twelve years after Saul instigated persecution toward the Hellenistic Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, he found himself as a Christian leader in the Hellenistic community of Antioch, where the church would send him out with Barnabas to spread the gospel (Acts 13:1-4). His time between being a new

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<sup>96</sup> Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 43.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-48.

convert and a church leader was spent primarily in Syria and Cilicia (Gal. 1:21; 2:1), it helped to shape him for the missionary work he would enter into with as much fervor as he had earlier in persecuting the church. Paul would work from Antioch as his sending congregation to plant the gospel and Christian communities in predominantly Gentile regions.<sup>99</sup>

Newton further explained how Paul sought to form communities of disciples instead of seeking to change individuals like philosophers of his day; he said that Paul's priority was to establish congregations of believers that would keep the faith through the guidance of able leaders. His priority was that the pastors should keep on teaching, mentoring, and training the congregations in their belief system.<sup>100</sup>

Paul did not work alone in his ministry of forming communities of disciples and training leaders for the churches. He had companions such as Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy as it was written;

The intimate circle of Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy demonstrates a strong, early influence from their sending congregations. Certainly, Paul had a major bearing on each of these fellow workers, mentoring them in study, preaching, teaching, discipline, handling difficulty, suffering, and relationships in the church. Yet they were not church novices before entering into ministry with Paul. Each had been prepared for the challenges of taking the gospel to other people groups through the gospel-saturated atmosphere of their home churches. Paul's ministry to them complemented their earlier preparation by continued mentoring in ministry.<sup>101</sup>

Besides the major personalities in Acts such as Peter, Paul, and Barnabas, other gospel witnesses were also involved in the work of discipleship and church planting. However, these witnesses received their training at the feet of the apostles and other Christian mentors. Newton said that the knowledge of apostolic doctrine and elemental knowledge about the church was obtained by early gospel workers from mentors of Christian origin who knew about the "development of relationships,

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<sup>99</sup> Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 50.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-56.

and maintaining the integrity of the gospel and the church. The same essentials remain necessary for those preparing for the gospel ministry.”<sup>102</sup>

### **Discipleship in Pauline Epistles**

Paul’s epistles were mostly pastoral. However, these letters were Paul’s letters to his disciples whether as individuals or as communities. The individuals included Timothy and Titus while the communities or churches included Romans, Corinth, Ephesus, and Philippi. Paul wrote these letters to these individuals and churches as a way of building them up in their faith. In other words, he was strengthening them in their faith as disciples of Christ. Newton specifically focused on Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus by stating that; “Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus, . . . , provides the framework for understanding some details of how Paul mentored his young associates. Throughout his missionary labors, the apostle regularly worked with associates who shared in the ministry at different levels.”<sup>103</sup>

Paul’s method of discipleship training in his epistles was that of community rather than that of an individual in isolation. “Paul trained them concerning the community of Christ-followers, rather than in isolation. Their ministries would not be cloistered in monasteries but active in local congregations. Paul mentored them with the church in view.”<sup>104</sup>

Paul focused more on training leaders for the communities of disciples. He “taught and modeled multiplication of Christian leaders, since he not only urged Timothy and Titus to follow his example but also to set examples for others to

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<sup>102</sup> Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 61.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

follow.”<sup>105</sup> This is because he wanted, through training Timothy and Titus in exemplary Christian conduct and doctrine, to be able to counteract false doctrines that were spreading among the Christian communities at that time. Thus, “He mentored much more than doctrine; he modeled the way of life in Christ (1 Tim.4:16).”<sup>106</sup>

Paul trained Timothy as a Christian leader and Christ’s disciple through association with him by giving him assignments of overseeing “various congregations as Paul’s representative.”<sup>107</sup> It could be said that Paul gave Timothy on-the-job training that enabled him to become a strong and capable Christian leader. Paul’s confidence in Timothy helped Timothy through the difficult times he passed through. His debriefing talks were also instructive to Timothy.<sup>108</sup>

Another associate of Paul who received rich training from him was Titus. He most probably got converted from Antioch under the leadership of Paul. Newton writes about Paul’s association with Titus that, “Titus’s background and association with Paul clearly trained him to effectively pastor, plant and revitalize churches. It also presents a good picture of the varied hues found in mentoring.”<sup>109</sup>

Paul’s discipleship training, as found in his epistles, was geared towards a ‘healthy theological basis for all conduct in the church.’ As Newton observed “The Pastoral Epistles underscore this by joining instruction and exhortation to a doctrinal rationale.”<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 63.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 64-65.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 68.

Paul also taught his associates in ministry and discipleship, especially in the Pastoral Epistles, the importance of observing church order. As Ellis observed;

The church order in the Pastoral Epistles is in essential respects the same as that in the other Pauline letters. Ministry continues to depend upon the gifts of the Spirit and to emphasize function rather than office as such. Even the 'laying on of hands,' employed occasionally to signify a commission to ministry or the mediation of a spiritual gift, is probably not different from earlier Pauline practice.<sup>111</sup>

The importance of conducting oneself properly in corporate worship was one of the pastoral instructions Paul gave to his associates in ministry and discipleship. As Newton wrote;

Pastoral instruction for corporate worship addressed various facets of prayer (1Tim. 2:1-2), the universality of the gospel (1Tim.2:3-4), the solitary means of salvation through the mediator's ransom (1Tim.2:5-6), and details affecting men and women in corporate worship so that their behavior will not disrupt worship (1Tim.2:8-12). While Paul did not establish a formal liturgy for corporate worship, he did preclude issues that distracted from and disrupted the body's gathering to worship.<sup>112</sup>

### **Discipleship in Ellen G White's Writings**

Mrs. White wrote fairly widely on discipleship in her published works. She wrote on conditions and obvious evidence of discipleship. One of the first evidence of discipleship that she pointed out was that of love. She said that without love no one can be a good minister of God's church.<sup>113</sup>

Another essential qualification or evidence of discipleship that she pointed out was that of self-denial and carrying the cross of Christ. She stated that just as Jesus denied self for the salvation of mankind, all His followers should deny self for the

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<sup>111</sup> E. Earle Ellis, *Pauline Theology: Ministry and Society* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005), 102.

<sup>112</sup> Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 74.

<sup>113</sup> White, *The Desire of Ages*, 815.

work of the gospel. Jesus led the way of self-denial that He wanted His followers to follow.<sup>114</sup>

She also gave advice concerning how true disciples of Christ could excel in their work when compared to other Christian denominations. She said that we could only do that by following Christ's example of sacrifice and self-denial. She explained that we could only rise above the religious standard of this world through courage and independence. We needed to follow Christ in sacrifice and denying of self if we were to be recognized as true disciples of Christ.<sup>115</sup>

A profession of discipleship that does not lead to obedience was described by Ellen G White as presumption. According to her, faith in Christ that led to salvation should also lead to obedience.<sup>116</sup> She revealed that obeying what God commanded was the test or sign of discipleship.<sup>117</sup>

True disciples of Jesus would sacrifice just the way Jesus sacrificed for the salvation of humanity. He or she would be willing to follow the examples of Peter, John, and Matthew who left everything to follow Jesus. Regarding this condition of discipleship, Ellen White stated that one should give himself to Christ without reservation. He should leave everything like the early disciples and consecrated himself wholly for the service of God.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 3:388.

<sup>115</sup> White, *Testimonies to the Church*, 5:78.

<sup>116</sup> Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1955), 146.

<sup>117</sup> Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1977), 60.

<sup>118</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 393.

She had also given another evidence of discipleship which is unity. True disciples of Christ would be united in purpose and mission for the salvation of mankind. Mrs. White elaborated on this evidence of discipleship when she stated that we should be united without sacrificing one principle of truth. We should give evidence of our discipleship by loving one another.<sup>119</sup>

### **Gaps in Discipleship Training**

Discipleship training was mostly considered a religious program. It dealt with the spiritual relationship between Christ and His disciples and between disciples themselves and fellow human beings. However, Christ in His discipleship training used various examples of His training that we would consider non-spiritual subjects. These examples included agriculture (Mat 13:1-43), Mining (Ma 13:44), trading (Mat 13:45, 46), fishing (Mat 13:47-50), building (Mat 7:24-27), and law (Mat 5:17-19).

Another aspect of discipleship training that could also be considered as a non-religious program was that of the relationship between Israel and God. The Israelites could be considered as disciples of God when He led them from Egypt to the promised land of Canaan through Moses and Joshua. God did not only relate to them on a spiritual basis but he also taught them how to divide the land among the various tribes of Israel except the Levites whom He designated as priests and did not give them inheritance among their fellow Israelites (Joshua 1:1-7).

Thus, in contemporary discipleship training, the non-religious aspects should also be included and emphasized if disciples were to be well-equipped and well-rounded for the service of Christ. In other words, disciples should also be trained in non-religious skills, careers, and trades so that they could use them to support the

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<sup>119</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Story Patriarchs and Prophets as Illustrated in the Lives of Holy Men of Old* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1970), 520.

work of preaching the gospel in all areas of the work. Regarding how artists used their work in discipleship, Hull wrote that during the Middle Ages, artist such as Michelangelo used their paintings to assist worshipers in understanding God. One of his famous paintings was on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel from 1508 to 1512. “Although literacy was rising, less than half of the population could read, thus he knew his work at the Sistine Chapel would assist worshipers.”<sup>120</sup>

Another person who used his trade in promoting discipleship was Paul the apostle of Christ Jesus. Paul’s knowledge of the trade of tent-making helped him to provide for his physical needs while continuing with the work of disciple-making. In Acts 18:1-8, Paul met with Aquila and Priscilla who were also tentmakers. He was able to fit well with them because he was of the same trade as they were.

Other skills that were not frequently emphasized in the work of training disciples were that of music and drama. Biblical-based music and dramas could be important ways of disciple-making. Hull counseled us to use music and drama in our discipleship and make other disciples for Christ. He stated that the use of music and drama would inspire people and help them praise God. “May God give us the discipline to use all that we have for our discipleship and the making of other disciples.”<sup>121</sup>

### **Towards Effective Discipleship Training in Greater Upper Nile Field**

In order to have effective discipleship training in the Greater Upper Nile Field, various stakeholders of the church like the elders, the youth, the women, and the children needed to be involved. Each of these groups needed special training and

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<sup>120</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 91-92.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

mentoring in discipleship. Various models of discipleship training as portrayed in this chapter could be used to train them towards effective discipleship.

With regards to the elders, Paul's model of training Timothy and Titus could be used. They needed to be trained in church administration and sound doctrinal teaching for the new disciples in the church. Furthermore, they also needed to be trained by the pastors in conducting evangelism in the churches where new disciples could be added to the communities of disciples as Paul did with the church in Ephesus where he assigned Timothy as its pastor. Newton reminded us of how Paul trained leaders for the local churches;

For those serving in pastoral offices in the local church, ministry to the flock loomed large in Paul's understanding of pastoral work, not merely holding titles. Despite the distance and his difficult circumstances, his concern for details of the church's doctrine, polity, leadership, relationships, and varied pastoral duties shows the heart of what he communicated to his trainees. Ministry must touch all of life or else it will prove deficient in the pastoral office.<sup>122</sup>

As far as the training of the youth in Greater Upper Nile Field was concerned, elders and other youths who had received more training in leadership and discipleship might be used as mentors and trainers. For example, in Bentiu District of Greater Upper Nile Field, youths were trained and mentored in discipleship through mission trips in which a number of them were involved in the program of preaching and witnessing to the community. In these trips, both spiritual and leadership mentoring were involved. The necessity of this type of mentoring in discipleship and leadership was echoed by Renee Columbus when she stated that when we mentored people it brought transformation in their lives. There should be good relationships between

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<sup>122</sup> Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 77.

mentors and mentees so that the mentoring would result in “more committed, productive, and motivated individuals.”<sup>123</sup>

On the training and mentoring of women in discipleship and spiritual leadership in Bentiu District of Greater Upper Nile Field, elders, and other spiritually matured women might be used as trainers. Since women who were church members in Bentiu District had reached sixty percent, their training as disciples and spiritual leaders would enhance the membership and financial growth of the district. As Columbus observed we could bring skill and knowledge that transform women when we mentored them spiritually. Through this mentoring, we could also develop their leadership skills and traits that would help them hold important leadership positions.<sup>124</sup>

The training of children in discipleship and spiritual leadership in Bentiu District of Greater Upper Nile Field was also important for the church’s growth in membership and spiritual maturity. However, there were two ways by which children could be trained in discipleship and spiritual leadership. One way was through the Pathfinder Club and the other one was through the school. In both ways, adults needed to be involved in mentoring and training the children. In the school setting, especially, mentoring could take place with the pupils as the mentees and teachers as the mentors. The teachers could mentor the pupils to love God and work for Him by the way they were serving God in the school. They could conduct Bible studies for the pupils, preach during weeks of spiritual emphasis, and during school prayer times. They could also have relationships with the pupils that “provide counseling, role

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<sup>123</sup> Renee Columbus, *A Qualitative Study on the Leadership Development of Women through Spiritual Mentoring* (San Diego, CA: Northcentral University, August 2018), 22-23.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

modeling,” as well as developing “friendship, acceptance, and confirmation” that would help the mentee on a level that was “professional and personal.”<sup>125</sup>

### **Summary**

Discipleship was God’s way of preparing workers for preaching the good news to the world. This work of discipleship started in the Old Testament when God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. God chose Moses to be the leader of His people and assigned Joshua as his assistant or disciple. Joshua eventually took the responsibility of leading the people of Israel after the passing of Moses.

The concept of discipleship in the Old Testament could also be seen in the life of Naomi and Ruth. Naomi discipled Ruth her daughter-in-law to know and worship the true God of Israel who later became one of the grandmothers of Jesus, according to the recorded history, in the Bible. The relationship between Ruth and Naomi was that of true love that exists between a disciple and the master.

Elijah’s relation to Elisha and that of Elisha to the school of the prophets represented true discipleship. Elijah mentored and taught Elisha the way of the Lord so that Elisha had no other desire other than to become like Elijah with a request of receiving Elijah’s spirit twice. This was given to him when Elijah was taken to heaven.

Matthew 28:18-20 was a classic text on discipleship. It revealed how Christ commanded His disciples to go all over the world and proclaim the gospel of God’s kingdom. It gave the assurance of power for the disciples to preach the gospel and the promise of Christ's presence accompanying them. The disciples were commanded to baptize those who believe and teach them to obey all that Christ had commanded

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 19.

them. This command was what Christians call the Gospel Commission.

Jesus started his work with His disciples by calling them. His teaching for the disciples took place in various places and under various circumstances: By the mountainside, beside seas, at wedding feasts, through parables, through the work of healing, and by various examples.

The Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) was a particular example of his teaching endeavor for His disciples. Here He taught His disciples about the requirements and the qualifications for the kingdom of God. He emphasized the importance of obedience to the law of God as well as loving our enemies. He pointed out the narrowness of the way and the importance of building our faith in the word of God by comparing it to building on a rock.

Christ also taught His disciples various lessons through parables. By the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, He taught them the importance of sowing the seeds of the word of God in the good soil of people's hearts if they were to grow and produce many other seeds. In the parable of the wheat and the weeds, Christ taught the importance of allowing time for the word of God to grow in the lives of believers before judging them prematurely. He also taught about the cost of discipleship when He told His disciples the parables of the hidden treasure and that of a pearl of great price in Matthew 13:44-46.

The relationship between Barnabas and John Mark was a good example of discipleship. Barnabas trained John Mark to become a gospel evangelist by mentoring him in the gospel ministry.

Timothy's relationship with Paul was another example of good discipleship. Timothy accompanied Paul in his second missionary journey as he had received the basic training from Paul as a gospel minister. Later, he worked as a pastor at the

church of Ephesus. Paul wrote him two pastoral letters to encourage him in the work of the ministry.

Ellen White also discussed the importance of discipleship both in the church and the community. Disciples provided the churches with training and encouraged Christian fellowship among believers. In the community, disciples embarked on the work of preaching the gospel of the kingdom and also breaking down the wall of partition between nations.

Many models of discipleship training had been portrayed in the Holy Scriptures. The current emphasis was on the model that was found in the New Testament. Here, the models of Christ and His disciples, that of Acts of Apostles, and that of Pauline Epistles were discussed. Christ called His disciples, trained, and mentored them, and sent them to go and make other disciples (Matt 28:18-20). In the Acts of the Apostles, Paul, Peter, and Barnabas and their associates raised communities of disciples and appointed elders to take care of them. In the Pauline Epistles, Paul embarked on the work of discipleship through training Timothy and Titus as leaders. He appointed them as pastors for the churches so that they could, in turn, raise more communities of disciples and mentor them through the local churches.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Discipleship was an important aspect of Christian ministry. Many books, articles, and dissertations have been written on the subject with some of these works containing specific information on general understanding of discipleship and clear definitions of the subject. Other works went further and explain the various dimensions of discipleship.

Lots of literature dealt with what it takes to be a disciple. They dug deep to explain what disciples endure through trials and persecution as they strived to remain faithful to their Lord Jesus Christ. Trials and persecutions had been experienced by disciples in all the periods of church history; especially during the apostolic period, Middle Ages, and the contemporary period.

There were also books that discussed models of discipleship training. This chapter reviewed some of the New Testament and contemporary models of discipleship training. Regarding the New Testament models, Jesus and His disciples, discipleship in Acts, and discipleship in Pauline writings were discussed. This section also focused on the implications of effective discipleship training in the Greater Upper Nile Field.

## Towards a Clear Understanding of Discipleship

### Definition of Discipleship

Many writers had attempted to define the term discipleship. According to the *New Oxford American Dictionary*, it was a state of being “a personal follower of Jesus Christ.” The third edition of the *New Bible Dictionary* clearly defined a disciple and discipleship by stating that; “A disciple is basically the pupil of a teacher”. . . . Although Jesus did not receive official recognition as a teacher or rabbi, His followers were popularly known as disciples.<sup>1</sup>

Robby Gallaty’s definition was worth noting. He defined discipleship as those who were equipped by God’s words in their various relations so that by the strength of the Holy Spirit, they could reproduce other disciples for Christ.<sup>2</sup> Jonathan K Dodson added to this definition by explaining in his book *Gospel-Centered Discipleship* that being a disciple was having faith in Jesus and accepting the gospel, though it is sometimes difficult to trust Jesus and accept the gospel.<sup>3</sup>

One important definition of discipleship was given by W. Jay Moon in his book *Intercultural Discipleship*. He explicitly stated that being a disciple was to focus on Christ amidst temptations. To be a disciple meant one must be aware of the difficulties that lied ahead and be prepared to face them.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I. H. Marshal, et al., eds., *New Bible Dictionary 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2010), 277.

<sup>2</sup> Robby Gallaty, *Rediscovering Discipleship: Making Jesus Final Word Our First Work* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 155.

<sup>3</sup> Dodson, Jonathan K., *Gospel Centered Discipleship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 19.

<sup>4</sup> W. Jay Moon, *Intercultural Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Publishers, 2017), 49.

Another important definition of discipleship was portrayed by Don Little in his book *Effective Discipling in Muslim Communities*. He wrote emphatically that, a Christian who committed himself to introduce others to Christ was discipling them. He also helped them in their growth process and finally in reproducing other disciples.<sup>5</sup>

Don Little went on to describe discipleship as portrayed in the gospel of Luke. Here he defined discipleship as a radical commitment to God that involved denying self, being lovely to others, doing service to others, being forgiving, and depending on God to supply our needs, thus helping us not to worry about our security, wealth, health, or what people said about us.<sup>6</sup>

Don Little also defined discipleship in the Islamic community. He wrote plainly that believers of Muslim background should be helped to feel belonging and cared for in a believing Christian community.<sup>7</sup>

Another definition that was worth considering and which was also advocated by Dodson in his book *The Gospel-Centered Discipleship* was that one who is Jesus' disciple would learn the gospel, relate to it, and share it with others.<sup>8</sup> He further emphasized that a disciple believed in the gospel and helped others to believe in the gospel. He would continue to learn from the gospel, relate to the gospel, and communicate the gospel.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Don Little, *Effective Discipling in Muslim Communities: Scripture, History, and Seasoned practices* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 76-77.

<sup>6</sup> Little, *Effective Discipling in Muslim Communities*, 68.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>8</sup> Dodson, *Gospel Centered Discipleship*, 38.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 41.

One of the fuller definitions of a disciple was that which was defined by Bill Hull. His definition focused on the disciple's relationship with Christ and how that relationship affects the disciple's character. He stated that a disciple learned from Jesus. He committed himself to at least one person and helped that person to follow Jesus.<sup>10</sup>

Gary E. Tangeman's definition of discipleship in his book was an elaborated one. His definition focused on three important characteristics that a disciple should possess. He stated emphatically that, "A 'disciple,' according to Jesus, is marked by three prominent characteristics during his maturing process. He abides in Christ's word, loves other believers, and bears fruit."<sup>11</sup>

Another definition of discipleship that was worth noting was found in the book *Discipleship Handbook*. Here discipleship was defined as, a person who spends time with Jesus so that he became like Him. He recognized Jesus as His teacher and spent time with Him in order to learn from Him.<sup>12</sup>

Martin Sanders provided another definition of discipleship. His definition explained how a disciple should commit himself to helping others to grow and be productive in Christ. He described discipleship as a way by which a mature believer in Christ helped another believer to grow in his relationship with Christ so that the second believer could reproduce himself in another person.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making followers for Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2006), 68.

<sup>11</sup> Gary E. Tangeman, *The Disciple Making Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Fort Washington, PN: The Christian Literature Crusade, 1996), 41.

<sup>12</sup> Jim Howard et al, *Discipleship Handbook: A Resource for Seventh-day Adventist Church Members* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2018), 3.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Sanders, *The Power of Mentoring: Shaping People who will Shape the World* (Camphill, PN: Wing spread Publishers, 2009), 75.

Erling Lundeby defined discipleship as “the habit of understanding and imagining ourselves and our world firmly rooted in the Christian gospel.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Dimensions of Discipleship**

Discipleship integrated three dimensions namely, rational, relational, and missional. This concept had been emphasized by Dodson in his book *Gospel-Centered Discipleship*. He wrote that gospel-centered discipleship integrated the three aspects of discipleship together namely the rational, relational, and missional aspects of discipleship through faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>15</sup>

A disciple related both vertically and horizontally. Vertically, he/she related to God, and horizontally, he/she related to fellow human beings. According to Dodson vertical discipleship pointed to God’s greatness and our sinfulness. It brought closeness between God’s holiness and our sinfulness through spending time reading the Bible, spending time in prayer and fasting, and doing good deeds.<sup>16</sup>

Concerning horizontal discipleship, Dodson expounded the concept by writing that as discipleship that involved our relationship with God led us to embrace God’s characteristics, discipleship that involved our relationship with each other led us to embrace God’s work. It dealt with the work of reaching out to others with the gospel message as well as establishing equality in society and bringing a renewed aspect to our culture.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Erling Lundeby, “Meer Discipleship: On Growing in Wisdom and Hope,” *European Journal of Theology* 28, no. 2 (2020): 202-203.

<sup>15</sup> Dodson, *Gospel Centered Discipleship*, 41.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

A very crucial dimension that was needed for effective discipleship was that of the relationship with the teacher. This dimension had been explained by Bill Hull. He pointed out the importance of this dimension by saying that for transformation to take place, a disciples should commit to following his teacher. This commitment should be to at least one person.<sup>18</sup>

The other important aspect of relational discipleship had been pointed out by W. Jay Moon in his book *Intercultural Discipleship*. According to Moon's explanation relational discipleship brought about worldview transformation through learning and obeying Christ's instructions.<sup>19</sup>

One more dimension of discipleship that was worth mentioning was the diagonal dimension. It was articulated by Dodson and he described it as a dimension that "frees us to rest in Christ" and required us to trust Jesus as Lord. He stated eloquently that through the gospel we were freed to live diagonally through faith in Christ. We graciously allowed Christ to rule "over the whole life, not just one aspect of it."<sup>20</sup>

Nonconformity had also been pointed out by John Stott as another dimension of discipleship. According to him since the church was living in this world but not involved in world affairs, it should maintain its holiness in the world without compromising to the world.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 63.

