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A Crisis of Rebirth:
An Exploration of Holiness Doctrine Across Five Professing Holiness Groups
and a Path Toward Discipleship

A Project Report
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Abstract

This project was an exploration of how revitalized practices of discipleship could lead to fuller practices of holy living. The goal was to ascertain what practices of discipleship were being utilized across five church groups affiliated with the Wesleyan Holiness movement. The key question of the research: How can revitalized practices of discipleship lead to fuller practices of holy living?

This research employed a qualitative methodology. Within the qualitative approach, this study was phenomenological by design with Constructivist characteristics. Twenty-one active ministers across the United Methodist Church, Church of God (Cleveland, TN), the Salvation Army, the Church of the Nazarene, and Church of God (Anderson, IN) were interviewed to determine whether they implemented discipleship practices within their ministry contexts and whether those discipleship practices were effective in leading to fuller practices of holy living.

The overall findings of the research demonstrated that there is a major disconnect between discipleship practices by design and in practice. Further, there was a noticeable gap between discipleship practices and the ability for those practices to affect holiness of believers. Before discipleship practices can be implemented within local ministry contexts, significant attention will have to be paid to definitions of key terms and the interconnectedness of discipleship and holiness. Additionally, beliefs about accountability being for leadership positions within the church and not all disciples of Christ will have to be rediscovered. Accountability was almost completely absent from church polity but is a key indicator of discipleship effectiveness.

Key Terms: discipleship, holiness, sanctification, rebirth bandwidth, process, instantaneous event, orthodoxy, orthopraxy, orthopathy, Wesleyan Holiness movement

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Discipleship occurs when a transformed person radiates Christ to those around her. It happens when people so deeply experience God's love that they can do nothing other than affect those around them. – Bill Hull

To be holy is to move beyond the question “what must I do to be saved?” to “what must I be and do now that I am saved?” – Barry L. Callen

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Chapter One: Introduction to the Research

Be holy, for I am the Lord your God. Leviticus 20:7b

Foundational Background

The apostle Peter gave attention to the priestly regulations of Leviticus in 1 Peter 1:15-16 when, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he wrote, “but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”¹ However, he was writing to “those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen,” and by way of writing to them, he was writing to future generations of Christ-followers.²

Since that First Century reminder by Peter under the direction of the Holy Spirit, countless people have attempted to discern the fullness of what it means to be “holy” while living in a world fallen by sin. In *A Study of Holiness from the Early Church Fathers*, J. B. Galloway reviewed many of those considered to be church fathers and their engagement with the doctrine of holiness. People like Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, the Bishop of Carthage, Eusebius, and others throughout history had their own discerning ideas concerning holiness. Even today, scholars and laypeople alike produce materials from personal experience, knowledge, and training.

This is not a new topic for exploration. However, just as John Wesley rebirthed the doctrine of holiness as a focus of the church during the 1700s, now there is a need for a fuller understanding of what holiness is so that it informs discipleship. William and Catherine Booth (Salvation Army), Daniel Sydney Warner (Church of God Anderson, IN), Bud Robinson

¹ All Scripture, unless otherwise noted in this dissertation, is taken from: *Holy Bible, New American Standard Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995).

² Ibid.

(Church of the Nazarene), Steven J. Land (Church of God Cleveland, TN), and Albert C. Outler (United Methodist Church) all followed in Wesley's steps as they discerned holiness for their generation and church group. However, their denominational affiliations and cultural necessities left them with only a partial understanding of the whole of Wesleyan holiness doctrine. The pragmatic theology of William and Catherine Booth involved simplifying doctrine and practice for laypeople with little ministerial training so that the mission of the poor might go forward with speed, purpose, and power. The eleven doctrines of The Salvation Army were created by the Booths in order to provide simple, practical understanding for salvation warfare in their communities.³ Holiness for Daniel S. Warner was a complete and perfect moral restoration of the soul from the effects of the inbred sinful nature. Physical and mental restoration were not part of that perfection because Warner believed that would only come with glorification at death. Further, the unity of believers into God's church and free from denominational distinctions was distinctly tied to his understanding of holiness.⁴ In much the same way as Warner but without a focus on the unity of believers free from sects and creeds, Bud Robinson promoted, "in the second work of grace, the heart is cleansed and made pure, the 'old man' is crucified, the body of sin destroyed, and the soul is filled with the Holy Ghost and becomes one of the elect children of God....."⁵ Steven J. Land discerned:

The question of entire sanctification then is not so much a question of subsequence or eradication. Rather, it becomes a question of the kind of measure of love appropriate or adequate to one who "so loved" the world. Nothing but a wholehearted love is adequate to this. Resistances seen in this light are confessed as they come into consciousness. The

³ R. David Rightmire, *The Sacramental Journey of The Salvation Army: A Study of Holiness Foundations* (Alexandria: Crest Books, 2016), 74.

⁴ Daniel S. Warner, *Bible Proofs of the Second Work of Grace* (Rome City, IN: Gospel Trumpet Company, 1880), 9.

⁵ Bud Robinson, *Honey in the Rock* (Salem, OH: Schmul Publishing Company, 1988), 196.

“flesh” is mortified as thoughts and desires come to light in a participatory following of Christ and are renounced as “not I” but the “old I” which found its integrating center in the “flesh” and not the Spirit.⁶

Albert C. Outler promoted to congregants of the United Methodist Church an inward holiness of love for God and an outward holiness of love towards others. This love for others would be manifested in seeking the well-being of others more than self.⁷ All of these various viewpoints have fed into the problem of understanding holiness because they further promoted doctrinal separation of believers that true holiness is supposed to eradicate.

Statement of the Problem

To completely understand the situation, we must focus our attention for a moment on the problem. As stated previously, God has called his people to be holy. Dr. Barry Callen stated it this way, “God still wants a people who will dare to be his own, trust him, love him, and risk for him, in short, who will be *like God* in character and *with God* as God works redemptively in the world.”⁸ At a lunch table many years ago, Kevin Mannoia overheard a scholar say, “the Holiness movement has lost its ability to renew itself, and its churches have become merely a repository of historical information.”⁹ As the Church of God (Anderson, IN), the church group to which I belong, currently struggles with closing many churches and its identity as a whole, I cannot help but agree with the lunch table scholar of years ago. The problem is that traditional holiness thinking, as it diverged from the original teaching of John Wesley, led to a perspective

⁶ Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), 202.

⁷ Albert C. Outler, *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1975), 82-83.

⁸ Kevin W. Mannoia and Don Thorsen, eds. *The Holiness Manifesto* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 15.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

suggesting that discipleship was no longer necessary in the life of the believer. In the process of carving out a doctrinal spot under the holiness movement umbrella, holiness churches got good at desiring to *know* God (orthodoxy), be *like* God (orthopathy) in contemplation and personal spiritual experiences, but not to be *with* God (orthopraxy) as he works redemptively in our communities and beyond. Concerning orthodoxy, orthopathy, and orthopraxy, Frost and Hirsch wrote,

We believe that right belief is an essential element of any discipleship in the way of Jesus. But we also believe that the church needs to reinterpret what it means by right belief and confession. The church nearly always sees orthodoxy as a commitment to propositional truth, assuming that the knowledge of God is received through purely the cognitive functions. We are convinced that our thinking about God must be right if we are to come to a full appreciation of God, but it must be complimented by orthopraxy and orthopathy if we are to come to be in a full-orbed, biblical engagement with God.¹⁰

Jürgen Moltmann discussed the same idea in *The Trinity and the Kingdom*. Moltmann wanted to provide material that would enable Christ-followers to join God in an orthopraxy that seeks to anticipate the kingdom of God that is coming and presently here.¹¹ Due to our denominational affiliations, we have a piece of “what” holiness is (orthodoxy); we are driven by disconnected emotions to be like God (orthopathy), but our limited understanding has caused us to lose focus of the “why” we are called to be holy (or Moltmann’s term of orthopraxy).

Added to that, the church has gone from being institutionalized within our culture to being seen as unnecessary to our culture. Gene Edward Veith Jr. stated:

The legacy of the postmodernists is not so much cultural relativism. It is relativizing culture. Dissolving all cultures. Undoing communities and the sense of community. This

¹⁰ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *ReJesus: A Wild Messiah for a Missional Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 156, <https://libguides-thedtl-org.dtl.idm.oclc.org/c.php?g=1099822>.

¹¹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1981), 124-128, 209-222. Jürgen Moltmann was a Reformed theologian that developed a strong theology of the Holy Spirit meant to help the church-at-large to regain her bearings within a fast-changing society. His inclusion in this research is due to his tremendous contribution to contemporary understanding of the Holy Spirit and orthopraxy.

dissolution was reinforced and enabled by a technological revolution that has refashioned society, while cutting it off further from reality.¹²

Such a drastic cultural shift in such a short period of time bespeaks the need for a new understanding of what it means to be a professing member of the Wesleyan Holiness movement today. Additionally, a construct is needed that maintains the tradition of Wesleyan thought on holiness but is different from previous materials in speaking to the Post-Christian church in rural America.

Purpose Statement

This explorative study is different from the doctrinal works of the Booths, Warner, Robinson, Land, and Outler in that the purpose is to ascertain whether revitalized practices of discipleship might lead to fuller practices of holy living. The conjecture is that the “why” of Wesleyan holiness is directly related to the personal discipleship (orthopraxy or right actions) of others. Also, this explorative study concludes with a proposed construct of practical discipleship. It is similar to the other studies in that key terms are defined and relatable amongst the different church groups. Further, professing members of the Wesleyan Holiness movement are viewed as being set apart from other church traditions while promoting an understanding of how best to interact within the current dominant culture.

Research Question(s)

The key question of this study is: How can revitalized practices of discipleship lead to fuller practices of holy living? Subsets of this question involve holiness perceptions of active ministers of The Salvation Army, Church of God (Cleveland, TN), Church of God (Anderson, IN), Church of the Nazarene, and United Methodist Church. These five church groups have been

¹² Gene E. Veith Jr., *Post Christian: A Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 172.

chosen because of their affiliation with the Wesleyan Holiness movement and their deep-rooted connections with rural Eastern Tennessee, among other criteria.

Delimitations

For this explorative, qualitative project, research will be limited to the five church groups mentioned in the section, considering research question(s) as they are affiliated and have a history of doctrinal stances with the Wesleyan Holiness movement. Geographical limitations will be in Eastern Tennessee, where the researcher provides pastoral service. Fifty percent of the in-person interviews gathered for this research will come from active ministers of the Church of God (Anderson, IN) operating in Eastern Tennessee. The other fifty percent will come from active ministers operating in Eastern Tennessee from the Church of God (Cleveland, TN), The Salvation Army, Church of the Nazarene, and United Methodist Church. Retired ministers not actively engaged in any ministry context will be excluded from this research since the focus is on current understandings of holiness and discipleship.

From outside of the five chosen church groups, the question may arise: Why choose these five church groups from more than a dozen groups affiliated with the Wesleyan Holiness movement? In his book entitled *Choose the Life: A Faith That Embraces Discipleship*, Bill Hull lists five personal competencies of disciples. In *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, he reiterates those competencies to be: “a disciple submits to a teacher who teaches him or her how to follow Jesus, a disciple learns Jesus’ words, a disciple learns Jesus’ way of ministry, a disciple imitates Jesus’ life and character, and a disciple finds and teaches other disciples for Jesus.”¹³ It is his contention that churches typically focus on items

¹³ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 2006), 47.

two through four of those competencies while floundering at best on items one and five. It is the contention of this researcher that, due to their focused understanding of holiness, each of the selected church groups best represents one of the five competencies or right actions (orthopraxy). However, not one of the five church groups has a practical holiness doctrine (orthodoxy) that will address all five competencies.¹⁴ In addition, the United Methodist Church has been predominantly in the news as they struggle with what it means to maintain a Wesleyan holiness theology while embracing a culture that is increasingly against tradition, structure, and established religion. The other church groups would do well to take heed of the shifts taking place within the UMC while reaffirming their own worldview where applicable and willfully changing it to a Christian worldview where necessary.

Research Design

The worldview of the researcher is important in understanding the biases and presuppositions inherent in any qualitative research project. The worldview of this researcher is somewhere within the melding of a transformative mindset and social constructivist. Research conducted with a transformative worldview can be described as containing a reformational action-based agenda that has the possibility of changing lives, the institutions where people work

¹⁴ The Salvation Army best represents the personal disciple competency that “a disciple submits to a teacher who teaches him or her how to follow Jesus” because of their military structure and leadership approach. See *The Holy River of God: Currents and Contributions of the Wesleyan Holiness Stream of Christianity* edited by Barry Callen on Page 79 for the reason why The Church of God (Cleveland, TN) best represents the competency that “a disciple learns Jesus’ words.” See *Discovering Christian Holiness: The Heart of Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* by Diane LeClerc on Page 123 for why The Church of the Nazarene best demonstrates the competency of “a disciple learns Jesus’ way of ministry.” In the book edited by Barry Callen, see on pages 127-133 how the United Methodist Church provides the best understanding of “a disciple imitates Jesus’ life and character.” Originally as a reformation movement, the Church of God (Anderson) had the focused doctrine of holiness that gave them the ability to “find and teach other disciples for Jesus.”

and live and the life of the researcher.¹⁵ Creswell and Creswell define social constructivists as “individuals that seek understanding of the world in which they live and work.”¹⁶

The research is qualitative in approach, meaning that it provides an avenue for inspecting and understanding what meaning people attach to social or human problems.¹⁷ Within the qualitative approach, this study is phenomenological by design with Constructivist characteristics. It is a “design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants.”¹⁸ The Constructivist characteristics involve this researcher’s prior knowledge and experience within the Wesleyan Holiness movement, and that knowledge is not discovered but constructed through social interactions, cultural values, the knower's interpretation, and experience.¹⁹ In the case of this research, the five groups identified are within the larger Wesleyan Holiness movement. The method of gathering the data for this research is to utilize open-ended questions during in-person interviews to promote a narrative-based conversation while anticipating the construction of over-arching themes and patterns that allow for consistent interpretation. “An important feature of constructions is that they can be manipulated and modified (by interrelating, interpolating, extrapolating, or metaphoric leap) into new and unexpected configurations, resulting in possibilities not directly encountered in experience; they can give rise to creative and innovative formulations that extend human thought and

¹⁵ John W. Creswell and David J. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2018), 13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 250.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁹ Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, *The Constructivist Credo* (Abingdon, UK: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 40.

appreciation.”²⁰ The design of this research is intricately important to the significance of the thesis because theological and doctrinal ideals are not only knowledge-based but require action for them to truly fall into the category of Christian beliefs.

Significance of the Study

Do discipleship practices influence practices of holy living? Does the status or frequency of discipleship practices within church groups affiliated with the Wesleyan Holiness movement affect holiness practices among adherents? These are just a few of the questions that denote the significance of this study. Furthermore, pertinent discussions of discipleship and holiness practices within the church are meant to challenge the conversationalists to search for deeper understanding of practical principles related to living out the Christian faith.

To date, this research will be original in combining a comprehensive definition of holiness with the practice of discipleship. While other research has shown how holiness doctrine within specific denominational groups should be comprehensive in scope, this is the first to research how strengthening discipleship practices within specific church groups affiliated with the Wesleyan Holiness movement might lead congregants to experience fuller practices of holy living. Further, no study of this kind has been conducted within the rural communities and culture of Eastern Tennessee. This has implications for rural areas across the southern United States and the possibility for implications beyond that. For that reason, a glossary of key terms is of importance so readers of this research may understand what the interviewees and researcher intended versus the personal biases and presuppositions of the reader.

²⁰ Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, 48.

Importance of Key Terms for this Study

It is imperative to have a commonality among key terms and their definitions so that the research at hand can be properly framed. Church groups within the Wesleyan Holiness Tradition are part of a speech community. “Speech communities are groups that share values and attitudes and language use, varieties and practices.”²¹ This framing of the research cannot be done in face-to-face communication, so it is important to start out on the same page. Speech communities are distinctively different from other speech communities. They come to the collective forefront when there is a crisis, and they are acknowledged in relation to other communities.²² I would suggest that the state of discipleship and holiness within the Wesleyan Holiness Tradition is one such crisis. Also, notice that the definitions that follow are person-oriented. Although they may have aspects that are task-oriented, “their highest priority is to establish and maintain personal relationships” and require social interactions to sustain their understanding.²³ The glossary of key terms is found in Appendix M.

²¹ Marcyliena H. Morgan, *Speech Communities: Key Topics in Linguistic Anthropology* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1.

²² *Ibid.*, 3.

²³ Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: A Model for Effective Personal Relationships*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 69.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

Hebrews 12:14

Introduction

Since the purpose of this explorative study is to determine whether reinvigorated discipleship practices might lead to deeper practices of holy living, John Wesley's practical theology on the subject of holy living, or holiness, is a good place to begin. From his holiness theology, mostly described through his considerable collection of sermons, we have a full definition that can be juxtaposed with holiness doctrines of denominational groups that splintered from Methodism in order to discern their own nuances of belief. John Wesley preached in his sermon entitled *The First Fruits of the Spirit*, "They who thus believe do no longer 'walk after the flesh,' no longer follow the motions of the corrupt nature, but 'after the Spirit'; both their thoughts, words, and works are under the direction of the blessed Spirit of God."²⁴ According to Rob Staples, "Sanctification asserts that Christian life ought not to be formed in a haphazard way. It takes constant, life-long attention, habits, and care to employ this character."²⁵ Said another way, and in keeping with both Wesley and Staples, holiness theology should have accompanying discipleship practices. Therefore, from those splintered nuances of holiness theology, we should expect to see discipleship practices accommodated to each denominational group's understanding of holiness.

²⁴ John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions* (London, UK: John Mason, 1846), 80.

²⁵ Rob L. Staples, *Outward Sign and Inward Grace: The Place of Sacraments in Wesleyan Spirituality* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1991), 204-5.

John Wesley

Holiness is the experience of sanctification, which, for Wesley, is the Holy Spirit working within the believer toward full salvation subsequent to justification. It is the process of salvation that begins with the new birth, where “renewal in the image of God continued throughout life.”²⁶ In speaking on Romans 8:1, John Wesley said, “It is thy part, patiently to continue in the work of faith, and in the labor of love; and in cheerful peace, in humble confidence, with calm and resigned and yet earnest expectation, to wait till the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this;” to wait upon the process of becoming more like Christ daily.²⁷ Justification relates to the work that God does for us through Jesus Christ, and the new birth relates to the work that God does in us by renewing our fallen nature. “In the moment we are justified by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus, we are also ‘born of the Spirit;’ but in order of thinking, as it is termed, justification precedes the new birth. We first conceive his wrath to be turned away, and then his Spirit to work in our hearts.”²⁸ While sanctification begins with the new birth, according to Wesley, an instantaneous occurrence takes place after the new birth, called entire sanctification.

Entire sanctification is the third liberty of the gospel after justification and the new birth but is a second repentance (orthopraxy) entailing a “deep conviction (orthopathy) not only that they are not yet whole, but also of their demerit and of an ‘utter helplessness’ to retain

²⁶ Timothy L. Smith, foreword to *Wesley and Sanctification*, by Harald Lindström (Nappanee, IN: Francis Asbury Press, 1980), v.

²⁷ John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions*, 89.

²⁸ John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions*, <https://ccel.org/ccel/wesley/sermons/sermons.ix.viii.html>
 html.org

(orthodoxy) anything apart from the grace of God”²⁹ (parenthetical additions mine). Put in a different way, “believers are convicted, through Word and Spirit, of the carnal nature that remains, even in a child of God, of all the unholy tempers and affections that still pollute the heart.”³⁰ However, Wesley does not merely call for the eradication of the sinful nature in entire sanctification. He replaces the carnal self with “holy love.” Charles Wesley, John’s brother and ministry partner, writes in the hymn, “Whom Jesus’ Blood Doth Sanctify,”

Our Prophet, Priest, and King, to Thee
we joyfully submit;
and learn, in meek humility,
our lesson at Thy feet:
Spirit and life Thy Words impart,
and blessings from above;
and drop in every listening heart
the manna of Thy love.³¹

Wesley’s understanding of holy love not only allows for the purification of character (Christian perfection), but also allows the rebirthed Christ follower to love God and others well. According to Wesley, this was and is holiness.

Without holiness, no one will be able to see God. For Wesley, the final completion of the entire sanctification process does not conclude in some form of purgatory. Entire sanctification occurs on this side of eternity.³² It is an instantaneous event, even if it occurs just prior to death.

²⁹ Kenneth J. Collins, 280.

³⁰ Ibid., 280.

³¹ “Divine Hymns,” accessed May 28, 2023, <https://divinehymns.com/lyrics/whom-jesus-blood-doth-sanctify-song-lyrics/>.

³² Kenneth J. Collins, 306.

Afterward, the soul achieves glorification, “deliverance from the very *presence* of sin” in paradise.³³

Concerning Wesley and discipleship, a practical approach to holiness led to a unique method combining “several interlocking group techniques to construct a ladder of personal spiritual improvement” (discipleship).³⁴ Methodist cell groups of six to eight people would meet weekly “to discuss their personal spiritual growth and live in accountability.”³⁵ Radical changes took place among the small group members as they practiced means of grace. “Wesley divided the ‘means of grace’ into three divisions: instituted means of grace, the prudential means of grace, and the general means of grace.”³⁶ In his own words, “By ‘means of grace’ I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace.”³⁷ Each division had spiritual formation practices meant to make the practitioner conscious of God’s forgiving and transforming presence of Christ for every day.³⁸ Although the means of grace had no salvific powers, Wesley believed that they were acts that served as channels for the Holy Spirit to work through and in the lives of individual believers. And since Wesley believed strongly that the work of the Holy Spirit was the key to sanctification and not the individual believer’s endeavors, the means of grace hold an important significance for this research.

³³ Randy L. Maddox, 190.

³⁴ D. Michael Henderson, *John Wesley’s Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples* (Wilmore, KY: Rafiki Books, 2016), 11.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Diane Leclerc and Mark A. Maddix, *Spiritual Formation: A Wesleyan Paradigm* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2011), 75.

³⁷ John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions*, 176.

³⁸ Diane Leclerc and Mark A. Maddix, *Spiritual Formation: A Wesleyan Paradigm*, 75.