<sup>19</sup> Moon, *Intercultural Discipleship*, 46.

<sup>20</sup> Dodson, *Gospel Centered Discipleship*, 47-48.

<sup>21</sup> John Stott, *The Radical Disciple: Some Neglected Aspect of Our Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 17.

## The Cost of Discipleship

Discipleship was costly. It might cost us our lives, jobs, relationships, and many other things we think were important to us. Relationship with God had always been costly since the Old Testament time. Del Dunavant mentioned this in his book *From Membership to Discipleship* by reminding us about the three ‘Hebrew worthies.’ He briefly informs the reader that; “God called us to give up anything which could keep us out of heaven. We ought to relinquish whatever would hinder our relationship with Him, just as did the three ‘Hebrew worthies’ (Dan 3:21, 25, 27). If we were connected to God, He would remove the desire and empower us to surrender whatever would keep us out of heaven.”<sup>22</sup>

Suffering and rejection were a ‘must’ for a disciple of Christ. This was the assessment of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer succinctly stated that disciples partook in the suffering of Christ as well as in His rejection and crucifixion. Discipleship meant submitting our lives to obey Jesus even to the suffering of the cross.<sup>23</sup>

Jesus’s views on the cost of discipleship were succinctly described in the book *Discipleship Handbook*. It stated that being a disciple was to deny self and suffer for Christ. Those who wanted popularity cannot be true followers of Jesus. A true follower of Jesus was willing to endure challenges and stand out from among the crowd.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Del Dunavant, *From Membership to Discipleship: A Practical Guide to Equipping Members for Ministry* (Lincoln, NE: Advent Source, 2009), 57.

<sup>23</sup> Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 2018), 178.

<sup>24</sup> Howard et al, *Discipleship Handbook*, 4.

The early disciples of Christ paid a high cost for following Him, especially after Christ's ascension to heaven. They were persecuted for following and preaching Christ. Robert E. Coleman wrote about how persecution forced the disciples to flee from their Jewish community. He explained that persecution forced the disciples to take the gospel to non-Jewish communities.<sup>25</sup> However, this persecution did not stop the spread of the gospel. Coleman further explained that persecution helped the gospel message to grow and multiply (Acts 12:24).<sup>26</sup>

Though discipleship was not easy but costly, David Watson in his book *Discipleship* assured us of God's ever presence by His Holy Spirit to strengthen and encourage us besides the love of other disciples. He stated that discipleship was not very easy because it involved pain and tears. However, we did not face these challenges by ourselves alone. The Holy Spirit together with other believers was willing to encourage and support us.<sup>27</sup>

Discipleship was also costly because it demanded that we leave all things behind to follow Jesus. Bill Hull explained by stating succinctly that for us to be Jesus' disciples, we should give up everything and walk after Jesus in whichever way He directed. True followers of Christ ought to reject cheap grace because it was the real enemy of God's people.<sup>28</sup>

Another cost of discipleship was discussed by Rob Warner. He clearly stated that "The persecution of the disciple is an inevitability and yet somehow a privilege,

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<sup>25</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revel, 1998), 26.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>27</sup> David Watson, *Discipleship* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), 22.

<sup>28</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 108.

in the way of the cross. The fellowship of his disciples is the fellowship of the crucified.”<sup>29</sup>

Persecution, rejection, and expulsion were some of the costs of discipleship especially in Muslim communities. Don Little explained how a woman called Cheri was expelled from North Africa because of her dedication to making disciples for Christ. He wrote that all the women Cheri witnessed became true believers because of the way she presented the gospel message to them.<sup>30</sup>

Discipleship involved carrying the cross of Christ. J. Paul Tanner discussed this by saying “Obviously Jesus was not instructing his followers to go out and carry literal crosses; rather he used this imagery to make a point. They were to consider themselves prepared to suffer to the point of death, or as Ladd succinctly put it, to take up one’s cross meant to be willing to go as Jesus went to a martyr’s death.”<sup>31</sup>

### **Discipleship and Witnessing**

Many books and articles discussed the importance of discipleship and witnessing because witnessing played a great part in the work of a disciple. Some important publications dealt with this aspect of a disciple’s work that was reviewed herein.

Philip G. Samaan, in his book, *Christ Way of Reaching People* emphasized the importance of witnessing for a disciple. He stated “We witness for our very spiritual survival. If we did not share what we have, we lost it. We became spiritually stagnant,

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<sup>29</sup> Rob Warner, *I Believe in Discipleship: The Adventure of Living* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 1999), 201.

<sup>30</sup> Little, *Effective Discipling in Muslim Communities*, 26.

<sup>31</sup> J Paul Tanner, “The Cost of Discipleship: Losing One’s Life for Jesus’ Sake,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56 no.1 (2013): 43.

weak, and eventually die.”<sup>32</sup> He further referred to the importance of witnessing by clearly stating that; “Witnessing will overcome our self-centeredness. Nobody can touch the lives of other people, feel their pain, think of them, and pray for them while remaining self-centered. Some may purposely not want to get involved in witnessing because they realize it will compel them to abandon their cozy selfishness.”<sup>33</sup>

Being Jesus' witnesses, disciples were to tell what they know, have seen, heard, and felt about Christ. Mrs. White clarified this in her book *The Desire of Ages* when she wrote that Christ's disciples proclaim messages that they had known, seen, and felt. Because they had been following Jesus closely, they would have something to say about Him.<sup>34</sup>

Witnessing for a disciple was a way of bringing others to Christ and helping them be transformed into Christlikeness. Mbui, in his book, *Making Discipleship Simple: Becoming a Disciple of Christ*, wrote that; “During the adult stage of the discipleship pathway, believers who are living the life of Christ will find it easy to share with others the Christ in them, to make them disciples too. The goal of witnessing is not just to circulate information to others, but rather, to bring about their transformation into Christ's likeness.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Philip G. Samaan, *Christ's Way of Reaching People: The Fine Art of Relational Witnessing* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1990), 118.

<sup>33</sup> Philip G. Samaan, *Christ's Way of Reaching People: The Fine Art of Relational Witnessing* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1990), 118.

<sup>34</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages: The Conflict of Ages Illustrated in the Life of Christ* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940), 340.

<sup>35</sup> Mbui, *Making Discipleship Simple*, 21.

Regarding discipleship and evangelism, Dodson, in his book, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship*, clearly wrote that in order for us to make disciples, we should share our faith, our lives as well as our failures, successes, obedience, and disobedience.<sup>36</sup>

### **Discipleship and Fellowship**

Discipleship required that believers fellowship together to strengthen their faith and witnessing. Aubrey Malphurs clarified by saying that a new community of believers should participate in small group fellowship so that they would find encouragement and support that led to discipleship and accountability.<sup>37</sup>

As to how discipleship also played an important role in genuine worship and fellowship, Mbui added that “Discipleship is at the center of successful fellowship in any church that is committed to growing authentic relationships. ... Believers who grow in their discipleship journey will be able to experience genuine worship and fellowship.”<sup>38</sup> He continued by saying, “Love for God is best expressed through worship, while love for others may be expressed through fellowship and witnessing. Discipleship is the process that brings about the fulfillment of this plan of God.”<sup>39</sup>

### **Discipleship and Edification**

For a discipling process to succeed, there ought to be an edification process in the church. Gary E. Tangeman elaborated on the process of edification in the church by stating that, the Great Commission ought to go together with edification. This was the responsibility of the church. The believers should be educated, looked after, and

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<sup>36</sup> Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship*, 15.

<sup>37</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Strategy 2000: Churches Making Disciples for the Next Millennium* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Resources, 1996), 173.

<sup>38</sup> Mbui, *Making Discipleship Simple*, 20.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

gathered in the church. This involved helping those who were new in the faith to grow in their relationship with Jesus by studying the Bible with them, sharing meals with them, and praying with them.<sup>40</sup>

Tangeman further elaborated on the process of edification by stating that when we made disciples, we preached to them and encouraged them. This meant that by making disciples, we improved the lives of first believers and we introduced to Christ those who did not know Him. “This was where true disciple-making began.”<sup>41</sup>

### **Discipleship and the Community**

In his discussion about discipleship and the community, Dodson pointed out that, as part of a community, disciples of Christ should fight a good fight of faith. As a believing community, the Holy Spirit empowered them to fight for God in their daily life.<sup>42</sup> He further emphasized that a disciple’s word and activities should always be for the good of others. As they served others, they would be satisfied in their daily lives in the community. To be clear, Christ’s disciples should always deny their private times, what they think was good for themselves, and luxury so that they could be able to love and give service to others.<sup>43</sup> He also argued that Christians should be able to meet with non-Christians during birthday celebrations and other festivals in the city. This would help them to witness the city as a community of faith.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Tangeman, *The Disciple Making Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 23.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>42</sup> Jonathan K. Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2012), 102.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 111-112.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

## Discipleship and Mentoring

Mentoring was an important aspect of discipleship if the work of discipling others for Christ was to succeed. Phil A. Newton described how Jesus mentored His disciples. He stated that Jesus mentored His disciples by demanding that their relationship with Him should be a primary one in which they were to live a life of obedience to Him. They were to obey Him as their Lord and follow His teachings, not a philosophy. His disciples were to fish people by “gathering and recruiting them as followers of Jesus.”<sup>45</sup>

Newton continued to elaborate on the way Jesus mentored His disciples by saying that it was through close association that was ‘tailored to each individual.’ He further pointed out that such mentoring needs better be carried out in local churches. He wrote that for local churches to succeed in discipleship, they were to build their training curriculum like that of Jesus. The way Jesus mentored was that it was focused on individuals. Hence, this kind of mentoring could be done well in local churches because they provided a good atmosphere for such mentoring in the community of believers.<sup>46</sup>

Newton also argued that ‘one-on-one and small group mentoring’ was the best method that local church mentors should use in mentoring disciples because of their positive impacts on the mentees. His point was that “Mentors not only give an example but also engage in specific training toward future ministry.”<sup>47</sup>

According to Joy A. Jones,

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<sup>45</sup> Phil A. Newton, *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2017), 27.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

Discipleship stems from a model of mentorship (Boldeau, 2014), and there are similarities between discipling and mentoring, such as intense and focused relationships. However, there are also differences between the two constructs. Although both relationships are characterized by mutuality and reciprocity, the primary goal of mentoring is to nurture, whereas the primary goal of discipling is to nurture and reproduce.<sup>48</sup>

Newton further argued that for local church mentors to succeed in producing fruits in succeeding years, they should major in the training of protégés in the proclamation. He emphasized that for a local church to produce much fruit in the future, it should engage in training protégés in preaching the gospel. She should help the protégés to see themselves as both teachers and heralds of the gospel by pointing people to the death and resurrection of Jesus “as the basis of salvation and central focus of their discipleship.... Likewise, teaching reinforces through instruction the basic application of Scripture to the whole of life.”<sup>49</sup>

### Summary

Jesus’ disciple had accepted the call to follow Him and was willing to deny himself in the process of following Christ. Discipleship had three basic dimensions through which a disciple of Christ would pass, namely, rational, relational, and missional. A disciple functions both vertically and horizontally. Vertically, he/she related to God while horizontally, he/she related to fellow human beings.<sup>50</sup>

About horizontal discipleship, Dodson expounded the concept by writing that when discipleship was vertical, it dealt with God’s character. When it was horizontal,

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<sup>48</sup> Joy A. Jones Jones-Carmack, “Understanding Discipleship and Mentoring through an Exegetical Analysis of Exodus 18:13-23 and Judges 2:6-17,” *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 15, no. 2, (2021): 11-26.

<sup>49</sup> Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 38.

<sup>50</sup> Dodson, *Gospel Centered Discipleship*, 44.

it dealt with God's mission. The danger of horizontal discipleship was that it could easily become a substitute for good works.<sup>51</sup>

The gospel's message directed us to the life of discipleship that is diagonal. Here we lived by faith in Christ, not in piety or mission. Jesus ruled in the whole of life without exception.<sup>52</sup> A disciple also needed to live a life of nonconformity to the world.

Discipleship was costly. It might cost us our lives, jobs, relationships, and many other things we think are important to us. Relationship with God had always been costly since the Old Testament times; True disciples would be opposed because they stood separate from others.<sup>53</sup>

Disciples of Jesus would tell what they have known, seen, heard, and felt about Christ. Those who had followed Christ closely would have something to relate regarding their walk with Jesus.<sup>54</sup>

Discipleship required that believers fellowship together in order to strengthen their faith and witnessing. Moreover, this fellowship would also provide the opportunity for "accountability, discipleship, encouragement, and support."<sup>55</sup>

As disciples of Christ, we were involved in the great warfare with the forces of evil. We could succeed in this battle as the Holy Spirit strengthened us to fight the battle daily<sup>56</sup> Disciples of Jesus could find deeper satisfaction by doing good for

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>52</sup> Dodson, *Gospel Centered Discipleship*, 47-48.

<sup>53</sup> Howard, et al., *Discipleship Handbook*, 4.

<sup>54</sup> White, *The Desire of Ages*, 340.

<sup>55</sup> Malphurs, *Strategy 2000*, 173.

<sup>56</sup> Dodson, *Gospel Centered Discipleship*, 102.

others instead of themselves. They should regularly deny self, comfort, and convenience to bring their love and service to others.<sup>57</sup>

Jesus did not only call His disciples and train them, but He also mentored them so that they could train and mentor others. As Newton explained, Jesus' way of mentoring involved each disciple. Because the local congregation provided a good place, it should be considered the ideal place for mentoring.<sup>58</sup>

Newton also argued that 'one-on-one and small group mentoring' was the best method that local church mentors should use in mentoring disciples because of their positive impacts on the mentees. He explained that local churches were the best places for one-to-one mentoring because the mentors could display love, service, and self-denial for others as Christ's faithful servants. "Mentors not only give an example but also engage in specific training toward future ministry."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 111-112.

<sup>58</sup> Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 33.

<sup>59</sup> Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 36.

## CHAPTER 4

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM DESIGN

The description of the program design dealt mainly with the issues in the research by converting theories into practice. In chapter two, the researcher established that discipleship was biblical. In chapter three, the major books on discipleship were reviewed, and in this chapter, the discovered data were turned into practical applications.

This chapter built on the biblical foundation in chapter two and the literature review in chapter three. It focused on ascertaining the aspects of discipleship currently practiced in the Greater Upper Nile Field of the Seventh-day Adventist church in South Sudan to help develop the program design and the research methodology. Moreover, this would also help build a strategy for implementing the discipleship training program in the Bentiu District of Greater Upper Nile Field. Since the strategies were part of the program design, it was prudent to start this chapter with a concise profile of the ministry context from the macro level to the micro level to provide the background necessary for the program design and implementation.

#### **A Concise Profile of the Ministry Context**

The concise profile of the ministry context placed this research into a historical context at both macro and micro levels. This would help the reader to understand the context and the environment in which this research was carried out. For the purpose of the logical understanding of the research, the macro context was examined before the micro context.

## **The Macro Context**

South Sudan was the most recent country to attain its independence among the world's nations. It gained its independence on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011 from the Republic of Sudan after 22 years of civil war that started in 1983 and ended on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005. As Machar Wek Aleu-Baak wrote in his thesis, this conflict took very long to end. Two million people lost their lives from both sides and another four million were displaced. The war was a struggle of African Christians and Animists for autonomous rule in the South.<sup>1</sup>

There were two major wars between the South Sudanese and Sudan that led to the country's independence. The first war started in August 1955 and ended in March 1972 with the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement in which Southern Sudan gained autonomy as a region with self-rule. The second war that ended in 2005 was the one that brought independence to the country.

The independence came as a result of a referendum conducted on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011, that was stipulated in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and in which South Sudanese voted to determine whether their region was to become independent or not. When the results of the vote were tabulated, it was found that 98% of the South Sudanese voted for separation and independence, hence the July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011 declaration of independence for the Republic of South Sudan. "On July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Republic of South Sudan joined the United Nations as the world's 193<sup>rd</sup> nation."<sup>2</sup>

However, two years after independence, on December 15, 2013, the country

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<sup>1</sup> Machar Wek Aleu-Baak, "Perceptions and Voices of South Sudanese About the North-South Sudan Conflict" (2011). *Dissertations and Theses*. Paper 184.

<sup>2</sup> Water for South Sudan, "Brief History of South Sudan," accessed on July 26, 2022 [www.waterforsouthsudan.org/brief-history-of-south-sudan](http://www.waterforsouthsudan.org/brief-history-of-south-sudan).

returned to war. This time it was not with the north but among the South Sudanese themselves. This war had affected the country very negatively with many people being killed and thousands fleeing as refugees to the neighboring countries of Kenya, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, and Ethiopia as a result. A peace agreement was signed in 2015 but it only lasted for about one year before another war erupted again in the country in July 2016. This second war sent more people into displacement and refugee camps. Another peace agreement called the Revitalized Peace Agreement was again signed on September 18, 2018.

Since the signing of the Revitalized Peace Agreement, relative peace had returned to the country. However, tribal conflicts had sprung up in many parts of the country thus threatening to derail the peace agreement. Though some refugees have started to return to the country, the majority of the refugees were skeptics and were still in the neighboring countries. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)'s South Sudan Regional Response Plan for the year 2021, South Sudanese refugees were spread in the neighboring countries as follows: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) had 60,000; Uganda had 938,000; Kenya had 129,000; Ethiopia had 400,000; and Sudan had 757,000.<sup>3</sup>

The Greater Upper Nile region in South Sudan was the territory in which the Greater Upper Nile Field of the Seventh-day Adventist church was situated in the north-eastern part of the country. This territory had been affected by all the wars fought in both Sudan and South Sudan with different communities in the region, including church members, being displaced by the wars and some of them taking refuge in the neighboring countries. This war scenario had affected the mission of the

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<sup>3</sup> reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/South%20Sudan%20Regional%20Refugee%20  
Accessed July 27, 2022.

church in this region and especially, it had affected the work of discipleship in the Field.

### **The Micro Context**

The massive displacement of people and refugee problems caused by the wars in South Sudan, both pre-and post-independence, had enabled the South Sudanese to come into contact with the Seventh-day Adventist message. Those who received this message came back with it to South Sudan and began to spread it. Prominent among these people is Fulgensio Ida Okayo who received the message in 1976 from Uganda and came with it to Juba and began to preach to the community of South Sudanese. Okayo later became a Seventh-day Adventist Pastor after receiving Theological training in Arusha, Tanzania.

Meanwhile, some South Sudanese who fled to refuge in Ethiopia also received the Adventist message and returned with it to the Greater Upper Nile region of South Sudan. These returnees preached the Advent message in Nasir and Malakal in the Greater Upper Nile territory. Prominent among these returnees was Ret Chol who was able to acquire some Adventist education from Ethiopian Adventist College. Through his guidance and training, the Advent message began to spread in the Greater Upper Nile region.

As the number of Seventh-day Adventist church members began to grow, especially in the two regions of Equatoria and Upper Nile, Pastor Fulgensio Okayo, in 1978, began to correspond with the then Afro-Mideast Division,<sup>4</sup> requesting for a missionary to be sent to Sudan. His effort paid off when, in 1979, a Tanzanian Missionary, the late Pastor David Ogillo was sent to Juba to officially open the

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<sup>4</sup> documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbook/YB1978.pdf accessed on Wednesday July 27,2022.

mission work in Sudan. David Ogillo was joined by Dr. Jerald Whitehouse, a missionary from the United States of America the following year. Many other missionaries were also sent to Sudan (now South Sudan) thereafter.

As the mission work of the church grew in the southern part of Sudan, the mission headquarters was established in Juba to oversee the work of the church in Sudan. Pastor David Ogillo and Dr. Jerald Whitehouse became the prominent leaders of the church. Pastor Ogillo was overseeing the pastoral work of the church and Dr. Whitehouse was overseeing the humanitarian and Medical Missionary work. Through the combined effort of these missionaries, the number of disciples increased in South Sudan.

The need for training workers for church work in South Sudan became very urgent. As a result, Fulgensio Okayo and the late George Okwera were sent to Arusha for two years of training in theology. When they returned to South Sudan, they added impetus to the work of the Lord. Many other youths were also sent to the Nile Union Academy, in Egypt, to be educated and trained as future leaders of the work in Sudan and South Sudan. They were now the current leaders of the South Sudan Union Mission. Prominent among them was Pastor/Dr. Clement Joseph Arkangelo Mawa, the current President of South Sudan Union Mission (SSUM).

Humanitarian work was not forgotten by the leadership of Pastor Ogillo and Dr. Whitehouse. Seventh-day Adventist World Service (SAWS) was registered by them as the humanitarian wing of the church and later it became the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) through it, the name of the church became popular among the communities in South Sudan.

## **Methodology**

Since this project was a training program for effective discipleship in the Greater Upper Nile Field, it adopted the instructional method. A training manual on discipleship was prepared by the researcher from which the lay leaders of Bentiu District, in the Greater Upper Nile Field, were trained. The manual covered a minimum of nine lessons on discipleship. This training program was carried out by the researcher for the lay leaders and then by the lay leaders themselves in ten churches within the district. The effectiveness of the training was analyzed through questionnaires provided for the purpose, both for the lay leaders in the first training by the researcher and for the churches in the second training that was carried out by the lay leaders themselves. In both cases, the question-and-answer method of instruction was used in the training program.

## **The Research Design**

The research was approached by combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, which is also known as mixed methods. According to John W. Creswell, this mixed methods approach dealt with gathering together open-ended and closed-ended data as a way of responding to a hypothesis that involved analysis of all the data.<sup>5</sup>

According to Dawadi et al, a “mixed-methods research design was a research design that had its philosophical assumptions and methods of inquiry. As a

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<sup>5</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Los Angeles, California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014), 217.

methodology, it included philosophical assumptions to provide directions for the collection and analysis of data from multiple sources in a single study.”<sup>6</sup>

“In other words, mixing two methods helped to produce a more complete picture and provided an opportunity for a greater assortment of divergent or complementary views; which were valuable as they not only led to extra reflection and enrich our understanding of a phenomenon but also open new avenues for future inquiries”<sup>7</sup>

Creswell further added to this definition by saying that, when the two approaches of qualitative and quantitative are combined, they made it possible to understand research issues better than any of them could do alone.<sup>8</sup>

Dawadi et al explained the benefit of mixed methods by stating that, “A mixed-methods design offers a number of benefits to approaching complex research issues as it integrates philosophical frameworks of both post-positivism and interpretivism (Fetters, 2016) interweaving qualitative and quantitative data in such a way that research issues are meaningfully explained.”<sup>9</sup>

The type of mixed method used in this research is the Convergent Parallel Mixed-Methods Design. According to Dawadi et al, “A convergent design that follows pragmatism as a theoretical assumption, is an efficient and popular approach to mixing- methods research. Two different approaches namely qualitative and quantitative methods are mixed to obtain the triangulated results in this design.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> S. Dawadi, S. Shrestha and R. A. Giri, “Mixed-Methods Research: A Discussion on its Types, Challenges, and Criticisms,” *Journal of Practical Studies in Education* 2, no. 2 (2021): 25-36.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Dawadi, Shrestha and Giri, “Mixed-Methods Research,” 25-36.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

Dawadi et al further discussed the importance of convergent design by stating that, “In a convergent design, the integration of both data will help a researcher gain a complete understanding of the one provided by the quantitative or qualitative results alone. It is an approach in which two data sets are combined to get a complete picture of the issue being explored and to validate one set of findings with the other.”<sup>11</sup>

Since this research involved people living in a particular district with similar perceptions and opinions, it was wise to use both research approaches. The qualitative approach was used for the interviews of the focus groups while the quantitative approach was used for finding the results of the training programs.

### **Population**

Kristie Saumure and Lisa M. Given defined a research population as “every individual who fits the criteria (broad or narrow) that the researcher has laid out for research participants”<sup>12</sup> Also, the population can be defined as the combination of all the constituents that were identified before the samples were selected.<sup>13</sup> In the context of this research, the population constituted the members of the twelve churches in Bentiu District in the Greater Upper Nile Field.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

Three focus groups were administered in Bentiu District of Greater Upper Nile Field to collect data on discipleship within the district. The purpose of selecting three focus groups is to ensure the credibility, trustworthiness, and rigor of the research.

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<sup>11</sup> Dawadi, Shrestha and Giri, “Mixed-Methods Research,” 25-36.

<sup>12</sup> Kristie Saumure and Lisa M. Given, “Population,” in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2008), 644.

<sup>13</sup> Viggo Sogaard, *Research in Church and Mission* (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1996), 113.

Two groups were composed of seven participants each. The third group had eight participants, making a sample size of 22 respondents who were selected purposively.

Participants for the focus group were selected using purposive sampling, based on their willingness to participate and their membership in the church for at least two years. While efforts were made to include both men and women, the majority of participants were men, with women comprising only about one-third of the group due to fewer women volunteering to participate. The 22 participants, selected through purposive sampling, were assigned to the three focus groups in a way that ensured diverse representation but without following a strict randomization process. Out of the twenty-two participants who were interviewed, 16 were male and six were female. Table 1 below shows the composition of the focus groups.

*Table 1. Focus Groups Composition.*

Group	Participants	Questions administered	Male	Female	Respondents
1	7	11	6	1	5
2	7	11	5	2	6
3	8	11	5	3	6
Total	22	11	16	6	17

A sample selection for the lay leaders who participated in the training conducted by the researcher was taken conveniently based on available lay leaders who were willing to participate in the training. Sogaard called this kind of sampling a convenient sample. He said that “it is a nonprobability sample where the researcher simply selects those that are conveniently available and willing to participate.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Sogaard, *Research in Church and Mission*, 115.

The lay leaders were informed by the district leader about their participation in the training. 29 lay leaders gave their consent for the training and filled an *informed consent form* before being allowed to participate in the training. The 10 lay leaders who participated in the training of the local churches were also chosen conveniently. However, their convenience was dictated by the security conditions in the district. Those who were able to access their churches were the ones who managed to conduct the training.

It was to be noted that, before venturing into the field to collect the data, official but verbal permission was secured from both the Field and district leadership of the church. Those who participated signed a form of agreement and returned it to the researcher before participating in the research. The consent form was attached as an Appendix A.

## **Research Instruments/Tools**

### **Qualitative Research Tools: Focus Group Interview**

The qualitative method used in this study was a focus group interview. Viggo Sogaard defined a focus group as a loosely structured interview that involves a small group of people and it is carried out by a trained person.<sup>15</sup> Sensing added to this definition by saying that in Focus Groups, participants were chosen using similar kinds and meaningful criteria. To have good diversity, more focus groups should be formed.<sup>16</sup> He further suggested that 8-12 persons in a group was the average that is recommended. He also pointed out that the way the researcher collected data depended on how the group responded to the various questions that were asked. “Yet

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<sup>15</sup> Sogaard, *Research in Church and Mission*, 107.

<sup>16</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 120.

it may hinder individual expression.”<sup>17</sup>

### **Trustworthiness of the Focus Groups**

There were three Focus Groups that were constituted purposively to study the state of discipleship in the Bentiu district of the Greater Upper Nile Field. Two of the Focus Groups were made up of seven persons each and the third one was made up of eight persons. The composition of the groups was voluntary after reading and signing the informed consent form. The questions were short and clear to the point so that each member of the group could answer. Each person was allowed to answer the questions, though not everybody answered the question posed to them. The participants were all church members who were in good regular standing in the church. One-third of the participants were women. These three Focus Groups, their composition, and their participants as well as the questions that were asked to the participants ensured that the results were trustworthy, reliable, and credible.

Four components ensured the trustworthiness of a focus group. The first was credibility. This was achieved through a prolonged engagement with the participants. It helped in building rapport and understanding “their perspectives deeply.”<sup>18</sup> It was also achieved through acknowledging personal biases “throughout the research process.”<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, it was achieved by triangulation where multiple data sources were used. The researcher took two days to conduct the focus group interviews for the three focus groups. Each day, 90 minutes were used for questioning the participants.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> [www.sciencedirect.com/journal/journal-of-medicine-surgery-and-public-health](http://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/journal-of-medicine-surgery-and-public-health)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

The second was transferability. Here, the thickness of the descriptions was explained. Detailed contextual information was provided “to enable readers to assess the transferability of the findings.”<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the sampling strategies were clearly articulated “to justify the potential transferability of the findings.”<sup>21</sup>

The third was dependability. This component involved methodological documentation where detailed research procedures and decisions were made during the study. Moreover, the “audit trail of research decisions, changes, and data analysis process”<sup>22</sup> was kept by the researcher to ensure traceability.

The fourth was confirmability. This component involved peer debriefing where the researcher engaged colleagues and experts to review the interpretations and findings that minimized the researcher’s bias. Participants were also allowed to review the accuracy of the findings to enhance confirmability. Moreover, reflexive journal documentation was kept in the course of the study which helped the researcher to track thoughts and biases during the research process.

### **Quantitative Research Tools: The Questionnaire**

Creswell defined the quantitative research approach by stating that it was a way that test objective theories by looking into how the variables related to each other. These variables, in turn, were measured on instruments so that numbered data were carried out by the use of statistical procedures.<sup>23</sup> He further asserted that researchers who do this kind of work protect themselves by explaining their findings

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 4.

in a general way that is easily reproducible.<sup>24</sup>

One of the ways of carrying out a quantitative research approach was the use of the questionnaire. According to Sogaard, A questionnaire worked as the connection between the information needs and the respondents. It is an official method of collecting data from respondents, but due to possible measurement errors, the assistance of an experienced researcher should be sought in designing the questionnaire.<sup>25</sup>

### **The Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire**

According to Daniel E. Gifford, “Validity is the extent to which an instrument “yields accurate assessments of the characteristics of the phenomenon in question” while reliability “is the degree to which an assessment strategy yields very similar results when the entity being assessed has not changed”<sup>26</sup>

“Validity explains how well the collected data covers the actual area of investigation. Validity basically means ‘measure what is to be measured.’”<sup>27</sup> There are four types of validity. They are the face validity, content validity, construct validity, and criterion validity.

Face validity is a subjective judgement on the operationalization of a construct. [It] is the degree to which a measure appears to be related to a specific construct, in the judgment of non-experts such as test takers and representative of legal system.... It evaluates the appearance of the questionnaire in terms of feasibility, readability, consistency of style and formatting, and the clarity of the language used. In other words, face validity

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Sogaard, *Research in Church and Mission*, 128.

<sup>26</sup> Daniel E. Gifford, *Discipleship and Leadership: The Correlation Between Discipleship and Servant, Transformational, and Shared Leadership in the Market Place*, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, P110.

<sup>27</sup> Hamed Taherdoost, “Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument; How to Test the Validation of a Questionnaire/Survey in a Research,” *International Journal of Academic Research in Management* 5, no.3 (2016): 28-36.

refers to researcher's subjective assessment of the presentation and relevance of the measuring instrument as to whether the items in the instrument appear to be relevant, reasonable, unambiguous and clear.<sup>28</sup>

"Content validity is defined as the degree to which items in an instrument reflect the content universe to which the instrument will be generalized."<sup>29</sup> According to Lawshe's method (1975), and based on the five experts who went through this questionnaire, the content validity ratio or CVR for this questionnaire is 0.99.

"Construct validity refers to how well you translated or transformed a concept, idea, or behavior that is a construct into a functioning and operating reality, the operationalization. Construct validity has two components: convergent and discriminant validity."<sup>30</sup>

"Discriminant validity is the extent to which latent variable A discriminates from other latent variables (eg, B, C, D). Convergent validity, a parameter often used in sociology, psychology, and other behavioral sciences, refers to the degree to which two measures of construct that theoretically should be related, are in fact related."<sup>31</sup>

"Criterion or concrete validity is the extent to which a measure is related to the outcome. It measures how well one measure predicts an outcome for another measure.... There are two types of criterion validity namely; concurrent validity, predictive and postdictive validity. The survey is predictively valid if the test accurately predicts what it is supposed to predict."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Taherdoost, "Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument," 28-36.

“Concurrent validity is a type of evidence that can be gathered to defend the use of a test for predicting other outcomes. It refers to the extent to which the result of a particular test or measurement, correspond to those of a previously established measurement for the same construct. For postdictive validity, the criteria is in the past.”<sup>33</sup> In other words, the criterion was “administered in the past.”<sup>34</sup>

Taherdoost also added to the definition of reliability by saying “Reliability is also concerned with repeatability. For example, a scale or test is said to be reliable if a repeated measurement made by it under constant conditions will give the same result”<sup>35</sup> Hence, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire used in this research were proved by the fact that the questionnaire was given to experts in the study area to check on the contents and face validity; the supervisor's input was also considered. In terms of reliability, the questionnaire was tested in Bentiu POC on a group of church elders. The results showed that the reliability coefficient was above 0.7 which is considered right.

Thus, based on the definition of face validity above, the questionnaire was relevant, readable, unambiguous, and clear. As far as the content validity was concerned, the instrument reflected the content universe. In regard to the construct and criterion validity, the questions of the instrument were related to each other and to the outcome.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

## **The Data Collection**

### **Qualitative Data Collection**

Three focus groups were organized. The first two groups had seven members each and the third group had eight members. Eleven questions on discipleship were asked of each group and their responses were recorded by the research assistant. When a question was asked by the researcher, an opportunity was given to each member of the focus group to answer the question after raising his or her hand. The research assistant documented the participants' responses in a notebook, which were later analyzed to evaluate the state of discipleship in the district before the intervention.

Each focus group interview took 90 minutes. The interviews were carried out for two days by the researcher himself.

### **Quantitative Data Collection**

This research used questionnaires to collect information from the lay leaders at the end of the researcher's first training program. They were used to collect information about the discipleship elements in the churches where some lay leaders conducted the training program on discipleship. The purpose was to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the training. Both the open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires were used. The use of questionnaires as an instrument for data collection for Doctor of Ministry (DMin) projects was echoed by Sensing. He said that in a questionnaire we use paper and pencil for asking people. It has different types of questions. DMin projects use open-ended types of questions, some of which only require a few sentences or just a word.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 113.

## Data Analysis

### Qualitative Data Analysis

The presentations and the descriptions of the findings were presented both in descriptive and tabular forms to help give clarity in understanding the data set. The tabular form provided the summary, while the description provided the details.

Edgar J. Elliston emphasized the importance of data analysis, explaining that the purpose of analyzing data was to help others understand its meaning. Through analysis, the significance of the data becomes clear.<sup>37</sup> He further discusses qualitative data analysis by pointing out that, “Qualitative analysis takes many forms and each method has its focus commensurate with the strength of the approach.... Properly applied analysis reduced surprises and enabled a researcher to make predictions.”<sup>38</sup>

Alan Bryman further expanded on qualitative analysis, suggesting that it can be conducted using approaches such as analytic induction, grounded theory, thematic analysis, and narrative analysis.<sup>39</sup> Following Bryman’s framework, the researcher employed both narrative and thematic analysis to interpret the data.

Qualitative data in this research was obtained through three focus-group interviews. The data was based on the eleven questions posed to the members of the groups concerning the condition of discipleship in the Bentiu District of Greater Upper Nile Field. The responses by the groups indicated that some discipleship was taking place in the district but not satisfying the expectations of the participants. Thus,

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<sup>37</sup> Edgar J. Elliston, *Introduction to Missiological Research Design* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2011), 146.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 146-147.

<sup>39</sup> Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2016), 570.

the responses helped the researcher to know how to intervene to address the needs of the lay leaders of the district.

The first question that was asked was, “What method do you use to bring disciples to Christ?” All the respondents of the three groups agreed that the methods they used to bring disciples to Christ were Bible study and visitations. They visited people in their homes and gave them home Bible studies, or they visited people and invited them to attend Bible studies in the church.

The second question asked, "How regularly do you baptize new believers (disciples) into the membership of the church?" Respondents from all three focus groups agreed that baptisms in the Bentiu district of the SDA Church, in the Greater Upper Nile Field, were scheduled quarterly. They also noted that, in special cases, some believers prepared by Bible instructors or elders may be baptized at other times throughout the year.

The third question was, “Through what ways do you nurture the newly baptized members in the church?” The respondents in group one indicated that it was done through Bible study and small group fellowship. The respondents in group two stated that it was done through Bible studies and visitations. Group Three respondents concurred with Group One by saying that it was done through Bible studies and fellowship. Therefore, the overall response to this question concerning the nurturing of new members revealed that nurturing was done through Bible studies, visitations, and small group fellowships.

The fourth question asked, “What percentage of newly baptized members remain faithful for at least one year, two years, and five years?” Responses varied across the three focus groups: participants in the first group estimated a retention rate of 30%, the second group suggested 45%, and the third group indicated 35%. While

these figures differ, they collectively point to a retention rate well below 50%, highlighting a significant need for enhanced discipleship training in the Bentiu District to improve member retention.

The fifth question was, “What do you do to have newly baptized members (new disciples) have worldview transformation?” The first group of respondents agreed that this can be done through Bible studies on Biblical prophecies. The second group emphasized more on visiting the new members and interacting with them so that they could learn the new way of life in Christ. As a result, worldview transformation would take place. However, the third group emphasized more on small group fellowship as a way of worldview transformation for new believers. This was because as they fellowshiped with fellow believers, they learned the new way of life in Christ. Therefore, the overall result was the combination of the three methods above, that was, Bible studies, visitations, and small group fellowship.

The sixth question asked, “How regularly do you have house-to-house prayer meetings?” The respondents in the first group indicated that house-to-house prayer meetings were held twice a week. The second group stated they were held once a week, while the third group concurred with the first, reporting twice-weekly meetings. On average, these responses suggested that house-to-house prayer meetings generally occurred about twice a week in the Bentiu District. However, the frequency might vary from church to church, reflecting differences in local practices.

The seventh question asked, “How many small groups do you have in your district churches?” Respondents in the first group agreed that each church in the district had at least three small groups. The second group stated that there were only two small groups per church, while the third group concurred with the first, reporting three small groups per church. On average, these responses suggested that the number

of small groups in the district churches generally hovered around three, though the exact number might vary slightly from church to church.

The eighth question asked, “What percentage of church members are involved in discipleship activities?” The responses varied: Group One estimated 15%, Group Two reported 25%, while Group Three gave a much lower estimate of 10%. These responses indicated that only a small percentage of church members in the district participated in discipleship activities, highlighting the need for greater engagement.

The ninth question asked, “What percentage of church leaders are involved in discipleship training?” The three focus groups provided differing responses: Group One estimated only 10%, Group Two reported 20%, and Group Three suggested 30%. These responses indicated that only a small proportion of church leaders in the Bentiu District participated in discipleship training.

The tenth question asked, “What percentage of church members or newly baptized members practice both biblical and traditional beliefs?” The first and second focus groups estimated that 10% of members followed a blend of biblical and traditional beliefs, while the third group gave a slightly higher estimate of 15%. These responses indicated that a significant portion—up to 15%, according to some respondents—continued to adhere to traditional practices alongside biblical beliefs. The eleventh and final question was, “What percentage of church members claim to be Adventists and yet live their lives based on their traditional beliefs?” The respondents in Group One estimated 5%, Group Two gave a slightly higher estimate of 10%, and Group Three reported 7%. These differing estimates suggested that a portion of church members, though identifying as Adventists, continued to follow primarily traditional practices.

Notably, these percentages were lower than those given in response to the

previous question, which asked about members who blend both biblical and traditional beliefs. This difference could be interpreted as reflecting a distinction between two groups: the first included those who combined elements of both belief systems, while the second focused on those who do not blend beliefs at all but lived purely according to traditional practices while still identifying themselves as Adventists.

*Table 2. The Responses of the Three Focus Groups*

S/N	Interview question	Group 1 Response	Group 2 Response	Group 3 Response	Overall Response
1.	Methods of bringing new disciples into the church	Bible study & visitation	Bible study & visitation	Bible study & visitation	Bible study and visitation
2.	Regularity of new baptisms	quarterly	quarterly	quarterly	quarterly
3.	Nurturing new disciples	Bible study & visitation	Bible study & visitation	Bible study & visitation	Bible study, visitation, & small group
4.	% of Retention of newly baptized members (disciples)	30	45	35	Less than 50%
5.	Ways of Worldview transformation of new disciples	Bible Study	Visitation	Small group fellowship	Bible study, visitation, Small group
6.	Regularity of house-to-house prayer meetings	2/7	1/7	2/7	May vary from church to church but at least once a week
7.	No of Small groups in churches	3	2	3	May vary from church to church but at least two small groups in a church
8.	% of Church members in discipleship activities	15	25	10	Quite low participation in the discipleship activities
9.	% of Church leaders in Discipleship Training	10	20	30	Quite low participation in training the disciples
10.	% Newly baptized practicing both biblical and traditional beliefs	10	10	15	Up to 15 % adhere to both traditional and Adventist beliefs
11.	% Church members practicing both biblical and traditional beliefs.	5	10	7	Up to 10 % still practice traditional beliefs

## **Quantitative Data Analysis**

The analyzed data indicated that 68% of the lay leaders were satisfied with the training, while 88% of the lay leaders were completely motivated to witness as a result of the training. Regarding the impact of the training on church growth, 100% of the lay leaders agreed that the impact was positive.

The results of the analysis of the training conducted by the lay leaders in the churches were close to that of the training of the lay leaders by the researcher. 70% of the churches indicated that there was a positive increase in spirituality in their churches. The impact of witnessing on the youth and women's witnessing groups in the churches was also 100% positive.

Data derived from the respondents proved beyond doubt that discipleship in Bentiu District would make huge progress as a result of the two training segments that were conducted in the district. Moreover, the researcher was contented that the lay leaders had learned important lessons on discipleship, and were willing to transmit this knowledge to their churches for effective church growth in the Bentiu District of Greater Upper Nile Field.

## **Data Presentation**

### **Presentation of the Qualitative Data**

Qualitative data in this research were obtained through three focus-group interviews. The data was based on the eleven questions posed to the members of the groups concerning the condition of discipleship in the Bentiu District of Greater Upper Nile Field. The responses by the groups indicated that some discipleship was taking place in the district but not satisfying the expectations of the leaders. Thus, the responses helped the researcher to know how to intervene to address the needs of the lay leaders of the district.

The qualitative data was presented as a summary based on eleven questions asked to the three focus groups. Each interview began and ended with a prayer. The results were recorded by a research assistant in a notebook. All the interviews were conducted within the church premises in a period of two days with each interview taking 90 minutes.

### **Presentation of the Quantitative Data**

The Greater Upper Nile Field was one of the four Fields in South Sudan Attached Territory of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the East-Central Africa Division. The Field had 10 churches and 44 companies. It had a membership of 8,663 according to the 2021 third quarter statistical report. The Field also had six districts of which Bentiu is one of them. Bentiu District was situated in the western part of the Field. Two training sessions on discipleship were conducted in the district, the first one was conducted by the researcher for 29 lay leaders drawn randomly from various churches, while the second one was conducted by the lay leaders themselves for the ten churches in the district. The results of the training were tabulated and described below.

The training of the 29 lay leaders for effective discipleship in Bentiu District took place within nine days, January 17 – 25, 2022. The training was conducted by the researcher himself using a training manual prepared for the purpose. The manual contained nine lessons on discipleship, the first of which was about the “Call to Discipleship” and the last was about “Discipleship and the Gospel Commission.” At the end of the training, a questionnaire containing twelve questions was administered to lay leaders to study the spiritual impact of the training on them. Consequently, out of the 29 lay leaders who attended the training, only 25 were able to answer the questionnaire.

The results indicated that the responses of the lay leaders varied according to the impact of the training given to each of them individually. Regarding question one—which was intended to study the spiritual impact of the training on the lay leaders—17 indicated that the general impression was satisfactory, two of them indicated that they were highly influenced spiritually by the training process and content, while three indicated that the result was moderate, and three of the lay leaders did not indicate the spiritual effect of the training on them.

Regarding the result of the training, the lessons that impacted them most positively spiritually were lessons 7 and 8. Lesson 7 is on “Discipleship and Spiritual Maturity” and Lesson 8 is on “Discipleship and Prayer Life”. These two also left the most encouraging impression on the lay leaders. A total of 14 lay leaders mentioned these two lessons. Other lessons that had a significant impact on participants were Lesson 9 with four respondents and Lesson 6 with two respondents. The remaining lessons had one respondent each.

As to how the training had helped the lay leaders in understanding discipleship, 17 of them indicated that it was beyond 75%, 3 of them said that it was 75%, while four indicated 50% and one 25%. This indicated that the training had helped the lay leaders understand the concept of discipleship in the context of the Christian faith.

### **The General Objective of the Seminar**

The general objective of the training seminar for effective discipleship was to make the lay leaders of Bentiu district effective disciples of Christ so that they in turn would be able to disciple others, especially church members under their leadership, as effective disciples. By attending this seminar, they were being prepared to train others on effective discipleship and become effective soul winners for Christ.

Furthermore, the training of the lay leaders would empower them spiritually so that they could help others to become spiritually strong disciples. Since most of the activities of the church took place in the local church, the training of the lay leaders would pave the way for local churches to be trained and equipped in effective discipleship.

### **Steps of the Research**

Steps taken by the researcher in conducting this research included the following points: First, the researcher developed the research idea and hypothesis. This was the issue the researcher wanted to study. He did this through the observation of everyday behavior in the district. Second, the idea that was developed was put into a testable theory.

Third, the researcher chose the appropriate research design. In the case of this research, it was the combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods that was otherwise known as the mixed method. The descriptive research design was used. It included surveys, interviews, observations, and others that gathered an in-depth understanding of the situation and answered the questions when, what, and where.

Fourth, the researcher chose the subject population and considered the sampling techniques. The population in this case was the twelve churches of Bentiu district and the sampling technique used was the non-probability sampling technique. Here the purposive and convenient sampling techniques were chosen and applied.

Fifth, the researcher decided what to observe and the appropriate measures to be taken. The observation was on discipleship and the appropriate measure taken was to conduct a training program for effective discipleship of the lay leaders of the Bentiu district.

Sixth, an actual study was conducted on the effective ways of training lay leaders and church members on discipleship through the use of focus group interviews and surveys or questionnaires for evaluating the training on discipleship. Three focus groups comprising 22 persons were formed. Also, a questionnaire was developed to study the effect of the training of the 29 lay leaders on discipleship.

Seventh, the researcher analyzed the data that was collected through the use of descriptive statistics. And eighth, the researcher reported the result of the findings by writing this dissertation and explaining all the steps that were taken in this study. He also reported the conclusions drawn from the study and the recommendations given for further study.

### **The Focus on the Local Church**

The local church was an important entity in the structure of the Seventh-day Adventist church. It was usually led by a pastor but in the absence of the pastor, either elders or other local lay leaders lead the local churches and their programs such as worship, fellowship, witnessing, and evangelism. It was to be noted that the term lay leader(s) referred to all local church leaders such as elders, youth leaders, women leaders, children's leaders, and all departmental leaders of the local church. It was these leaders who need to be equipped spiritually and materially for effective discipleship if the local churches were to prosper in fulfilling the mission of the church.