Instituted means of grace were practices that Jesus Christ directly instituted for participation by his followers. Prayer, in-depth study of Scriptures, fasting, having spiritual conversations with others, and sharing in the Lord's Supper were just a few of the practices. The prudential means of grace were practices that were prudent and beneficial to carry out. Obeying Christ and his commands, interaction with relational small groups much like the band meetings Wesley instituted, special prayer meetings, visiting the less fortunate (widows, orphans, the sick, and those imprisoned), reading devotionals that aided in understanding God's word, and doing good as much as able for as many people as able. General means of grace were more generic in their nature but not in their character. They included: watching, denying self and ego, taking up our personal cross, and enjoying the presence of God.³⁹

Wesley's understanding of sanctification as a robust process towards full salvation, complete with the means and ways to obtain it, provided a solid construct for many generations. While other aspects of sanctification, such as empowerment and witness, were important to Wesley, they cannot constitute a significant portion of this thesis. As church groups searched for their niche within the Wesleyan holiness tradition, they splintered the fullness of Wesley's holiness understanding to give denominational focus. One such church group began as a movement with no intentions of ever becoming a denominational sect.

Church of God (Anderson, IN) (ChoG AN)

Daniel Sydney Warner is considered the founding pioneer of the ChoG AN. His interactions with Oberlin College, First Eldership of the Churches of God (Winebrennarian), and the National Campmeeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness in the years 1860-1890 led

³⁹ For a more detailed understanding of Wesley's typologies of the means of grace, see Henry H. Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1992), 2-5.

his fledgling movement to prioritize the presence and leading power of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁰ His subsequent crisis moment with holiness led Warner to profess the keys of true holiness as: “thorough human consecration (orthopraxy), a pervasive divine presence (orthodoxy), and resulting joy (orthopathy) known individually and in the body of believers”⁴¹ (parenthetical additions mine). In one of his journal entries dated April 16, 1877, Warner wrote, “Since I rose this morning my constant prayer has been to God to lead me in all things. I pray God to take me like an old sack and shake me until entirely empty, and then fill me with the fulness of God.”⁴² However, Warner’s focus concerning holiness began to shift as he saw the aftermath of the American Civil War and the effects of sectarianism on people. After 1878, Warner would be unapologetic and relentless as an advocate for Christian holiness. This type of holiness should enable Christians to live in supernatural unity. Warner would place special emphasis on the unity of believers in Christ, the reality of living a victorious Christian life through the Holy Spirit, and the present reality of the kingdom of God.⁴³ Writers like Charles Ewing Brown, F. G. Smith, and J. W. Byers would carry the same focus that Warner had into the early and middle twentieth century.

In writing about entire sanctification, John W. V. Smith said,

In the early writing and preaching on sanctification two points stand out clearly. The first is that sanctification is a divine work, wrought by the Holy Spirit, and that it alters a man’s very nature The second point is that sanctification is a complete work. Entire sanctification meant an elevation of life to the plane that even one’s

⁴⁰ Barry L. Callen, *It’s God’s Church! The Life & Legacy of Daniel Sydney Warner* (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1995), 10.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴² Daniel S. Warner, quoted in Barry L. Callen, *It’s God’s Church! The Life & Legacy of Daniel Sydney Warner* (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1995), 70.

⁴³ Harold Phillips, “Editorials in *Vital Christianity*,” June 9 through October 20, quoted in Barry L. Callen, *It’s God’s Church! The Life & Legacy of Daniel Sydney Warner* (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1995), 79.

motives and desires were made perfect and were brought into harmony with the will of God.⁴⁴

Smith was echoing the early pioneers of the ChoG AN in that entire sanctification was a second work of grace, a crisis experience that was complete, and an experience that caused the receiver to “come-out” of denominationalism into the one true church as they saw it.

As Wesley focused on the entire sanctification process (ESP), Warner and ChoG AN writers focused on the instantaneous nature of sanctification as realized by moral purity and unity among believers. For Wesley, ESP (Entire Sanctification Process) was a series of stages within the full salvation process. Within ChoG AN, entire sanctification was promoted as a unique crisis event after salvation but not necessarily needed for salvation to be maintained. (It was for those Christians who desired a deeper walk with Christ, or ministers called into service.)

If holiness theology is limited to moral purity and unity of believers, then discipleship will be focused on practices that aide moral purity and increase unity among believers. Diane Leclerc wrote, “. . . practices or disciplines become second nature to us and provide significant meaning in our life of faith, and open us up to God’s daily sanctifying grace. Therefore, through these ordinary disciplines or practices, we become transformed into the likeness of Christ Jesus.”⁴⁵ This presents the question, “What practices of spiritual formation are desirable to maintain moral purity and the unity of believers?” Prayer and special prayer meetings would be the first two practices to come to mind for maintaining unity among believers. In relaying his personal experiences, S. O. Susag wrote,

The first Camp Meeting I attended at Grand Forks, I generally got up at 3 or 4 A. M. and went to the woods to pray. At that time you could hardly find a place to pray. There were

⁴⁴ John W. V. Smith, *Truth Marches On: A Brief Study of the Church of God Reformation Movement* (Anderson, IN: Gospel Trumpet Company, 1956), 29.

⁴⁵ Diane Leclerc and Mark A. Maddix, 77.

2 or 3 members praying behind every tree before I got there. The first Camp Meeting I attended in Anderson, I went out early in the cemetery and here they were praying every where. The Pioneer ministers knew how to pray, because they had no sermon outline book to take it from. Their converts knew how too for they were taught by the Holy Ghost.⁴⁶

For moral purity, obeying Christ or keeping his commandments is key to fostering a meaningful relationship with God. Nonetheless, it is a means of grace that is often misunderstood. We must be reminded that we are not earning grace through works but through God's grace.⁴⁷

Dr. Gilbert W. Stafford, professor of Christian theology at Anderson University from 1976-2007, tackled the idea of Wesleyan holiness theology and discipleship in tandem. He wrote, "Entire sanctification has to do with the complete oneness of the total self with Christ for the purpose of fulfilling his mission on earth"⁴⁸ and "A life entirely sanctified is a life centered on its divine vocation. It is a life with all of its parts integrated around the person of Christ and his mission in the world."⁴⁹ In practice, personal holiness should be characterized by discipleship, and discipleship should be characterized by personal holiness. Both should be taught as an integral and important part of church life and personal spiritual growth.

The ChoG AN has always had a strong sense of teaching as ministry. "Institutions of higher education have become a major means by which the Church of God has sought to assist persons to prepareInformed spirituality has not been the only goal in the church's higher education. Personal maturity ,professional preparation, and effectiveness have also been

⁴⁶ S. O. Susag, *Personal Experiences* (Houston, TX: The Ambassador Press, 1965), 189-90.

⁴⁷ Diane Leclerc and Mark A. Maddix, 79.

⁴⁸ Gilbert W. Stafford, *Theology for Disciples*, 2nd ed. (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 2012), 296.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 299.

essential concerns over the years.”⁵⁰ In honor of the centennial celebration of the church group’s founding, Arlo F. Newell (editor of *Vital Christianity*) wrote: “As individuals, we seek to remain humble and open to the daily instruction and leadership of the Holy Spirit. As a movement, the Church of God always seeks to allow itself to be reformed so that, by avoiding any development of the stagnation of rigid creed or inflexible structure, it can remain a pliable instrument in the hands of God.”⁵¹ Having humility, pliability, and a holiness focus on moral purity in practice, the ChoG AN possessed the potential to be a group of disciples that teach other disciples for Jesus by their orthopraxy.

In rural Eastern Tennessee, where this research was conducted, and across much of the southern states, the ChoG AN sought to distance itself from other church groups within the Wesleyan tradition, not only by doctrinal stances, but in name as well. This occurred in no way more than with ChoG CL. Many Anderson-affiliated churches took up the moniker of “First Church of God” to denote their buildings and fellowships as different from the “Church of God” around the corner. However, what made them different was far less than what united them under the leadership of Christ.

Church of God (Cleveland TN) (ChoG CL)

The ChoG CL has the distinction of being the oldest Pentecostal group in the United States. Richard and R. G. Spurling started the group in 1886 in Monroe County, Tennessee.⁵² In the Winter 2018 periodical *Engage*, ChoG CL reprinted a blog from then general superintendent

⁵⁰ Barry L. Callen, *Enriching Mind & Spirit: A History of Higher Education in the Church of God (Anderson)* (Anderson, IN: Anderson University Press, 2007), 10-11.

⁵¹ Arlo F. Newell, “We Believe: A Statement of Conviction on the Occasion of the Centennial of the Church of God Reformation Movement,” *Vital Christianity*, (March 23, 1980), 18.

⁵² Roger E. Olson, 225.

of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC), A. D. Beacham, with the reference note that they were a group with similar doctrines and beliefs as (ChoG CL). In the article, Beacham wrote about three historical events that shaped the IPHC. The second event he mentions was the renewal movement of John Wesley. He wrote,

Our understanding of holiness, as a manifestation of divine love, flows from Wesley's understanding of the Bible From Wesley, we learned that God has begun a good work in our lives that goes beyond justification by faith. Often called the "second blessing," or "sanctification as a second definite work of grace," we experience victory over the dominion of sin and are empowered to fully live as instruments of righteous blessing in the world.⁵³

Steven J. Land, former President and professor of Pentecostal Theology at Pentecostal Theological Seminary, took a broader stroke when he wrote on spirituality. His thesis was "That the righteousness, holiness, and power of God are correlated with distinctive apocalyptic affections which are the integrating core of Pentecostal spirituality."⁵⁴ He went on to write, "Pentecostalism is more Catholic than Protestant in emphasizing sanctification-transformation more than forensic justification, but more Protestant than Catholic in the conviction that the Word is the authority over the church and tradition for matters of faith, practice, government, and discipline."⁵⁵

Holiness in ChoG CL is defined in terms of entire sanctification as well. Dr. Cheryl Bridges John, professor of Christian formation and discipleship at Church of God Theological Seminary wrote, "The journey into holiness is thus a journey of our affections (orthopathy). It is our journey into desiring God (orthodoxy).... While crisis *second work of grace* is necessary to move us toward sanctification, there is the need to weave crisis experiences into a patterned and

⁵³ A. D. Beacham, "Thoughts on Our Wesleyan Heritage," *Engage*, Winter 2018, 19.

⁵⁴ Steven L. Land, 12.

⁵⁵ Steven J. Land, 18.

disciplined life (orthopraxy) (*italics and parenthetical addition mine*).”⁵⁶ She reiterated the sentiment of Land when she wrote:

The character of holiness is love in the believer. It is a perfect love filling the cleansed, emptied vessel and without which the believer’s gifts, sacrifices, and righteous deeds will profit nothing. The measure of love given in new birth, along with the graces therein implanted, come to full fruitfulness in sanctification. This entire sanctification is a burning passion for souls that enables one to forgive one’s persecutors.⁵⁷

Where Wesley focused on entire sanctification as a process within salvation, and Warner focused on entire sanctification as a second crisis (work of grace), (ChoG CL) integrated both crisis and process as a means for perfecting love within the justified believer. The key has been to remind congregants of the inspired nature of God’s Word for the continual renewing of the heart and mind.

The ChoG CL, as a Spirit-filled body of believers, has repeatedly focused on the inspired Word of God. Land wrote, “The Spirit inspires the Word and builds up the community; the Word enables us to understand our experience of the Spirit and teaches us the form of our common life; the community forms the context in which the Word is understood and the Spirit encountered.”⁵⁸ Such a strong emphasis on God’s word should produce discipleship practices with a similar focus. Daniel Tomberlin, author of *Pentecostal Sacraments: Encountering God at the Altar*, wrote about his early years in the ChoG CL: “My pastor, Walter Langdon, directed me to the Church Training Course (CTC) books published by the Church of God Publishing House/Pathway Press. The CTC books covered biblical studies, theology, and church leadership. Completing the CTC courses and receiving the certificate was a significant milestone in my

⁵⁶ Cheryl B. Johns, “Cultivating a Heart for Holiness,” *Engage*, Spring/Summer 2018, 33-34.

⁵⁷ Steven J. Land, 124.

⁵⁸ Steven J. Land, 30.

journey as a disciple.”⁵⁹ In the Preface to the Minutes of the Seventh General Assembly, General Overseer A. J. Tomlinson stated, “We commend these pages to the honest, sincere searcher after truth and to those who are interested in seeing the Bible Church re-established on earth with all the graces, gifts and glory of its former existence.”⁶⁰ Because of their strong focus on God’s Word and their apocalyptic-infused view of holiness, the ChoG CL have utilized orthopraxy to emphasize God’s Word. Such a strong connection between Word and practice should present an equally strong connection between holiness and discipleship practices.

In the Spring/Summer 2016 edition of *Engage*, Randy L. Ballard addressed the connection between holiness and discipleship for ChoG CL. He wrote, “With all this spiritual nurture and good works, we assume everyone in the church is growing spiritually. We often assume they are mature because of their outside works without considering whether an ongoing transformation is really taking place. Nonetheless, we tend to produce members who support the church, instead of disciples who impact their world.”⁶¹ Leslie Parrott Sr., author of *What is Sanctification?* and former Nazarene pastor, echoed the same sentiment of the ChoG CL back in 1979 when He wrote: “Though sanctification is the distinguishing doctrine of our church, there are many sincere people in our congregations fighting carnality in their lives. Seemingly, they have not grasped God’s plan for ‘purity and power.’”⁶² As stated earlier, what separates Wesleyan-affiliated church groups is far less than what connects them under the holy leadership of Christ.

⁵⁹ Daniel Tomberlin, “My Journey in Christian Discipleship,” *Engage*, Spring 2013, 11.

⁶⁰ Consortium of Pentecostal Archives, “Church of God General Assembly Minutes, 1911 Edition Published,” accessed September 4, 2023, <https://pentecostalarchives.org/?a=d&d=CGM1911-Published.1.4&e=-----en-20-1- img-txIN ----->.

⁶¹ Randy L. Ballard, “Nondiscipleship: The Elephant in the Church,” *Engage*, Spring/Summer 2016, 42.

⁶² Leslie Parrott Sr., *What is Sanctification?* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1979), 3.

The Church of the Nazarene

In the early years of the 20th Century, J. B. Chapman, former editor of the *Herald of Holiness* and general superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene, tasked H. Orton Wiley to publish a systematic theology for the Nazarene Church. Wiley amassed “almost 1,400 pages of comparative, historical, philosophical, biblical, and systematic theology..... In addition to recognizing the contributions of classical Methodist and Nazarene theologians..... Wiley freely acknowledged the contributions of theologians from other traditions.”⁶³ However, Wiley sought to protect aspects of Nazarene theology that he sensed were open to misinterpretation. One such area was entire sanctification. Wiley wanted to make certain that “entire sanctification was understood in the church as an instantaneous act, a second work of grace.”⁶⁴ The problem for Wiley was other contemporary theologians who wrote on sanctification.

Methodist theologians who were contemporaries of Wiley emphasized sanctification as a gradual process instead of instantaneous. “According to Wiley, this was because they had failed to recognize that sanctification was a work of grace alone. They failed to understand sufficiently that sanctification was an act of God and not an act of man.”⁶⁵ Wiley used the term “progressive” instead of “gradual” to describe the successive stages that a Christian goes through prior to the crisis experience of entire sanctification. These successive stages were a means of revealing the deep-rooted carnal nature within the believer that needed eradication in the instantaneous sanctifying grace of God. The process did not happen after an instantaneous experience as in the

⁶³ Mark R. Quanstrom, *A Century of Holiness Theology: The Doctrine of Entire Sanctification in the Church of the Nazarene 1905 to 2005* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2004), 75.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁶⁵ Mark R. Quanstrom, 81.

ChoG CL, but the process led up to an instantaneous experience that completed the work of full salvation in the believer.

Once the instantaneous sanctifying grace of God took hold of a believer, Wiley believed that there was an accompanying divine empowerment by the Holy Spirit. “Under the heading ‘Positive Devotement to God,’ which was derived from the phrase the Church of the Nazarene used in their article of faith to describe the grace of entire sanctification, Wiley explained that in entire sanctification, the Holy Spirit of God possessed and filled the believer resulting in ‘positive devotement to God.’ This was nothing other than holy love.”⁶⁶ However, Wiley made it clear that Nazarene holiness theology would not be sufficient if it only focused on holy love. Purity of intentions had to be combined with holy love to be, in essence, the same holiness as God’s. A heart cleansed from all sin and filled with divine love was proposed as two parts of the same work of grace.⁶⁷ As a result, the very nature of the believer was changed to take on the ministry and character of Jesus. After reading the entire 10th Article of Faith at the 2001 General Assembly meeting of the Church of the Nazarene, Dr. Paul Cunningham declared concerning entire sanctification:

It is born of a relationship with Jesus that is nurtured and grows as we become seekers after the mind of Christ. There is a hunger to be like Jesus—so much so that when He reveals to us that we have been born with a flawed nature that only the Holy Spirit can change, we say yes to Jesus by making a complete consecration to God or everything we are or ever will be and rejoice as He purifies our hearts by faith.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Mark R. Quanstrom, 83.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁶⁸ Paul Cunningham, “Minutes of the 25th General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene, June 24-29, 2001,” 236. Quoted in Mark R. Quanstrom, *A Century of Holiness Theology: The Doctrine of Entire Sanctification in the Church of the Nazarene 1905 to 2005* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2004), 175-76.

In their core values found on the international website for the Church of the Nazarene, the idea of taking on the ministry and character of Jesus is most clearly seen.

We are called by Scripture and drawn by grace to worship God and to love Him with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves. To this end, we commit ourselves fully and completely to God, believing that we can be ‘sanctified wholly,’ as a second crisis experience. We believe that the Holy Spirit convicts, cleanses, fills and empowers us as the grace of God transforms us day by day into a people of love and spiritual discipline, ethical and moral purity, and compassion and justice. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that restores us in the image of God and produces in us the character of Christ. Holiness in the life of believers is most clearly understood as Christlikeness.⁶⁹

Because of the aforementioned holiness focus, discipleship practices within the Church of the Nazarene should mimic the life and character of Christ. Jesus’ ministry should become the ministry goals of the denominational members. However, what was Jesus’ ministry goal? In Jesus’ own words, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.”⁷⁰

Article XIV of the Articles of Faith for the Nazarenes states: “We believe in the Bible doctrine of divine healing and urge our people to seek to offer the prayer of faith for the healing of the sick. . .”⁷¹ In Article XIII, we find, “We believe that the Memorial and Communion supper instituted by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is essentially a New Testament sacrament, declarative of His sacrificial death, through the merits of which believers have life and salvation, and promise of all spiritual blessings in Christ.”⁷²

⁶⁹ “Core Values,” Church of the Nazarene, accessed July 28, 2023, <https://nazarene.org/who-we-are/core-values>.

⁷⁰ Luke 4:18-19.

⁷¹ Mark R. Quanstrom, 199.

⁷² Ibid., 199.

The Church of the Nazarene focused on the life and character of Christ. Holiness led to deeper influence upon believers of Christ's nature. The Salvation Army took this ideal to the poor, destitute, spiritually and emotionally needy, and "least of these" (Matt. 25:40-45). Holiness and discipleship took on aspects of social justice from the early stages of TSA involvement in local society.

The Salvation Army (TSA)

William and Catherine Booth started the Salvation Army in 1865 in England. The Salvation Army "began as a ministry to the poor in East London under another name, The Christian Mission."⁷³ TSA began firmly entrenched in Wesleyan holiness theology when William was ordained as a Methodist minister in 1852. Although he left the Methodist ministry in 1862, he continued to appropriate the Methodist doctrines into his new group. Article Ten of TSA reads, "We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be 'wholly sanctified', and that their 'whole spirit and soul and body' may 'be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thess. 5:23)."⁷⁴

In two areas of Article Ten, we find the impetus for holiness within TSA. Under Section II, 5b of Article Ten: "Holiness in men is possible only when Jesus, who once lived among men, lives in them in the transforming power of His Spirit."⁷⁵ Also, in Section III, 2b of Article Ten: "In relation to sanctification, the Holy Spirit brings the life and power that makes holiness possible, while a wholehearted response to all the Spirit imparts makes holiness actual (see Rom.

⁷³ Jonathon S. Raymond, "The Salvation Army," in *The Holy River of God: Currents and Contributions of the Wesleyan Holiness Stream of Christianity*, edited by Barry L. Callen (Marion, IL: Aldersgate Press, 2016), 121.

⁷⁴ International Headquarters of The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine* (St. Albans, UK: Campfield Press, 1969), x.

⁷⁵ International Headquarters of The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine*, 151.

8:1-17).⁷⁶ Holiness must be accomplished through the work of Jesus and submission by the Christ follower is paramount in actualizing the holy life.

The result of this focus on Wesleyan holiness is the idea of inward and outward holiness. The Spirit effects inward change in the believer, and then cooperation with the Spirit through submission by the believer effects outward change. “In growing saints (making disciples) the holiness catechesis of TSA emphasizes a balanced integration of knowing Christ (orthodoxy), loving Christ (orthopathy), and living Christ (orthopraxy).⁷⁷ TSA members are characterized by living for others through inward holiness and living socially through outward holiness.

Even the structure of church membership was designed with discipleship in mind. “At the heart of William Booth’s approach to missions were four important principles: evangelism, cultural adaptation, self-support, and self-propagation.”⁷⁸ The fourth principle of self-propagation was that “New converts to his East London mission were expected to accept the biblical duty to witness found in Matthew 28:19-20 by winning one friend, acquaintance, or family member to Christ each year.”⁷⁹

Living in such a way as to win others to Christ through personal actions was part of a robust holiness theology for TSA members. The UMC has embraced similar ideals as they currently struggle with what it means to show God’s love and grace to a Post-Christian culture in

⁷⁶ International Headquarters of The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine*, 153.

⁷⁷ Jonathon S. Raymond, “The Salvation Army,” in *The Holy River of God: Currents and Contributions of the Wesleyan Holiness Stream of Christianity*, edited by Barry L. Callen (Marion, IL: Aldersgate Press, 2016), 123-24.

⁷⁸ Andrew M. Eason, “The Strategy of a Missionary Evangelist: How William Booth Shaped the Salvation Army’s Earliest Work at Home and Abroad,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 38, no. 4 (October 2014): 183, <https://journals-sagepub-com.dtl.idm.oclc.org/doi/10.1177/239693931403800405>.

⁷⁹ Andrew M. Eason, 185.

America. While the UMC has the deepest and longest heritage of Wesleyan holiness doctrine, it has not most recently been seen from the outside as embracing traditional Wesleyan ideals.

The United Methodist Church (UMC)

To speak of a current theology of holiness within the UMC is to speak with an abundance of historical assumptions. J. Ellsworth Kalas aptly states, “The United Methodist Church tends these days—like the culture in which it lives—to divide its soul between many causes until it no longer recognizes its own soul. So it is difficult to say where United Methodism is today because United Methodism is not really sure of its own identity.”⁸⁰ Albert Outler says it this way: “Our traditional emphasis on ‘the spiritual life’ is more ambiguous than it should be and our traditional commitments to social reform are less effectual. And it goes without saying that non-Methodists are, for the most part, baffled or unedified by this disintegration of a great tradition.”⁸¹ More recently, Paul W. Chilcote writes, “Perhaps one of the most unique features of Methodist theology is the fact that it permits such diversity; the elusive nature of theological distinctives may itself be a major characteristic of the tradition.”⁸² However, theologians and writers in more recent years are attempting to define, through traditional lenses while speaking into current culture, the beliefs and practices of the United Methodist Church. Although “the content of the various Methodist theologies does not provide the cohesive elements to fashion a distinctive theological tradition,” to these current theologians and writers, we must look.⁸³

⁸⁰ J. Ellsworth Kalas, *Being United Methodist: What It Means Why It Matters* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012), 137.

⁸¹ Albert C. Outler, *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1975), 68-69.

⁸² Paul W. Chilcote, “Mapping Global Methodist Theology,” *Holiness* 8, no. 2 (August 2023): 83, <https://www.10.284/holiness-2023-0011>.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 84.

J. Ellsworth Kalas tells an impassioned story of the stained-glass windows that filled the sanctuary of his pastorate in Green Bay, Wisconsin. One window depicted a saddlebag and happened to be the window that stood opposite the pulpit when he would preach. He used that window as an illustration of the ministers of early American Methodism and how they spread a message of head and heart.⁸⁴ Wesley and early Methodists offered a “comprehensive vision of the Christian life.”⁸⁵ The goal was to balance between heart knowledge and head knowledge.

In the same vein as their founding father, the UMC has traditionally held to Wesley’s interpretation of holiness. However, the emphasis on heart or head knowledge has shifted throughout the years. “The image of a waterfall might be a more appropriate metaphor for this most recent development. The waters of the tradition simply cascade into a myriad of streams and cross-currents, reflecting the unique contexts of Methodism around the world today.”⁸⁶ This shift has been evidenced greatly in the church’s view of social holiness as theologians currently stipulate “that all truth is inextricably bound to unique and diverse cultural and historical contexts.”⁸⁷ This shift necessitates a complete “rethinking of the essential nature of theology, looking for ways to relate it more integrally to the praxis of specific communities of faith.”⁸⁸

According to Philip R. Meadows,

Because of the lingering Christendom mindset, Wesley’s concept of social holiness has generally been misunderstood or half-interpreted. On the one hand, it has been taken to mean the task of making wider society more holy or Christianizing the world. This is not what Wesley intended. On the other hand, ‘society’ has been interpreted to mean the

⁸⁴ J. Ellsworth Kalas, 39-50.

⁸⁵ Ted A. Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 69.

⁸⁶ Paul W. Chilcote, 81.

⁸⁷ Paul W. Chilcote, 81.

⁸⁸ Randy Maddox, ‘Untapped Inheritance,’ In *Doctrines and Disciplines: Methodist Theology and Practice*, Dennis M. Campbell, William B. Lawrence, and Russell E. Richey eds., (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 50.

disciplines of Christian fellowship that empower individuals to pursue holiness of heart and life.⁸⁹

In speaking of social sanctification, Campbell wrote, “sanctification is not limited to the holiness of individual persons. It is a process in which believers seek the sanctification of the world around them.”⁹⁰ This view of sanctification versus the disciplines of Christian fellowship seems to be where the UMC has focused more recently. Kevin Highfield wrote,

While much has been written in Methodist and general Christian theologies on methods for the ‘works of piety,’ such as how to pray, how to conduct sacraments or how to search scriptures, there seems to much less written on methods for works of mercy. It seems the Methodist focus has been on the ‘means of grace’ that relate more to personal devotion in loving the transcendent God (such as seeing God’s presence in the sacraments), and not the means of grace in loving our neighbor, found especially in the immanent Christ (that is, seeing God’s presence in the poor).⁹¹

The focus on social holiness has provided the UMC with a unique ability to imitate Jesus’ life and character. “If you’re looking for a Bible verse that summarizes John Wesley’s feelings about a true Methodist, it seems to me that you’ll find it in our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount: ‘you will know them by their fruit’ (Matthew 7:20, CEB).”⁹² Similarly, “a true Methodist ‘thinks, speaks, and lives according to the method laid down in the revelation of Jesus Christ.’”⁹³ As such, key means of grace practices, or discipleship, should emerge that promote the imitation of Jesus’ life and character. One such aspect should be seen in the sacrament of baptism for the UMC.

⁸⁹ Philip R. Meadows, *Remembering Our Baptism: Discipleship and Mission in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2017), 159.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁹¹ Kevin Highfield, “Communal Holiness in the Liberation and Methodist Movements,” *Holiness* 8, no.1 (April 2023): 18, <https://doi.org/10.2478/holiness-2023-0003>.

⁹²J. Ellsworth Kalas, 56.

⁹³ John Wesley, “The Character of a Methodist,” 5. https://wesleymc.org/images/Romans/The_Character_of_a_Methodist.pdf

In speaking of baptism as the beginning of new life in Christ and the focal point for a life of holiness for UMC adherents, Philip R. Meadows writes, “Baptism should remind us that we are free to choose, every day, whether we will live or die.”⁹⁴ He goes on to write, “The first principles of discipleship is ‘renouncing ourselves’” or taking up our cross and dying daily.⁹⁵ Hand in hand with that practice of the means of grace is the sacrament of Holy Communion. “Communion, for Wesley, was one of the key practices that enabled one to grow in grace and become more holy.”⁹⁶ It was also an “obvious place where Christians can expect to encounter God’s grace in tangible and life-changing ways” as they examine their lives for daily dying to self.⁹⁷

Bud Robinson, Nazarene preacher of sanctification, wrote about the eradication of self. It sounded much like modern-day discipleship practices. The goal always being to deny the self and take on more of Christ, constituted by the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Robinson wrote, “... if you want to show Christ to this old world you will have to get rid of self, for as long as there is any self in you the world cannot see Jesus Christ. Remember, friend, the world does not read their Bible. They read you....”⁹⁸ Although not a focus of Wesleyan holiness theology, discipleship was a by-product of holy living throughout all the five church groups in this research.

⁹⁴ Philip R. Meadows, 55.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 140.

⁹⁶ Kevin M. Watson, *A Blueprint for Discipleship: Wesley’s General Rules as a Guide for Christian Living* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2009), 81.

⁹⁷ Kevin M. Watson, 59.

⁹⁸ Bud Robinson, *Sunshine and Smiles* (Noblesville, IN: Newby Book Room, 1902), 129.

Discipleship Practices in the Wesleyan Tradition

Wesley's means of grace and how they were divided into instituted, prudential, and general practices have been detailed earlier. However, different authors within the Wesleyan Holiness Movement have expounded on these practices in ways that will be helpful to the research at hand. Let us now look specifically at discipleship practices in the context of Wesleyan sources and how they might inform holy living.

Authors of Wesleyan persuasion have divided discipleship into three broad areas. The three areas of concern are: the marks of discipleship, making an environment/culture that promotes discipleship, and the means of spiritual transformation through discipleship practices. I would define the marks of discipleship as imitating Christ and what that looks like in practical application. Making an environment/culture of discipleship would be loving others in such a way that it creates an environment for spiritual growth to occur. The means of spiritual transformation through discipleship practices would include moving from a place of spiritual immaturity (flesh) to a place of spiritual maturity (Spirit) while continuing to change by degree into the image of Christ.

Bill Hull, paraphrasing the Apostle Paul, wrote that “imitating Christ should be our primary goal in discipleship.”⁹⁹ Dallas Willard wrote about Christ-likeness in this way: “. . . we can say from the outset that, in the degree to which spiritual formation in Christ is successful, the outer life of the individual becomes a natural expression or outflow of the character and teachings of Jesus.”¹⁰⁰ However, the outer life is not the goal but the outcome. The

⁹⁹ Bill Hull, 114.

¹⁰⁰ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2021), 15. Dallas Willard, an American philosopher in the Calvinist tradition, was a leading voice on spiritual formation. He was included in this research because of the close connection between the concepts of holiness, discipleship, and spiritual formation.

transformation of the inner life is where true Christlikeness lies. Christ taught a complete change in every believer, and that this change should first manifest in our inner being.¹⁰¹ Discipleship requires a total commitment of the inner self to transformation by Christ's Spirit.

We do not become disciples simply by satisfying the intellectual curiosity of the curious. We do not become disciples simply because we are convinced of the truth concerning the person and the work of Jesus Christ. We become disciples when we, convinced by the Word of God, commit ourselves totally and completely to Jesus Christ and become his disciples.¹⁰²

N. T. Wright describes the inner transformation as “the pattern of thinking and acting which runs right through someone, so that wherever you cut into them (as it were), you see the same person through and through.”¹⁰³

The inner transformation that marks true discipleship can be divided into subareas of transformation. Dallas Willard divides the inner environment into spirit (heart/will), mind (thought/feeling), social (rootedness in others), and soul (meta-dimension).¹⁰⁴ These subareas require obedience. James Montgomery Boice wrote: “There is nothing so obvious as the truth that in religion, words without practice are worthless, even contemptible.”¹⁰⁵ Bobby Harrington and Alex Absalom added holiness to the equation when they wrote: “Disciple making is about

¹⁰¹ J. Heinrich Arnold, *Discipleship: Living for Christ in the Daily Grind* (Walden, NY: The Plough Publishing House, 2011), 1.

¹⁰² J. Dwight Pentecost, *Design for Discipleship: Discovering God's Blueprint for the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Classics, 1996), 17.

¹⁰³ N. T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York, NY: Harper One, 2010), 27. N. T. Wright, and Anglican bishop, was included in this research because of his views on the communal aspects of soteriology within the church. For him, salvation is a way of recognizing the church as this researcher contends discipleship and holiness should represent members of the Wesleyan Holiness movement.

¹⁰⁴ Dallas Willard, 33.

¹⁰⁵ James Montgomery Boice, *Christ's Call to Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2013), 54.

obedience and sanctification (increasing holiness).”¹⁰⁶ Regardless of the manner in which the author chooses to represent the inner transformation that takes place in discipleship; obedience is key. Likewise, any environment conducive to discipleship will have obedience to God’s Word as a key component.

Making an environment/culture of discipleship within a ministry context involves leaders who understand the Christ-commanded product of believers is fruit-bearing discipleship.¹⁰⁷ Phil Maynard writes concerning the church at-large: “We need to make a shift from making members to making disciples.”¹⁰⁸ Knight and Poe suggest that making disciples is based on the conviction that just as heart holiness leads to holiness in practice, it is communities committed to God’s love that actively participate in discipling others in keeping with the Great Commission.¹⁰⁹ Essentially, ministry leaders shift away from measuring church attendance as success to measuring success by how many people are being loved by the church and are being led into the character and nature of Jesus by coming to Christ and then following him in obedience.¹¹⁰ Making an environment within the church that is conducive to discipleship also means understanding that there are elements of that environment that must be present.

¹⁰⁶ Bobby Harrington and Alex Absalom, *Discipleship that Fits: The Five Kinds of Relationships God Uses to Help Us Grow* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2016), 19.

¹⁰⁷ Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor: The Key to Building Healthy Christians in Today’s Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1988), 50.

¹⁰⁸ Phil Maynard, *Membership to Discipleship: Growing Mature Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Satellite Beach, FL: Excellence in Ministry Coaching, 2015), 11.

¹⁰⁹ Henry H. Knight III and F. Douglas Powe, Jr., *Transforming Community: The Wesleyan Way to Missional Congregations* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2016), 11-12.

¹¹⁰ Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington, *Discipleshift: Five Steps that Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2013), 31.

There are necessary elements of a healthy ministry environment/culture. “In order to flourish, people need trust, grace, humility, submission, and affirmation in their environment.”¹¹¹ Greg Ogden narrows the elements to just four writing: “When we (1) open our hearts in *transparent trust* to each other (2) around *the truth of God’s Word* (3) in the spirit of *life-changing accountability* (4) while engaged in our *God-given mission*, we are in the Holy Spirit’s hothouse of transformation.”¹¹² In discussing innovating discipleship into ministry contexts, Will Mancini lists that “innovation must be anchored in clarity first. If you don’t stop doing something, you’ll never start doing something better. Margin is essential.spiritual leaders must start with the heart. For church leaders, leaning into team is the most inconvenient innovation essential.”¹¹³ Focus must be placed on environmental elements of discipleship while seeing the means of spiritual transformation as obtainable through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The means of spiritual transformation through discipleship practices are as rich in content as any religious idea steeped in centuries of history. The means include stages of development towards Christlikeness and the types and implementations of spiritual practices that saturate true discipleship. Robert Coleman developed eight steps for training disciples as follows: (1) selection, (2) association, (3) consecration, (4) impartation, (5) demonstration, (6) delegation, (7) supervision, and (8) reproduction.¹¹⁴ A Wesleyan ecology of faith formation described by Sondra Higgins Matthaei is an invitation to communion, deepening communion, and finally, full

¹¹¹ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 155.

¹¹² Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 145.

¹¹³ Will Mancini, *Innovating Discipleship: Four Paths to Real Discipleship Results* (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 82.

¹¹⁴ Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell Publishing, 1963), 10.

communion.¹¹⁵ Bobby Harrington and Josh Patrick list seven elements of a discipleship lifestyle to be: relationships, Jesus, intentionality, Bible, Spirit, journey, and multiply.¹¹⁶ Finally, in the *Real-Life Discipleship Training Manual*, the authors define how disciples grow as the spiritually dead, the spiritual infant, the spiritual child, the spiritual young adult, and the spiritual parent.¹¹⁷

The types and implementations of spiritual practices are divided into two broad areas: individual and communal disciplines. According to Bill Hull, a comprehensive list of spiritual practices includes Bible reading, meditation, Scripture memorization, prayer, worship, evangelism, service, stewardship, fasting, silence, and solitude, to name a few.¹¹⁸ Richard J. Foster adds simplicity, confession, guidance, and celebration to the list.¹¹⁹ However, the list should be clarified by adding that “the Spiritual Disciplines are an inward and spiritual reality, and the inner attitude of the heart is far more crucial than the mechanics for coming into the reality of the spiritual life.”¹²⁰ What matters most in life is what we are on the inside and not just what is portrayed on the outside.¹²¹ Whether individual or communal in nature, the key to

¹¹⁵ Sondra Higgins Matthaëi, *Making Disciples: Faith Formation in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 167-170.

¹¹⁶ Bobby Harrington and Josh Patrick, *The Disciple Maker's Handbook: 7 Elements of a Discipleship Lifestyle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2017), 63-173.

¹¹⁷ Jim Putman, Avery T. Willis Jr., Brandon Guindon, and Bill Krause, *Real-Life Discipleship Training Manual: Equipping Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010), 43-59.

¹¹⁸ Bill Hull, 193.

¹¹⁹ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York, NY: Harper One, 2018), 79-190. Richard Foster, a contemporary Quaker theologian, was used in this research because a key tenet of Quaker theology is that believers can directly experience the divine nature of the Holy Spirit. This theology is at the heart of this researcher's belief in the interplay between discipleship and holiness practices.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹²¹ Dallas Willard, 8.

effective spiritual discipline practices is the expansion of rebirth bandwidth within the individual person for the edification of the whole body of Christ-followers.

Discipleship and holiness theology are not just actionable ideals. There is definitely orthodoxy involved in comprehending the two. Right actions are not determinable unless right thought informs them. Reflecting theologically upon the interactions between holy living and discipleship is imperative for putting both into action within the life of the believer and the church-at-large.

Theological Reflection

Jürgen Moltmann once wrote about a time when the church was challenged to firmly grasp the commission of Christ outlined in Matthew 28:18-20 and to return to a frame of reference where Christ's future was no longer flawed and dying. "In a situation like this the theological doctrine of the church cannot simply be expressed in abstract terms about the church's timeless nature. It will have to provide points of departure for reforming the church, for giving it a more authentic form."¹²² Research reveals that we are in such a time as this for the church in the areas of discipleship and holiness.

Although this research is confined to five church groups from the Wesleyan Holiness Tradition, "the doctrine of the church can no longer be the slave of the self-understanding of our own particular denomination, and its difference from all the others. Traditional controversial theology, with its 'doctrinal distinctions,' will then give way to a theology of co-operation founded on common ground."¹²³ Discipleship and holiness are areas where common ground can be ascertained because the mission of the church "is not to spread the church but to spread the

¹²² Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 2.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 12.

kingdom.”¹²⁴ This spreading of the kingdom best happens through the practices of discipleship and holy living (holiness). The spreading of the kingdom does not occur merely through information sharing, but by “becoming” the hands and feet of Christ within and throughout culture and society. Therein lies the hope of the inbreaking of God’s kingdom upon the earth and the reality that it has not yet fully occurred to the degree hoped for by Christ-followers.

The Process of Becoming

The church lies within the contradiction of “hope and reality.”¹²⁵ The reality of current imperfect practices of discipleship and holy living and the hope of perfect kingdom-minded practices are always in juxtaposition within the earthly church. “The church cannot accept itself for what it is, either out of resignation or out of complacency . . .” while the perfect promises of Christ remain unfulfilled.¹²⁶ The church is always becoming something greater than its individual parts and is always striving to experience the kingdom of God in the here and now.

Individually, this idea of becoming is equally true. Wesleyans believe that wholly sanctified people can step away from God’s redeeming grace through willful sin. Nonetheless, entire sanctification, as grace that firmly establishes the believer in Christ, makes it much more likely that we can and will retain our spiritual condition of salvation.¹²⁷ The same is true of the means of grace that John Wesley understood to be of importance in the process of discipleship. God’s continued grace is a necessity if we intend to remain redeemed and live holy lives.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 11.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹²⁷ J. Kenneth Grider, 410.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 511.

Entangled with the theology of holiness and discipleship is whether holiness is a process, instantaneous experience, or some combination of both. While Wesley saw an instantaneous experience as part of the greater process of holiness, little was said by him concerning how discipleship progresses. Is it periods of little movement highlighted by moments of forward propulsion towards Christlikeness or is it a steady movement of embracing deeper levels of Christlikeness while dying to self?

Processes and Experiences

The theology of the church in relation to discipleship and holiness is practical by nature. It is more experiential than it is known through comprehension. Yet, it can be comprehended.

It is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in particular that depicts the processes and experiences in which and through which the church becomes comprehensible to itself as the messianic fellowship in the world and for the world. These processes and experiences are on the one hand the ‘means of salvation’— proclamation, baptism, the Lord’s supper, worship, prayer, acts of blessing and the way in which individual and fellowship live. On the other hand they are the ‘charismata,’ the ministries, gifts and tasks (or offices, as they are often called) in this fellowship, or which flow from this fellowship for society. If these ‘means of salvation’ and these ministries of the church are understood as mediations and ministries of the messianic fellowship in the world, then they cannot be misinterpreted in a clerical sense; nor will it be permissible to represent them merely in the context of the inner mutual relationship between Christ and the church, or between the church and Christ.¹²⁹

Hebrews 12:14-15 says, “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God....” The author proclaims that holiness is experiential because we are to strive after it. Also, we are to obtain grace, which Wesley considered to be necessary for discipleship to take place. “Discipleship is a journey of

¹²⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, 198.

grace and faith in which we abide ever more deeply in fellowship with God, so we might participate ever more fully in the mission of God.”¹³⁰

In our individualistic society, holiness and discipleship can be seen as personal experiences. However, they are meant to be experienced in community. After Peter’s sermon on Pentecost, “those who had received his word were baptized, and that day there were added about three thousand souls.”¹³¹ Notwithstanding, to what were they added? Some might think that they were added to the kingdom of God, and they would be partially correct. They were also added to the early church because “they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common.”¹³² Their individual experiences were made possible and magnified by their fellowship within the community of believers. They understood that processes within the body of believers gave structure to their experiences.

We can see that holiness and discipleship are experiential by nature and involve individual and communal aspects, but what of the processes that take place within the church? Wesley defined holiness as both an experience and a process. Let us look to this first before we describe discipleship. “Entire sanctification is received instantaneously because (1) ‘instantaneous’ symbols (baptism, sealing, circumcision) are used in Scripture to describe how it

¹³⁰ Philip R. Meadows, 59.

¹³¹ Acts 2:41

¹³² Acts 2:42-44

is received; (2) it is received by faith; (3) aorist tenses are used; and (4) receiving it is analogous to receiving regeneration.”¹³³

Baptism, the first instantaneous symbol mentioned, is best seen in Acts 1, where the 120 believers are waiting to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire. A person is not baptized over a period, but it happens instantaneously. The second symbol mentioned is sealing. The Greek word, σφραγίζω, “respecting God, who by the gift of the Holy Spirit indicates who are his.”¹³⁴ There are three references in Scripture to this instantaneous occurrence. In 2 Corinthians 1:22, Paul writes, “who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.” Sealing is also referenced in Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30. The process of sealing could not take place over an extended period because it would allow impurities to enter through the process. Finally, the instantaneous symbol of circumcision is found in Colossians 2:11. “In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ....” There is a similar reference in Romans 2:29.

If holiness, or entire sanctification, was received progressively, then it would be by works. However, holiness is received by faith. Thus, it is instantaneous. In Acts 15:8-9 Peter says, “And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he also did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.” Paul reports the same information in Acts 26:18 in dealing with the Gentiles.

The aorist tense always denotes a specific action or reference in time. The aorist tense can be ingressive, effective, or constative based on context. That’s why so many variations on

¹³³ J. Kenneth Grider, 393.

¹³⁴ Joseph H. Thayer, Carl L. W. Grimm, and Christian G. Wilke, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Coded with the Numbering System from Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 1996), 609.

instantaneous versus progressive sanctification exist. “At the same time, even when all due allowances are made for other possible significations of the aorist tense, it is still an exegetical support of the instantaneousness of entire sanctification in various contexts.”¹³⁵ Yet Wesley was certain that sanctification was both instantaneous and progressive by nature.

What can be said of Wesley’s understanding of the progressive nature of entire sanctification? “John Wesley taught that prior to entire sanctification there is a gradual sanctification that is preparatory. By this gradual sanctification, he sometimes seemed to mean a gradual lessening of original sin.”¹³⁶ Wesley understood entire sanctification as:

A continuum of grace and response that leads persons from the guilt and despair of their sin to the knowledge of God and, by faith in His grace in Jesus Christ, to the crisis moment of the justification and the new birth. The life of sanctification springs from the regenerated life created by the new birth and continues as the Holy Spirit through His gracious ministry calls them to moment-by-moment obedience to the will of God, which is the expression of His holiness and love.¹³⁷

Wesley utilized verses to promote his understanding of sanctification as a process. 2 Corinthians 7:1 says, “Therefore having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” Also, in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.” “Bringing it to pass” seems to denote a moment-by-moment encounter with God to affect change within the life of the believer.