Regarding how important the church was to Jesus Christ who was its head, the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual stated that Jesus loved the church very much

because He was her head. He was feeding her daily and wanted the church to be holy and blameless.<sup>40</sup>

Concerning the implementation of the training program for effective discipleship for lay leaders in the local churches, the program would be implemented through the local lay leaders themselves using the same training manual prepared by the researcher. Out of the 29 lay leaders who attended the first training session on effective discipleship, 25 of them agreed to go and train the churches on the same subject. However, due to insecurity in some parts of the district, only 10 lay leaders were able to implement the training in their churches.

The training of the local churches started one month after the lay leaders were trained. Before starting the training program, the lay leaders were required to record the condition of the churches at the time. They were also required to record the membership of the churches, the spiritual condition of the churches, the witnessing groups in the churches, and whether a training program in discipleship had been done prior to that time. All this information was entered into part A of the questionnaire to be evaluated by the researcher.

The training program in all ten churches took nine days to complete. Each day had two hours of training by a trained lay leader on effective discipleship. This means that each of the ten churches would receive 18 hours of needed training. The lay leaders were also required to record the impact of the training on the church members immediately after the training sessions were over to assess the impact on the local churches. All of them filled out part B of the questionnaire which enabled the researcher to assess the impact of the training on the local churches.

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<sup>40</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 18<sup>th</sup> ed.* (Hagerstown, MA: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2010), 22.

At the elapse of three months from the time of their training, part C of the questionnaire was administered to the churches through the lay leaders to find out the implications of the training on the local churches. The questionnaires focused on five areas of the local church's activities including; new members joining the churches as the result of the training, members joining witnessing groups as the result of the training, an increase in spirituality of members as the result of the training, effect on witnessing of the youth groups, and effect on witnessing of women groups. The questionnaires were then collected by the researcher and evaluated.

### **Focus on the Local Lay Leaders**

Local Lay leaders have played a historical role in the growth and the care of the Christian churches. Some of these lay leaders, such as elders and deacons, have been mentioned in the Bible where they played a great role even during the apostolic church.

The ministry of deacons in the local churches started as early as the appearance of the apostolic church as recorded in Acts chapter 6:2-7. Luke wrote about the appointment of the first deacons when he stated that the twelve apostles made this move because there was a need to take care of the widows. The believers chose seven deacons who were men with good character. The appointment of the deacons set the apostles free for the proclamation of the gospel, resulting in the multiplication of disciples.<sup>41</sup>

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual also explained the work of deacons in the local church by stating that seven men were chosen to serve as deacons

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<sup>41</sup> *Holy Bible, New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1982)

in the apostolic church and their work was “to attend to the business of the church.”<sup>42</sup> Hence, deacons in our churches today served a major role in the proper functioning of the church. They assisted in worship services, evangelism, and many other lines of work in the local church.

The elder was the other local lay leader of important consideration. Elders were appointed as leaders of the local churches where there was no trained pastor. Their functions included administration and pastoral responsibilities. The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual elaborated more on this by stating that Elders were people who have gained a good reputation in the church as spiritual leaders. Their good reputation was also recognized by those who were not in the church. When the pastor was not available, they assumed responsibility as spiritual leaders of the church and ought to guide the church into a deep and full understanding of the Scriptures.<sup>43</sup>

The Bible also spoke of the role played by elders in the congregation. Paul emphasized this importance in his first letter to Timothy. He wrote that elders should have characters that agree with the Scriptures. They should have exemplary families having good reports both within and outside the church. They should not be newly converted believers.<sup>44</sup>

Other local lay leaders that were of importance to the local Seventh-day Adventist churches were the church clerk, the church treasurer, the Personal Ministries director, the Women Ministries leader, the Sabbath School Superintendent, the Youth leader, the Children Ministries leader, etc. All these local leaders helped greatly in the functions of the church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual

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<sup>42</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 18<sup>th</sup> ed.*, 76.

<sup>43</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 18<sup>th</sup> ed.*, 71.

<sup>44</sup> *Holy Bible, New King James Version.*

emphasized the work of these departments and auxiliary organizations of the church as closely connected to the church pastor. Their work was to assist in the missionary activities of the body of Christ.<sup>45</sup>

Therefore, as the work of these local leaders was so important for the growth and development of the local churches, and, in turn, for the whole church structure, they needed to be equipped and empowered to do the work of the Lord effectively. Hence, a need for a training program for effective discipleship both for the local church leaders and the church members themselves.

### **A Requirement of the Work**

The Seventh-day Adventist church in South Sudan had few pastors who could take care of the churches in a professional way. As a result, lay leaders helped greatly in the oversight and management of the local churches. This, therefore, necessitated that they be trained so that they could effectively lead the churches toward the fulfillment of the gospel commission of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Hence the need for this study. Moreover, Bentiu District was one of the districts of Greater Upper Nile Field whose churches were mostly led by lay leaders. Hence, this research focused on training the lay leaders of the district, so that they can be equipped and empowered to do more effective work for the Lord and His church in the Greater Upper Nile Field in particular and the South Sudan Union Mission at large.

### **The Overall Goal**

This project's major goal was to train lay leaders in effective discipleship in Greater Upper Nile Field so that they, in turn, would train the churches in effective

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<sup>45</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 18<sup>th</sup> ed.*, 84.

discipleship that would help and enhance growth in spirituality and witnessing in the Field, hence, the intervention design was developed based on this overall goal.

### **The Intended Change**

The change expected to take place as the result of this study is to help lay leaders of Bentiu District to properly know who was a disciple, practice the life of a disciple, and train church members how to practice biblical discipleship.

In this aspect, as it was discussed in chapter 3 of this dissertation, the lay leaders would be trained to understand the three dimensions of discipleship, which were rational, relational, and missional. They would also be trained to understand the various aspects of discipleship, which were edification, witnessing, fellowship, community, and mentoring. Furthermore, they would be encouraged to practice all these aspects and dimensions to be truly effective disciples and lay leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Bentiu District.

To bring the intended change to the lay leaders, three strategies would be used. The first strategy was to show that discipleship was biblical by preparing a biblically based training manual on discipleship from which the lay leaders and the churches were to be trained. The second strategy was to train the lay leaders themselves using the manual that was prepared for this purpose. The third strategy was to allow the lay leaders themselves to train the churches using the same manual that was prepared for the same purpose. This approach would assist the lay leaders in internalizing and applying what they have learned from the first training and at the same time equip the churches for effective discipleship.

These strategies were applied in chapter five of this dissertation where the real training program for the twenty-nine lay leaders in the ten churches was explained. It

would be carried out for two hours each day for nine days, both for the lay leaders and the churches.

### **Summary**

The description of the program design dealt mainly with the issues of the research by converting theories into practice. In chapter two, the researcher established that discipleship is biblical. In chapter three, the major books on discipleship were reviewed. In this chapter, the investigations were turned into practical applications.

The concise profile of the ministry context placed this research into a historical context at the macro level as well as the micro level, helping the reader to grasp the meaning, context, as well as environment in which this research was carried out.

South Sudan was the most recent country to attain its independence among the world's nations. It obtained its independence on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011, from the Republic of Sudan after 22 years of civil war that started in 1983 and ended on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

The independence came as the result of a referendum conducted on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011 that was stipulated in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and in which the South Sudanese voted overwhelmingly for independence. Hence the July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011 declaration of independence for the Republic of South Sudan. "On July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Republic of South Sudan joined the United Nations as the world's 193<sup>rd</sup> nation."<sup>46</sup>

The displacement of refugees caused by the wars in South Sudan, both pre- and post-independence, had allowed the South Sudanese to come into contact with the

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<sup>46</sup> Water for South Sudan, "Brief History of South Sudan."

Seventh-day Adventist message. Those who received this message came back with it to South Sudan and began to spread it.

Meanwhile, some South Sudanese who fled to Ethiopia as refugees also received the Adventist message and returned with it to the Greater Upper Nile region of South Sudan. These returnees preached the Advent message in Nasir and Malakal in the Greater Upper Nile territory.

Since the church in South Sudan was young, it was faced with challenges of trained workers, especially pastors, who can professionally lead the church. This lack of pastors resulted in the heavy involvement of lay leaders in the management of the church and the running of its affairs. This necessitated that the lay leaders be given special training that equipped them for effective ministry in the church. Hence, a research project for effective discipleship of Lay Leaders in the Bentiu District of Greater Upper Nile Field was initiated.

Since this project was a training program for effective discipleship in the Greater Upper Nile Field, it used the instructional method for the training. A training manual with a minimum of nine lessons on discipleship was developed by the researcher from which the lay leaders of Bentiu District were trained. A mixed method of research was used in this project. Creswell describes this way of research as involving acquiring data by asking the research questions.<sup>47</sup>

Regarding the qualitative method, interview questions were used for obtaining data through focus groups. The quantitative aspect in the research came about when questionnaires were used to collect the data for evaluating the training program for the lay leaders. Designing of the intervention depended on the data that were acquired by

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<sup>47</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 217.

the qualitative method of the research. At least three important observations emerged from the data analysis. The first observation was that discipleship is taking place in Bentiu District even though in a low capacity. The second observation was that new disciples' worldviews should be transformed if they were to remain faithful in the church. The third observation was that lay leaders were not fully informed and equipped in discipleship training. So, the intervention should focus on training and equipping the lay leaders for effective discipleship so that they can help the churches grow spiritually, numerically, and financially.

## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM DESIGNED

This chapter explained the practical steps taken to implement the training program for effective discipleship in the Bentiu District of the Greater Upper Nile Field. It also responded to the issues that arose in the presentations in chapter four of this dissertation. This report examined the final evaluation, the research instrument used, and the data analysis presented. Chapter four dealt with how lay leaders in Bentiu District could become effective disciples through a discipleship training program. This chapter explained how that program was carried out.

The data analysis in chapter four revealed that the lay leaders as well as the members of Bentiu District churches, had some knowledge of discipleship. However, they lacked enough knowledge to make them effective disciples. Hence, this chapter explained the steps that were taken to address the situation in order to improve the quality of the discipleship of lay leaders.

Seminars that strengthened the effectiveness of discipleship in Bentiu District were designed and implemented by the researcher and the lay leaders themselves. This implementation plan involved the preparation of a training manual on discipleship, the preparation of questions for the focus groups, the preparation of questionnaires for the response of the lay leaders following their discipleship training, the preparation of questionnaires for the response of the churches to the training by the lay leaders, selection of the lay leaders for the training, and finally the evaluation of the results of the training.

The evaluation of the effect of the trainings was done three months after the trainings were conducted, especially in the churches by the lay leaders. The purpose of the evaluation was to ascertain the understanding of the participants regarding the subjects presented. It was also to help the researcher and the lay leaders to know the type of interventions to be carried out in those churches.

In this chapter, some aspects of chapter four have been incorporated in order to give clarity to the subjects under consideration. This included data presentation and analysis during the intervention program.

### **Implementation of the Program**

The first program for the training on effective discipleship was conducted for nine days for the twenty-nine lay leaders. The program was conducted in the Sector 4 church in Bentiu displaced camp because it was the only available church for conducting the program at the time. Each lay leader attended a two-hour training program on discipleship each day for the nine days of the training. The total number of hours each lay leader attended during the training was 18 hours.

The training was conducted using a discipleship training manual that was prepared by the researcher himself (see Appendix A). The manual had nine lessons on discipleship. The first lesson was entitled, “The Call to Discipleship” while the last lesson was entitled, “Discipleship and the Gospel Commission.” An analysis of the training showed that the two lessons that had the most spiritual effect on the lay leaders were lessons seven and eight, entitled “Discipleship and Spiritual Maturity” and “Discipleship and Prayer Life,” respectively.

The training manual was in a question-and-answer form where the trainer asked the questions to the trainees and the answers were checked from the Bible. Each person was allowed to answer the questions. After a particular question, the next

question was considered. Each lesson had between 7 to 11 questions. Besides the general objective of the manual, each lesson had its objective under each of the topics.

At the end of the training, the lay leaders appreciated the training and requested more sessions in the future. Evaluation questionnaires were then administered to them, which they filled out and returned to the trainer (researcher). Only 25 of the 29 lay leaders who attended the training were able to fill out the questionnaires and returned them to the researcher.

### **The Training of the Lay Leaders**

To address the low level of discipleship in the Bentiu District, an intervention program was designed to equip leaders with the necessary knowledge and skills. The program included the training of 29 lay leaders conveniently selected from eight churches, to participate in discipleship training. The training lasted nine days and was structured around nine lessons on discipleship from the discipleship training manual (see Appendix), which was prepared by the researcher. At the end of the training, questionnaires were administered to the lay leaders to assess the effectiveness of the program. Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were included in the questionnaires to gather comprehensive feedback.<sup>1</sup>

The Greater Upper Nile Field was one of the four Fields in the South Sudan Union Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the East-Central Africa Division. The Field has 10 churches and 44 companies. It has a membership of 8,663 according to the 2021 third quarter statistical report. The Field also had six districts of which Bentiu is one of them. Bentiu District was situated in the western part of the Field. Two training sessions on discipleship were conducted in the district, the first

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<sup>1</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 113.

one was conducted by the researcher for 29 lay leaders drawn conveniently from various churches, while the lay leaders themselves conducted the second one for the ten churches in the district. They were also chosen conveniently. The results of the training were tabulated and described below.

The training of the 29 lay leaders for effective discipleship in Bentiu District took place within nine days, January 17 – 25, 2022. The training was conducted by the researcher himself using a training manual prepared for the purpose. The manual contained nine lessons on discipleship, the first of which was about the “Call to Discipleship” and the last was about “Discipleship and the Gospel Commission.” At the end of the training, a questionnaire containing twelve questions was administered to lay leaders to study the spiritual impact of the training on them. Consequently, out of the 29 lay leaders who attended the training, only 25 were able to answer the questionnaire.

The results indicated that the responses of the lay leaders varied according to the impact of the training on each of them individually. Regarding question one—which was intended to study the spiritual impact of the training on the lay leaders—17 indicated that the general impression was satisfactory, two of them indicated that they were highly influenced spiritually by the training process and content, while three indicated that the result was moderate, and three of the lay leaders did not indicate the spiritual effect of the training on them.

Regarding the result of the training, the lessons that impacted them most positively spiritually were lessons 7 and 8. Lesson 7 is on “Discipleship and Spiritual Maturity” and Lesson 8 is on “Discipleship and Prayer Life”. These two also left the most encouraging impression on the lay leaders. A total of 14 lay leaders mentioned these two lessons. Other lessons that had a significant impact on participants were

Lesson 9 with four respondents and Lesson 6 with two respondents. The remaining lessons had one respondent each.

As to how the training had helped the lay leaders in understanding discipleship, 17 of them indicated that it was beyond 75%, 3 of them said that it was 75%, while four indicated 50% and one 25%. This indicated that the training had helped the lay leaders understand the concept of discipleship in the context of the Christian faith.

Questions four and five on the questionnaire revealed the motivation of the lay leaders in regard to witnessing and training others about discipleship. 22 of the lay leaders said that they were completely motivated to go and witness as a result of the training, while all 25 participants agreed to go and train others on discipleship. Two of them indicated that they were moderately motivated to witness.

Question six focused on the practical approach that should be clearly emphasized in the training of discipleship in Bentiu District, while question seven focused on what elements should be emphasized for the growth of disciples in the district. As per question six, 8 of the lay leaders wanted lesson 7 to be repeated in the future training of disciples. Lessons 1, 2, and 4 each had two respondents while seven respondents did not indicate which lessons should be emphasized more in the training. As to questions 7 and 6, the respondents wanted more discipleship training to be conducted in Bentiu District while four wanted training on church leadership. One respondent indicated camp meetings and social involvement, while one had no idea.

Question 8 focused on discovering which group of church members would need more training on discipleship, while question 9 focused on finding out the percentage of appreciation for the training. 19 of the lay leaders indicated that the youths should be given more training on discipleship; two of them wanted women to

be given more training on discipleship, while two had no idea. As to the percentage of appreciation for the training, 19 lay leaders placed the training at more than 75%; four placed it at 75% and two at 50%.

Questions 10 and 11 dealt with the impact of the training on church growth and lay leaders of Bentiu District respectively. All 25 lay leaders indicated that the training would have good results for church growth in the district. However, regarding its impact on the lay leaders themselves, 22 of them agreed that the impact was positive, one indicated that it was negative, and two had no idea. Hence, based on the responses of the lay leaders, it could be deduced that the training has a positive impact both for the lay leaders and for church growth in the district.

Question 12 asked the lay leaders whether they would like the training to be repeated in the district in the future. 24 overwhelmingly agreed that it should be conducted again. However, one lay leader had no idea whether it should be repeated. Table 3 below shows the result of the training of the lay leaders.

*Table 3. The Result of the Training of the Lay Leaders*

S/No	Questionnaire on	Responses
1.	The spiritual effect of the training	Satisfactorily=17; Highly=2; Moderately=3; No respond=3
2.	The lesson with the most spiritual effect	L6=2; L5=2; L7=7; L8=7; L4=1; L9=4; L3=1; L1=1.
3.	% of understanding the training	25%=1; 50%=4; 75%=3; <75%=17.
4.	Motivation for witnessing	Completely=22; Moderately=2; Not responded=1
5.	Motivation to teach on discipleship	Yes=25; No=0
6.	Area of Emphasis on discipleship in Bentiu district	L1=2; L2=2; L3=1; L4=2; L6=1; L7=8; L8=1; L9=1; No idea=7.
7.	Other emphasis for discipleship growth	More discipleship training=16; Church leadership training=4; camp meeting=1; Being social=1; No idea=1.
8.	Group of people that need more training in discipleship in Bentiu	Youth=19; Women=2; Youth and women=1; Women and Elders=1; Others=2
9.	% of appreciation of the training	<75%=19; 75%=4; 50%=2.
10.	Impact of the training on church growth in Bentiu district.	Positive=25; Negative=0; Not known=0
11.	Impact of the training on lay leaders in Bentiu district.	Positive=22; Negative=1; Not sure=2
12.	The desire to repeat the training in the future.	Yes=24; No=0; No idea=1

Key to Abbreviations: L= Lesson number of the Training Manual.

### **The State of the Churches before Intervention**

The second training on effective discipleship was conducted by ten lay leaders, out of twenty-five, in ten churches, one month after the main training undertaken by the researcher. The objectives of this second training were to empower the churches on effective discipleship for effective witnessing and to help the lay leaders internalize what they learned in the first training. The churches that received this training were Dhoreng (C1), Babanuth (C2), Sector 5 (C3), Biett (C4), Sector 3

(C5), Sector 2 (C6), POC Women (C7), Ngunchak (C8), Bentiu Central Prison church (C9), and Leer church (C10). The churches were selected based on their transport availability, their representation among the lay leaders who were trained, and their good security situation. The lay leaders were chosen based on their attendance at the training on discipleship conducted by the researcher. They were also willing to go and conduct the training in their churches. Only ten of the lay leaders, out of twenty-five, were able to conduct this training because the other remaining lay leaders could not access the Churches they proposed for training due to insecurity in some parts of the district.

Regarding the process of selecting the churches for conducting training, all the twenty-five lay leaders were allowed to choose where they preferred to conduct their training. They all chose a church, but only ten of them succeeded in making successful choices because of insecurity and transport unavailability in their areas. As far as the churches were concerned, they were chosen by the lay leaders based on their ability to reach those churches.

The questionnaires were administered to the lay leaders to collect the data three months after the training to study the effectiveness of the training in the lives of the church members. The questionnaires covered areas such as the condition of the churches before the training, the effect of the training on the churches, and the condition of the churches three months after the training was carried out.

On the condition of the churches before the training, only six churches were able to report their membership: C1=74, C2=20, C3=50, C5=340, C8=70, and C9=27. On spiritual condition, four churches (C1, C5, C6, and C10) reported their spiritual condition as strong. The rest of the churches reported their spiritual conditions as moderate.

Regarding the fraction of the churches participating in witnessing and visitations, three (C1, C2, C3) churches reported that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of their membership were participating in witnessing and visitations. Three churches (C6, C7, C8) also reported that  $\frac{1}{2}$  of their members were participating in witnessing and visitations. The rest of the churches reported that only  $\frac{1}{4}$  of their members were participating in witnessing and visitations before the training was conducted.

Regarding the training on discipleship, three of the churches (C4, C6, and C8) reported that they had earlier been trained on discipleship before the lay leaders went to train them. The rest of the churches reported that they had no prior training in discipleship. Churches C1 to C6 and C10 reported that the active members in their churches were the youth, while C7 and C8 reported women as the most active members in their churches, while C9 reported men as the active members.

On cultural influence and attending prayer meetings, four churches (C1, C2, C4, and C10) reported strong cultural influences, churches C5, C6, and C7 reported moderate cultural influences on them, while the rest of the churches reported weak cultural influences on them. Regarding attending prayer meetings, C1, C6, and C8 reported that 75% of their membership were attending prayer meetings; C2 and C5 reported that only 50% of their membership were attending prayer meetings; while C3, C4, C7, and C9 reported that a little more than 25% were attending prayer meetings and C10 reported that only less than 25% of the membership were attending prayer meetings. Table 4 below shows the condition of the churches before the training conducted by the lay leaders.

*Table 4. The Condition of the Churches before the Training*

S/N	Questionnaire on	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
1.	Membership	74	20	50		340			70	27	
2.	Spiritual Condition	S	M	M	M	S	S	M	M	M	S
3.	Witness & Visitation	$\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$
4.	Training on disciples	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
5.	Active members	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	We	We	Me	Y
6.	Cultural Influence	S	S	W	S	M	M	M	W	W	S
7.	% Attending prayer	75	50	<25	<25	50	75	<25	75	<25	>25

Key to Abbreviations: C=church; S=strong; M=moderate; W=weak; We=women; Me=men; Y=youth

### **Intervention Design and Approach**

The design of the intervention was based on the qualitative data that was collected. At least three important observations emerged from the data analysis. The first observation was that there was discipleship taking place in Bentiu District even though at low quality. The intervention should be to enhance or improve on what had already been done earlier. The second observation was that new disciples' worldviews should be transformed if they were to remain faithful in the church. The intervention should incorporate worldview transformation methods so that the new disciples were fully transformed into the new life in Christ. The third observation was that lay leaders were not fully informed and equipped in discipleship training. So, the intervention should focus on training and equipping the lay leaders for effective discipleship training so that they can be able to help the churches grow spiritually, numerically, and financially.

The intervention in the ten churches was carried out by ten trained lay leaders

under the supervision of the researcher. The lay leaders used the same training manuals that were given to them during their training by the researcher.

After conducting the training sessions in the churches, the ten lay leaders reported the reactions of the churches to the training. The effect of the training on the spirituality of the members was reported as moderate by C2, and very high by C1, C3, and C8. The rest of the churches reported the effect of the training on their spirituality as satisfactory. Regarding the lessons with the most positive effect on the members' spirituality, the churches that reported lesson 8 were C5 and C10; lesson 7 were C2 and C6; lesson 3 was C3 and C7; lesson 2 was C4 and C9; lesson 4 was C4 and lesson 5 was C8.

Regarding the percentage of understanding discipleship and their motivation for witnessing due to the training, four churches (C1, C4, C6, C8) reported that their understanding of discipleship was beyond 75%. C3, C5, C7, C9, and C10 reported 50% of understanding discipleship, while C2 reported 75% of understanding the training on discipleship. All the churches except C5 and C7 reported that they were highly motivated to witness as the result of the training. C5 and C7 reported their motivation as moderate. On motivation to teach others, all the churches from C1 to C10 reported that they are highly motivated to teach others about discipleship.