The moment-by-moment obedience that the Holy Spirit guides us to through sanctification is the great call of the Gospel. This obedience, active engagement in doing God’s

¹³⁵ J. Kenneth Grider, 397.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 397.

¹³⁷ Melvin E. Dieter, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1987), 19.

will is, in short, the call to discipleship. Hebrews 11:17-19 states, “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your descendants shall be called.’ He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.” Abraham was caught up in a new course of life that preempted his own desires and placed his faithful obedience on full display. Walter Brueggemann writes, “Discipleship is no easy church program. It is a summons away from our characteristic safety nets of social support.”¹³⁸ He goes on to state that the life of discipleship entails “a resolve to follow a leader who himself has costly habits” and “in order to engage in disciplines that disentangle us from ways in which we are schooled and narcotized into new habits that break old vicious cycles among us, drawing us into intimacy” with God.¹³⁹ In response to obedient resolve to follow a leader, namely Jesus, Peter responded in Matthew 19:27 with “Behold, we have left everything and followed you....” In response to the latter, Jesus asks the disciples in Matthew 16:15, “Who do you say that I am?”. The disciples respond according to their habits, schooling, and narcotizing. “Some say John the Baptist, and others, Elijah; but still others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.”¹⁴⁰ But Peter’s response shows the beginning of disentanglement from those preconceived ideas. “Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”¹⁴¹

As the Holy Spirit works within our lives through the “new birth,” consecration of self to God’s will provides the resolve needed to follow Jesus. The practice of spiritual disciplines

¹³⁸ Walter Brueggemann, *The Word that Redescribes the World: The Bible and Discipleship* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 95.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁴⁰ Matthew 16:14.

¹⁴¹ Matthew 16:16.

builds within us the character outlined in Galatians 5:22-23. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” “When we have fully surrendered, it is the same Spirit who brings assurance of acceptance; by him we are born again and at the same time inducted into the body of Christ. All this is the work of the one and selfsame Spirit of whom Jesus said, ‘He abideth with you, and shall be in you’ (John 14:17).”¹⁴² The process of discipleship takes form within the parameters of the body of Christ.

In the body of Christ is a key place where “iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”¹⁴³ The true church, the body of Christ, engages in disciplines that disentangle us from ways in which culture has conditioned us to believe and act. Unfortunately, “church culture in America tends to discourage—rather than encourage—ongoing loyalty and commitment to a local family of believers.”¹⁴⁴ Additionally, “the common practice of running from church to church is rather silly when viewed in light of New Testament relational priorities.”¹⁴⁵ Dallas Willard writes:

For at least several decades the churches of the Western world have not made discipleship a condition of being a Christian. One is not required to be, or intend to be, a disciple in order to become a Christian, and one may remain a Christian without any signs of progress toward or in discipleship. Contemporary American churches in particular do not require following Christ in his example, spirit, and teachings as a condition of membership—either of entering into or continuing fellowship of a denomination or local church. Any exception to this claim only serves to highlight its

¹⁴² Albert F. Gray, *Christian Theology*, Vol. 2 (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1946), 79.

¹⁴³ Proverbs 27:17.

¹⁴⁴ Joseph H. Hellerman, *When the Church was a Family: Recapturing Jesus’ Vision for Authentic Christian Community* (Nashville, TN: B & D Publishing, 2009), 152.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 153.

general validity and make the general rule more glaring. So far as the visible Christian institutions of our day are concerned, discipleship clearly is optional.¹⁴⁶

Fortunately, Jesus gave the church plenty of instruction on how to disentangle ourselves from the habits culture teaches.

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (Matt. 18:15-17)

Most churches struggle with discipline and accountability among congregants and, therefore, struggle with the disciplines that compose discipleship. Yet the possibility remains that words such as “discipline” and “accountability” that bring consternation to minimal believers may be understood through Wesley’s “means of grace” and become more palatable.

In dealing with discipleship, John Wesley relied heavily upon the means of grace, which were varied and pervasive, while focusing the believer’s attention to the work of Christ versus the sacrificial obedience of the believer. Wesley differentiated between two means of grace, particular and general. In terms of the latter, Wesley had specific things in mind. He believed that universal obedience, keeping all the commandments, watching, denying ourselves at every opportunity, taking up our cross daily, and being increasingly aware of the presence of God were important in maintaining a fruitful relationship with God.¹⁴⁷ Jesus says, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”¹⁴⁸ In response to the former, Wesley meant works of piety.

¹⁴⁶ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), 258-259.

¹⁴⁷ Kenneth J. Collins, 257.

¹⁴⁸ Luke 9:23.

What was the nature of these works of piety? In private matters, Wesley encouraged others to “fix some part of every day for private exercises of reading and prayer.... This advice makes clear that Wesley understood God to work through these exercises, renewing our energy for growth in holiness.”¹⁴⁹ Paul would say it in this manner. “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”¹⁵⁰ In corporate matters, Wesley encouraged regular participation in the Lord’s Supper, worship, fellowship, and accountability. The latter in this list of corporate practices is of utmost importance for discipleship practices.

Flourishing takes place in an environment of accountability. The environment of accountability is filled with mutual “trust, grace, humility, submission, and affirmation.”¹⁵¹ King Solomon, stated: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”¹⁵² The trust begins in a personal relationship with Jesus, but cannot be restrained to Christ alone. Bill Hull lists one monumentally important requirement for spiritual development as finding a minimum of one person in your life who you find to be trustworthy.¹⁵³ Jesus states in Luke 6:40, “A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.” Jesus found twelve that he could trust with the ministry of the Gospel and calls for his

¹⁴⁹ Randy L. Maddox, 214.

¹⁵⁰ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

¹⁵¹ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 155.

¹⁵² Proverbs 3:5-6.

¹⁵³ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 156.

disciples to do the same. A key to accomplishing this is providing large degrees of grace to others and self.

Regarding grace, God treats his followers much better than they deserve. For disciples, “grace means treating others better than they deserve to be treated” because we have been treated so well by God.¹⁵⁴ Paul states it this way in Ephesians 2:8-10: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” Our good works are sharing the grace so wonderfully bestowed upon us by God in a spirit of humility.

Concerning humility, St. Benedict had a construct of a ladder with twelve rungs.¹⁵⁵ His twelve steps consisted of: “reverence, doing God’s will, obedience to others, enduring affliction, confession, contentment, self-reproach, obeying the common rule, silence, seriousness, simple speech, and humble appearance.”¹⁵⁶ Jesus warned in Luke 14:11, “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” The Apostle Peter also stated in 1 Peter 5:6, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time....”

Humility allows the disciple to submit. “Nothing could be more radical or countercultural than Christians who submit to other people’s needs.”¹⁵⁷ Walter Brueggemann writes, “The story of the early church is not the settlement. It is rather the slow, troubled, long-term meditation on

¹⁵⁴ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 157.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 158.

¹⁵⁶ Timothy Fry, ed., *The Rule of St. Benedict in English* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982), 32-38.

¹⁵⁷ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 159.

the tradition, always probing and moving, and finding itself led to newness where it thought not to go, led there by its Lord who is the pioneer as well as the perfecter.”¹⁵⁸ Finding newness occurs through submission to God’s will and to others within the body of Christ. In James 5:16, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” The goal in confession is affirming God’s ability to forgive to the uttermost and to experience the grace that forgiveness brings as to warm the heart towards the sin-plight of others.

In respect to affirmation, we all need some form of affirmation. If we do not receive affirmation from others, we will begin to affirm ourselves. Paul understood the power of affirmation in speaking to young Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:3-5.

I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy. For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.

Affirmation gives people permission to drop their defenses in an environment where deep change takes place.¹⁵⁹

The processes and experiences of the church in regard to holiness and discipleship are bulwarked by differentiated frameworks depending on the doctrinal and theological beliefs of the believing group. Thoughts on the means of grace, humility, and affirmation do not occur in an experiential vacuum. A proper framework is detrimental to orthopraxy concerning discipleship practices and fuller practices of holy living.

¹⁵⁸ Walter Brueggemann, 188.

¹⁵⁹ Bill Hull, *Christlike: The Pursuit of Uncomplicated Obedience*, 188.

The Framework Forward

Again, Hebrews 12:14 reads, “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.” The writer of Hebrews does not motivate the reader to have knowledge of holiness, but to prove their knowledge of holiness through actions. The framework forward for discipleship and holy living is not one of orthodoxy (to *know* God) over orthopraxis (to be *with* God). It is not orthopathy (to be *like* God) over orthopraxy or orthodoxy. It is a framework that begins with the structure of the three (orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and orthopathy) and how they function within a complete triangular system.

In family theory, “an emotional triangle is formed by any three persons or issues.”¹⁶⁰ The triangle formed in discipleship and holy living is between our knowledge (orthodoxy), practice (orthopraxy), and Christlikeness (orthopathy). “The basic law of emotional triangles is that when any two parts of a system become uncomfortable with one another, they will ‘triangle in’ or focus on a third person, or issue, as a way of stabilizing their own relationship with one another.”¹⁶¹ Regarding discipleship and holiness, if knowledge is strong, but there is no becoming like Christ or praxis, the focus will turn on whether the knowledge is right or proper. If the practices and knowledge are evident but no becoming like Christ, the focus will be on the possible disconnect between knowledge and the practices that are informed by that knowledge. However, the key is to have all three areas functioning in a healthy system within the individual and church community. Paul says it this way in 2 Corinthians 5:6-9.

Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing (orthodoxy) that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk (orthopraxy) by faith, not by sight—we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to

¹⁶⁰ Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 1985), 35.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

be at home with the Lord. Therefore we also have as our ambition (orthopathy), whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. (Parenthetical additions mine)

There must be an individual and corporate framework for Christians that addresses the experiences and processes of discipleship and holiness.

For this framework to reach its full potential, theology must be “conceived as a kind of ‘practical wisdom’ (or *phronesis*), which means having the wisdom to live well, reflecting on practice, and learning from it. The practice of theology would be a disciplined reflection, providing indicative models of understanding how talk about God emerges from human experience and questions.”¹⁶² The method would include an equal, reflective space for orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and orthopathy. The learning edges would be in the triangulated corners where each meets and where God has designed His creation to be. “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”¹⁶³ Here lies the triangulated combination of orthodoxy (right knowledge of how God is perfect and how He desires for us to be perfect in love), orthopraxy (right actions of expressing our love for God and for His creation), and orthopathy (being the body of Christ, blameless and without spot, in a world who needs to see the physical manifestation of God’s love for His creation).

Conclusion to the Theological Reflection

The question concerning Christians needs to be asked, “What makes us different from non-Christians?” “Our Christian history of (often) not practicing what we’ve preached is still apparently haunting us, even in a generation that was raised by people who’ve already left the church behind long ago. There remains an air of cynicism about Christians and their claims and

¹⁶² Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward, *Theological Reflections Methods*, 2nd ed. (London, UK: SCM Press, 2019), 9.

¹⁶³ Matthew 5:48.

the judgmentalism that all too often comes with the claims.”¹⁶⁴ God clearly reveals in His Word that we are to be people of the Word (orthodoxy) that practice (orthopraxy) the Word and become like (orthopathy) the Word. We must see our experiences and the processes of life pointing towards and focused on our call to be disciples of Christ.

We must believe that Christianity is more than simply understanding that Jesus died for our sins. It takes more than having our sins forgiven and going to heaven when we die.¹⁶⁵ We must see a need for personal and corporate discipleship. We must see Matthew 28:19-20, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age” as a great command from God for all believers and not merely a great wish or suggestion.

¹⁶⁴ Arthur van Wijngaarden, *Renovating Holiness*, ed. Josh Broward and Thomas Jay Oord (Nampa, ID: SacraSage, 2015), 13.

¹⁶⁵ Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2006), 13.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

But others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times as much. Matthew 13:8

Introduction

This explorative study is different from the doctrinal works of the Booths, Warner, Robinson, Land, and Outler in that it purposes to ascertain whether discipleship practices might influence practices of holy living among church congregants. The aforementioned writers and church leaders made distinct inroads into specific theological perspectives, but did not develop a construct of how to live out those perspectives within their respective church groups. Previous research has focused primarily on holiness and discipleship as standalone doctrines of the church. The conjecture is that the “why” of Wesleyan holiness is directly related to personal discipleship (orthopraxy or right actions) of others. It is similar to other studies in that the key terms are specifically defined and relatable amongst the various church groups involved in the research. Also, the Wesleyan holiness perspective is set apart from other church traditions while promoting an understanding of how best people might maintain their holiness tradition and interact effectively within their current culture. This chapter is divided into four sections which cover the methodology of the research, the rationale behind this study, the parameters of the research, and the method of data evaluation.

Research Methodology

My research is inductive analytical in methodology meaning that it proposes a broader supposition about how revitalized practices of discipleship can lead to fuller practices of holy living. The specific problem relates to the holiness and discipleship practices within five church

groups affiliated with the Wesleyan Holiness Movement. For this reason, my research falls under the subcategory of applied social and psychological research.¹⁶⁶ In theory, the research falls under the interpretive paradigm because it uses observations and participants' experiences instead of a posteriori knowledge which limits possibilities, and it seeks local knowledge to create subjective meaning and not so much generalized theory.¹⁶⁷ Also, this research is interpretive in theory because of the emphasis I place on the social construct of meaning. The interpretive perspective is that "humans construct their versions of reality through social interaction and communication."¹⁶⁸ They take "local knowledge and develop solutions to local problems."¹⁶⁹ Also, "Subjective knowing is the only possibility. Humans cannot be objective; they are always influenced by prior experience, perceptions, and beliefs."¹⁷⁰

As stated in Chapter One, the worldview of the researcher is important in understanding the biases and presuppositions inherent in any qualitative research project. The worldview of this researcher is somewhere within the melding of a transformative mindset and social constructivist. Creswell and Creswell define research conducted with a transformative worldview as containing "an action agenda for reform that may change lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's life."¹⁷¹ They define social

¹⁶⁶ Jerry W. Willis and Claudia Edwards, eds., *Action Research: Models, Methods, and Examples* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2014), 4.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁷¹ John W. Creswell and David J. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2018), 9.

constructivists as individuals that seek understanding of the world in which they live and work.”¹⁷²

The research methodology is qualitative by design. Tim Sensing writes, “Qualitative research produces culturally specific and contextually rich data critical for the design, evaluation, and ongoing health of institutions like churches.”¹⁷³ A qualitative research design was chosen for this study because I am observing actions more than behaviors. “To put it another way, qualitative data are not so much about behavior as they are about *actions* (which carry with them intentions and meanings and lead to outcomes or consequences).”¹⁷⁴ Discipleship and holiness practices should be naturally occurring within church groups affiliated with the Wesleyan Holiness Movement. “One major feature of well-collected qualitative data is that they focus on *naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings* so that we have a strong handle on what ‘real life’ is like.”¹⁷⁵

Merriam & Grenier 2019 provide five characteristics of qualitative research that denote my reasoning for choosing qualitative over quantitative research for my dissertation. “The first characteristic is that researchers strive to *understand the meaning people have constructed* about their world and their experiences....”¹⁷⁶ I believe that adherents to Wesleyan holiness theology have constructed meaning concerning discipleship and holiness that is particular and addressable.

¹⁷² John W. Creswell and David J. Creswell, 8.

¹⁷³ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 58.

¹⁷⁴ Matthew B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2020), 7.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁷⁶ Sharan B. Merriam and Robin S. Grenier, eds., *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2019), 5.

A second characteristic is that “*the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis.*”¹⁷⁷ This characteristic goes without saying in my research design. The third characteristic of all qualitative research is that “in attempting to understand the meaning a phenomenon has for those involved, qualitative researchers build toward theory from observations and intuitive understandings gleaned from being in the field.”¹⁷⁸ My research is limited to active ministers working within their ministry context. The fourth characteristic is that “*the process is inductive, rather than deductively deriving hypotheses to be tested....*”¹⁷⁹ By inductive, I mean that I believe renewed practices of discipleship have the potential to inform holiness practices and therefore begin from that perspective. “Finally, because qualitative research is designed to understand a phenomenon from the participants’ perspectives, the product of a qualitative inquiry is *richly descriptive.*”¹⁸⁰ The data collected from this research is full of verbal and non-verbal descriptors of what it means to function within the Wesleyan Holiness Movement and its’ distinct theological perspectives.

Within the qualitative approach, this study is phenomenological in style with Constructivist characteristics. M. Q. Patton states, “There is no definitive way to categorize the various philosophical and theoretical perspectives that have influenced and that distinguish the types of qualitative inquiry.”¹⁸¹ He then goes on to “examine, compare, and contrast 16 different

¹⁷⁷ Sharan B. Merriam and Robin S. Grenier, eds., 5.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 6.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 6.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 6.

¹⁸¹ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2015), 85.

theoretical approaches to quality inquiry” of which social constructivism is one.¹⁸² “In the constructivist view, intersubjective understandings comprise structures and agents. These norms, rules, meanings, languages, cultures, and ideologies are social phenomena that create identities and guide actions.... Intersubjective understandings are more than aggregated beliefs of individuals.”¹⁸³ Intersubjective understandings become stable meanings over time that create structures and the parameters of doctrinal beliefs. One dichotomy of intersubjective understanding is the knowledge of holiness and discipleship within five church groups of the Wesleyan Holiness Tradition versus the actual experience of holiness and discipleship.

Research Rationale

Holiness has a variety of meanings across church groups affiliated with the Wesleyan Holiness Movement. Some see it as a process, while others view holiness as an instantaneous experience. Some view holiness as being set apart to do God’s will, while others claim sinless perfection. While a common definition would be helpful in promoting unity across holiness groups, it is not the aim of this research to provide one. The rationale behind this research is to determine how discipleship practices might inform fuller practices of holy living; allowing the practices to dictate a unifying description of what it means to live and be holy. Further, the narrowness of a holiness description does not determine the effectiveness of the discipleship practices. There is plenty of room within the Wesleyan Holiness Movement for varied descriptors of holiness and a myriad of discipleship practices.

To date, this research will be original in defining discipleship practices, or the lack thereof, and how those practices might lead to fuller practices of holy living. While other

¹⁸² Michael Quinn Patton, 85.

¹⁸³ Audie Klotz and Cecilia M. Lynch, *Strategies for Research in Constructivist International Relations* (Abingdon, UK: Taylor & Francis Group, 2007), 7-8.

research has focused on discipleship and holiness separately; this research is the first to combine the holiness doctrines of the five church groups with Wesley's original holiness theology to inform discipleship practices. Further, no study of this kind has been conducted within the rural communities and culture of Eastern Tennessee, with the emphasis being on predominantly small (less than 100 members) rural churches.

At this point, I think it important to reveal that my intention for this research did not begin as purely community-minded. I have long questioned the understanding of holiness theology and practice within my affiliated church group. I have wondered if holiness practices, immersed in sinless perfection, help or hinder discipleship practices. For my own confusion and misunderstandings, I began the research of this topic.

Research Parameters

Interviews were conducted over a period of three months in the latter part of 2023 to ascertain the knowledge and practices of active ministers in Eastern Tennessee from the Salvation Army, United Methodist Church, Church of the Nazarene, Church of God (Anderson), and Church of God (Cleveland). Participants provided verbal and non-verbal responses to twelve open-ended questions concerning holiness and discipleship knowledge, and practices within their personal ministry contexts.

The research was limited to the five church groups mentioned previously because they are affiliated and have a history of doctrinal stances with the Wesleyan Holiness Movement. Geographically, the research was limited to Eastern Tennessee, where the researcher provides pastoral service. Fifty percent of the in-person interviews gathered for this research came from active ministers of the Church of God (Anderson, IN) operating in Eastern Tennessee. The other fifty percent came from active ministers operating in Eastern Tennessee from the Church of God

(Cleveland, TN), The Salvation Army, Church of the Nazarene, and United Methodist Church. Retired ministers, not actively engaged in any ministry context, were excluded from this research since the focus is on current understandings of holiness and discipleship.

Fifteen of the twenty-one total interviews were conducted in-person. The remaining six interviews were conducted through Zoom video calls. Of the in-person interviews, ten were conducted within the ministry context of the interviewees, three were held in personal office space, and two were held in restaurants. Of the six Zoom video calls, all six interviews were conducted by the researcher from personal office space. Five of the interviewees went through the interview process from their homes while one was in a church office.

The data for this research was stored on a password-protected hard drive. Audio recordings of the interviews were shared via Google Drive with a transcriber who worked with two other people. After the audio recordings were transcribed, they were sent via email and downloaded onto the password-protected hard drive where the data has been maintained. After the completion of this dissertation process, the data will be deleted from the email server and maintained on a password-protected hard drive for a period of three years. Informed consent forms were sent, signed, and returned via email and when not returned, hard copies were provided and signed by interviewees before the interview and maintained in a secure folder in the possession of the researcher. All informed consents will be digitally deleted or shredded (for hard copies) after three years of the completion of the dissertation process.

Data Evaluation

Audio recordings of the interviews, ranging from around fifteen minutes to over an hour in duration were captured using an audio recording program from my personal computer and a handheld digital recorder. Permission for recording the interview sessions was provided verbally by the interviewees before recording devices were started. The interviews were then transcribed by three people with no connection to the research and then coded by the researcher. Although some researchers may determine that affective coding methods lack “objectivity or rigor for social science inquiry,” I have chosen this line of coding because they “investigate subjective qualities of human experience (e.g., emotions, values, conflicts, judgments) by directly acknowledging and naming those experiences.”¹⁸⁴ Further, “affective qualities are core motives for human action, reaction, and interaction and should not be discounted from our investigations of the human condition.”¹⁸⁵

Under affective coding methods, I utilized values coding developed in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*.¹⁸⁶ “Values coding is the application of codes to qualitative data that reflect a participant’s values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview.”¹⁸⁷ Values coding incorporates an integrated system of values, attitudes, and beliefs among participants. “Values Coding is appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies, but particularly for those that explore cultural values and belief systems, identity, intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions in case studies, appreciative inquiry, oral

¹⁸⁴ Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 4th ed. (London, UK: SAGE Publications, 2021), 159.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 159.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 167.

history, critical ethnography, sociology, social media research, and longitudinal qualitative studies.”¹⁸⁸ For this reason I chose values coding. It is my contention that church groups within the Wesleyan Holiness Movement sought to find their own creative niche within the larger holiness group and the created culture of each niche group has informed holiness and discipleship practices far greater than biblical mandates for the practices.

Once the verbal and non-verbal values, beliefs, and attitudes of the participants were coded, a thematic analysis was conducted “through the use of extended phrases and/or sentences rather than shorter codes.”¹⁸⁹ The themes gleaned from the research consisted of descriptions of behavior related to holiness and discipleship teaching, preaching, and practical applications, iconic emotions elicited during the interview process, and explicit and implicit beliefs of the participants regarding holiness and discipleship practices within their affiliated church group. “Theming the Data is not an expedient method of qualitative analysis. It is just as intensive as coding and requires comparable reflection on participant meanings and outcomes. But it is important to note that coding and themeing are not either/or procedures.”¹⁹⁰ Researching discipleship and holiness in a qualitative manner requires both/and procedures. Research participants can be both right and wrong, conservative and progressive, holy and unholy, an active participant in discipleship while still on the proverbial sideline.

Much like the triangular nature of Family Theory that provides a helpful paradigm for my dissertation, Tim Sensing recommends a “multi-methods approach of evaluation that allows

¹⁸⁸ Johnny Saldaña, 168.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 375-76.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 259.

triangulation.”¹⁹¹ Essentially, this triangulation is three analytical reference frames that emerge as the insider’s, the outsider’s, and the researchers.¹⁹² The data is evaluated as themes, slippage, and silences.¹⁹³ The data is organized in such a way as to “discuss the areas of significant overlap as themes or patterns, the areas of disagreement as slippage, and the ‘realities’ not represented in your findings as silences.”¹⁹⁴ The role of silences, that highlight truth within participants’ experiences, is a key point of emphasis(or awareness). “We often silence the stories we believe will be unacceptable even when they are deemed more ‘real’ or authentic to our experiences. We discount what experience teaches and tell the cover stories instead.”¹⁹⁵

In summary, this explorative study consists of action research under the subcategory of applied social and psychological research. The research is qualitative by design falling under the purview of Constructivist characteristics. Interviews were conducted by a researcher with a worldview that is somewhere within the melding of a transformative mindset and social constructivist. Data gleaned from the research was coded under the subcategory of Values Coding under Affective Coding Methods and analyzed utilizing Thematic Analysis.¹⁹⁶ Finally, the research was limited to a cluster of five church groups and the active ministers leading them that are affiliated with the Wesleyan Holiness Movement in Eastern Tennessee.

¹⁹¹ Tim Sensing, 197.

¹⁹² Ibid., 197.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 197.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 197.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 201.

¹⁹⁶ Johnny Saldaña, 267.

Chapter Four: Research Findings

From the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do, their chiefs were two hundred; and their kinsmen were at their command.

1 Chronicles 12:32 NASB

As detailed previously, this research concentrated on five church groups affiliated with the Wesleyan Holiness movement. All twenty-one interviewees were pastors in Eastern Tennessee. (See Figure 1)¹⁹⁷ Of these twenty-one ministers, fifteen met directly with me in person and six met via Zoom video conferences.

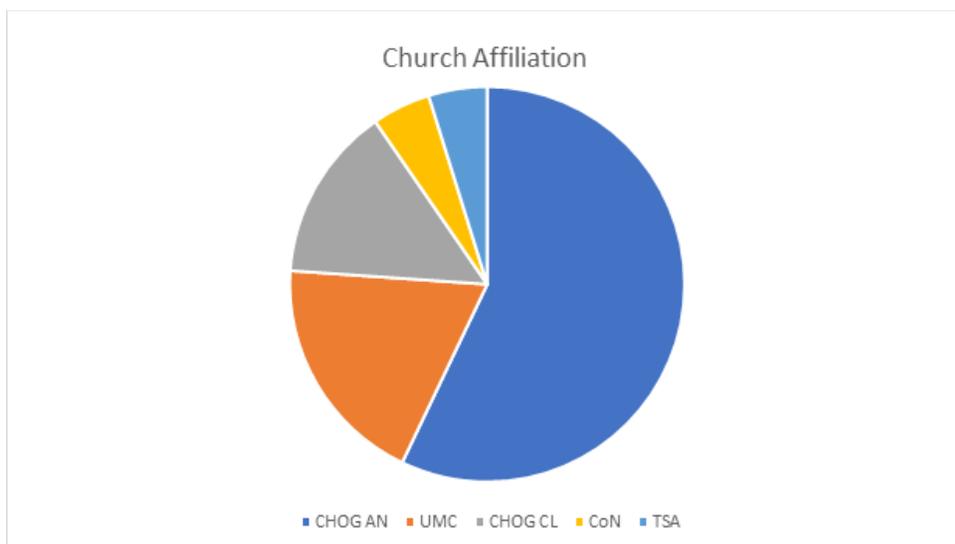


Figure 1. The percentage of each church group represented by the data.

During the interviews, key words and phrases emerged that thematically described discipleship and holiness within local ministry communities. Representative quotes from the

¹⁹⁷ Church of God (Cleveland, TN) was represented by three ministers, the United Methodist Church (four), the Salvation Army (one), and the Church of the Nazarene (one). The Church of God (Anderson, IN) had twelve representatives. Of the twenty-one ministers that were interviewed, four were female and seventeen were male. Nineteen of the twenty-one ministers had greater than ten years of active ministry as a lead pastor in their church group. It is noted here that because of the sample size, the overall understanding of a church group towards discipleship and holiness can not be ascertained. However, trends did emerge within the data, consistent with published doctrinal beliefs of each church group, that can be studied.

interviewees can be found in the text of this chapter as well as in substantive footnotes. The emergence of key words and phrases formed the codes utilized in this research respecting discipleship and holiness practices. While most of the interviewees saw discipleship and holiness as different, they did utilize similar codes to describe the two. The codes employed for this research are listed as category headings for this chapter and as areas of discussion in Chapter Five. The category headings are listed as follows: discipleship and holiness as relation/personal, transformational, an event/process, reproduction, practical applications of each, and accountability.

Discipleship

One of the most interesting finds for this researcher was the diverse number of definitions for discipleship that existed among the interviewees. Each of the interviewees had their own distinctive take on what discipleship means. However, two categories emerged from the data as discipleship being relational and/or personal by nature. For a sample of someone who saw discipleship as relational, one interviewee responded that “disciples have a heart to serve others.”¹⁹⁸ Those who saw discipleship as of a personal nature were similar to an interviewee who stated that discipleship was “someone who knows the Lord.”¹⁹⁹ Two of the interviewees had discipleship as being both relational and personal in nature. One of them responded that, “Discipleship can involve two things because a person has to become a disciple before they can be discipled. So discipleship can be leading someone to Christ and then helping them grow in

¹⁹⁸ Interview Subject G. Interview by Chris Alexander, November 16, 2023.

¹⁹⁹ Interview Subject F. Interview by Chris Alexander, November 16, 2023.

their walk.”²⁰⁰ Such a small number of interviewees seeing discipleship as both relational and personal was a disturbing discovery of this research.

Discipleship as Relational

Eleven responses centered around discipleship as relational (See Figure 2). Eight of those could be characterized as Paul/Timothy relationships, while the remaining three were indicative of Barnabas/Paul relationships. Paul/Timothy relationships are described as a style of interaction where a coach (Barnabas) imparts information and skills to a student (Paul). Paul/Timothy relationships are described as a style of interaction where a mentor (Paul) helps a mentoree (Timothy) make sense of their lives through their understanding of their personhood as defined by God.

Figure 2. Discipleship as relational vs. personal

Discipleship as Relational	11
<i>Mentor/Mentoree Style</i>	3
<i>Coach/Student Style</i>	8
Discipleship as Personal	10
Total	21

The primary avenue interviewees used to grow and develop these relationships was through the sermon. Of the twenty-one pastors interviewed, eleven of them said that all of their Sunday morning sermons from the previous year provided a practical application of discipleship that could be implemented by congregants, both individually and within their respective congregations. Sixteen of the twenty-one stated that fifty percent or greater of their Sunday

²⁰⁰ Interview Subject E. Interview by Chris Alexander, December 1, 2023.

morning sermons in the previous year had some practical application of discipleship implementation for their congregants.

Discipleship as Personal

As seen in Figure 2, almost 50% of the interviewees had a view of discipleship that is of a personal nature. Their purpose for discipleship was to change the individual to more Christ-like character with no tangible focus on relationships other than between the disciple and Jesus. The focus was on putting away perceived sinful and selfish behavior in exchange for what was believed to be righteous behavior. Words that the interviewees used to describe personal discipleship were: surrender, lifestyle, personal transformation, spiritual maturity, spiritual formation, stewardship, and Holy Spirit working through personal spiritual practices.

One interviewee described the personal nature of discipleship as “to the best of my ability trying to grow in my relationship with Jesus.” Another interviewee related discipleship as “putting our life into submission and not following God physically but letting him abide in us.” Still another stated, “Here we use the Jesus model. Would Jesus do it? Would he have said it? The discipleship process here has been to show congregants how to be good stewards.” For these interviewees, the personal growth aspect of discipleship overshadowed the relational needs inherent in discipleship practices. Therefore, at best, discipleship would only be personally transformational.

Discipleship as Transformational

Whether relational in nature or not, transformation was a key term in the understanding of discipleship for interviewees. One interviewee responded that “discipleship is a process of

becoming more like Christ.”²⁰¹ Eighteen of the twenty-one ministers equated discipleship with transformation, whether through an instantaneous event or process. Transformation, seen as an instantaneous event, was often described as God initiating a change in the heart of the believer.

One ChoG AN minister responded “God is trying to mold you into the soldier of the cross, someone who has the focus and dedication of wanting to reach out and to win others....”

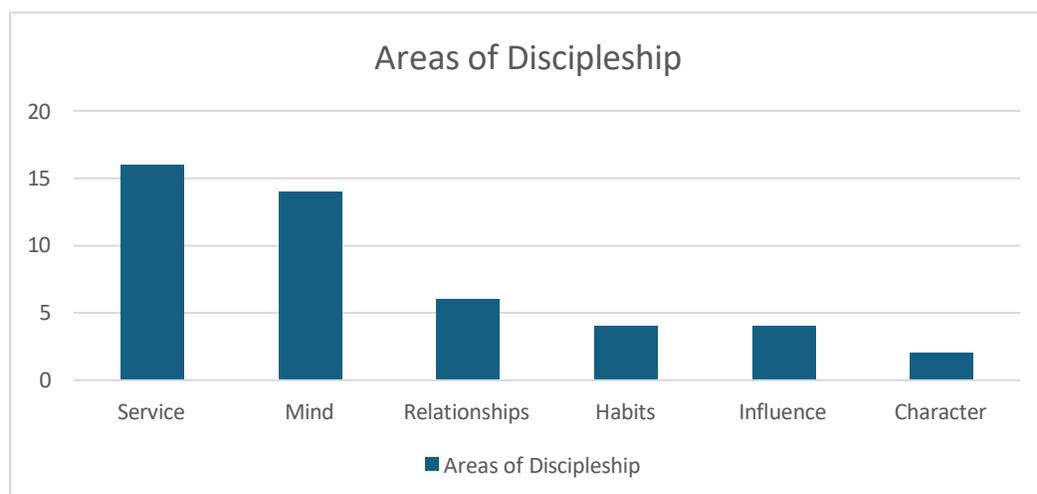
Process-oriented transformation was often seen through the lens of behavioral change. One interviewee responded by saying, “When it comes to discipleship, I’m trying to model the things which we want them to do.” Another interviewee said, “How do you interact? Are you a good employee? Are you a good boss? I think a lot of that can be taught.” Transformation from discipleship was rarely articulated by the interviewees to be both an instantaneous event and an ongoing process.

By precluding one form of transformation at the expense of the other, the interviewees were not facilitating full transformation of their congregants. Bill Hull described transformation across six areas: mind, character, relationships, habits, service, and influence.²⁰² Sixteen of the interviewees equipped their congregants with practical applications of discipleship by providing them with ministry opportunities. Four of those focused on the development of skills needed for vocational ministry. Four others spoke specifically about skill development for work within the confines of church leadership. Five mentioned teaching in the context of information sharing through pastor/congregant relations. The remaining three described modes of ministry opportunities to include: small groups, time for open discussions, and being a living sacrifice for ministry in every context.

²⁰¹ Interview Subject C. Interview by Chris Alexander, November 16, 2023.

²⁰² Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor: The Key to Building Healthy Christians in Today’s Church*, 130.

Figure 3. Discipleship transformation areas identified in responses.



When categorizing practical applications of discipleship, transformed service was the largest focus of the interviewees. Sixteen interviewees related discipleship with acts of service (See figure 3). This category cut across all five church groups. It surfaced as people from local congregations being called into active ministry, taking on ministry positions within the church, and entering some level of service within the local community.

While transformed service was the largest categorization of discipleship, transformation of the mind came in a close second. Fourteen out of the twenty-one interviewees had some aspect of a transformed mind as to how they equipped their congregants (See Figure 3). The typical terms that interviewees used were: teach, train, preach, educate, share the Word, and Bible study. Interviewees did not mention equipping congregants through time-tested discipleship practices. From the terms used to describe their efforts, twenty of the twenty-one interviewees did not provide congregants with a structure or pathway that would teach them how to apply Christlike principles to their lives. The interviewees merely described a way to transfer information from one person to another.

While practical applications of discipleship primarily fell under the categories of transformed service and transformed mind, a third category deserved mention: transformed relationships. Six out of the twenty-one interviewees mentioned practical applications of discipleship that would be categorized in this area (See Figure 3). Although the interviewees had aspects of relationship building in their answers, there was no clear focus other than small group ministry for how those relationships were nurtured. Two interviewees with backgrounds in the United Methodist Church mentioned love for God and others along with aspects of involvement in social justice efforts. However, these were anomalies within the greater research. The typical understanding of transforming relationships was how people interacted with each other within the confines of the church walls.

Tied for fourth in areas of transformation were influence and habits. Four out of the twenty-one interviewees responded with practical applications of discipleship that have the prospect of transforming influence and habits of their congregants (See Figure 3). Interviewees from the CHoG (CL) were especially in tune with transforming influence. Two out of the three interviewees from this church group mentioned raising-up leaders from within their congregations as a measurable success of their discipleship efforts. They placed special emphasis on how many ministers had “come up” under their discipleship efforts.

Three out of the twenty-one interviewees responded to practical applications of discipleship that could be categorized as possibly transforming character (See Figure 3). One interviewee aptly stated that transformation is “the fact that you see them growing in the faith. They are not living in sin. They are growing daily by reading their Bible and doing the disciplines of the faith.” Yet another said, “Discipleship ought to lead to better home lives...the

key word is discipline.” The general idea was that transformed character took place through the work of the Holy Spirit and practical, daily application of the means of grace.

Discipleship as Process

All of the interviewees saw discipleship as a process. However, this can be problematic by putting the responsibility of change squarely on the disciples with no mention of the work of the Holy Spirit. One interviewee responded, “It is a lifetime of always having to reorient ourselves back to God’s way, towards holiness, and towards the pathway of discipleship.”²⁰³ While sixteen of twenty-one considered salvation to be the beginning of the process, some saw discipleship taking place even before a commitment of faith. Each interviewee had personal stories of spiritual success as someone moving from no faith in God to an active relationship. The process was typically carried out one-on-one or in a small group setting of two to three people. However, as stated before, the primary intended impetus for getting involved in the discipleship process was through sermons. The result was that many people heard the call to discipleship, but few responded through practical application.

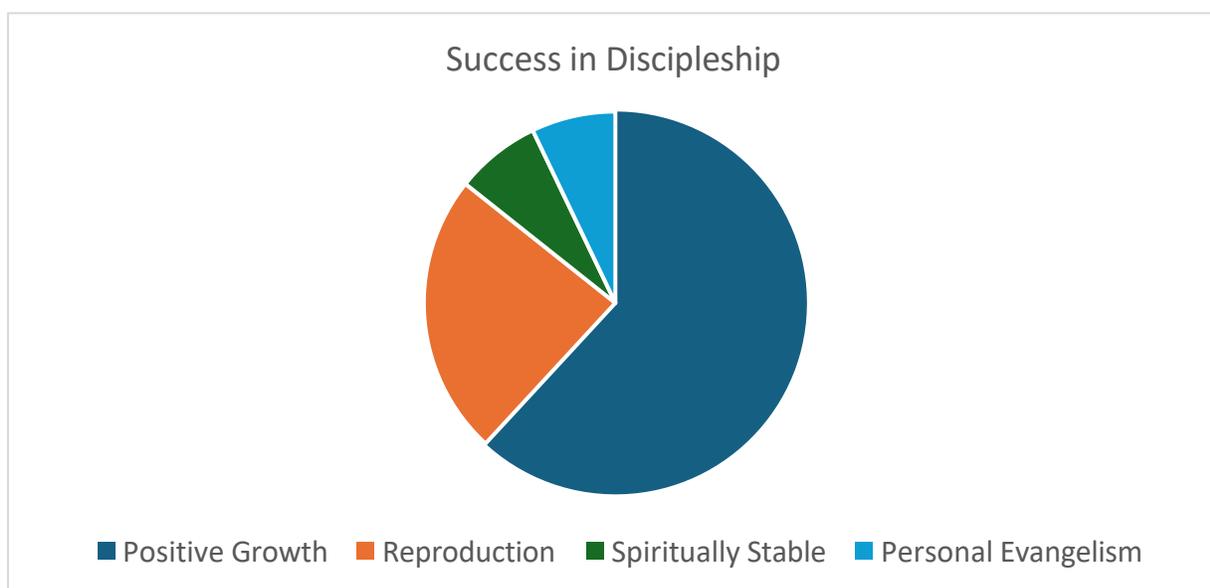
One would think that success in discipleship would be moving forward through the process. No matter to what degree or speed, success would be measurable by a positive trajectory. However, determining the overarching goal of discipleship proved to be more elusive. Of the interviewees, 62% described spiritual success in discipleship in terms of a positive growth trajectory of varying degrees of quality and covering a variety of topics (See Figure 4). Growth leading to ministry within the church (three), growth in faith (two), and behavioral changes (two) topped the list of descriptions. One interviewee stated,

²⁰³ Interview Subject A. Interview by Chris Alexander, November 16, 2023.

It might be a little bit repetitive, but I think that when you can see that individual able to state what they believe on an issue, or an area of Scripture, you want them to be able to understand why they believe on an issue, or an area of Scripture. You want them to be able to understand why they come up with their statement. You want them to measure things from a scriptural perspective, a scriptural worldview. Again, I think too many Christians do not have a biblical worldview. They have a secular worldview.²⁰⁴

It is important to note that only one interviewee measured success in discipleship by the presence of the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit provides a list of training objectives for disciples that are biblical, practical, and vital for becoming like Christ.

Figure 4. How interviewees viewed success in discipleship



Discipleship as Reproduction

Another possibility of success in discipleship could be understanding what the end goal of the process looks like and then measuring success when someone reproduces the end goal in others. The second measure of success in discipleship came in at a distant 29% and was the

²⁰⁴ Interview Subject P. Interview by Chris Alexander, December 1, 2023.

ability to reproduce disciples.²⁰⁵ Five of the interviewees described success in this way (See Figure 4). One interviewee went so far as to say success is only when you have spiritual grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Therefore, the ability to measure success might not happen in the lifetime of the disciple and success might be indeterminate.

Adding to the struggle of measuring success in the process of discipleship, not everyone saw growth or reproduction as measures of spiritual success. Two of the interviewees described spiritual success in the process as people who reached spiritual stability in the midst of trials, temptations, and suffering (See Figure 4). In this way, discipleship success would be unmeasurable during times of peace and serenity. Even more, two other interviewees described the ability to personally evangelize as a measure of success in discipleship (See Figure 4). Unfortunately, these two respondents made no mention of what character traits would need to be present or developed in order to effectively evangelize. It sounded more like spiritual gifts that were present in the life of the believer and then nurtured over time.

Discipleship as Practical Application

The difficulty in applying discipleship in a practical way across any ministry context is the personal process that takes place. Each disciple starts at a different stage of development and grows at varying paces as well as to different degrees “as God has allotted to each a measure of faith” (Romans 12:3). Interviewees offered small group ministries as a means of alleviating this difficulty. They also focused on building relationships with congregants so that discipleship could occur. However, many of the interviewees decried the inability to do all the work of

²⁰⁵ Quotes from Interviewees: “The ultimate goal is to teach them to be able to make disciples themselves.” “Share your life with someone else in order that they can capture what it means to walk with Christ as I walk with Christ.” “I think discipleship is a process of becoming more like Christ.”

ministry and often felt forced to focus on large group experiences in order to reach the largest amount of people in the least amount of time.

Interviewees spent much of their time being solely accountable for visitations, teaching, preaching, conducting funerals and weddings, being available for counseling, and attending to the physical needs of their congregants. There was little time left for focused and intentional discipleship with intended goals and accountability partners. To add to this struggle, the longevity of tenure for ministers required for discipleship to occur was rarely met by interviewees as some church groups required their ministers to move after short durations in a community.

Discipleship as Accountability

When asked about accountability practices within their ministry context, interviewees typically responded the same. Once the initial shock of being asked about accountability in their ministry context wore off, the interviewees began to talk openly about the struggles they face from a culture of consumerism in the church.²⁰⁶ One pastor from the CHoG AN, when asked about holding congregants accountable, tersely responded, “We don’t (hold anyone accountable).” Another interviewee responded that “there’s no way (to hold anyone accountable)” when asked how to hold people accountable to personal Christlikeness. Yet another interviewee, when asked about holding congregants accountable for their actions, said, “God doesn’t force us to live right so I won’t either.”²⁰⁷ If utilized at all, accountability took place amongst church leadership.

²⁰⁶ Bill, Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 255-56.

²⁰⁷ Quotes in the referenced paragraph were compiled from multiple interviewees during data collection and reflect the sentiment of even more interviewees. Names of interviewees have been withheld to protect confidentiality. Parentheticals added are mine for clarity.

As stated under the practical application of discipleship, the interviewees felt forced to focus on getting the most out of what little time they had with congregants. With that understanding, the top way in which accountability was provided was through large group experiences. Six of the interviewees mentioned preaching or sermons in general. Second, accountability happened in the context of mutual relationships. Five interviewees based their understanding of accountability on working through mutual relationships where each participant felt comfortable with correction. Thirdly, one interviewee took accountability out of natural hands and placed it on the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual. The interviewee espoused the belief that if God wanted a person to grow spiritually, the Holy Spirit would speak to that person individually. However, what would be the purpose of the church if spiritual growth could occur completely in solitude with the Holy Spirit? Finally, three other interviewees saw their responsibility to lovingly confront others in their care through private conversations and small group settings. For these three, the relationship was not as important as the setting for accountability to take place.