Questions 6 and 7 inquired from the churches about discipleship and other areas that need more emphasis in future training. The responses of the churches C3, C5, C6, C7, and C9 were that more witnessing should be emphasized. Only C8 wanted more emphasis on obedience, while C1, C2, C4, and C10 wanted more emphasis on intercultural discipleship. As to other things that should be emphasized, C2, C3, and C4 wanted witnessing to be emphasized more, while C6 wanted more training and C7 wanted church planting to be emphasized. C5 wanted more emphasis

on prophecy, C8 on school, and C9 wanted more emphasis on intercultural discipleship. Regarding the groups needing more training on discipleship and the percentage of understanding the discipleship training, C3 and C6 to C9 all reported that the youth were the ones that needed more training on discipleship. However, C1, C2, C4, C5, and C10 all reported that women were the ones who wanted more training on discipleship. C2 to C4 and C6 to C10 all reported the percentage of appreciation to be beyond 75% while C1 and C5 reported the percentage at 75%. All the churches from C1 to C10 reported the effect of the training on lay leaders and church growth as positive. All the churches indicated with optimism that they wanted more training on discipleship in the future. Table 5 below shows the reactions of the churches to the training of the lay leaders.

*Table 5. Reaction of the Churches to the Training*

S/N	Questionnaire on	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
1.	Effect on members' spirituality	high	moderate	high	satisfied	satisfied	satisfied	satisfied	high	satisfied	satisfied
2.	The lesson with the most positive effect	4	7	3	2	8	7	3	5	2	8
3.	% of Understanding Discipleship	<75	75	50	<75	50	<75	50	<75	50	50
4.	Motivation for witnessing	completely	completely	completely	completely	moderate	completely	moderate	completely	completely	completely
5.	Motivation to teach others.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6.	Area of discipleship for more emphasis	Intercultural	Intercultural	withnessing	Intercultural	withnessing	withnessing	witnessing	obedience	withnessing	Intercultural
7.	Other things for more emphasis		Witnessing	Witnessing	Witnessing	Prophecy	+Training	Church planting	School	IC	
8.	Group needing more discipleship training	Women	Women	Youth	Women	Women	Youth	Youth	Youth	Youth	Women
9.	% of appreciation for the training	75	<75	<75	<75	75	<75	<75	<75	<75	<75
10.	Impact on church growth in the local church	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive
11.	Effect on lay leaders	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive
12.	The desire for further training in the future	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Key to Abbreviation: IC=intercultural discipleship.

### **Assessing the Effectiveness of the Intervention**

A questionnaire with five questions was administered to the churches three months after the training to assess how effective discipleship training was conducted by the lay leaders. The results of the questionnaire indicated that the churches were affected positively in different ways. Regarding new members joining the churches, as a result of the training, eight of the churches reported that new members joined the churches after the training. C5 reported the highest number that joined the church, namely, 20 members; while C1 reported 15 new members joining the church as the result of the training. Both C4 and C10 have reported that 10 persons joined each church as a result of the training. Also, both C7 and C9 reported an increase in their membership by 5 persons each. C2 reported an increase of 3 persons to the church but C3 and C6 both reported no increase in the membership of their churches.

All the churches except one reported church members joining the witnessing groups. C4 had 40 members joining the witnessing group, the highest number of them all. C3 and C9 both reported 25 and 24 members joining witnessing groups respectively. C2 had 20 members that joined the witnessing group while C1 and C8 had each 18 members joining the group. C6 had 17 members, C7 had 14 and C10 had 4 that joined the witnessing groups. C5 had no members join the witnessing group.

On the question of the increase in the spirituality of the members, all the churches reported a positive increase in the spirituality of the members as a result of the training. However, C9 reported a higher increase than the rest of the churches. The effect of the training on the youth group was reported as positive; besides, the effect of the training on the women's group was also reported as positive by all the churches. Table 6 below shows the condition of the churches after the training by the lay leaders.

*Table 6. Condition of the Churches after the Training.*

S/N	Questionnaire on	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
1.	New Members Joining the Church	15	3	0	10	20	0	5	8	5	10
2.	Church Members joining Witnessing group	18	20	25	40	0	17	14	18	24	4
3.	Increase of Spirituality of Members	P	P	P	50%	P	<75%	Yes	P	H	P
4.	Effect on the Witnessing of Youth Group	P	P	P	P	70%	P	P	P	P	P
5.	Effect on the Witnessing of the Women's Group	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

Keys to Abbreviations: P=positive; H= high

### **Assessment of the Intervention**

This section of the data analysis used frequencies and percentages in frequency tables to show the lay leaders that responded to a particular question. Bryman supports the use of frequency tables and writes, “A frequency table provides the number of people and the percentage belonging to each of the categories for the variable in question. It could be used with all of the different types of variables.”<sup>2</sup> The data was analyzed to discover the knowledge of the lay leaders about discipleship so that an intervention could be planned for further training for more effective discipleship.

It is to be noted that the data that was collected was ordinal. Bryman defines ordinal data/variables as “variables whose categories can be ranked ordered but the

<sup>2</sup> Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed, 336.

distance between the categories are not equal across the range.”<sup>3</sup> However, due to the types of questions posed to the lay leaders, some of the data that were collected may be termed nominal data. Bryman defines nominal data as “variables that comprise categories that cannot be rank ordered.”<sup>4</sup>

The data were analyzed based on the themes that were presented in the questionnaire. The first theme to be analyzed is the spiritual effect of the training on the lay leaders. Table 7 below shows the spiritual effect of the training on the lay leaders.

*Table 7. Spiritual Effect of the Training on the Lay Leaders*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfactory	2	8
Moderately Satisfactory	3	12
Satisfactory	17	68
No Response	3	12
Total	25	100

Table 7 above showed that out of the 25 lay leaders who attended the discipleship training, 8% indicated that they were highly satisfied with the training, while 12% were moderately satisfied. However, 68% said that they were pleased by the training while another 12% did not give their response. The fact that 68% of the lay leaders were satisfied indicates that the training has achieved its goal of equipping the lay leaders spiritually.

Table 8 below shows the lessons with the most spiritual effect on the 25 Lay Leaders who responded to the questionnaire.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 335.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

*Table 8. Lessons with the most Spiritual Effect on the Lay Leaders*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Lesson 5	2	8
Lesson 6	2	8
Lesson 7	7	28
Lesson 8	7	28
Lesson 9	4	16
Lesson 4	1	4
Lesson 3	1	4
Lesson 1	1	4
Total	25	100

Table 8 above was on lessons with the most spiritual effect on the lay leaders. Both lessons 7 and 8 had the most positive spiritual effect on the lay leaders because each of them scored 28%. They were followed by lesson 4 with a 16% spiritual effect on the lay leaders. Lesson 7 was about “Discipleship and Spiritual Maturity” with lesson 8 being on “Discipleship and Prayer Life” while lesson 4 was about “Discipleship and the Lordship of Jesus Christ.” Since the two lessons above had the most spiritual effects on the lay leaders, they need to be emphasized more in the future training on discipleship in Bentiu District.

Table 9 below shows the percentage of understanding of the training by the Lay leaders.

*Table 9. Percentage of Understanding the Training by Lay Leaders*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
25% Understanding	1	4
50% Understanding	4	16
75% Understanding	3	12
More than 75% Understanding	17	68
Total	25	100

Table 9 above explains the percentage of how the lay leaders understood the discipleship training. Those who had over 75% understanding were 68% of the group, and those who had 75% understanding were 12% of the group. Those with 50% understanding constituted 16% of the group while those with 25% understanding constituted only 4% of the group. This clearly showed that the majority of the lay leaders understood the training very well. Hence, it had helped them to be effective disciples and discipleship trainers for the churches in Bentiu district.

Table 10 below shows how the Lay Leaders were motivated to witness as the result of training by the researcher.

*Table 10. Motivation of the Lay Leaders for Witnessing due to the Training*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Completely Motivated	22	88
Moderately Motivated	2	8
Not Responded	1	4
Total	25	100

Table 10 above explains the motivation of the lay leaders as the result of the discipleship training. 88% of the participants were completely motivated as a result of the training. However, 8% of the group were moderately motivated while 4% did not respond to the questionnaire. This result was an encouragement to the researcher because it showed that most of the lay leaders who participated in the training would actively participate in the witnessing program of the church. Moreover, their training in effective discipleship had prepared them to do that.

Table 11 below shows how the impact of the training of the Lay Leaders would have on the churches in Bentiu District.

*Table 11. Impact of the Lay Leaders' Training on Church Growth*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	25	100
Negative	0	0
Not Known	0	0
Total	25	100

Table 11 above indicates that the impact of the training on church growth in Bentiu District was 100% positive according to the responses of the lay leaders. This was a positive indication for church growth in the district if all the lay leaders will implement what they have learned from the training.

Regarding the second training on discipleship that was conducted by ten of the lay leaders in ten churches, the researcher again used a frequency table to analyze the effect of the training on the churches. As far as the conditions of the churches before the training were concerned, an analysis was done of the spiritual condition of the churches, witnessing and visitation in the churches, and percentage of church members attending prayer meetings regularly.

Concerning the spiritual condition of the churches before the training, it was found that out of the ten churches that attended the training, 40% of them had strong spiritual conditions, while the remaining 60% had a moderate spiritual condition (see Table 12 below). This information was important to the researcher and the lay leaders because it helped in the intervention, especially in the churches that were moderate in their spiritual condition. Table 12 below shows the spiritual condition of the churches before the training of the Lay Leaders.

*Table 12. Spiritual condition of the churches Before Training*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strong	4	40
Moderate	6	60
Weak	0	0
Total	10	100

On the participation of the church members in witnessing and visitations in the churches before the training, table 13 (below) shows that 30% of the churches had  $\frac{3}{4}$  of their members participating in witnessing and visitations, another 30% had  $\frac{1}{2}$  of their members participating, while the remaining 40% of the churches had only  $\frac{1}{4}$  of their members participating in the witnessing and visitation programs of the churches. This was a clear indication that these churches needed further training in discipleship so that they could increase their membership. Table 13 below shows the participation of the churches in witnessing and visitation.

*Table 13. Participation in Witnessing and Visitations in the churches*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
$\frac{3}{4}$ of church members	3	30
$\frac{1}{2}$ of the church members	3	30
$\frac{1}{4}$ of church members	4	40
Total	10	100

As to the churches whose members were attending prayer meetings regularly, table 14 below shows that out of the 10 churches under study, only 30% had 75 percent members attending prayer meetings, another 20% of the churches had 50 percent attendance, 40% had a little more than 25 percent members participating, while the remaining 10% had less than 25 percent of their membership attending prayer meetings. Table 14 below shows that only half of the churches had

considerable membership attending prayer meetings. This shows that an intervention was needed to help increase the percentage of church attendance. Table 14 below shows the percentage of church members attending prayer meetings regularly.

*Table 14. Percentage of Members attending Prayer Meetings regularly*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
75 percent of the members	3	30
50 percent of the members	2	20
More than 25 percent of the members	4	40
Less than 25 percent of the members	1	10
Total	10	100

The analysis of the second part of the questionnaires administered to the churches following the training conducted by the ten lay leaders in the ten churches focused on three themes namely; the effect on membership spirituality, the motivation of members to witness, and the impact on church growth, though many other themes were included in the questionnaire. Three of the churches that received the training reported that 30% of their members were highly impacted spiritually by the training (see Table 15 below). Only one church indicated that its members were moderately affected spiritually by the training. Nevertheless, six churches reported that their members were satisfactorily stimulated spiritually by the discipleship training by their lay leaders. This result indicated that more intervention was needed at least in seven of the churches involved in this study to help them grow spiritually. Table 15 below shows the effect of the training on church members' spirituality in the Bentiu district.

*Table 15. Effect of the Training on Members' Spirituality.*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Highly	3	30
Moderately	1	10
Satisfactorily	6	60
Total	10	100

Table 16 below shows that 80% of the members or 8 of the churches that received the training on discipleship indicated that they were completely motivated to witness as a result. However, two of the churches that represent 20% of the members indicated their motivation as being moderate. Therefore, though the majority of the churches were completely motivated to witness, further intervention needed to be carried out to bring the remaining 20% of the members to the level of the rest. This could be done by conducting more training for the 20% of the churches that had shown low motivation. Table 16 below shows the motivation of church members for witnessing in the Bentiu district.

*Table 16. Motivation of Church Members for Witnessing*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Completely	8	80
Moderately	2	20
Total	10	100

As indicated by Table 17 below, the impact of the discipleship training by the lay leaders, using the discipleship manual prepared by the researcher in the local churches, was 100% positive. This means that all the ten churches that received the training reported that the training was a strong catalyst in motivating growth in their churches. Table 17 below shows the impact of the training on church growth in the local churches of the Bentiu district.

*Table 17. Impact of the Training on Church Growth in the Local Churches*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	10	100
Negative	0	0
Total	10	100

Following the training of the churches by the lay leaders, a period of three months elapsed before a questionnaire was administered to study the impact of the training on the churches in terms of membership increase, members joining witnessing groups, an increase in the spirituality of the members, and the effect of the training on witnessing for both youth and women groups.

Based on the analysis in Table 18 below, five churches increased new membership from 0 to 5 and they represented 50% of the churches, three churches that represented 30% of the churches increased new members from 6 to 10, and one church or 10% of the churches increased new members from 11 to 15, and another one church or 10% of the churches increased new members from 16 to 20. These results indicate that the training on discipleship by the lay leaders had a positive effect on membership increase, but more intervention still needs to be carried out if more new members were to join the churches. This result also showed that the lay leaders had already inculcated the teaching they had received from the researcher and were applying it correctly. Table 18 below shows how new members joined the churches in the Bentiu district as a result of training by the lay leaders.

*Table 18. New Members Joining the Churches*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 5	5	50
6 – 10	3	30
11 – 15	1	10
16 – 20	1	10
Total	10	100

Of the number of church members that joined witnessing groups three months after the training was conducted, table 19 below shows that two churches had 0 to 10 or 20% of members that joined the witnessing group; five churches had 11 to 20 or

50% of members that joined the witnessing groups, another two churches had 21 to 30 or 20% of members that joined the witnessing groups, and only one church reported 31 to 40 or 10% of members that joined the witnessing groups in the local churches. These results showed that at least 80% of the churches studied had sizable members who joined witnessing groups. However, for the sake of the 20%, more intervention needed to be carried out if more members were to join the witnessing groups in the Bentiu District of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Table 19 below shows the number of church members who joined witnessing groups as a result of the training by the lay leaders.

*Table 19. Numbers of Church Members that Joined Witnessing Groups*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 10	2	20
11 – 20	5	50
21 – 30	2	20
31 - 40	1	10
Total	10	100

On the increase of spirituality of members, only one church, or 10% of the churches, reported a high increase in the spirituality of the members (see Table 20 below). However, seven churches, or 70% of the churches reported a positive increase in the spirituality of the members as a result of the training. One church, which represents 10% of the churches reported that the increase in members' spirituality had reached more than 75% meanwhile another 10% of the churches reported a 50% increase in spirituality as a result of the training. Table 20 below shows the increase in the spirituality of church members as the result of the training by the lay leaders.

*Table 20. Increase of Spirituality of Members*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Highly	1	10
Positive	7	70
More than 75 Percent	1	10
50 Percent	1	10
Total	10	100

All ten churches or 100% of the churches that attended the discipleship training that was conducted by the lay leaders reported a positive effect on the youth and women groups in terms of witnessing. However, this did not mean that there was no need for an intervention because these ten churches were only representatives of all the churches in Bentiu District. Table 21 below shows the effect of the training on the witnessing of the Youth and Women groups in the Bentiu district.

*Table 21. Effect on the Witnessing of Youth and Women Groups*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	10	100
Negative	0	0
Total	10	100

### **The Implementation of the Strategies**

The study, “A Training Program for Effective Discipleship of Lay Leaders in Greater Upper Nile Field,” was implemented in six strategically important points. The first point was to show that discipleship was biblical. The second point was to show that discipleship was sanctioned by the church. The third point was to explain that discipleship was transformational. The fourth point was to show that discipleship was rational. The fifth point was to explain that discipleship was relational, and the sixth point was to demonstrate that discipleship was missional. These strategically important points were discussed one-by-one hereafter.

## **Discipleship was Biblical**

The command to go and make disciples was given by Jesus Christ in Matthew, chapter 28:18-20. The work of disciple-making was based on this command, and Jesus promised to be with us if we went to make disciples for Him. Thus, discipleship was biblical.

The nine lessons for the training for effective discipleship in the Greater Upper Nile Field were all based on biblical teachings. Concrete questions were asked to the participants, to which they answered by quoting relevant Bible verses, followed by explanations. The participants were also allowed to ask questions if they did not understand the meaning of the text.

For example, lesson one of the Training Manual was about the “Call to Discipleship.” After defining that a disciple was a born-again follower of Christ, John 3:1-8 was quoted and explained. In chapter three of this research, discipleship was defined as giving the word of God to believers so that they were filled by the Holy Spirit. These believers then made more disciples of Christ by living their lives for Christ as they learnt more of Him.<sup>5</sup> Thus discipleship was biblical because it focuses on the word of God.

Lesson two of the discipleship training manual discussed the “Evidence of Discipleship.” The first question focused on John 8:31-32, in which Jesus said that a person who was His disciple must continue in His word, thus showing that discipleship was biblical. However, for one to continue in Jesus, he ought to

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<sup>5</sup> Robby Gallaty, *Rediscovering Discipleship: Making Jesus Final Word Our First Work* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 155.

discipline himself in the study of the word of God. He ought to faithfully accept the teachings of the Scriptures and memorize them in his heart.<sup>6</sup>

This concept was explained to the participants of the training. Jesus also taught His disciples that following Him was a costly endeavor. In Luke 14:27, He asked His disciples to carry their crosses and follow Him. Thus, the third lesson of the training manual on discipleship focused on the “Cost of Discipleship.” It explained to the participants that following Jesus was costly and may cost a disciple his/her own life. However, Jesus promised that those who lose their lives for His sake would find it again.

A disciple acknowledged the authority of Jesus Christ as supreme because He was Lord of all (Acts 10:36). This was the focus of lesson four in the Training Manual on effective discipleship. The title of the lesson was, “Discipleship and the Lordship of Jesus Christ” and it taught that a true disciple would acknowledge Jesus as Lord by being obedient to His commandments. As Sanders J. Oswald observed, a disciple obeyed Christ's teachings and applied them in his life.<sup>7</sup> This point was strongly emphasized to the participants at the training seminar. They, in turn, asked questions that were answered based on the Bible.

The rest of the lessons in the Training Manual from lesson five entitled “Discipleship and the Holy Spirit” to lesson nine entitled, “Discipleship and the Gospel Commission” were all Bible-based. They all showed that a true disciple depended on the Bible for his instructions in following Jesus Christ. They ought to

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<sup>6</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2012), 513.

<sup>7</sup> Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 543.

respect and obey what the Bible taught and exemplify it in their lives and their relation to other disciples.

### **Discipleship was Sanctioned by the Church**

The fact that discipleship was sanctioned by the church was shown by the Mission Statement of the Seventh-day Adventist church. The statement stated that the work of the church was making disciples, and preaching the gospel as it was revealed in the messages of the three angels in Revelation 14. This preaching was to lead people to accept Jesus as their Savior and join His last-day church by serving Him as their Lord and getting ready for His imminent return.<sup>8</sup>

The policy further stated that this mission was pursued as the Holy Spirit gave us the power to do so,<sup>9</sup> and through preaching, teaching, healing, and discipling. Concerning Christ-like discipling, the policy added that we should help all members to grow in their relationship with Jesus and with fellow church members. We should help newly converted members to grow in righteousness, in reaching out with the gospel, and in obeying God's commandments.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, the fact that training in effective discipleship was sanctioned by the church was emphasized to the participants at the training. All their questions in this regard were answered and confirmed by the official documents of the church. One of these documents of the church was the *Discipleship Handbook* which was published by the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It defined discipleship as the steps we take in acquiring the character of Jesus because we spend

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<sup>8</sup> *Working Policy of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist, 2011-2012 ed.* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2011), 29.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

time with Him. This was not achieved by spending time in classes of discipleship. The personal relationship with Jesus as our teacher was the real point of being a disciple of Christ.<sup>11</sup>

### **Discipleship was Transformational**

To be a disciple of Christ was to live a transformed life. This was what the Bible emphasized in 2 Corinthians 5:17 when it said that those who believe in Jesus became new creatures because they had left their old way of life and allow the new way of life in Christ to control them.<sup>12</sup> In Romans 12:2, Paul urged the disciples of Christ not to allow the world to control them but to allow Jesus to change their lives through the renewal of the mind.<sup>13</sup>

Evelyn and Richard Hibbert beautifully described this transformation in a disciple's life by saying that making disciples was the way whereby the believer helped those who wanted to become Christ's disciples to change from the old manner of life to the new one that qualified them to be members of God's church. The "journey is deeply relational. It is helpful to think of this journey like people walking along a road together."<sup>14</sup>

W. Jay Moon in his book *Intercultural Discipleship* emphasized the importance of disciples having a transformed worldview. He wrote that being a disciple changed one's worldview within the culture in which he lives. Hence, being a

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<sup>11</sup> Jim Howard et al., *Discipleship Handbook: A Resource for Seventh-day Adventist Church Members* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2018), 3.

<sup>12</sup> *Holy Bible, New King James Version.*

<sup>13</sup> *Holy Bible, New King James Version*

<sup>14</sup> Evelyn Hibbert and Richard, *Walking together on the Jesus Road: Discipling in Intercultural Context* (Littleton, CO: William Carey Publishing, 2018), 6

disciple was not only to learn new teachings or ways of life, but the worldview that led to accepting new teachings needed to be changed.<sup>15</sup>

Hull explained the key to transformation in disciples' lives when he stated that the spiritual habits of disciples should be disciplined. These habits included spending time in prayers and fasting which helped us to overcome the lust of the flesh. We should also participate in worship, keep prayer journals, and submit our will and appetites to be controlled by Jesus.<sup>16</sup>

Hence, this concept of transformation in the lives of disciples was emphasized in the training for effective discipleship in Bentiu District. Lesson five of the training manual entitled, "Discipleship and the Role of the Holy Spirit;" also emphasized that a disciple's life can only be transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The participants interacted very well in this area. They asked questions about the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming disciples' lives and their questions were answered based on the Bible. It was also emphasized that transformation could only come into a disciple's life if he or she was obedient to the will of God. Davis observed that "Obedience is the bridge between knowledge and experience that not only accomplishes the will of God in the world but also brings about transformation at the deepest levels."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> W. Jay Moon, *Intercultural Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Publishers, 2017), 46.

<sup>16</sup> Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO; Navpress, 2006), 206

<sup>17</sup> Charles A. Davis, *Making Disciples Across Cultures* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015), 65-66.

## **Discipleship was Rational**

Dodson pointed out the rational aspects of discipleship by stating that gospel-centered discipleship was rational because it brought the three aspects of discipleship, rational, relational, and missional, together through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>18</sup>

In other words, discipleship involved reasoning and logic. A person ought to consciously accept Jesus as Lord and Savior and commit himself or herself to follow and obey Jesus. As Dodson further observed, being a disciple of Christ was to carry our cross and go after Him. It meant surrendering our complete life to Him and accepting His leadership over all parts of our lives.<sup>19</sup>

The rational aspect of discipleship also meant that we died to the old way of life, and were raised to a new life in Christ. Dodson commented that, by accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we surrendered our old way of life and embraced the new one that was in Christ. By trusting in Jesus as our Lord, we gave up self-rule and came under the Lordship of Jesus. As we submitted to Him, we also joined His work of saving others on earth.<sup>20</sup>

In other words, by coming under God's reign, everything in our lives would change.

When disciples turn to Jesus Christ as Lord, they gain a whole new way of living under God's reign in His grace. Jesus is King and Jesus is Savior. God has made Jesus 'both Lord and Christ' so that He may make and multiply new humanity after the image of his glorious Son (Acts 2:36). Therefore, when a gospel as lofty as Jesus' lordship and as earthy as His sufferings take center place in the heart and life of a disciple, the impact is immeasurable. This good

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<sup>18</sup> Jonathan K. Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2012), 41.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>20</sup> Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship*, 41.

news can affect *everything* in our lives as we rest in Christ and live for the Lord.<sup>21</sup>

This aspect of discipleship was also emphasized to the participants of the Discipleship Training Seminar in Bentiu District. Questions that were raised by the participants were answered based on the biblical teachings on disciples. Lesson two of the discipleship training manual touched on this rational aspect of discipleship.

### **Discipleship was Relational**

A disciple related both to Jesus and other disciples. A disciple's relationship with Jesus was known as vertical discipleship and his relationship to fellow human beings was known as horizontal discipleship. Dodson called vertical discipleship 'piety-centered discipleship' and that it "is associated with our personal relationship with God."<sup>22</sup> He continued by saying that being a disciple brought us closer to God through our participation in Bible studies, prayerful activities, confessing sins, fasts, and personal good works.<sup>23</sup>

As disciples of Christ, our relationship with God was insufficient to qualify us as true disciples of Jesus Christ. We also needed to have a relationship with one another. That was why Jesus said that we should love one another so that the world would know that we were His disciples (see John 13:35). In Matthew 22: 39, Jesus called this the second greatest commandment when He said, the second one was like the first: have love for those who were closer to you as you loved yourself.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 43-44.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> *Holy Bible, New King James Version.*

As disciples related to one another they became a family. This family relationship was to extend outside the circle of Christ's disciples. Through the grace of God, it was meant to grow and become a large family of disciples.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, Jesus wanted the relationship between His disciples to be manifested as a relationship of trust. Hull concurred and said that the foundation for transformational discipleship could only be provided by trusting relationships. It was also through these relationships that barriers to obedience could honestly be dealt with.<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, the relationship between disciples ought to be interdependent. Davis observed that, in order for the church to work well, individual activities and collective activities ought to balance. In other words, "To grow, disciples must develop relational interdependence."<sup>27</sup>

Thus, in the training program for effective discipleship, these points of relational discipleship were clearly emphasized. The participants learned and understood that disciples of Christ depended on one another both for spiritual and physical needs. Christ said that as we do this, we show love for one another, and the world would know that we were His disciples.

### **Discipleship was Missional**

Christ's disciples obeyed Christ's gospel commission in Matthew 28:18-20 by going out and making other disciples for Him. This was what was meant by saying that discipleship was missional. In brief, it carried out the mission of Christ. Hull

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<sup>25</sup> Dodson, *Gospel Centered Discipleship*, 30.

<sup>26</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 156.

<sup>27</sup> Davis, *Making Disciples Across Cultures*, 88.

emphasized this missional aspect of discipleship when he said that, the work of disciples was to save people from being destroyed in eternal fire. They were to be changed from their inside to the outside. Their missionary charter was the gospel commission that gave all authority to them for making other disciples for Christ.<sup>28</sup>

The missional aspect of discipleship was also echoed by Davis who said that when disciples increased in number, they should also come closer to each other spiritually. This helped them to realize their closeness to the wedding feast as they further connected to each other and Jesus Christ.<sup>29</sup>

Dodson said that the third aspect of a disciple's life was that of being missional. He called this Jesus' agenda of grace. And he said that a disciple was first a learner, second a family member, and third a missionary.<sup>30</sup> As a missionary, a disciple was expected to witness for Christ. This witnessing might be through proclamation, teaching, or healing ministries. It might be through living a life of obedience and thus reflecting Christ to others. Dodson proceeded to point out that, Jesus was the alpha and omega of disciple-making. It was He who made the Gospel Commission great because disciple-making started with Him and ended with Him.<sup>31</sup>

The last lesson in the Discipleship Training Manual for lay leaders in the Bentiu district was entitled "Discipleship and the Gospel Commission." This lesson emphasized the importance of obeying the Gospel Commission. It also emphasized Jesus' promise in Matthew 28:20 in which Jesus promised to be with His disciples up to the end of the age. Furthermore, the lesson also stressed the importance of

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<sup>28</sup> Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 26, 27.

<sup>29</sup> Davis, *Making Disciples Across Cultures*, 91.

<sup>30</sup> Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship*, 31.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

depending on the Holy Spirit that Christ promised in Acts 1:8. A disciple could succeed in witnessing for Christ if and only if the Holy Spirit abided with him or her.

Ellen G White explained the importance of a disciple's depending on the Holy Spirit for witnessing when she stated that disciples fight against a vigilant and determined leader of darkness, and they could succeed only by depending on the power of the Holy Spirit that God gave them.<sup>32</sup>

### **Emphasizing the Benefits of Discipleship**

The benefit of discipleship was clearly emphasized to the participants by the researcher. They were shown that discipleship benefited all sectors of the church namely the elders, the women, the youth, the children, and so on, and also helped them grow spiritually and relationally. It also helped them become effective witnesses for Christ. Moreover, discipleship also helped the church to grow numerically, qualitatively, and financially as well.

### **Showing that the Benefits were Sustainable**

The researcher explained to the participants that discipleship was the most sustainable way of witnessing because it helped the number of disciples to grow in a spiritually mature way. As Dodson explained, being disciples meant that we introduced people to Jesus and His power again and again. How we learn, relate, and communicate the gospel did not end.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1970), 31.

<sup>33</sup> Dodson, *Gospel Centered Discipleship*, 38.

Hence from the very beginning, the main objective of discipleship was to help the church grow numerically, spiritually, and financially so that the church can be self-sustaining in the work of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **The Implementation Matrix**

In order to summarize the key points of the presentation, an implementation matrix was developed. This matrix was to make the major points clear to the participants, which would lead to the implementation of the training program in their local churches.

Table 22 below shows the major points in the implementation matrix. The table was divided into four columns, each recording a particular implementation area. The first column contained the lessons that were implemented in the training program, the second column contained the main points of emphasis in the training, the third column contained the number of lay leaders that attended the first training conducted by the researcher himself, and the fourth column contained the number of lay leaders who implemented the training they received from the researcher in the ten local churches.

As shown in Table 22, 29 lay leaders attended the training program but only 10 implemented what they learned and conducted training in their churches. This was because the security situation in the district prevented some of the lay leaders from implementing the training program in their churches. However, the number that implemented it was enough for the study purpose. Table 22 below shows the implementation matrix of the lay leaders of the Bentiu district in the Greater Upper Nile Field.

*Table 22. The Implementation Matrix*

Lessons	Major Points	# of Lay Leaders Trained	# of Lay Leaders Who Implemented
1. Call to Discipleship	All are called	29	10
2. Evidence of Discipleship	Continue in God's Word	29	10
3. The Cost of Discipleship	Carry the Cross of Christ	29	10
4. Lordship of Jesus Christ	Love and obey Christ	29	10
5. Role of the Holy Spirit	Empowers for Witness	29	10
6. Discipleship & Servanthood	Serve as Christ Served	29	10
7. Discipleship & Spiritual Maturity	Press to God's High Calling	29	10
8. Discipleship & Prayer Life	Pray in Faith	29	10
9. The Gospel Commission	Make other Disciples	29	10

### **Final Evaluation**

Though 29 lay leaders were trained in effective discipleship for lay leaders in Bentiu District, only 10 were able to conduct the same training for effective discipleship in their churches. Hence, the final evaluation was done based on the result of the training conducted by the 10 lay leaders in the 10 churches using the same training manual. This evaluation was done three months after the training seminars in the churches. However, in two of the churches, the period for evaluation was more than three months. The initial intended period for evaluation was between three to six months.

### **Research Instruments**

Since there are detailed discussions of the research instruments in this study in chapter four, only a brief discussion of the research instrument is described here. The final evaluation of this research was based on the quantitative method that employed both open-ended and closed-ended questions.

The questionnaires for final evaluation were administered to the 10 lay leaders who filled them out and sent them back to the researcher for evaluation. The

evaluation indicated that both the training of the lay leaders and that of the researcher had a positive impact on discipleship in Benitu District.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

The data presentation and analysis were based on questionnaires administered to the 25 lay leaders who attended the first training and part C of the questionnaires administered to lay leaders who conducted the training in the churches. The presentation was in narrative form based on the frequency tables that were already used in the chapter.

### **Data Presentation**

Based on the first training that was conducted by the researcher for the lay leaders, the data presentation was on five areas of the questionnaire. These areas included the spiritual effect of the training, lessons with the most spiritual effect on the lay leaders, how the lay leaders were motivated to witness, how the lay leaders were motivated to teach on discipleship, and the impact of the training on church growth in Bentiu District.

On the training on spiritual effect, 17 of the lay leaders indicated that they were satisfied with the training. However, two of them indicated that they were highly satisfied, three indicated that their satisfaction was moderate, and three did not respond to the questionnaire.

Regarding the lessons with the most spiritual effect on the lay leaders, lessons seven and eight had the highest responses. Seven lay leaders indicated that lesson seven had the most positive spiritual impact on them, while another seven lay leaders indicated that lesson eight had the most powerful spiritual effect on them. It is to be

noted that the two lessons were entitled, “Discipleship and Spiritual Maturity” for lesson seven and “Discipleship and Prayer Life” for lesson eight.

Concerning motivation for witnessing, 22 lay leaders indicated that they were completely motivated to witness, two said that they were moderately motivated to witness, while one did not respond to the question. It was thus concluded that the lay leaders were completely motivated to witness Christ as a result of the training.

As to whether the lay leaders were motivated to teach on discipleship, all the 25 lay leaders who filled out the questionnaires indicated that they were motivated to go and teach others about discipleship. This was very encouraging because it meant that the lay leaders would participate effectively in leading church growth in Bentiu District.

As far as the impact of the training on church growth was concerned, all the 25 lay leaders who filled out the questionnaires agreed that the training would have a positive impact on church growth. This result gave hope to the work of discipleship in Bentiu District as the lay leaders would participate effectively in training other lay leaders and church members in effective discipleship.

The final evaluation of this study was based on the 10 lay leaders’ training in the 10 churches. This evaluation was based on tables 18 to 21 in chapter 4 of this study. It was done three months after the trainings were conducted. Table 18 was on the new members who joined the churches three months after the training. Five of the churches or 50% of them had 0 – 5 members that joined churches, three of the churches, or 30% of them had 6 – 10 members that joined their churches while the remaining churches had 11 – 15 and 16 – 20 members joining each of them, each representing only 10% of the churches.

Table 19 shows the number of church members who joined the witnessing group as a result of the training. 20% of the churches had 0 – 10 members that joined the group following the training, 50% of the churches had 11 – 20 members that joined the group, another 20% of the churches had 21 – 30 members that joined the group, and only 10% of the churches had 31 – 40 members that joined the witnessing group three months after the training.

Table 20 studies the increase in spirituality of the church members. 10% of the churches reported a high increase in spirituality. 70% of the churches reported a positive increase while 20% reported their increase in terms of percentage. One church reported more than a 75% increase in spirituality and the other church reported a 50% increase in spirituality. These results also revealed that the training conducted by the lay leaders was as effective as that which was conducted by the researcher.

Table 21 shows the effect of the training on the witnessing activities of the youth and women groups in the churches. The result showed that the training had a positive effect on the youth and women groups in all ten churches or 100% of the churches. This indicated that the important groups in the churches, such as youth and women, could become important channels for discipleship programs in their local churches.

### **The Gap in this Study**

The following were the gaps in this study: (1) The study focused on lay leaders in general instead of focusing on particular types of lay leaders such as elders, deacons, and local church departmental leaders. Hence, it was a generalized study not having a specific lay leader to focus on. (2) The research used convenient and purposive methods of sampling instead of a random method. This was because it was not possible to collect samples randomly from the twelve churches in the Bentiu

district. (3) The training conducted by the lay leaders was conducted only in ten churches due to the limitations caused by insecurity. Moreover, the researcher could not visit these lay leaders to supervise their training due to the same reason. (4) This study only focused on one district out of the five districts of the Greater Upper Nile Field. Hence, the opinions of other districts were not captured in this study. (5) Since this study was conducted in one field out of four fields in South Sudan, the study may not be representative of the whole situation of discipleship in South Sudan.

### **Contribution of this Study to the Area of Ministry**

This study has contributed to the area of ministry in the following ways:

- (1) The study had helped the lay leaders of the Bentiu district of Greater Upper Nile Field to learn effective ways of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. It had also helped them to be strong witnesses for Christ. Moreover, it had helped them to learn how to conduct training in effective discipleship in the churches of Bentiu district.
- (2) The study had also helped ten churches in the Bentiu district to learn about effective discipleship when the ten lay leaders conducted training on discipleship in their churches.
- (3) The study had contributed to the spiritual growth of the lay leaders and church members of the Bentiu district of Greater Upper Nile Field. This was revealed by the result of the questionnaire administered to the lay leaders and the churches.
- (4) The study contributed to church growth in the Bentiu district when the ten lay leaders conducted discipleship training in the ten churches and evaluated the result after three months. The result indicated that there was church growth in most of the churches that received the training.
- (5) The study had helped the researcher learn new ways of conducting research, especially by the use of Mixed Method Research.

(6) The study had contributed to scholarship in the area of ministry, thus enhancing our understanding of the importance of discipleship in the ministry of the church.

### **Summary**

This chapter explained the practical steps that were taken to implement the training program for effective discipleship in the Bentiu District of the Greater Upper Nile Field. The chapter responded to the issues that arose in chapter four of this dissertation with a final evaluation, research instrument used, and data analysis being examined.

Seminars that strengthened the effectiveness of discipleship in Bentiu District were designed and implemented by the researcher and the lay leaders themselves. This implementation plan involved the preparation of a training manual on discipleship, the preparation of questions for the focus groups, the preparation of questionnaires for the response of the lay leaders following their discipleship training, the preparation of questionnaires for the response of the churches to the training by the lay leaders, selection of the lay leaders for the training, and finally the evaluation of the results of the training.

A sample selection for the lay leaders who participated in the training conducted by the researcher was picked conveniently based on the available lay leaders who were willing to participate in the training. Sogaard called this kind of sample selection, a convenient sample. He said that it, “is a nonprobability sample where the researcher simply selects those that are conveniently available and willing to participate.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Sogaard, *Research in Church and Mission*, 115.

The evaluation of the effect of the training was done three months after the trainings were conducted in the churches by the lay leaders. The purpose of the evaluation was to ascertain the understanding of the participants regarding the subjects presented. It was also to help the researcher and the lay leaders to know the type of interventions to be carried out in those churches.

On the implementation of the training program for effective discipleship for lay leaders in the local churches, the implementation was done by the local lay leaders themselves using the same manual prepared by the researcher. Out of the 29 lay leaders who attended the first training on effective discipleship, only 25 of them agreed to go and train the churches on the same subject. However, due to insecurity in some parts of the district, only 10 lay leaders were able to implement the program.

The benefit of discipleship was clearly emphasized to the participants by the researcher and lay leaders. They were shown that discipleship benefits all sectors of the church, namely, the elders, the women, the youth, the children, and so on, and would help them grow spiritually and relationally. It also helped them become effective witnesses for Christ. Moreover, discipleship helped the church to grow numerically, spiritually, and financially as well.

The researcher explained to the participants that discipleship is the most sustainable way of witnessing because it helps the number of disciples to grow in a spiritually mature way. As Dodson explained, Jesus' disciples proclaim the gospel and the power of Christ to people again and again. They did not stop their effort to learn the gospel, relate it, and communicate it to the people.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Dodson, *Gospel Centered Discipleship*, 38.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, a concise summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the research study were provided. The chapter captured the main findings of the study and developed recommendations based on the findings.

This study was to develop strategies for enhancing effective discipleship training and practices in the local churches. It focused on 29 lay leaders and ten churches in Bentiu District in the Greater Upper Nile Field of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Republic of South Sudan. The lay leaders were targeted due to their leadership responsibilities and influences in the local churches.

Since the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Sudan had few trained and ordained pastors that professionally cater to the ministry in the local churches, lay leaders usually assumed the responsibilities of leading and discipling in the churches, hence had become important pillars in their local churches.

In the four-level structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the local churches played a foundational role in developing human resources for the entire church, supporting the economy of the entire church through tithes and offerings, and promoting the church's mission through evangelistic endeavors. Thus, good leadership and effective discipleship at the local church level brought vitality to the entire church system.

Effective discipleship was chosen because it is a biblically based theme. Jesus commanded His disciples to go all over the world and made more disciples (Matt 28:19, 20). Disciple-making programs and processes had been very weak in South

Sudan, particularly in the Greater Upper Nile Field due to a lack of effective disciplers. As Evelyn and Hibbert observed, those who serve in the cross-cultural context find it difficult to make disciples for Christ. This was because the method they use for making disciples in their own countries did not work in the countries in which they were serving due to cultural differences. Thus, making disciples cross-culturally became a great challenge.<sup>1</sup>

Since the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Sudan was pioneered by people from other countries such as the USA, Tanzania, and the Philippines, the workers found challenges due to the different cultural contexts. Thus, the discipline process was not very effective regarding the spiritual growth of church members. Evelyn and Hibbert said that to make disciples across cultures, one must aim at a long-term period and work purposefully with people of that culture in leading them to enhance their spiritual growth relation with Jesus. Thus, making disciples across cultures required that one must prepare to face difficult challenges beyond what is usually faced in the same culture where one is living.<sup>2</sup>

Many churches that had practiced effective discipleship programs have benefited and prospered from them. Effective discipleship programs were built based on the Scriptures, thus, an effective disciple was known by the fact that he/she made other disciples like himself or herself.

### **Summary of the Dissertation**

This research study has six chapters. Chapter One was the introduction that gave the general overview of the research, Chapter Two established the biblical

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<sup>1</sup> Evelyn Hibbert and Richard Hibbert, *Walking together on the Jesus Road: Discipling in Intercultural Context* (Littleton, CO: William Carey Publishing, 2018), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Hibbert and Hibbert, *Walking together on the Jesus Road*, 5.

foundation for the research, Chapter Three focused on the literature review, and Chapters Four and Five presented the main findings of the research study. The paragraphs below gave a summary of the study chapter by chapter.

Chapter one of this research started with an introduction and a brief description of the context of the study. Then it spelled out the problem by stating that there were only a few pastors in the Greater Upper Nile Field that were qualified to effectively minister to the churches. As a result, lay leaders, who were insufficiently trained in pastoral and discipleship ministry, were involved in taking care of churches and companies. This had led to the passive involvement of church members in witnessing and nurturing new members and poor leadership of the churches under the care of these lay leaders. Furthermore, the purpose of this research was to develop, implement, and evaluate an effective training program that focused on the discipleship of lay leaders.

Concerning the justification, undeniably, local lay leaders played an important part in caring for many churches in the Greater Upper Nile Field. As the local lay leaders, they carried more than three-quarters of local church leadership responsibilities. Thus, it was obvious that there was a great need for a program that would train them in basic elements and skills for effective discipleship, and greatly improved their practical effectiveness in caring for the churches in Greater Upper Nile Field.

The delimitation of the study was that although there were five districts in Greater Upper Nile Field where lay leaders were mostly involved in leading churches and companies, this research focused only on the Bentiu District, where most churches led by lay members were situated.

The first researcher's expectation—following the development, implementation, and evaluation of the research work—was to see qualified lay leaders in Greater Upper Nile Field, who were well-trained and equipped to carry on the work of discipleship for church members in the Field.

The other expectation was on the practical dimension of the lay leaders, who should start the work of training people in discipleship in their local churches; thus, their effort would be blessed by the increase in church membership and the increase of lay members who assumed full responsibility, as leaders in their local churches.

Furthermore, there would be spiritual growth and maturity of the church members because of their understanding of the work of the church in spreading the Gospel in their mission territory.

In chapter two, which was the biblical foundation, it came out that discipleship was God's way of preparing workers for preaching the gospel all over the world. This work of discipleship started in the Old Testament when God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. God chose Moses to be the leader of His people with Joshua as his assistant or disciple. This concept of discipleship in the Old Testament could also be seen in the life of Naomi and Ruth, Elijah and Elisha, and Elisha's relationship with the school of the prophets.

In the New Testament, Jesus started His work with His disciples by calling them. His teaching for the disciples took place in various places such as by the side of mountains, beside the sea, at wedding places, through parables, through the work of healing, and by His examples. It was Jesus' command in Matthew 28:18-20 that His disciples should also go and make other disciples.

Ellen White also discussed the importance of discipleship both in the church and the community. Disciples gave training in the churches and encouraged

fellowship among believers. In the community, disciples embarked on the work of preaching the gospel of the kingdom and breaking down the walls of partition between nations. They encouraged people to trust in Jesus as their personal Savior and prepared them for His second coming, which was very near according to the signs taking place in the world.

In chapter three, the literature review, a disciple of Christ had accepted Jesus' call to follow Him and was willing to deny himself in the process of following Christ. Discipleship had several dimensions through which a disciple of Christ would pass. It integrated three dimensions, which are rational, relational, and missional. A disciple related both vertically and horizontally. Vertically, he/she related with God and horizontally, he/she related with fellow human beings.

Discipleship was costly. It might cost us our lives, jobs, relationships, and many other things we thought were important to us. Relationship with God had always been costly since the time of the Old Testament, as it is written that one who stood firmly for Christ as His disciple would face difficulties for his stand for Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus did not only call His disciples and trained them, but He also mentored them so that they would be skilled to train and mentor others. As Newton explained, the way Jesus mentored focused more on the individual disciple. This kind of mentoring could be achieved in the context of a local church because, as a congregation, it provided an environment suitable for it.<sup>4</sup>

Training for effective discipleship in Greater Upper Nile Field needed to involve all the stakeholders of the church, namely the elders, the youth, the women,

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<sup>3</sup> Howard et al., *Discipleship Handbook*, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Phil A. Newton, *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2017), 33.

and the children. Various models of discipleship training that could be used might include that of Christ and His disciples, the models used in the Acts of the Apostles, and that of Pauline letters.

Chapter four was titled ‘The Description of the Program Design.’ The chapter explained the strategy for implementation of the program design by the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. According to Creswell, this mixed method was done when data were collected qualitatively and quantitatively, following the questions that were asked for the research.<sup>5</sup>

In the qualitative method, interview questions were used to obtain data through focus groups. In the quantitative method, questionnaires were used to collect data for evaluating the training about discipleship in the Bentiu District of the Seventh-day Adventist church. The intervention design was based on the data that was gathered through qualitative methods.

Chapter Five dealt with the intervention of the program designed. This chapter explained the practical steps that were taken to implement the training program for effective discipleship in the Bentiu District of the Greater Upper Nile Field. The chapter responded to the issues that arose in chapter four of this dissertation. In this report, the final evaluation, the research instrument used, and the data analysis presented were examined.

Seminars that strengthen the effectiveness of discipleship in Bentiu District were designed and implemented by the researcher, and the lay leaders themselves. A sample selection for the lay leaders who participated in the training conducted by the

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<sup>5</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014), 217.

researcher was taken conveniently based on available lay leaders who were willing to participate in the training.

The evaluation of the effect of the trainings was done three months after the trainings were conducted, especially in the churches by the lay leaders. The purpose of the evaluation was to ascertain the understanding of the participants regarding the subjects presented. It was also to help the researcher and the lay leaders to know the type of interventions to be carried out in those churches.

The training programs were based on six strategies which state that discipleship was biblical, sanctioned by the church, transformational, rational, relational, and missional.

Chapter six summarized all the five previous chapters. It provided a comprehensive conclusion to the entire dissertation. Moreover, it provided recommendations for further action and research in the future and brought together all the thoughts and arguments of the dissertation.

### **Conclusion**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Sudan did not have enough pastors to render professional ministry to the churches. As a result, many churches ended up being cared for by local church leaders such as elders and deacons. To empower them for effective services, these local lay leaders needed to be trained in effective discipleship so that they in turn would train the church members to be effective disciples.