All twenty-one of the interviewees saw themselves as responsible for accountability within their ministry context. Even the interviewee that placed accountability on the work of the Holy Spirit held themselves responsible for challenging congregants to follow Christ. However, their personal responsibility to the congregant only went as far as the willingness of the congregant to be in submission to the challenges of the minister.

While most of the interviewees lamented the lack of accountability in their ministry context, one interviewee mentioned the core practice of a successful accountability plan that embraces the responsibility of those involved to obediently surrender to God's discipline. The interviewee responded that people are held accountable by asking each other good questions and

not being judgmental towards responses. The interviewee went on to describe good questions as those seeking to understand practices, habits, behaviors, and beliefs and not necessarily to change those practices, habits, behaviors, and beliefs. Once the person seeks to understand the other, then it is possible for accountability to take place through intentional relationships.

Holiness

Just as in discipleship, each interviewee understood holiness in a distinct manner. Yet, that was as far as the similarities went. Seventeen of the twenty-one interviewees responded that holiness and discipleship were different. How were they different? Some of the interviewees saw discipleship as something done while holiness was something Christ did through the Holy Spirit in believers. Further, discipleship was seen as something done with others while holiness was seen as in partnership with the Holy Spirit. One interviewee responded that discipleship was “doing” while holiness was “being.” Both discipleship and holiness grow believers into the likeness and actions of Jesus Christ. However, definitions of holiness matter when understanding how practices of discipleship affect holy living and vice versa.

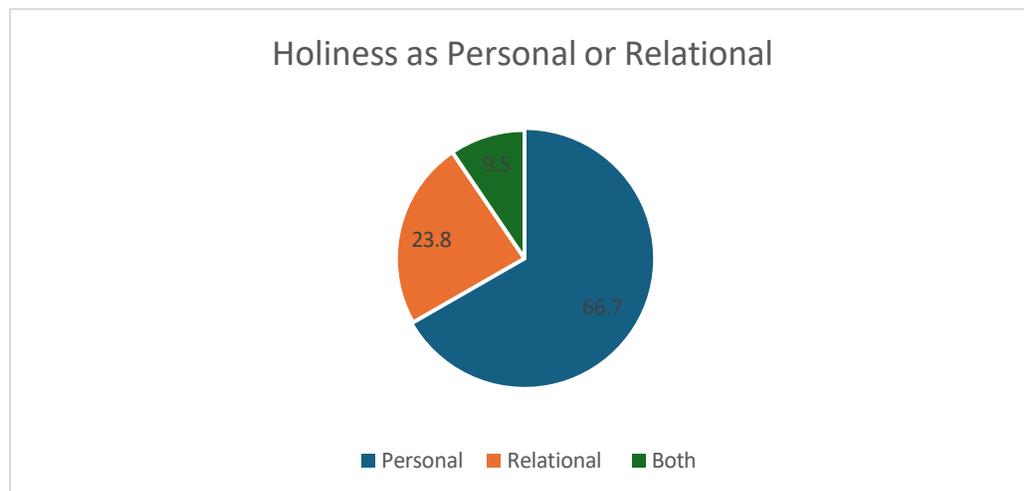
Holiness as Relational

Five of the interviewees understood holiness in terms of life change that affected community (relational).²⁰⁸ Two of the interviewees had aspects of both community (relational) and personal life change (See Figure 5). Of the five who understood holiness as change for affecting community, terms were used for holiness like perfect love, social holiness, consecrated/sacred, completeness/maturity, and entire sanctification. One respondent even stated

²⁰⁸ Quotes from Interviewees: “It is not just about going to heaven. It is about encouraging others to live in that same relationship and not doing anything that would persecute, press, or limit someone else’s physical condition.” “Taking part in community is really important....community faith is really important and accountability.” “There is something bigger than me going on.”

that they shy away from using any term for holiness in general.²⁰⁹ The interviewees mentioned how many misunderstandings exist concerning holiness and how their individual church groups have often been to blame for misconceptions.

Figure 5. The percentage of responses to holiness being personal, relational, or both



Holiness as Personal

Of the twenty-one interviewees, fourteen understood holiness in terms of life change that is deeply personal.²¹⁰ Of the fourteen who understood holiness as deeply personal, they used terms for holiness like sanctification, sinless, perfection, holiness, entire sanctification, and second work of grace. The focus was on personal change through the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit. A holy lifestyle would prove obedience to God’s word and assure adherents a place in heaven. Absent from this perspective was how holy living might show others Christ.

²⁰⁹ An interesting side note to this research was stumbled upon by the researcher during interviews. Many of the interviewees mentioned their sectarian views on holiness before proceeding to speak to their own individual interpretations that oftentimes did not fully coincide with their church traditions.

²¹⁰ Quotes from Interviewees: “Sinless.... We believe in holy sanctification.” “Through the process of sanctification, we reach that moment where we go from wanting Jesus as our Savior to knowing him as Lord.” “He (Jesus) is leading 100% of the way!” “I am saved, but sanctification happens until the day I die.”

Holiness as Transformational

Just as with discipleship, all twenty-one interviewees saw holiness as transformational. Some saw holiness beginning with an instantaneous event leading to a lifelong process while others saw holiness as a process beginning with salvation and ending with glorification at death. Eighteen of the interviewees responded with aspects of holiness that related to perceived personal responsibility in the process. The focus was on the individual to be obedient to God's word as they understood instruction. One interviewee viewed holiness as "an individual stopping personal sin." Another described holiness "as love for Christ and others." One stated that holiness was "to have knowledge of following God everyday" while another responded that holiness was "not wanting your own way all the time." More poetically, an interviewee stated holiness was "yearning and aching for God in your heart," while a more studious interviewee responded that holiness was "developing the spiritual disciplines in the personal life and taking part in communal church events like baptisms and Communion." Regardless of the response, these interviewees put particular emphasis on the work of the individual in living a holy life.

Only one of the twenty-one interviewees specifically mentioned God's role of purifying people from sin. Two other interviewees mentioned aspects of the Holy Spirit working in the life of the individual instead of the impetus for change being placed on the believer. While intentionality of the believer to follow God obediently and faithfully was of importance to the interviewees, the work of God in the believer should have been of equal importance. However, it was noticeably absent.

Holiness as Process

All twenty-one interviewees viewed holiness as a natural progression from salvation in Christ. While some saw it as a second, distinct work of grace, others saw it synonymously starting at the point of salvation. Regardless of starting point, the practical aspects of holiness were progressive. Ten of the twenty-one interviewees provided comprehensive spiritual nurture for their congregants by viewing their spiritual journey as one moving from being unsaved to being in church ministry or church leadership. The end goal in this group was people fit for ministry opportunities within the church. One interviewee even mentioned that they were providing comprehensive spiritual nurture because they had an atheist in the church who was actively involved in church ministry.

Of the twenty-one interviewees, seven described comprehensive nurture by the means and processes of carrying out spiritual development of congregants.²¹¹ Words like mentorship and modeling led the list of key terms. Holiness was defined as the processes used within the church and not the lifestyle of congregants or their character modification to be more like Jesus. Focusing on the process allowed ministers to focus on holiness as the ability to reproduce the process and not reproducing Godly character.

Holiness as Reproduction

Eleven of the twenty-one interviewees saw holiness as a personal endeavor with God. They utilized words like perfection, second work of grace, set apart, entire sanctification, and

²¹¹ Quotes from Interviewees: “I have tried my best to nurture in such a way that others can be confident in their leadership.” “They are going from justification to sanctification, meaning that they are learning from the process of being a saved person, a new baby in Christ, to being a fully developed Christian.” “You introduce them to someone, create a relationship with them. You invite them to dinners. You hang with them. You walk with them. You model before them what it looks like to find joy and the everlasting peace that is found in Christ.”

sinless.²¹² Two other interviewees had aspects of both relational and personal holiness in their responses. Greater than fifty percent of the interviewees focused on the personal attributes of holiness which made discerning areas of reproduction difficult.

Where reproduction was mentioned, it was in the processes and practices of holy living. Four of the interviewees listed Scripture reading as an important aspect of holiness. Digging deeper into God's word was seen as a way of training and reproducing right attitudes and actions in the life of the believer. All of the interviewees utilized personal stories of times when they saw others exhibiting holiness. These stories were forms of life markers for how to reproduce holiness in their own lives. Furthermore, interviewees listed concrete examples of people who deeply impacted their faith-walk by exhibiting holy character and a strong spiritual witness. The stories humanized holiness, but the examples provided a context for how to make reproduction possible.

As the stories and examples shifted to communal events, five interviewees mentioned relational aspects of holiness in the distinct use of the word "community." Holiness, for them, was reproducible in the sacraments and ordinances of the church. Also, corporate prayer and worship experiences were seen as opportunities for reproduction. For them, the practices of the community were highly important.

Holiness as Practical Application

For practical applications of holiness in the church, eleven of the twenty-one interviewees had aspects of their response indicative of manifestations of holiness in outward lifestyle (See figure 6). Some of the responses were: pursuing perfection, working out your salvation in all

²¹² Quotes from Interviewees: "Part of our teaching is we believe that holiness is God's standard for living." When asked, "What theological term would you use to describe holiness?" The one-word response of one interviewee was, "sinless." "If I was going to choose one, it would be entire sanctification....It is a partial process and the process is not being reached to its full potential for the individual."

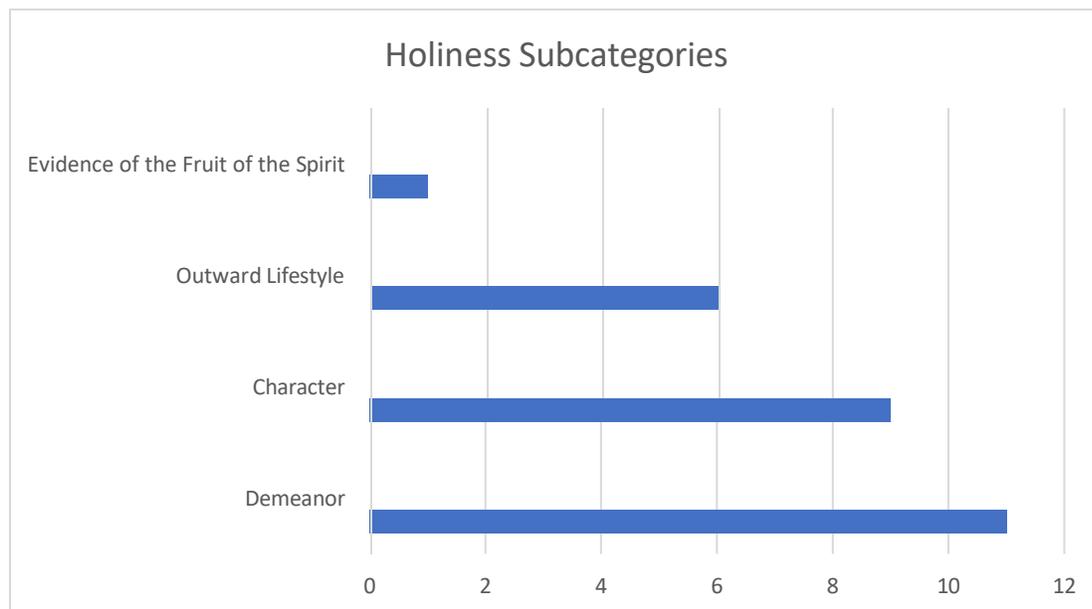
aspects of your life, and personal/practical application of the Scriptures to your life.²¹³ While it should be noted that there is both a personal and communal aspect to holiness, these eleven interviewees spoke only of the personal aspect when describing lifestyle changes.

While an inward change should result in an outward expression, nine of the interviewees had aspects of their response that focused on character change in holiness (See Figure 6). Some of the responses were: personal accountability, heart change, doing the disciplines of the faith, and taking away the “want” to sin. These interviewees believed that the inward change must precede the outward application of holiness.

The first group in this section focused on outward manifestations of holiness but with no relation to community change. The second group in this section focused first on the inward change that needed to occur for holiness to be evidenced. However, a third group among the interviewees existed. Six of the interviewees mentioned aspects of holiness pertaining to the demeanor of their congregants (See Figure 6). Some of the responses for this aspect of holiness were more relational in nature. A few listed were: holiness defined by peace with self and others versus being known by what we hate; the act of Communion and Baptism as a communal event; to not want your own way all the time; and personal conduct in interactions with others. For this group, the goal was not personal holiness for the sake of personal improvement. These interviewees viewed practical applications of holiness as a way to help others achieve aspects of holy living.

²¹³ Quotes from Interviewees: “Visiting the sick, clothing the naked.” “Perfect love.” “How do we react when stress comes on? How do we talk to people?”

Figure 6. Subcategories of holiness understanding by interviewee responses.



As the above chart denotes, only one of the twenty-one interviewees evidenced practical applications of holiness as the fruit of the Spirit being displayed in the life of the believer. (See Figure 6). This directly corresponds to the low number (two) of responses to transforming character in applications of discipleship found in Figure 3 and possibly reveals that holiness and discipleship are more connected than the interviewees disclosed. If utilized, evidence of the fruit of the Spirit could provide a measurable determinant of holiness in the life of the believer and whether God’s work through the Holy Spirit has had the intended effect.

Holiness as Accountability

As mentioned in the section on Discipleship as Accountability, all the interviewees saw themselves as responsible for accountability within their ministry context.²¹⁴ They held themselves to a high standard and tried to maintain the same standard for those in church

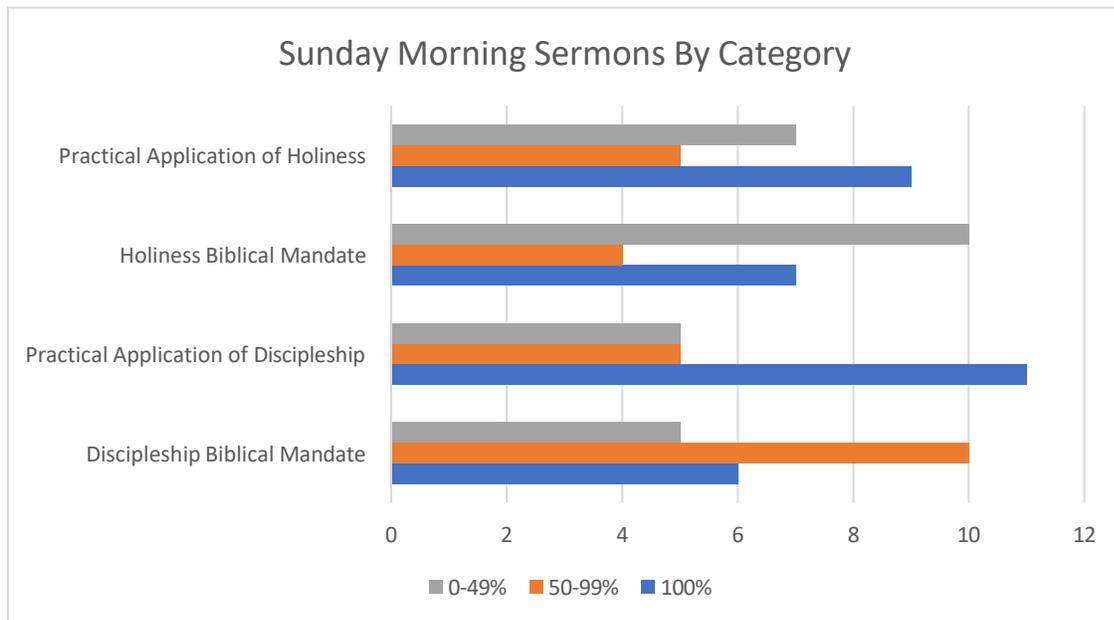
²¹⁴ Quotes from Interviewees: “I am an inspector of fruit. You know when someone walks with the Lord. They are being transformed.” “As a pastor, I have a responsibility to teach and to live it out first and teach it as well.” “If people are physically gifted, I try to encourage them to let God use their talent.”

leadership. This was equally evident in their understanding of holy living. The interviewees saw themselves required to live above reproach for the benefit of their congregants and as an example of holiness. Twelve of the interviewees responded that accountability colored their understanding of holiness. They used phrases connoting relational accountability with God, Christ, others, and community. The individual nature of how the Holy Spirit works within the life of the believer was common among the interviewees, but accountability to God, the church, and others was not so common.

Preaching of Discipleship and Holiness

Digging deeper into information previously related in this chapter, six of the twenty-one interviewees responded that 100% of their sermons on Sunday morning over the previous year dealt with discipleship as a biblical mandate for all Christians. Ten more had the percentage at 50% or higher (See Figure 7). With such intentional preaching, one would believe that congregants were actively engaged in discipleship in high numbers. Yet, all of the interviewees mentioned some level of dissatisfaction with how discipleship and holiness were applied by their congregation. Most of the interviewees had every intention of discipling their congregants and encouraging them to live out godly holiness, but most saw only small successes in their opinion.

Figure 7. Percentage of Sunday morning sermons from previous year by interviewees which mentioned discipleship or holiness as a biblical mandate and the percentage of those sermons which also had a practical application of discipleship and holiness.



Of the twenty-one interviewees, eleven stated that 100% of their sermons on discipleship had some aspect of practical application for the congregants to pursue. When adding in the number of ministers who placed that number at fifty percent or better, sixteen of the respondents are included. As stated earlier in the chapter, this should lead to high numbers of congregants engaged in discipleship, but that evidence does not bear out.

The primary apparatus for disseminating holiness practices was also through the sermon. Seven of the twenty-one interviewees responded that 100% of their sermons on Sunday morning over the previous year dealt with holiness as a biblical mandate (See Figure 7). Four more had the percentage at 50% or higher. The high percentage of interviewees who understood holiness from a predominantly personal perspective might have skewed the applicable results of this data. Congregants may have applied personal holiness to their lives, but it may not show visibly during church events.

Of the twenty-one interviewees, nine stated that 100% of their sermons on holiness had some aspect of practical application for the congregants to pursue. When adding in the number of ministers who placed that number at fifty percent or better, fourteen of the respondents were included. As stated previously, this data might be misleading due to the number of interviewees who focused on the personal aspect of holiness between God and the individual.

On the whole, ministers interviewed in this research focused on holiness and discipleship in their Sunday morning sermons but were not satisfied with the application that they saw in the lives of their congregants. The interviewees, for the most part, did not see their focus being translated to increased focus on discipleship and holy living for their members. Yet, the majority of the ministers, twenty of the twenty-one interviewed, did not have a plan in place that covered all six areas of transformation by Bill Hull outlined in the Literature Review of this dissertation.

Chapter Five: Research Analysis

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. James 1:5 NASB

Introduction

In combining the evidence collected from the interviewees and data gleaned from research materials, a general synthesis of ideas can be discovered. The takeaway from the interviews was that discipleship and holiness were:

More of an imposed culture, a “here’s what we believe and here’s how we behave” religion, than a thought-through and personally embraced set of convictions. It had more to do with responsibilities and expectations than with anything vital going on in me or between me and others. Ideas such as freedom and authenticity weren’t part of the package. A throbbingly real relationship with Christ wasn’t even in sight.²¹⁵

The general consensus of the reading materials was:

Holiness churches have tried so hard to keep up with generic evangelicalism for the sake of numerical growth that they sacrificed their distinctive call to preach holiness ‘throughout the land.’ Indeed, in a culture of consumerism, preaching what people want to hear is easier than preaching the cost of discipleship. Unfortunately, generic evangelicalism often has a Calvinist slant. Possibly, in this kind of milieu, the optimism inherent in the Wesleyan-Holiness message has been muffled.²¹⁶

and from LeRoy Eims concerning discipleship, “The biggest reason [we don’t see discipleship going on today as it did in the 1st Century church] is that all too often we have relied on programs or materials or some other thing to do the job. The ministry is to be carried on by people, and not by some thing. Disciples cannot be mass produced.”²¹⁷ While written in 1978, this determination still holds true for the church culture of today.

²¹⁵ Wes Roberts and Glenn Marshall, *Reclaiming God’s Original Intent for the Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 2004), 7.

²¹⁶ Diane Leclerc, *Discovering Christian Holiness: The Heart of Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*, 17.

²¹⁷ LeRoy Eims, 45.

In keeping with the structure of Chapter Four, the information in this chapter will be under the headings of the codes that emerged from the interviews. Discipleship and holiness will be synthesized as relational and/or personal. Both will be described as transformational, an event/process, as a means of reproduction, the aspirations of where current practical applications are headed, and accountability as a key aspect of discipleship and holiness.

Discipleship

The interviewees and research material listed discipleship as personal and relational. While the interviewees typically focused on one aspect more than the other, the research material was quite clear that true discipleship has an equal blend of the two. However, what makes discipleship characteristically personal or relational? Bill Hull described three dimensions of disciple-making that best illustrate this idea of discipleship being personal or relational. “The first step in making disciples is evangelism, the part of the Great Commission that tells us to ‘baptize them’.”²¹⁸ This dimension of disciple-making applies to discipleship as being both personal and relational. All Christians should be delivered from sin (personal) and then be “actively involved in finding others who need Christ and then—through the disciples’ gifts, opportunities, and faith community—introducing these individuals to the life of following Christ” (relational).²¹⁹ Once deliverance has taken place, a disciple develops character and capacity through obedience and commitment to Christ. This is commonly called spiritual formation and has a distinctly personal nature. After a disciple is personally trained, they are deployed. In this dimension, “the disciple gains an awareness that he lives among the lost and

²¹⁸ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 34.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

broken people and that God's kingdom grows best organically through relationships."²²⁰ As stated before, the key is to understand discipleship as equally defined by relational and personal components.

Discipleship as Relational

In Chapter Four, the interviewees who saw discipleship as relational understood the style of their interactions to be Barnabas/Paul (Coach/Student) or Paul/Timothy (Mentor/Mentoree). Eight of the eleven were characterized as the latter. This is where someone, generally of a deeper spiritual maturity, pours their knowledge and learned life lessons into someone of lesser spiritual maturity. Robert Clinton and Paul Stanley defined this type of Paul/Timothy relationship as coaching. "Coaching is a process of imparting encouragement and skills to succeed in a task through relationship."²²¹ According to Clinton, director of the Leadership concentration path in the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Seminary, and Stanley, former international vice president of the Navigators, there are seven main functions of a coach. The main functions of a coach are to

impart skills (frequently knowledge is involved also), impart confidence and understanding in the use of those skills, motivate people so as to bring out the best in them, model the importance of learning the basics of a skill, point the mentorees to other appropriate resources and link them up with them, observe the mentorees in action, and evaluate the mentorees experience and give feedback to enhance self-learning and development.²²²

The other three responses listing discipleship as relational could be characterized as Barnabas/Paul relationships. "While coaching focuses on skills and equipping, mentoring helps

²²⁰ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 34.