The Greater Upper Nile Field, more than any other field in South Sudan, was particularly affected by this lack of trained and ordained pastors. Out of the five major districts, it was Bentiu District that was majorly affected by this problem in the entire

Unity State of South Sudan. A training program for effective discipleship of lay leaders would be of great benefit to the churches of Bentiu District.

Since discipleship had its base in the Bible in both the Old and New Testaments, the church needed to undertake the work of training lay leaders in Bentiu District so that they became effective disciples and in turn disciple others in becoming effective witnesses for Christ, hence, the need for this study. This training program investigated the situation of discipleship in the Bentiu district and undertook training that empowered the lay leaders of the Bentiu District in effective discipleship.

The training program involved a sample of 29 lay leaders, applied qualitative methods for focus group interviews, quantitative methods for designing study questionnaires, preparation of a training manual on discipleship, training of the lay leaders by the researcher, and training of the churches by the lay leaders.

The training of the lay leaders took 18 hours in nine days. At the end of the training, a questionnaire was administered to the participants to find out the subsequent effect of the training on them. The result of the training indicated that the lay leaders were satisfied with the training, and were willing to go and train the church members about effective discipleship.

Ten lay leaders who received the training from the researcher were able to go and conduct the same training in their respective churches. The results of their training were evaluated after three months, and the results showed that the training had a positive effect on the churches that received the training. The churches showed spiritual growth, new members were added, more church members joined witnessing groups, and a positive effect of the training was noticed in both youth and women groups in the churches.

It could thus be safely concluded that the training program for effective discipleship for lay leaders achieved its goal of inspiring, empowering, and equipping the lay leaders of Bentiu District in effective discipleship. Moreover, the lay leaders who conducted the training in their local churches had testified that they were blessed by the training.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations could be made for further studies. Firstly, the same kind of study should be conducted in other districts of Greater Upper Nile Field and the results be compared with this study so that responses from various districts concerning the effect of the training on effective discipleship in other parts of the field could be known.

Secondly, since this study generalized to all lay leaders, another study can be carried out on specific lay leaders' groups, such as the role of elders, deacons, or other lay leaders in various departments in the local churches. Such a study would result in a better understanding of the roles of these lay leaders and what role they played in discipleship in the local churches.

Thirdly, though this study had established how effective discipleship affected church members spiritually in a positive way, another study could be undertaken to establish the level of spirituality that came as a result of being a faithful disciple of Christ. The result of such a study could then be compared with what had already been done.

Fourthly, studying how discipleship affected youth and women groups, in particular, was very recommendable. Such a study might help the churches know that empowering women and youth in our churches in the area of discipleship could

produce a positive result for the future of the church in Greater Upper Nile Field in particular and the South Sudan Union Mission at large.

Another important area that needed to be considered for further study was the relationship between discipleship and leadership in the local churches. Such a study might need to be compared with how being an effective and dedicated disciple affects a particular lay leader who led in the local church.

Furthermore, it sufficed to say that this study had been very educative and empowering to me as a researcher. It has strengthened my understanding of discipleship and had motivated me to do more research on the church to understand the church's mission and ministry better. It had helped me to grow spiritually and socially as a result of the training of the lay leaders of Bentiu District. To God be the glory!

### **Recommendations for Action**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were to be considered and applied in the local churches of the Greater Upper Nile Field.

1. Discipleship training seminars should be conducted in all the local churches in the Field so that all local lay leaders and church members are empowered for effective ministry in the churches and companies.
2. All local churches should be educated on the mission statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church so that they can understand that discipleship was sanctioned by the church.
3. All local church members in Bentiu District who had received training on effective discipleship be encouraged to implement what they have learned in their churches so that disciples might increase within the district and the entire Greater Upper Nile Field.

4. All local churches should be encouraged to include in their agenda discipleship training as part of their mission statement.
5. All pastors of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Sudan should be instructed on the need to train their local churches and lay leaders on the importance of effective discipleship so that church members would grow in spiritual maturity and be able to witness effectively for the Lord.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Your consent to participate in this study entitled: *A Training Program for Effective Discipleship of Lay Leaders in the Greater Upper Nile Field* is highly valued. This study is purposed to assess the strengths and growth areas of the churches under study in this district of the Field.

You are requested to participate in this study by attending a training program on Discipleship, training one or two churches on discipleship, and answering a questionnaire concerning the result of this training. Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary and your identity will be kept anonymous. All data obtained in this survey will be kept on a password-protected computer.

In case you change your mind and wish to withdraw from the study, the data which was collected from you will be deleted. Individual results may not be provided, but the research report will be forwarded to my supervisor at the Adventist University of Africa when required and will be available for you to read.

If you choose to be involved in this project, you will contribute to knowledge that may, in the future, be beneficial to the church and, in turn, to our communities. You will not be paid for participating in this study.

If you agree with the terms and conditions mentioned above, please sign the Participation Approval Form below.

This form will be collected before conducting the training and later administering the questionnaire for the outcome of the result of the training.

Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at the following telephone contact or email address: Tel. 0911212644/0928314882; email:

[iggamark@yahoo.com](mailto:iggamark@yahoo.com), [mark.igga@gmail.com](mailto:mark.igga@gmail.com)

If you have comments or complaints about this study, please contact my supervisor: Dr. Israel Kafeero at [kafeeroi@aua.ac.ke](mailto:kafeeroi@aua.ac.ke) or [ikafeero@hotmail.com](mailto:ikafeero@hotmail.com) DMin PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA

PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_,

Give my consent to participate in the research: *A Training Program for Effective Discipleship of Lay Leaders in the Greater Upper Nile Field*.

1. I have had the chance to ask questions about my participation in the project. [SEP]
2. The participation in this training and survey is voluntary [SEP]
3. My identity will be kept anonymous. [SEP]
4. All aggregated data to which I contribute will be protected and kept securely. [SEP]

I understand that I can withdraw from this research at any time, without penalty, and my data will be deleted from this research.

My signature: .....

Please return the signed approval to: Mark Igga Mona

NOTE: To save using a second page, you can use the alternative language (shown below) on the first page.

By signing below, you are agreeing to participate in this study. <sup>SEP</sup>Name:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ If you

choose not to participate, simply return this form to the researcher. Do not sign it.

Thank you.

APPENDIX B  
MANUAL FOR DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING  
**DISCIPLESHIP FOR ETERNITY**

MANUAL FOR DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING  
IN  
GREATER UPPER NILE FIELD

PREPARED BY

PASTOR MARK IGGA MONA ODOLOPRE  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY (CANDIDATE)  
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## Lesson One

### THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

#### 1. Who is a disciple of Jesus Christ?

According to a dictionary, a disciple is a personal follower of Jesus Christ.

Bill Hull defines a disciple as follows: “Disciple is the primary term used in the Gospels to refer to Jesus’ followers and is a common referent for those known in the early church as believers, Christians, brothers/sisters, those of the way, or saints, although each term focuses upon different aspects of the individual’s relationships with Jesus and others of the faith.”

Excerpt From: Bill Hull. *“The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ (The Navigators Reference Library 1).”* iBooks p 56.

He further said, “A disciple, then, is a *reborn* follower of Jesus.” Ibid. (emphasis supplied).

**John 3:1-8** – Jesus invites those who want to be His followers to be born again

#### 2. Who is called to discipleship?

All of us are called to discipleship.

**Luke 9:23** – Anyone who is willing to deny self.

**Mt. 11: 28** – All who are heavily laden are invited by Christ to come to Him and find rest.

#### 3. What does a disciple do?

**Matt. 28:18-20** – A disciple goes and makes other disciples.

**Luke 19:10** – A disciple seeks others and brings them to a saving relationship with Christ.

**Mark 10:45** – A disciple serves others as Christ did.

#### 4. How should a disciple live?

**1 Cor. 9:24-27; Gal. 4:19** – A disciple should live a temperate and self-controlled life to obtain the kingdom of God.

#### 5. Whose example should a disciple follow?

**John 13:15-17** – A disciple should follow the example of Jesus Christ his/her Lord.

#### 6. How should a disciple relate to others?

**John 13: 34-35** – A disciple should love others as Christ loves them.

#### 7. Where does a disciple get the power to witness and love others?

**Acts 1:8** – A disciple gets the power to witness and love others from the Holy Spirit whom Christ sends to his followers.

#### 8. What is the ultimate goal of discipleship?

**John 14:1-3; 3:16** – The ultimate goal of discipleship is to prepare oneself and others for eternal life in Christ's Kingdom.

## **Lesson Two**

### **EVIDENCE OF DISCIPLESHIP**

#### **1. What is the first evidence that a person is a disciple of Christ?**

**John 8:31-32** – The person will continue in the Word of Christ.

“This gives us the inward view of discipleship, permanent continuance in the words of the Master, the attitude of a scholar to the teacher. Where that is absent, discipleship is nominal and lacks reality.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 508.

“Continuance in Christ’s Word is not automatic; it is the result of strong purpose and self-discipline. It demands taking time, not only to read the Scriptures but to meditate on them, turning them over in the mind in the same way the cow chews the cud. It will include memorization—hiding His Word in our hearts. Further, it will need to be “mixed with faith.” Without that, our reading will bring little spiritual profit.” Ibid, p 513.

#### **2. What is the second evidence that a person is a disciple of Christ?**

**John 13:34-35** – The disciple will love others as Jesus does.

“Those verses give the outward view of discipleship and have to do with our relations with our fellow men.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 514.

“Aversion and affinity are alike irrelevant. We are to love our fellows, not because we like them or because they are attractive. Our love must not be selective—because of family or social ties, or because they are neighbors geographically—but simply because we are obligated to share the love of Christ with others.” Ibid, p 516.

#### **3. How should the disciple follow Jesus in expressing love?**

**1Cor. 13:2-8** – He/she should express selfless, forgiving, and sacrificial love as Jesus did.

“The supreme evidence of discipleship, the authentic badge, is genuine love for one another. When people see it exemplified in Christians’ lives, they will say, “These are true disciples of Christ. We can see it by the warmth of their love for one another.”

We can preach, pray, give, and even sacrifice, but without this love, we gain nothing, are spiritual nonentities (1 Corinthians 13:2).”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 518.

#### **4. What is the third evidence that a person is a disciple of Christ?**

**John 15:7-8** – The disciple bears fruit in his/her character and services.

#### **5. How does a disciple bear fruits in his/her character?**

**Gal. 5:22-23** – He/she will reveal the fruits of the spirit in his or her life.

#### **6. What does Paul say that he seeks in a disciple of Christ?**

**Phil. 4:17** – Paul desires fruits that increase in a disciple’s life.

#### **7. How does a disciple bear fruit in his or her service?**

**John 4:35-36** – He or she reaps the fruits of his or her labor in soul winning.

“Fruit is seen when souls are won for Christ, disciplined by concerned disciples, and led on to spiritual maturity.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 520.

#### **8. What is involved in a disciple’s fruit-bearing according to Jesus?**

**John 12:24** – Fruit bearing for Christ involves cross-bearing or sacrificing for the gospel’s sake.

“The fruit-bearing that is an authentic mark of discipleship is not automatic but conditional. ... He [Jesus] thus links fruit-bearing with the cross. And did He not exemplify this principle in His death? A single kernel of wheat fell into the ground at Calvary and died, but on the Day of Pentecost it produced three thousand kernels, and fruitage has resulted ever since.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set. iBooks, 520-21.

### **Lesson Three**

#### **THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP**

#### **1. What conditions does Jesus say we should meet to become His disciples?**

**Luke 14:27** – We should carry our cross and follow Him.

“And it is to cross-bearing of this nature that the disciple is always called. It involves a willingness to accept ostracism and unpopularity with the world for His sake.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 500

#### **2. How does Jesus advise us about the cost of discipleship?**

**Luke 14:28,31** – Jesus advises us to estimate the cost while we are making decisions to follow him.

#### **3. How much did it cost Christ to save us from our sins?**

**Matt. 27:33-35** – Jesus was crucified and died on the cross to save us from our sins.

#### **4. How does a disciple prioritize his relationship to Jesus to that of his family?**

**Luke 14:25-33** – His relation with Christ must be above that of his family relationship.

“But note that because we love Christ supremely does not mean we will love our relatives less than we love them now. Indeed, the very reverse can be the case; for when Christ holds first place in our affections, our capacity to love will be greatly expanded.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 496.

#### **5. How does Jesus want us to surrender ourselves to Him?**

**Luke 14:33** – Jesus wants us to give Him unreserved surrender.

“The first condition had to do with the heart’s affections; the second with life’s conduct; the third with personal possessions. Of the three, the third condition is probably the most unwelcome of all in our covetous and materialistic age. Did Jesus mean what He said to be taken literally? Everything?”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. "Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set." iBooks, 501.

**6. How did Jesus test the faith of the rich young ruler?**

**Matt. 19:21** – He told him to sell everything and give to the poor and follow him. "He had to choose between Christ and his many possessions. He flunked the test, and because he was unwilling to forsake all, he disqualified himself from being a disciple of Christ. Christ must be given preeminence over all earthly possessions." Ibid, 501-502.

**7. How did Abraham show his faith as a disciple of Christ?**

**Hebrews 11:8-10** – He left his household and went to the place God promised him. "There is indeed a cost in loyal discipleship, but there is also assurance of abundant compensation. It is impossible to out-give God. We may lose in material things but never in terms of joy and fulfillment here and eternal bliss hereafter." Ibid, 528 -529.

**8. What did Jesus say to the man who wanted to bury his father first before becoming Christ's disciple?**

**Luke 9:59,60** – He said that let the dead bury their dead.

"Jesus implied that if he would put God's interests first, his family's interests would not suffer. ... "All other interests must come second if one is to be a true disciple. He must learn—and so must we—that where there is a clash of interests, Christ can be divisive." Ibid, 531.

"God is not indifferent to family relationships and responsibilities. He does not speak with two voices, urging great care and compassion in those relations on the one hand and then making harsh, contrary demands on the other. But even home ties must come second to His requirements." Ibid.

**9. What does Jesus say to the halfhearted people who want to be his disciples?**

**Luke 9:61,62** – They are not fit for His kingdom.

"Christ's reply uncovered the nature of that man's problem: his heart was back at his home, not with his Master. Jesus saw that soon he would be looking back and then turning back. There is so much to deflect us from the path of full discipleship. Many like this man are willing for a limited commitment, yet there is always a "but" in their following."

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. "Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set." iBooks, 534.

## **Lesson Four**

### **DISCIPLESHIP AND THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST**

**1. Whose authority does a disciple acknowledge as supreme?**

**Acts 10:36** – A disciple acknowledges the authority of Jesus Christ as supreme because He is Lord of all.

**2. How does a disciple acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Savior?**

**John 14:15** – By loving Him and obeying His commandments.

“Christ’s call was not merely to believe in Him but to be His disciple, and that involves more than “making a decision” or believing certain doctrinal facts. A disciple is one who learns of Christ with the purpose of obeying what he or she learns.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 543.

**3. What was the problem of ancient Israel concerning acknowledging the Lordship of Jehovah?**

**Isa. 26:13** – They invited other gods to share their allegiance besides Jehovah. “Note that he did not say “instead of you,” but “besides you.” Israel did not want to entirely reject Jehovah, but they invited other gods to share their allegiance. But God will tolerate no rivals, no divided loyalty.” Ibid, 546.

**4. How did Paul acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus when he was converted on the way to Damascus?**

**Acts 22:10** – He asked Jesus “Who are you, Lord? What shall I do Lord?”. “That was a clear, unequivocal submission to His lordship. His subsequent life proved that he never withdrew that allegiance. It should be remembered that in New Testament times a confession of Christ as Lord meant an irreversible change in public life. It needs to be clearly stated and strongly emphasized in our day that the Lord Jesus Christ has absolute and final authority over the whole church and every member of it in all details of daily life.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 547.

**5. How does a disciple render full submission to Christ’s Lordship?**

**1 Peter 3:15** – By setting Christ as Lord in his/her heart.

**6. Whose ownership does a disciple recognize?**

**Acts 10:36; 1 Tim. 6:17** – He recognizes the ownership of Jesus Christ because He is Lord of all.

“The word Lord here carries the idea of an owner who has control of all His possessions. Unless we recognize that fact in practice, Christ’s reign over us is purely nominal. We are His by creation, and we are His by purchase. Now we are His by self-surrender. All that we have we hold as trustees, not as owners.” Ibid, 550.

**7. How does a disciple render obedience to Christ?**

**Luke 6:46** – He/she renders unquestioning obedience to Christ.

“Obedience from the heart is the true and unmistakable evidence of the reality of Christ’s lordship in our lives. Disobedience vitiates all our professions of loyalty. Our performance speaks more loudly than our professions. The test is not what I say but what I do.” Ibid, 553.

**8. Who helps a disciple in rendering unquestioning obedience to Christ?**

**1Cor. 12:3** – The Holy Spirit helps a disciple in rendering unquestioning obedience to Christ.

“The Holy Spirit is sent to enable the disciple to keep Christ on the throne of the believer’s life, and He delights to do it. He will detach our hearts from the world and

attach our affections to Christ. He will empower our weak wills and make them strong to do the will of God.” Ibid, 556.

## **Lesson Five**

### **DISCIPLESHIP AND THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

#### **1. What standard of Christian life does Christ expect His disciples to live?**

**Matt. 5:48; 1 Peter 1:16** – Christ expects His disciples to live a perfect and holy life. “The business of living the Christian life as it should be lived is too lofty in its ideals and too exacting in its demands for us to engage in it alone. We desperately need a partner with adequate capital to make it a success.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 559.

#### **2. Who is the disciples’ partner in living the Christian life?**

**2Cor. 13:14** – The Holy Spirit is the disciples’ partner in living the Christian life. “Without straining the text, that is the staggering suggestion that the third Person of the Trinity is willing to become the active, though secret, Partner of the disciple in his walk and witness. He is not a mere power or influence that we can use for our purposes, but a divine Person. We believe the doctrine, but do we always recognize and honor Him as such in daily life? It is so easy to forget Him or to ignore Him unconsciously, and yet He is active in every aspect of life.” Ibid, 561

#### **3. Who did Christ say He would send to help the disciples in their witness and living for Christ?**

**John 14:15-17** – The Holy Spirit will help the disciples as they witness and live for Christ.

#### **4. Whom will the Holy Spirit represent in the lives of the disciples?**

**John 16:7** – The Holy Spirit will represent Christ in the lives of the disciples.

“He was assuring His disciples that His Representative whom He was sending was exactly like Himself. This Representative would be just as loving, tender, and caring—so much so that there would be an advantage to them in His departure (John 16:7).” Ibid, 564.

#### **5. What is the primary purpose of the Holy Spirit’s partnership with the disciples?**

**John 16:13,14** – To lead them into all truth and give glory to Jesus.

“The Holy Spirit has been sent to transact big business for the kingdom of God, nothing less than to participate in the redemption of a lost world. In this vast enterprise, He seeks our partnership as He oversees the interests of Christ on earth. “If we are truly partners with the Spirit, then that will be our consuming objective too. So long as our genuine ambition is to glorify Christ, we can count on the aid of our Senior Partner, whether in home, school, office, or pulpit.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 565-566.

#### **6. What position does the Holy Spirit hold in the life of a disciple?**

**Judges 6:34** – He holds the position of a senior partner.

“The Holy Spirit, however, will not consent to be a sleeping partner, although He may be a secret Partner in the sense that He is not visible in the partnership business. He must be accorded the role of Senior Partner and have control of the whole enterprise if there is to be a harmonious and successful operation.

“The story of Gideon illustrates this point. He became a powerful instrument in God’s hands because he recognized correctly the relative positions of the Holy Spirit and himself.

“If in our service we honor the Holy Spirit, and consistently respect His position as Senior Partner, we will not be prone to suffer from the contemporary malady of “burnout.” We will not be undertaking work for God in our strength or embarking on enterprises He has not initiated. The last word in any decision must lie with the Senior Partner.” Ibid, 566-568.

**7. How does the Holy Spirit help a disciple in furthering Christ's Kingdom?**

**Acts 1:8** – He gives power for the disciple to witness for Christ.

**8. What will the Holy Spirit contribute in His partnership with the disciple?**

**Eph. 3:8; Col. 2:3** – He will contribute all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge of God.

**9. What other privileges do disciples get in their partnership with the Holy Spirit?**

**2Cor. 4:6** – He imparts the knowledge of God through our Bible studies.

**Zech.12:10; Rom. 8:26** – He assists us in our daily prayer life.

**Acts 1:8** – He gives us power in our service for Christ.

**2Cor. 3:18** – He transforms us into the likeness of Christ.

**Lesson Six**

**DISCIPLESHIP AND SERVANTHOOD**

**1. With what does Jesus equate greatness in discipleship?**

**Mark 10:43-44** – Jesus equates greatness in discipleship with servanthood.

**2. Whose example should a disciple follow in rendering services to others?**

**Luke 22:27** – A disciple should follow Jesus' example in rendering services to others.

**3. How does Jesus expect His disciples to be treated while rendering services to others?**

**John 15:20** – Jesus expects His disciples to be treated as He was treated while serving people.

**4. How dependent should a disciple be while rendering service to people?**

**John 5:19; 7:16; 14:24** – A disciple should depend on Christ as Christ was dependent on the Father.

“Taken together, those verses indicate that Jesus chose to be dependent on His Father for both His words and His works. Are we as dependent as He was? This divine paradox is one of the amazing aspects of His incarnation when He took “the very nature of a servant” (Philippians 2:7). The Holy Spirit will be able to use us to measure that we adopt the same attitude. The danger is in our being too independent.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. "Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set." iBooks, 580-581.

**5. What attitude should a disciple have while serving others in Christ's name?**

**Isa. 42:2** – He or she should have an attitude of self-effacement.

“The Devil tempted Jesus on this point when he challenged Him to create a stir by jumping from the parapet of the Temple. But He did not fall into the tempter’s snare. On the contrary, He silenced those who would blazon His miracles abroad. Often He stole away from the adulation of the crowd. He performed no miracle to enhance His prestige.” Ibid, 582.

**6. How empathetic should a disciple be while rendering services to others?**

**Isa. 42:3** – He or she should minister to all types of people including the weak and the erring ones.

“The weak and erring, the failures, are often crushed under the callous tread of their fellow men. But the ideal Servant specializes in ministry to those who are generally despised or ignored. No life is so bruised and broken that He will not restore it.

“Jesus, however, found delight and satisfaction in stooping to serve those whom most choose to ignore. His skillful, loving care caused the broken reed once again to produce heavenly music and fanned the dimly burning wick into a glowing flame. He never entirely crushed or condemned the penitent. It is noble work to care for those whom the world ignores.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. "Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set." iBooks, 583-584.

**7. How optimistic should a disciple be while rendering services to others?**

**Isa. 42:4** – He or she will not falter or be discouraged until the goal of the service is achieved.

“We will look in vain for pessimism in the life or ministry of the pattern Servant. He was a realist but not a pessimist. He evinced an unshakable confidence in the fulfillment of His Father’s purposes and the coming of the kingdom.

“The implication is that though God’s Servant engages in a gracious ministry to bruised reeds and smoking wicks, He is neither one nor the other. The essential elements of hope and optimism will be justified by the achievement of His objective.” Ibid, 585-586.

**8. Who enables a disciple to render a service that is acceptable to God?**

**Isa. 42:1; Acts 10:38** – The Holy Spirit enables a disciple to render good and acceptable service to Christ.

“All that He did was through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Until the Spirit descended on Him at His baptism, He created no stir in Nazareth; then world-shaking events began to happen.

“The same Spirit and the same anointing is available to us. We should not attempt what our divine Exemplar would not do—embark upon ministry without being anointed by the Spirit.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. "Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set." iBooks, 586-587.