²²¹ Paul Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992), 76, <https://libguides-thedtl-org.dtl.idm.oclc.org/c.php?g=1102692>.

²²² Paul Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, 82.

others make sense of their lives. More specifically, spiritual mentoring helps an individual gain awareness of his personhood as he lives under God.”²²³ Although coaching and mentoring are often used interchangeably, there are subtle differences that should not be overlooked.

One subtle difference is the nature of the relationship between mentor and mentoree versus coach and student. In the latter, the coach has teachable skills that the student does not have or lacks their full mastery. In the relationship of the former, the mentor walks with the mentoree through life sharing both successes and failures. Bill Hull writes, “Mentoring is closer to the core meaning of discipleship, because discipleship is about one person following another and becoming like that person.”²²⁴

Another difference is that coaching requires the coach to have competencies in specific skills while mentoring allows the mentor to focus on their personal character. An interesting dynamic that showed up in the research is how people understood their personal character as part of the discipleship process. Only one of the twenty-one who were interviewed said that those they discipled should follow them as they followed Jesus. Paul told the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.” The overwhelming majority of those interviewed saw their role as leading others to Christ and his character instead of modeling the character of Christ themselves.

A final subtle difference is that the skills taught in a coaching/student relationship can be learned by the student separate from them attaining God’s purpose for their life. They may be performing for the coach but not grasping how the skills can transform their lives for the betterment of themselves and others. Søren Kierkegaard called this idea of people missing God’s

²²³ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 214.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 216.

purpose for their lives as the “sickness unto death.”²²⁵ In discipleship, people can miss their God-given purpose when disciple-makers share information and skills without also promoting real change of character and habits.²²⁶

A problem that emerged from the interviews and was reinforced by the research materials was that information was shared through sermons about discipleship and seen as practicing discipleship. Unfortunately, “Sermons do not prepare people to live effective Christian lives. Christians evidence a serious lack of depth of both knowledge and good experience.”²²⁷ To further exacerbate the problem, “many people believe the right things in their heads about Jesus but do not follow him. The solution is discipleship, which can be summarized as believing what Jesus believed, living the way Jesus lived, loving the way Jesus loved, ministering the way Jesus ministered, and leading the way he led.”²²⁸

Discipleship as Personal

In American culture, the goal has been to individualize all aspects of life. People have the ability to personalize their work, their families, their homes, and their faith. The author of Proverbs 24:5a wrote, “A wise man is full of strength, and a man of knowledge enhances his

²²⁵ Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 13, <https://www-jstor-org.dtl.idm.oclc.org/stable/j.ctt24hrkd.6?seq=3>.

²²⁶ “I think we as a church have made discipleship into information sharing and less on living and walking as Christ walked on earth. Discipleship is really bringing someone alongside you and investing in them in order that they begin to imitate.... As Paul said, imitate me as I imitate [Christ].... As Paul said, ‘imitate me as I imitate Christ.’ I think we spend so much time on information.... I think people are focused mostly on books as the source of their information sharing.... [T]hey do book studies and not Bible studies, but they’ll put it under the term of the Bible study. I think we have forgotten about the importance of Scripture.” Names of interviewees have been withheld to protect confidentiality.

²²⁷ Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor: The Key to Building Healthy Christians in Today’s Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1988), 22.

²²⁸ Bill Hull, *Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith that Embraces Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 18.

might...” Those who saw discipleship as personal tended to focus on man’s individual quest for knowledge to enhance his might. However, the author of Proverbs didn’t stop there. In 24:5b, he wrote, “for by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory.” Wisdom came, and continues to come, from being in relationships with the wise and the give-and-take that occurs. John Koessler wrote in *True Discipleship: The Art of Following Jesus*, “When we talk about the life of discipleship, we are really talking about the spiritual life. The goal of the disciple is to be a ‘spiritual’ person. But what does this really mean?”²²⁹

The personal growth aspect of discipleship must never overshadow the relational characteristics of discipleship. The goal must never be personal growth but personal growth for the purpose of transformational relationships. James Earl Massey wrote, “Every man is a person intended for relation. That intended relation involves God. It involves other men. The process of human development shows this in unmistakable clarity.... Every man is a creature of relation and is fulfilled only when his turning to another man is reciprocated.”²³⁰ Watson and Kisker gave the personal aspects of discipleship and relational characteristics even more clarity. “You were made for community. You were made for connection. You were made to connect with the God who created you in love. And you were made to connect with other people that God created in love.... Christians believe that God is Trinity—three persons in one essence—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One God.”²³¹ Discipleship cannot exist without the interactions and connections of human to human and human to God.

²²⁹ John Koessler, *True Discipleship: The Art of Following Jesus* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003), 55.

²³⁰ James Earl Massey, *The Hidden Disciplines* (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1972), 70-1.

²³¹ Kevin M. Watson and Scott T. Kisker, *The Band Meeting: Rediscovering Relational Discipleship in Transformational Community* (Franklin, TN: Seedbed Publishing, 2017), 3.

Discipleship as Transformational

The interviews and research material bore out that not all discipleship is created equal. Some discipleship practices are designed to be transformational. However, “not all discipleship is transformational.”²³² “Discipleship apart from Jesus is nontransformational.”²³³ All twenty-one interviewees pointed to pursuing Christlikeness as the transformational element of discipleship.

Bill Hull described the issue of transformation in six areas. As mentioned just above, true disciples are transformed. Bill Hull described the transformation of mind, character, relationships, habits, service, and influence.²³⁴ Discipleship practices fell into categories that allowed for transformation in each of the six areas. Some of the discipleship practices that came from the interviews and research were: prayer, Scripture reading, sharing personal faith, multiplying, loving others, ministry, obedience, serving others, and sharing the gospel. Although this list was in no way exhaustive, it provides a comparative list for discipleship practices. Further, it is important to note that “God works both inside out and outside in. Transformation—real and lasting change—finds its roots on the inside of a person but will always ‘show up’ in different behavior that affects others.”²³⁵

In Chapter Four, there were two interviewees who limited practical applications of discipleship to personal evangelism. While personal evangelism has transformational characteristics for both the evangelizer and the evangelized, further clarification should be made. George G. Hunter III describes evangelizing others to “become Christian disciples” and adds that

²³² Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2012), 6.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 8.

²³⁴ Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor: The Key to Building Healthy Christians in Today’s Church*, 130.

²³⁵ Bill Hull, *Christlike: The Pursuit of Uncomplicated Obedience* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010), 91.

“evangelism has two related objectives for people: (1) that they become lifetime followers of Jesus Christ as their Lord, living by his power and his will, in their lives, relationships, and world, and (2) that they be incorporated into Christ’s Body—the church or messianic community.”²³⁶ Personal evangelism, as defined by the interviewees, only encompassed the second aspect of Hunter’s definition.

The largest group of interviewees responded that discipleship occurred by congregants being transformed for the purpose of service. The focus appeared to be on filling ministry positions and not so much on service from a spirit of love. This could be because loving others in this way is unnatural. “Can you imagine a life so lost in benefiting others that your personal needs and wants do not play a big role in your thoughts? Love, after all, means action directed toward the benefits of others. It is unnatural to achieve this state; most of us are self-conscious instead.”²³⁷ What might occur if ministers focused on loving others well versus filling ministry positions as a means of fulfilling the discipleship facet of transformative service?

The same could be said of transforming the mind through discipleship practices. In writing about the ability of churches to help members understand the Bible, Phil Maynard wrote:

We generally offer a full spectrum of biblical studies and discipleship classes, but this does not turn out to directly translate into people’s perception that they really understand the Bible better. We provide an assortment of ‘flavor of the month’ studies by well-known preachers and video-based classes by popular, photogenic teachers which are great for highlighting particular themes (and also convenient and not too demanding, preparation-wise). But is that fully feeding people’s deeper hunger? What we more rarely offer people is a pathway to learn the skills to study the Bible for themselves: how to use time-tested resources to discern truths on their own and how to apply such thoughtfully explored scriptural wisdom to their lives.²³⁸

²³⁶ George G. Hunter III, *The Contagious Congregation: Frontiers in Evangelism and Church Growth* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1979), 23-24, <https://libguides-thedtl-org.dtl.idm.oclc.org/c.php?g=1123146>.

²³⁷ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 145.

²³⁸ Phil Maynard, *Membership to Discipleship: Growing Mature Disciples Who Make Disciples* (self-pub., 2015), 56.

In the area of transforming the mind, an applicable structure provided to congregants for personal Bible study, along with a plan for accountability, may alleviate the information sharing that plagues many Bible study classes.

In the third most discussed area of transformation, relationships emerged. While culture emphasizes the need for individualization, “discipleship is relational.”²³⁹ True discipleship is evidenced when relationships outside of the discipler/disciple relationship are changed.

Concerning transformative relationships Dallas Willard writes, “Living under the governance of heaven frees and empowers us to love as God loves. But outside the safety and sufficiency of heaven’s rule, we are too frightened and angry to really love others, or even ourselves, and so we arrange dreary substitutes in the form of pleasures of various kinds and ‘loves.’”²⁴⁰ Discipleship that transforms relationships is hard and therefore, often overlooked or ignored.

As you move down the spectrum of transformation, each area becomes intrinsically harder to accomplish without focus, purpose, and the work of the Holy Spirit. While none of the areas can be truly transformed without the Holy Spirit, the transformation of influence, habits, and character is impossible without God. In his seminal work on spiritual disciplines, Richard J. Foster writes: “The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.”²⁴¹ This area requires for people to realize that obedience to

²³⁹ Jake Giesbrecht, *Relationship: The Essence of Discipleship* (Winnipeg, MB: Word Alive Press, 2019), xi.

²⁴⁰ Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (Broadway, NY: HarperOne, 2006), 25.

²⁴¹ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (Broadway, NY: HarperOne, 2018), 1.

the gospel is not an easy thing.²⁴² These are the most difficult of the six areas because they require submission to the work of the Holy Spirit. John Wesley called the practical applications of transforming influence, habits, and character as general and instituted “means of grace.”²⁴³ In terms of general means of grace, Wesley identified “universal obedience, keeping all the commandments, watching, denying ourselves at every opportunity, taking up our cross daily, and being increasingly aware of the presence of God.”²⁴⁴ In describing the instituted means of grace, Wesley identified particular areas “instituted” by Jesus that included: “prayer, searching the Scriptures by reading, meditating, hearing, attending the ministry of the word, either read or expounded, the Lord’s Supper, fasting, or abstinence, and Christian conference, which included both the fellowship of believers and rightly ordered conversations which minister grace to hearers.”²⁴⁵ “While the means of grace themselves have no salvific worth, they were channels by which the Holy Spirit works in our hearts.”²⁴⁶ The key emphasis being on the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and the willingness of the believer to submit to the leadings of the Holy Spirit as change is instituted and transformation occurs.

²⁴² “Being a disciple is realizing that the Gospel is not an easy thing. What Jesus did was not an easy thing, and being a Christian is anything but comfortable. And so, to me, practically, it’s going out and realizing that every single day you are not reigning over your own life. Christ is reigning over your life, and you have to tune in to what you know is right and good.” Names of interviewees have been withheld to protect confidentiality.

²⁴³ Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 257-59.

²⁴⁴ Henry H. Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1992), 5.

²⁴⁵ Henry H. Knight, 5.

²⁴⁶ Diane Leclerc, “Finding the Means to the End: Christian Discipleship and Formation Practices,” in *Spiritual Formation: A Wesleyan Paradigm*, eds. Diane Leclerc and Mark A. Maddix (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2011), 74.

Discipleship as Process

All of the interviewees saw discipleship as a process and all of the reading material pointed to discipleship being a lifelong process of growth to be more like Christ. The problem was, and still remains, that church structure and ministry tenure do not promote discipleship as a process. Many of the interviewees were in their current ministry contexts for less than five years. They were forced to compartmentalize the need to put down personal roots in their community while implementing a discipleship process with accomplishing as much as they could with what little time they had before being moved to the next assignment. Parker J. Palmer wrote about the issue at hand concerning all types of human interaction.

The divided life, at bottom, is not a failure of ethics. It is a failure of human wholeness. Doctors who are dismissive of patients, politicians who lie to the voters, executives who cheat retirees out of their savings, clerics who rob children of their well-being—these people, for the most part, do not lack ethical knowledge or convictions. They doubtless took courses on professional ethics and probably received top grades. They gave speeches and sermons on ethical issues and more than likely believed their own words. But they had a well-rehearsed habit of holding their own knowledge and beliefs at great remove from the living of their lives.²⁴⁷

What might be needed is individual words and actions consecrated and set apart in harmony to God's plan and purpose for his kingdom work instead of for the structure and inner workings of denominational or individual desires.

This “divided life” as Palmer calls it, is witnessed in another way by the interviewees and research material. The idea of worldview comes into play when rectifying the divided life. Part of discipleship must be to transform from a secular worldview to a scriptural view. The positive growth trajectory of moving from a secular worldview to being biblically literate enough to make decisions from a scriptural worldview is an aspect of holiness (wholeness) that I prefer to relabel

²⁴⁷ Parker J. Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 7.

as “rebirth bandwidth.” This new descriptive term intertwines holiness and discipleship to be focused upon what Wesley called the “means of grace” and what others call “spiritual disciplines.” “The Spiritual Disciplines are God’s means of grace which we are enabled to bring our little, individualized power pack we call the human body and place it before God as a ‘living sacrifice,’ as the wise apostle Paul put it (Rom. 12:1).”²⁴⁸ Under this term, discipleship is not seen as distinctively different from holiness, but interacts and merges with holiness at all points along the spiritual growth process.

Discipleship as Reproduction

Jesus saw discipleship as reproducing himself in the lives of his followers. He had four distinct stages of his ministry that he took his disciples through and marked their progress through each stage. The first phase was an information gathering and investigation stage where those he had chosen were asked to “come and see.” The second phase, signified by “come and follow,” established his followers in the absolute truths of the Scripture as it was available to them at that time, how to pray, the importance of living within community and outreach ministry. The third phase, “come and be with,” was a transitional stage where the disciples prepared to take the lead in Jesus’ absence. Finally, the fourth phase, “remain in,” the disciples learned to abide in the power and leadership of the Holy Spirit.²⁴⁹ A fifth phase identified by this research was disciples making disciples. The ability to reproduce and grow God’s Kingdom through the exponential power of the Holy Spirit appears to be missing from current discipleship practices.

²⁴⁸ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (Broadway, NY: HarperOne, 2018), xiv.

²⁴⁹ The four stages were taken from: Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 169-186.

Perhaps measuring growth through each phase can be a powerful way to acknowledge success in discipleship.

Discipleship as Practical Application

The struggle in measuring spiritual success in discipleship is the personal process that is involved.²⁵⁰ Each disciple starts at a different stage of development and grows at contrasting paces. “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned” (Rom. 12:3). What is the starting capacity for the faith of one disciple might not be for another. “Brothers and sisters, I do not regard myself as having taken hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13-14). Paul goes on, “Therefore, all who are mature, let’s have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that to you as well; however, let’s keep living by that same standard to which we have attained” (Phil. 3:15-16). If the process of discipleship is not carried out in such a way as to be able to note small, incremental changes, the effects of discipleship may be missed altogether.

Tied to this struggle is providing practical applications of the pursuit of holiness within the church. Growth in Sunday morning attendance is typically how the church in America measures success, and yet that is the wrong frame of reference. Phil Maynard wrote, “As I travel around the country, every gathering of church leaders I visit is wrestling with the same

²⁵⁰ Quotes from Interviewees: “A very special relationship....” “Times when you lead someone to an aha moment.” “Seeing someone repent of their sins and give their heart to Jesus....” “Spiritual grandchildren and great-grandchildren.”

challenge. The form may differ, the buzz words may change, but the expectation is clear. We need to make a shift from making members to making disciples.”²⁵¹

Many churches only have Sunday morning services--for any number of reasons beyond the scope of this research. An unintended consequence of less time corporately together as a church is for the minister to share as much information about as many issues the congregants are facing in the shortest amount of time possible; and to do it in such a way that it is engaging and entertaining. However, “discipleship is far more than thinking critically about tough topics...”²⁵² “For us as a Wesleyan tradition with a renewed interest in discipleship, the spiritual formation process is also the path to holiness. The goal of holiness is the same goal of discipleship: the restoration of human beings to the image of God.”²⁵³ Paul said it in this way, “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor. 3:18).

Having condensed opportunities for corporate togetherness within the church and trying to share large quantities of biblical wisdom are not the only problems facing discipleship today. According to Geiger, Kelley and Nation, they “have observed two common yet flawed views that unfortunately impact a church’s likelihood to make disciples that are transformed: equating information with discipleship and viewing discipleship merely as behavioral modification. Discipleship is much more than information and much deeper than behavioral modification.”²⁵⁴ Discipleship is growing to be like Christ through relationships of accountability.

²⁵¹ Phil Maynard, 11.

²⁵² Preston Sprinkle, *Go: Returning Discipleship to the Front Lines of Faith* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2016), 113.

²⁵³ Rondy Smith, “Via Salutis: Discipleship on the Wesleyan Journey,” in *Pastoral Practices: A Wesleyan Paradigm*, Mark A. Maddix and Diane Leclerc eds. (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2013), 119-20.

²⁵⁴ Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, 18.

Discipleship as Accountability

Among the interviewees, accountability was relegated to those in leadership positions. Yet in the research material, discipleship was not experiential without accountability. This seems to flow from what Ed Robinson calls the “absurdity of separating spiritual leadership (organism) and secular management (organization) or the real work of ministry from the necessary evil of administration.”²⁵⁵ All leadership should be spiritual in nature because all are called to lead others to Christ regardless of their administrative position within the church.

The structure of churches has placed an undue emphasis on paid clergy and their role within God’s kingdom. Placing undue responsibility squarely on the minister’s shoulders omits the responsibility of the congregants to obediently surrender to God’s discipline in their lives. Perhaps this is an effect of the culture of consumerism within the church. The culture of consumerism, combined with the attitude that God is responsible for our spiritual growth, has clearly created the sense, for many, that there is no need to be actively engaged in personal growth and discipleship. Additionally, the belief that God doesn’t force us to live right, so we should not hold others accountable to live right, has deeply infiltrated the church. God may not force us to live righteously, but he does require people to choose one way of life or another.

When Jesus demanded voluntary poverty of the rich young man, the young man knew that his only choices were obedience or disobedience. When Levi was called from tax collecting and Peter from his nets, there was no doubt that Jesus was serious about those calls. They were supposed to leave everything and follow him. When Peter was called to step out onto the stormy sea, he had to get up and risk taking the step. Only one thing was demanded in each of these cases. That was their entrusting themselves to the word of Jesus Christ, believing it to be a stronger foundation than all the securities of the world.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ Ed Robinson, “Leading with Basin and Towel: Servant Leadership in a Wesleyan Framework,” in *Pastoral Practices: A Wesleyan Paradigm*, eds. Mark A. Maddix and Diane Leclerc (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2013), 104.

²⁵⁶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 41.

The life of faith is imperative for discipleship and holy living to occur. Walter Brueggemann places obedience in the context of Torah. “The critical mandate of the community of Torah, as this tradition voices it, is to be a community matched in its life and practice to the very character of YHWH. The tone of that obedience is command; the substance is holiness, utterly, singularly, peculiarly devoted to and matched with the very character of YHWH.”²⁵⁷ To be a people of God, discipleship and holiness through practical obedient surrender to God must be evident. A certain degree of transparency among believers is part of this obedient surrender. The writer of Proverbs writes that “iron sharpens iron” (Proverbs 27:17). “Discipleship at this level typically involves a group of men or a group of women committing to grow in hearing and obeying God together over an extended period of time.”²⁵⁸

One of the interviewees employed the idea of commitment to grow among believers by being willing to ask difficult questions to each other. Once the discipler seeks to understand the discipled, then it is possible for accountability to take place through intentional relationships. “Believers must share their lives with one another, ask one another hard questions, confess sins to one another in a safe environment, and invest so personally in one another that one believer has a profound spiritual impact on another.”²⁵⁹ This requires time and effort but is the only way for true discipleship to occur.

²⁵⁷ Walter Brueggemann, *The Word that Redescribes the World: The Bible and Discipleship* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 178.

²⁵⁸ Bobby Harrington and Alex Absalom, *Discipleship that Fits: The Five Kinds of Relationships God Uses to Help Us Grow* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 160-61.

²⁵⁹ Jamie Archer, “Developing an Effective Biblical Method for the Rediscovery of Accountability in Christian Discipleship” (Doctor of Ministry diss., Liberty University School of Divinity, 2017), 49, <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2439&context=doctoral>.

Key aspects of discipleship are surrender to God’s discipline and accountability within the context of intentional relationships. In surrendering to God’s discipline, Barry Callen writes, “being forgiven of the guilt of sin is one thing, one very important and beginning thing; but being truly renewed through character reformation by the Spirit’s ministry is another thing—or at least an additional dimension of the first thing.”²⁶⁰ Richard Rohr talks about surrendering to God’s discipline in terms of vulnerability. “In my experience, healthily vulnerable people use every occasion to expand, change, and grow.”²⁶¹ Mark Dever speaks of accountability within the church as “church discipline.” “For the good of the one disciplined, for the good of other Christians as a warning, for the health of the church as a whole, for the good of our witness to non-Christians, and for the glory of God, we will be helped to grow as we practice church discipline.”²⁶² Putman, Harrington, and Coleman talk about accountability in terms of ministering as Jesus ministered.

When Jesus said to go and make disciples, he defined his methodology by his own example. Jesus’ methodology was more involved than just standing in front of people and teaching them biblical truth. He walked alongside people, having conversations with them through the normal course of each day, holding people accountable, and demonstrating spiritual truth to them directly.²⁶³

The bottom line is that “People can’t become Christlike without accountability, and they can’t have accountability without structure....”²⁶⁴

²⁶⁰ Barry L. Callen, *Authentic Spirituality: Moving Beyond Mere Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2001), 146.

²⁶¹ Richard Rohr, *The Divine Dance: The Trinity and Your Transformation* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2016), 57.

²⁶² Mark Devers, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), 197.

²⁶³ Jim Putman, Bobby Harrington, and Robert E. Coleman, *DiscipleShift: Five Steps that Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 134.

²⁶⁴ Bill Hull, *Christlike: The Pursuit of Uncomplicated Obedience* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010), 179.