**9. How balanced should a disciple’s ministries or services be rendered?**

**Isa.61:6; 42:6-7; John 17:4** – He should render services both as a minister and as a priest.

“The priests ministered to the Lord. The Levites ministered to their brethren. It is the privilege of the disciple to minister to both, and we must therefore keep in balance the worship of God and man's service.

“We are to offer spiritual sacrifices in the sanctuary and to engage in the other duties of the house of God as well.” Ibid, 587-588.

## **Lesson Seven**

### **DISCIPLESHIP AND SPIRITUAL MATURITY**

#### **1. What is the will of Christ for every disciple concerning spiritual maturity?**

**Hebrews 6:1** – The will of Christ for every disciple is for every disciple to grow into a spiritual maturity reflecting that of Christ Himself.

#### **2. What is Paul's admonition about a disciple's spiritual growth into maturity?**

**Philippians 3:12-15** – The disciple should press to the mark of God's high calling in Christ Jesus.

“Maturity in the spiritual realm is not attained overnight, any more than it is in the physical. It is a dynamic process that continues throughout life.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 618.

#### **3. What should a disciple do for him or her to be transformed into the image of Christ?**

**2Cor. 3:18** – He or she should behold the glory of the Lord for transformation to take place in his or her life.

“While we spend time gazing at the Christ who is revealed in the Scriptures and long to be more like Him, the Holy Spirit silently effects the progressive change. He achieves that by increasing our aspiration, and revealing and imparting the graces and virtues of our Lord in response to our trust.” Ibid, 620.

#### **4. How does accepting external disciplines enhance a disciple's growth into spiritual maturity?**

**Daniel 3:16-18; Hebrews 12:10** – It moves the disciple from being a spiritual kid to a spiritually mature person.

“The presence or absence of spiritual maturity is never more noticeable than in one's attitude to the changing circumstances of life. Too often they generate anxiety, anger, frustration, or bitterness, whereas God's design is always for our spiritual growth.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 621.

#### **5. Through what experiences did Paul reach spiritual maturity?**

**2Cor. 11:23-28; Phil. 4:11-12** – Through trials and wants.

“That is spiritual maturity. Needless to say, Paul did not reach that victorious position overnight. It was a costly learning process, but through dependence on the Holy Spirit, he mastered that very difficult lesson. The same Spirit and the same grace are available to us.” Ibid, 622.

**6. What was the secret of Paul's growth to spiritual maturity as a disciple of Christ?**

**Phil. 4:13** – It was his daily union with Christ.

“Regarding Paul's mastery of his circumstances, note that it was a process, not a crisis. His mastery covered every type of circumstance from plenty to want.

“It was because of his vital union with Christ that he was able to triumph and be content. He did not run away from the difficult circumstance but embraced it and made it tributary to his spiritual growth. Because he was so dependent on Christ, he could be independent of circumstances.” Ibid, 624.

**7. What attitude should a disciple have towards temptations?**

**James 1:2-3** – A disciple's attitude should be a joyous one.

**8. Why does God allow a disciple to be tempted?**

**James 1:12; Genesis 50:20** – Because He wants the disciple to produce character fit for His kingdom.

“Satan tempts and seduces the disciple to sin. God tests the disciple to produce the gold of proved character and lead him to greater spiritual maturity.” Ibid, 625.

**9. What does God promise to provide for a disciple who is passing through temptation?**

**1Cor. 10:13** – God promises to provide a way out of that temptation.

“We must, however, be watchful for the Enemy's snares and wiles, for he is subtle and underhanded in his methods.

“Our Enemy chooses his timing shrewdly. The temptation to discouragement and flight came to Elijah when he was exhausted both physically and emotionally. Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife when there were no men in the house and nobody else would have known. Jonah found the ship to Tarshish ready and waiting when he was disobediently running away from the divine command. David was tempted when he was neglecting his kingly duties and indulging in illegitimate relaxation. Jesus was tempted by Satan when He had fasted for forty days and was under intolerable spiritual pressure.

Satan chose the occasion in each case with diabolical skill, so that it would come with maximum impact.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 627,628.

**10. How does Peter admonish disciples concerning Satan's temptations?**

**1 Peter 5:8** – Disciples should always be self-controlled and alert.

**11. What should disciples do to attain spiritual maturity?**

**2 Cor.5:17; Phil.2:12,13; James 4:8** – Disciples must always cooperate with Christ in working out their salvation and spiritual maturity.

“In the culture of the soul, no habit is more crucial and formative than maintaining a consistent devotional life—a regular time reserved for fellowship and communion with God. Not everyone finds that easy, but its importance and value cannot be exaggerated. Since that is the case, it is only reasonable to expect that the habit will be the focus of relentless attack from our adversary.” Ibid, 630.

## **Lesson Eight**

### **DISCIPLESHIP AND PRAYER LIFE**

#### **1. What did the disciples ask Jesus to teach them?**

**Luke 11:1** – The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray.

“As they had heard Him pray, a yearning had sprung in their hearts to know a similar intimacy with the Father. We do well to echo their request.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 670-671.

#### **2. Whose interest must come first in a disciple’s prayer to God?**

**Matt. 6:9-13** – God’s interest must come first before the disciples.

“To the maturing disciple, God’s interests will always be paramount. The prayers of the immature Christian usually revolve around (the) self. In response to the disciples’ plea to be taught to pray, Jesus said, “This, then is how you should pray,” He gave them a pattern by which to model their prayers.” Ibid, 671.

#### **3. What role does prayer play in a disciple’s warfare against spiritual forces of evil?**

**Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 10:3-4** – Prayer is one of the spiritual weapons for fighting the forces of evil.

“The fulcrum on which defeat or victory turns is our ability to pray aright and make intelligent use of our weapons.” Ibid, 673.

#### **4. How does Jesus link prayer and fasting in a disciple’s warfare against forces of evil?**

**Matt. 9:28,29** – Prayer and fasting must go together if the disciple is to overcome the forces of evil.

“Restful and trustful prayer has an important place in the Christian life, but Paul taught and practiced a different kind of praying. Only strenuous and aggressive prayer that laid hold of the power released by the cross and the resurrection would dislodge the enemy from his age-long stronghold. It is that kind of praying that releases the power and resources of God and brings them into play in the field of battle.

“It is the responsibility of the disciple to exercise this delegated authority in prayer in his conflict with Satan and the power of darkness. In this way, Christ’s triumph becomes the triumph of His weakest follower.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 674-675.

#### **5. What should a disciple possess for his or her prayer to be powerful?**

**Matt. 17:20-21** – A disciple must have faith for his or her prayer to be powerful.

“Scripture bears witness to the fact that God delights to answer daring prayers that are based on His promises. Jesus encouraged His disciples to ask as freely for the impossible as possible.” Ibid, 676.

#### **6. How should a mature disciple of Christ pray?**

**Colossians 4:12** – A mature disciple of Christ must wrestle in prayer as Epaphras did.

“That type of prayer is the experience of the mature disciple. Epaphras was one of these. But how pale a reflection of the praying of Epaphras are our prayers.” Ibid, 677.

### **7. What type of prayer will prevail against the forces of evil?**

**Luke 11:5-8; 18:1-8** – It is the important prayer that will prevail in our warfare with the forces of evil.

“Jesus enforced the necessity of importunity and persistence in prayer by telling two parables—the three friends and the unprincipled judge. In each He taught by contrast, for God is neither a lazy, selfish neighbor, nor is He an unprincipled judge.

“The lesson to be drawn is that it is “shameless persistence” that comes away with full hands, and the opposite is also true. Tepid praying does not move God’s arm.

“Adoniram Judson of Burma said, “God loves an importunate prayer so much that He will not give us much blessing without it. He knows that it is a necessary preparation for our receiving the richest blessing He is longing to bestow.

“The necessity of importunity lies in us, not in God. William E. Biederwolf suggests that importunity is one of the instructors in God’s training school for Christian culture. Sometimes He delays the answer because the petitioner is not in a fit state to receive it. There is something God desires to do in him first.”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 677, 680, 681.

### **8. Why does God not answer some of the prayers of His disciples?**

**Deut.34:4; 2Cor. 12:7-9; James 4:3** – God only answers prayers that are asked according to His will and in faith.

“The mature disciple will not stumble because of apparently unanswered prayer. He will not, however, adopt a fatalistic attitude; he will examine his prayers and seek to discover the cause of failure.

“The plain fact is that God does not always say yes to every prayer (though we usually expect Him to do so).

“God does not undertake to answer every self-centered petition, but He does promise to answer every prayer that is according to His good and perfect will.” Ibid, 681-682.

### **9. What then does God require from a disciple for his or her prayers to be answered?**

**Matt. 9:29; 17:20** – He requires the disciple to exercise a living faith in the living God.

“Or we may have been substituting faith in prayer for faith in God. We are not told anywhere to have faith in prayer but to “have faith in God,” the One who answers the prayer.”

“The naked eye sees little difference between a grain of sand and a mustard seed, but there is a world of difference between the two. In one is the germ of life. It is not the size of our faith that is important, but is it a living faith in a living God?

The mature disciple will not become discouraged because of a delay in the answer to his prayer. He knows that a delayed answer is not necessarily a denied answer.

“God’s timing is infallible. He takes every factor and contingency into account. We often want to pluck unripe fruit, but He will not be pressured into premature action. If He in His wisdom delays the answer to our prayer, that delay will in the long run prove to be for our good (Hebrews 12:10). It will be either because He has some

better thing for us, or because there is something He desires to achieve in our lives that can be effected in no other way.

As we mature spiritually and get to know our heavenly Father more intimately, we will be able to implicitly trust His love and wisdom, even when we cannot understand His actions. Jesus prepared His disciples for this experience when He said, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand” (John 13:7).”

Excerpt From: Sanders, J. Oswald. “Spiritual Leadership/Spiritual Discipleship/Spiritual Maturity Set.” iBooks, 683, 684, 685.

## **Lesson Nine**

### **DISCIPLESHIP AND THE GOSPEL COMMISSION**

#### **1. What command did Jesus give to His disciples before His ascension to heaven?**

**Matt 28:18, 19** – He commanded them to go and make disciples of all nations.

“To us also the commission is given. We are bidden to go forth as Christ messengers, to teach, instruct, and persuade men and women, to urge upon their attention the word of life” EGW Ev. 15.2.

#### **2. What did Christ command should be done to those who have accepted to become His disciples?**

**Matt 28:19, 20** – Those who have accepted to become Christ's disciples should be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and be taught to observe all things that Christ has commanded.

“In the commission to His disciples, Christ not only outlined their work but gave them their message. ... The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included.” Ibid, 15.3.

#### **3. What assurance did Christ give to His disciples as they went about making disciples of all nations?**

**Matt 28:20** – Christ assures His presence to be with them as they embark on the work of disciple-making.

“And to us, the assurance of Christ’s abiding presence is given. Whatever the difficulties with which we have to contend, whatever the trials we may have to endure, the gracious promise is always ours, ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world’.” Ibid, 15.2.

#### **4. How did Jesus promise the disciples will receive power for witnessing Him?**

**Acts 1:8** – The disciples will receive power for witnessing through the Holy Spirit.

“The Savior knew that no argument, however logical, would melt hard hearts or break through the crust of worldliness and selfishness. He knew that His disciples must receive the heavenly endowment; that the gospel would be effective only as it was proclaimed by hearts made warm and lips made eloquent by a living knowledge of Him who is the way, the truth, and the life. ... A vigilant, determined leader was in command of the forces of darkness, and the followers of Christ could battle for the right only through the help that God, by His Spirit, would give them.” AA 31.1.

**5. How will the disciples preach the gospel before Christ's second coming?**

**Matt 24:14** – They will preach the gospel to all the world for a witness.

**6. How did John see the disciples of Christ preaching the everlasting gospel in the last days?**

**Rev 14:6, 7** – John saw the disciples like angels flying in midair proclaiming the gospel to all nations, tongues, and people.

“Christ is coming the second time, with power unto salvation. To prepare human beings for this event, He has sent the first, second, and third angels’ messages. These angels represent those who receive the truth, and with power open the gospel to the world.” Letter 79, 1900 [7BC 978.11].

**7. How does Paul exhort fellow disciples to preach the gospel?**

**2 Tim 4:1, 2** – Paul exhorts them to preach the gospel in season and out of season.

“This solemn charge to one so zealous and faithful as was Timothy is a strong testimony to the importance and responsibility of the work of gospel minister. Summoning Timothy before the bar of God, Paul bids him preach the word, not the sayings and custom of men; to be ready to witness for God whenever opportunity should present itself – before large congregations and private circles, by the way, and at the fireside, to friends and enemies, whether in safety or exposed to hardship and peril, reproach and loss.” AA 503.1.

**8. What promise does God make for disciples who will be faithful in witnessing to others?**

**Daniel 12:3; Matt. 24:13** – They will be saved in God’s kingdom and will shine like the stars forever and ever.

“By living a life of devotion and self-sacrifice in doing good to others, you might have been adding stars and gems to the crown that you will wear in heaven, and laying up unfading, eternal treasures.” MS 69, 1912 [4BC 1174.1].

APPENDIX C  
INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM

QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

BENTIU, UNITY STATE, SOUTH SUDAN

1. What methods do you use to bring disciples to Christ?
2. How regularly do you baptize new believers (disciples) into the membership of the church?
3. Through what ways do you nurture the newly baptized members in the church?
4. What percentage of newly baptized members remain faithful for at least one year, two years, and five years?
5. What do you do to have newly baptized members (new disciples) have worldview transformation?
6. How regularly do you have house-to-house prayer meetings?
7. How many small groups do you have in your district churches?
8. What percentage of church members are involved in discipleship activities?
9. What percentage of church leaders are involved in discipleship training?
10. What percentage of church members or newly baptized members practice both biblical and traditional beliefs?
11. What percentage of church members claim to be Adventists and yet live their lives based on their traditional beliefs?

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE

A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP OF LAY LEADERS  
IN THE GREATER UPPER NILE FIELD

Name: ..... Date .....

1. How did the training affect you spiritually?  
a. Moderately, b. highly, c. Satisfactorily.
2. Which lesson of the training had the most positive effect on your spirituality?  
.....
3. How has the training helped you in understanding discipleship in terms of percentage?  
a. 25% b. 50% 75% d. More than 75%
4. How has the training motivated you concerning witnessing?  
a. Completely b. moderately, c. None
5. After taking this training, are you motivated to go and teach others about discipleship?  
a. Yes b. No c. No idea.
6. What area of discipleship do you think we should emphasize more clearly in the Bentiu district?  
.....
7. What other things do you think we should emphasize as a church so that discipleship can increase in the Bentiu district?  
.....
8. What group of people do you think need more training in discipleship in the Bentiu district?  
.....
9. How do you appreciate this training?  
a. 25% b. 50 75% d. Beyond 75%
10. What impact do you think this training will have on church growth in Bentiu district?  
a. Positive b. Negative c. Not known
11. What impact do you think this training has on the lay leaders of this district?  
a. Positive b. negative c. Not Sure.
12. Do you like this training to be repeated sometime in the future in this district?  
a. Yes b. No c. No idea.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON LAY LEADERS' DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

## PROGRAM IN BENTIU DISTRICT

Name of Trainer..... Date of Training.....

Name of the Church.....

### A. CONDITION OF THE CHURCH BEFORE THE TRAINING

1. What was the membership of the church?  
.....
2. What was the spiritual condition of the church?  
a. Strong b. Weak c. Moderate d. Poor
3. How many church members were participating in witnessing and visitations?  
a. One quarter b. a half c. three quarter d. None of the above.
4. Did the church attend any training on discipleship earlier?.....
5. Who are the most active members of the church?  
a. Youth b. Women c. Men d. Children
6. What is the cultural influence on the church?  
a. Strong b. Weak c. Moderate
7. How is the attendance of prayer meetings by the church members?  
a. Less than 25% b. 25% or more c. 50% d. 75%

### B. REACTION OF THE CHURCH MEMBERS TO THE TRAINING

1. How did the training affect members spiritually?  
a. Moderately, b. highly, c. Satisfactorily.
2. Which lesson of the training had the most positive effect on the members' spirituality?  
.....
3. How has the training helped the members in understanding discipleship in terms of percentage?  
b. 25% b. 50% 75% d. More than 75%
4. How has the training motivated the members about witnessing?  
b. Completely b. moderately c. None
5. After taking this training, are the members motivated to go and teach others about discipleship?  
b. Yes b. No c. No idea.
6. What area of discipleship do you think we should emphasize more clearly for the church members?  
a. Witnessing b. Obedience c. intercultural discipleship
7. What other things do you think we should emphasize as a church so that discipleship can increase in your church?  
.....
8. What group of people do you think need more training in discipleship in your church?  
a. Women b. Men c. Youth d. Children
9. How do the members appreciate the discipleship training?  
a.25% b. 50 75% d. Beyond 75%
10. What impact do you think this training will have on church growth in your local church?  
a. Positive b. Negative c. Not known

11. What impact do you think this training has on the lay leaders of your church?
  - a. Positive b. negative c. Not Sure.
12. Do the members like the training to be repeated sometime in the future in your church?
  - a. Yes b. No c. No idea.

C. CONDITION OF THE CHURCH AFTER THE TRAINING

1. How many new people decided to join the church as a result of the witnessing activities of the members following the training? Give number if possible.....
2. How many church members joined the witnessing group because of the influence of the discipleship training?  
.....
3. How has the spirituality of the church members increased as a result of the training?  
.....
4. How did the training affect the youth group in terms of witnessing?  
.....
5. How did the training affect the witnessing activities of the women's group in the church?  
.....  
.....

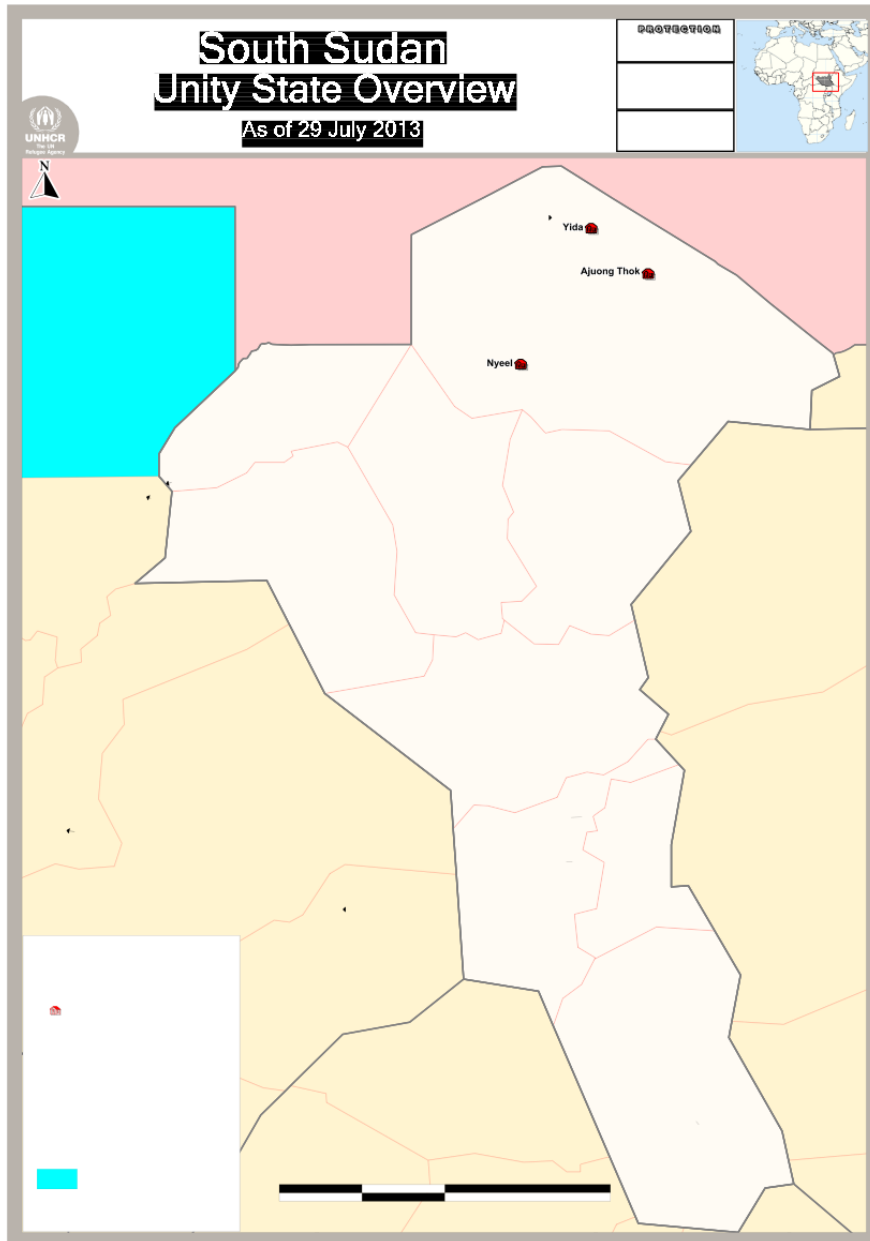
APPENDIX D

MAPS

Map of South Sudan



Map of Unity State



## VITA

**Name:** Mark Igga Mona Odolopre

**Background:** Born on January 16, 1964, in Mugali village of Magwi county of Eastern Equatoria State in South Sudan. Spent the first eight years of my life in Uganda due to the first civil war in South Sudan that started in 1955 and ended in 1972. I was the first born of my parents and I was followed by two other brothers. Before joining the Seventh-day Adventist church on May 18, 1985, by baptism, I was a Catholic Christian.

**Family:** Married to Alice Anduwa Dominic Marali on May 18, 1992, and have been blessed with six children – four boys and two girls: Daniel Opinile Mark 32 years old, Joel Drici Mark 28 years old, Amos Ayiga Mark 26 years old, Anna Forogo Mark 21 years old, Benjamin Achiga Mark 18 years old, and Jennifer Mundua Mark 15 years old.

### **Education:**

2018-2025	Doctor of Ministry student, Adventist University of Africa (Nairobi, Kenya).
2011-2015	Masters of Arts in Islamic Studies, Middle East University (Beirut, Lebanon).
2003-2010	Bachelor of Arts in Pastoral Ministry, Middle East University (Beirut, Lebanon).
1996-1998	Diploma in Theology, Sudan Adventist Seminary (Khartoum, Sudan).
1981-1984	Loa Senior Secondary School, Loa, Eastern Equatoria State (Sudan).
1978-1980	Nimule Intermediate School, Nimule, Eastern Equatoria State (Sudan).
1972-1977	Nyigeri, Mugali, and Loa Primary schools (Uganda and Sudan).

### **Ordination:**

2003 Ordained on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003 in Khartoum, Sudan, by the Middle East Union, and currently holding credentials from the South Sudan Union Mission of the East-Central Africa Division (ECD) of Seventh-day Adventist Church.

### **Work Experience:**

2022 to date	Ministerial Secretary and Departmental director for Adventist Mission, Family Ministries, AMR, Media, and Communication, South Sudan Union Mission (SSUM) of Seventh-day Adventist Church.
2015-2021	Field President, Greater Upper Nile Field, South Sudan.
2014-2015	Acting Field President, Greater Upper Nile Field, South Sudan.

2012-2013 Ministerial Secretary and Education Director, Greater Upper Nile Field, South Sudan.  
2006-2011 District Leader and Departmental Director, Sudan Field, Khartoum (Sudan).  
2002-2006 District Leader, Sudan Field of SDA Church, Khartoum (Sudan).  
1992-2001 Global Mission Pioneer, Sudan Field of SDA, Khartoum (Sudan).  
1990-1991 Grinding Mill Manager, ADRA, Juba, South Sudan.  
1984-1985 Office Clerk, Norwegian Church Aid, Torit, South Sudan.