Holiness

Discipleship as a transformation of character, life-time process, means of reproduction, and its practical applications tie directly to the Wesleyan tradition of holiness. In describing how character is formed, Judith Hougen writes:

Many churched people have a spiritual life that's like a car, sputtering down the highway, coughing and jerking, red engine lights flashing. The driver's solution is to beat a fist on the dashboard until the warning lights quit flashing. He or she motors on, believing that eliminating the warning signs is the same as fixing the problem. This is how most Christians are taught to treat the spiritual predicaments in which they find themselves...try harder, read the Bible more, pound on the spiritual dashboard until the warnings cease. Something is wrong with the engine—the machinery of faith, the inner workings are seriously impaired.²⁶⁵

The question then follows: What does my spiritual engine (character) look like? How am I living out God's call of holiness in my life? In regard to holiness being a life-time process like discipleship,

Wesley rejected the idea of a static perfection that would not admit of a continual increase and advance as one improves the rich grace of God. Thus, there is no place in Wesley's theology for the notion that 'one has arrived,' spiritually speaking. Those whose hearts have been made pure by the blood of Christ must continue to grow in knowledge, grace, and gifts, but they will not grow into purity since the heart has already been purified.²⁶⁶

The same could be said for holiness being a means of reproducing Christ followers.

... to be human necessarily means being in relation—to God, others, self, and the world. To be holy means to be in proper and loving relationship with each of these. This is God's design and destiny for humanity. If sin is a distortion of these relationships through different forms of nonlove or existential estrangement, then holiness implies a restoration of not only our nature and our telos but also our very capacity for relationships as well.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ Judith Hougen, *Transformed Into Fire: Discovering Your True Identity as God's Beloved* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publishing, 2002), 19-20, <https://libguides-thedtl-org.dtl.idm.oclc.org/c.php?g=1109129>.

²⁶⁶ Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 300.

²⁶⁷ Diane Leclerc, *Discovering Christian Holiness: The Heart of Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2010), 187.

Also, practical applications of discipleship tie directly to practical applications of holiness. “The act of faith that justifies is also the engine of sanctification; both are unified in discipleship, the lifelong journey of following and obeying Jesus.”²⁶⁸ Yet many of the interviewees saw discipleship and holiness as different. The truth is that both discipleship and holiness grow us into the likeness and actions of Jesus Christ. The major complexities within holiness theology, and I believe a deeper pursuit of discipleship as transforming character, are two-fold.

First, holiness remains a complex topic because it has proven to be difficult to define and explain. Either ‘holiness’ results in a rigid, legalistic lifestyle, or ‘holiness’ is assumed to be unattainable and therefore lacks practical application. Second, scholars from various theological backgrounds begin the conversation from different perspectives—e.g. sin, love, judgment. Therefore, the value of Wesley’s message lies in his biblical and theological explanations of holiness as a functional part of the Christian life.²⁶⁹

Terms for holiness do matter when understanding holiness through the lens of discipleship and vice versa.

Holiness as Relational

Interestingly, research material from the UMC emphasized the social nature of holiness and the interviewees from that church group disproportionately held to that understanding of holiness. “Social holiness operates on several levels, each with a biblical basis and a practical application. To be like their Lord, holiness Christians must have a heart for others, a zeal for social justice, and, ultimately, a sense of corporate holiness that transcends the personal holiness of individual believers.”²⁷⁰ Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth, “I am going to show you a far

²⁶⁸ Bill Hull, *Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith that Embraces Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 12.

²⁶⁹ Douglas R. Milne, “Functional Holiness,” in *Renovating Holiness*, Josh Broward and Thomas Jay Oord eds. (Nampa, ID: SacraSage Publishing, 2015), 367.

²⁷⁰ Robert Black, “Social Holiness,” in *Be Holy: God’s Invitation to Understand, Declare, and Experience Holiness*, ed. Joseph Coleson (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2008), 152.

better way” (1 Cor. 12:31b). The better way of which Paul spoke? “That is the way of love. It is loving all men for God’s sake. It is a humble, gentle, patient love, which Paul so admirably describes.... Without this love, he assures us, all eloquence, knowledge, faith, works, and all sufferings are of no more value in the sight of God than sounding brass or a rumbling cymbal.”²⁷¹ While the zeal for social justice may be misplaced sometimes, it speaks more to Wesley’s understanding of holiness as perfect love than does the personal aspects espoused by other interviewees.

Holiness as Personal

As discussed in Chapter Four, those who listed holiness as personal often focused on individual transformation but not for the purpose of leading others to Christ and growth in holy living. As Clarence Bence wrote:

In the latter half of the twentieth century, a sobering phenomenon could be observed in many holiness churches. Although lip service still was given to the doctrine of entire sanctification, and candidates for ordination were thoroughly examined concerning both their understanding and their personal testimony of the baptism of the Spirit, preaching and teaching on the subject waned.... Those who talked of the holy life moved toward more Keswickian theology, which spoke of power to live victoriously over the ever-present sinful nature, rather than of heart purity.²⁷²

The issue... “A variety of terms have been used for the second work of grace, and they are partly appropriate, partly inappropriate” because they do not fully encompass the complete change of character that needs to take place, both personally and socially.²⁷³ Any term for sanctification that does not encompass both the character change that needs to happen in the life of the believer

²⁷¹ John Wesley, *The Nature of Holiness* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1988), 182-3.

²⁷² Clarence Bence, “The American Scene,” in *Be Holy: God’s Invitation to Understand, Declare, and Experience Holiness*, ed. Joseph Coleson (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2008), 87-8. Keswickian theology is letting Christ do things in and through you instead of trying in any capacity to do them yourself.

²⁷³ J. Kenneth Grider, *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1994), 367.

and the relational purpose of living a holy life, fails to describe the fullness of a life of holiness. Living the Christian life means being committed to each other. It entails being part of a community that is centered around Jesus Christ. By dealing with each other, we are forced to deal with areas of our lives that we would otherwise avoid; because of our committed love to each other, we pray and reflect on those areas and repent.”²⁷⁴ Perhaps the reason why so few (three) of the interviewees mentioned the transformation of character as a practical application of discipleship was because their understanding of holiness was too personal and narrow to see the social need for character change.

Holiness as Transformational

Hebrews 12:14 says, “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.” 1 Peter 1:15-16 says, “but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written: ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’” Although holiness is an inward change in the believer orchestrated by God through the Holy Spirit, there is a discernable, outward manifestation through “one’s lifestyle, demeanor, and character (the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer manifested outwardly as the fruit of the Spirit), which can only be obtained through a true relationship with God. It is a way of life (in a most ontological sense) that the church has been called to live to bring others into the light.”²⁷⁵ While it has personal aspects, those personal facets are to be implemented for the sake of others.

The believer must also not overlook God’s participation in holy living. Keith Drury wrote, “There are two parts to sanctification: God’s part and our part. God’s part is purifying and

²⁷⁴ Mark Devers, 196.

²⁷⁵ Lisa L. Dorsey, “Holiness as Praxis,” in *The Holiness Manifesto*, eds. Kevin W. Mannoia and Don Thorsen (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 236.

energizing. Our part is consecration and faith.”²⁷⁶ Yet, both parts bring God glory when they are pointed outward in love and compassion towards others.

Holiness as Process

Holiness in personal and relational practice has a degree of intentionality at its core. Geiger, Kelley, and Nation write that “the fundamental reason your church exists is to make disciples of Jesus.”²⁷⁷ However, “To be deficient in your core reason for existence is always unacceptable.”²⁷⁸ They go on to say that “the sad reality is that the daily lives, aspirations, and desires of many people in our churches mirror those who do not claim to know Christ.”²⁷⁹ The reasons for this may be many, but the idea cannot be overlooked that lack of intentionality to provide comprehensive nurture for the spiritual development of an individual in our care could be a key reason. “Sometimes we make the mistake of assuming that the beginning of something is the end.... Unfortunately, Christians also seem to make the mistake of confusing the beginning of something with its end. There is an abbreviated form of Christianity that has become popular in recent years. It can be expressed in a simple statement: ‘I got saved.’”²⁸⁰ Unfortunately, work in ministry has replaced salvation as a significant experience for comprehensive spiritual nurture in the minds of some people. Further, mentoring someone to behavioral change has replaced discipleship. Even so, Ralph Moore reminds Christ-followers:

²⁷⁶ Keith Drury, *Holiness for Ordinary People* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2009), 109.

²⁷⁷ Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, 10.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁸⁰ Kevin M. Watson, *A Blueprint for Discipleship: Wesley’s General Rules as a Guide for Christian Living* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2009), 27-28.

For starters, discipling differs from mentoring. In fact, I think a misplaced desire to feel ‘relevant’ has caused us to embrace the concept of mentoring in place of discipling. . . . We were called to ‘make disciples.’ Don’t get me wrong: a mentoring relationship is valuable. . . . But mentoring is a human shortcut when substituted for discipling. It is not nearly as personal or as effective as discipling.²⁸¹

Holiness as Reproduction

N. T. Wright wrote about a reproductive circle of holiness in his book, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters*. At the top of the circle he placed Scripture. Next came stories, examples, community, and practices. “One of the encouraging things about this circle is that it doesn’t matter where you break into it—or where, so to speak, it breaks in upon you.”²⁸² The practice of reading scripture, studying scripture, acting scripture, singing scripture—generally soaking oneself in scripture as an individual and community—has been seen from the earliest days of Christianity as central to the formation of Christian character.²⁸³ Further, it is a way to be located within a larger narrative of Christians being reproduced by the transforming power of God’s word. Second, Wright wrote about stories. Reading scripture consistently and daily trains us to listen and learn from varieties of stories that we come across on a daily basis. In stories, “we want to know what happens, how it works out. We want resolution, closure, a sense of justice being done, or at the very least some sense of completeness.”²⁸⁴ Next, Wright wrote about examples. This ties directly to the previous aspect of the circle of stories. “Examples come to us from all over, but they come within a context. That context is—and I know how trivialized this

²⁸¹ Ralph Moore, *Making Disciples: Developing Lifelong Followers of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 40.

²⁸² N. T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (Broadway, NY: HarperOne, 2010), 260.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 261.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 264.

word has become—the community of the people of God.”²⁸⁵ Five of the interviewees mentioned community in their understanding of holiness. For reproduction to take place, relationships must be formed and maintained for distinct periods of time. “The nature of spirit in ourselves is chiefly seen in its unifying, socializing, transforming and sacramentalizing activities; all these are suggestive of the nature or activity of God.”²⁸⁶ Lastly, Wright wrote about holiness practices. “The practices of the community are all-important. The very fact that we call them by that name gives a hint: these are the things through which the community practices the habits of mind and heart which develop those corporate virtues....”²⁸⁷ With more people attending church online than ever before, these practices must be reworked to include people who are in-person and virtual.

Holiness as Practical Application

In applying holiness, it is critically important to understand the functionality of the will. The human will must be brought into submission and under direct obedience to the will of God on a daily basis.²⁸⁸ There must be an understanding and desire to love God and love neighbors as a call to Christian discipleship. This combination of personal holiness through works of piety and social holiness through works of mercy provides a basic framework for faith formation in the faith community.²⁸⁹ John states in 1 John 4:12 that “if we love one another, God remains in us,

²⁸⁵ N. T. Wright, 272.

²⁸⁶ Alasdair I. C. Heron, *The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit in the Bible, the History of Christian Thought, and Recent Theology* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1983), 121. Alasdair I. C. Heron is a Reformed theologian who has made considerable contributions in the area of pneumatology. For this reason, he has been included in this research.

²⁸⁷ N. T. Wright, 278.

²⁸⁸ Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 99.

²⁸⁹ Sondra Higgins Matthaëi, *Making Disciples: Faith Formation in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 52.

and His love is perfected in us.” Throughout verses 7-21, we can relocate “the assurance of divine love in the perceptible grace of the Christian community. And this love can be heard, seen, and touched. Such love was from the beginning, for it proceeds from the very heart of God. This love became perceptible in the Word of life (Jesus Christ), particularly in His death on our behalf. And this love is shared in perceptible and palpable ways in local church congregations.”²⁹⁰ If it is not, holiness of life is not occurring.

As noted in Chapter Four, only one interviewee mentioned the fruit of the Spirit evidenced in the life of the believer as a practical application of holiness. “The test of any so-called disciple, Jew or Gentile, is the fruit of the lifestyle that is led.”²⁹¹ This corresponds to the low number (two) of responses to transforming character in applications of discipleship found in Figure 3 and possibly reveals that holiness and discipleship are more connected than the interviewees disclosed.

Many serious and thoughtful Christians are looking for ways into an intelligent and powerful Christ-likeness that can inform their entire existence and not just produce special religious moments.... This is a very hopeful development. But unless the interest in spirituality, as it is now sometimes called, finds a foundation in the nature of human personality and in God’s redemptive interactions therewith, it will be at most a passing fad.²⁹²

The fruit of the Spirit provides a measurable means in the life of the believer to determine whether God’s work of holiness through the Holy Spirit is having its intended effect.

²⁹⁰ Thomas Jay Oord and Michael Lodahl, *Relational Holiness: Responding to the Call of Love* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2005), 114.

²⁹¹ Steve L. Roy, “An Examination of the Theme of Discipleship in the Seven Churches of Revelation” (EdD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC: 2017), 125.

²⁹² Dallas Willard, 138.

Holiness as Accountability

The writer of Hebrews wrote in 13:17, “Obey your leaders and submit to them—for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account—so that they may do this with joy, not groaning; for this would be unhelpful for you.” Barry Callen wrote:

There is growth when faith and obedience are exercised. As justification is a gift of God’s grace, a gift effective only when matched by the human response of accepting faith, so sanctification is a divine gift effective only when enriched by the believer’s faithful use of the available means by which grace is made operational. Sanctification, a divine gift of the Spirit, is nonetheless a human task. When responding to grace, the believer becomes responsible to the purpose of that grace.²⁹³

Responsibility to a purpose and to like-minded others is required in the life of the believer. While twelve of the interviewees had aspects of accountability in their responses, they did not see accountability as a nonnegotiable in holiness and discipleship practices. A key thought on discipleship for Bill Hull was, “You can’t make disciples without accountability, and accountability requires structure.”²⁹⁴ However, in the books on holiness used in this project, “accountability” was not a word often used. The individual nature of how the Holy Spirit works within the life of the believer was common, but not accountability to God, the church, or others.

Preaching of Discipleship and Holiness

Preaching as a means of true transformation in the research material echoed the results of the interviews in that one-to-one interactions are more effective in changing people. While most of the interviewees relied on sermons to promote discipleship and holiness, true change emerged through intentional small groups and relationships of accountability. Perhaps the problem with using sermons is that interviewees utilized preaching for promotion of discipleship and holiness.

²⁹³ Barry L. Callen, *God as Loving Grace* (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1996), 298.

²⁹⁴ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 241.

Walter Brueggemann wrote, “Preaching is the difficult, daring act of enunciating a truth from outside conventionally assumed reality.... It aims to assure by an alternative, to jar by exposé, and to impel action in a new direction.”²⁹⁵ Preaching can still be effective if used properly to impel action and not to promote opportunities or make suggestions.

²⁹⁵ Walter Brueggemann, *The Word that Redescribes the Word: The Bible and Discipleship*, 20.

Chapter Six: Research Summary

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you....

Matthew 28:19-20a NASB

Introduction

From the beginning, this research was not the result of some grand purpose to change the “church world” with the results. The research was conducted to answer fundamental questions regarding the personal inadequacies felt by the researcher towards discipleship and living a holy life. When people asked, “What does a mature disciple of Christ look and act like?” I wanted to point them, like Bob Moss, to a “snap shot” given in the Scriptures.²⁹⁶ “The entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’...The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:14, 22-24). I wanted to feel adequate to provide leadership for the local church in spiritual as well as numerical growth.

However, as reading materials were digested and interviews conducted, more questions were raised than concrete answers. The research became less about information-seeking and more of a quest for the existence of tangible discipleship and holiness practices in the five church groups of this thesis. Adding to the complexity of the situation, each church group had similar verbiage that ministers used to describe holiness and discipleship but their meanings were complex and often dissimilar. In their pursuit of relevance, Wesleyan Holiness churches have not grasped the genius of evangelicalism described by Stanley J. Grenz. “The genius of the

²⁹⁶ Bob Moss, *Rediscover: The Passion, the Promise, the Power* (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 2021), 95.

movement, in other words, is a shared religious experience, which, I would add, is couched in a shared theological language.”²⁹⁷ As church groups sought to find their niche in the larger Wesleyan Holiness Movement, they divided and subdivided their terms, definitions, and practices to buttress their doctrinal beliefs and perceived regional cultural tensions. One only has to look at the early Church of God movement from Anderson, Indiana to see this niche-seeking division to be problematic.

In those days, they preached the need to end denominationalism, the need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit so as to live truly Spirit-led lives, the need to live as a community of saints, the need to stay true to their Wesleyan-Holiness roots, and the need to resist the secularization forces within America. Warner’s voice needed to be heard on those issues in towns and cities across America in the nineteenth century. But those are not the most pressing issues that Christians in China, Nepal, Kenya, Guatemala, and Burma are facing at the dawn of the twenty-first century. What the Church of God reformers may have been preaching was true and important, but it was also addressing a situation in America—specifically the nineteenth century American Midwest. Warner and the reformers could not foresee that the movement would exist for so long and take in so many different countries and cultures with different theological landscapes.²⁹⁸

The result of this doctrinal/sectarian division has left the holiness church groups I interviewed and researched in much need of what the other four groups hold towards holiness and discipleship. The individual church groups were fractions of what they could be if they could operate under the fulness of true biblical holiness and the effectual discipleship practices of a Wesleyan perspective.

²⁹⁷ Stanley J. Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology: A Fresh Agenda for the 21st Century* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 37.

²⁹⁸ Patrick Nachtigall, *Mosaic: A Journey Across the Church of God* (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 2010), 63.

Research Summary

The problem that I began with was that traditional holiness thinking, as it diverged from the original teaching of John Wesley, led to a perspective suggesting that discipleship was no longer necessary in the life of the believer. In the process of carving out a doctrinal niche under the holiness movement umbrella, holiness churches got good at desiring to *know* God (orthodoxy), be *like* God (orthopathy) in contemplation and personal spiritual experiences, but not to be *with* God (orthopraxy) as he works redemptively in our communities and beyond. Being with God is what makes discipleship and holy living successful. God cannot be experienced virtually or periodically. Relationship with God must be a daily focus of the believer. This relational focus is what fueled the question behind this research. How can revitalized practices of discipleship lead to fuller practices of holy living?

From the interviews and research materials, codes emerged in regard to discipleship and holiness. While the majority of the interviewees acknowledged discipleship and holiness as different, the reading materials did not draw such distinct differences. Veritably, I did not come across any significant readings that combined discipleship and holiness practices. Yet, the verbiage used in stand-alone volumes was quite similar.

Discipleship and holiness were described in the interviews and research materials as personal and/or relational. There were aspects of both being personal experiences of growth towards Christlikeness. There were also facets of both being personal in regard to focused practices. Both discipleship and holiness had practices that were viewed as relational. They also both had outcomes that were meant to affect and transform relationships.

Practices of discipleship and holiness were seen by the interviewees as transformational in nature. Some interviewees and research material began the transformation process at salvation

while others made salvation a prerequisite for true transformation to occur. Transformation was seen across six areas that progressed in complexity for change. Transformed service was a key focus of many of the interviewees as they sought to qualify people for open ministry positions within their congregation. A transformed mind was next as ministers shared information in Bible studies, through sermons, and small group settings. Third, requiring more complex practices, experience, and focused effort than the first two, transformed relationships were a strong focus of the UMC with social justice but not with the other four church groups. Transformed influence, habits, and character rounded out the higher end of complexity for true change to take place. Very few interviewees mentioned these as areas of transformation among their congregants; possibly because these three require so much time and effort to see success. However, when success occurs, all the other areas are transformed as well.

The complexity of time and effort required to see transformation in each of the six areas from Bill Hull outlined throughout this dissertation leads to the idea that all of the interviewees saw discipleship and holiness as a process. While some had a definite second work of grace beginning the process of holiness and others saw that same start at salvation, all of them believed in an ongoing process after a definite beginning. According to the research material, the process is a perfect place to overlap practices and to allow discipleship to lead to fuller practices of holy living. First, though, there must be a clear end goal for the process and a universally accepted, encompassing definition of what it means to live and be holy. Therein lies the practical application of discipleship and holiness practices.

Discipleship and holiness practices must, by application, grow people to be more like Christ in ministering as he ministered, believing how he believed, loving others and God as he loved, leading others in the way of truth as he led others, training for good works as he trained,

and living out grace, forgiveness, and mercy as Jesus lived. The focus can no longer be on doctrinal fidelity to a specific church group. There must be a rebirth of the fullness of spiritual practices with a heavy influence from relational accountability.

The research material confirmed that accountability is a key facet of discipleship and holiness success. The lack of accountability across the five church groups I interviewed proved and confirmed accountability's place in successful practices of discipleship and holiness. Frustration from interviewees was palpable as they wanted to see spiritual growth in their congregants but felt no way to institute that growth due to lack of accountability.

Findings Related to the Literature

One of the underlying questions of this research echoed one of Bill Hull's questions: "What kind of person does non-discipleship Christianity produce?"²⁹⁹ "Praise and proclamation, the presence of Jesus and the Spirit, and the affections in Christ and the power of the Spirit are all fused in a call to Christian character and vocation."³⁰⁰ Intentionality of Christian character in discipleship has been an essential aspect of the reading material.

Discipleship

The way of Jesus is the way of discipleship. However, "not all discipleship is transformational."³⁰¹ "Today, church members and leaders view discipleship as a means of providing workers for the church. Discipleship apart from Jesus is nontransformational."³⁰² All twenty-one interviewees pointed to pursuing Christlikeness as the transformational element of

²⁹⁹ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 41.

³⁰⁰ Steven J. Land, 125.

³⁰¹ Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, 6.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 8.

discipleship. If resources are reproducible and easily accessed and implemented by ministers who believe in pursuing Christlikeness, then the future still remains bright for congregations in the Wesleyan-Holiness Movement.

All twenty-one of the interviewees saw discipleship as a process. This could be problematic, though, because “process” as a term only defines part of discipleship. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” “In real life, God does not have a production plan; he uses us to reach others in a variety of ways. His glorious method is unpredictable, not smooth or symmetrical. It bursts forward with spasms of energy. It zigzags across the planet in disorganized patterns, propelled by the passion of faithful disciples.”³⁰³ But that is not all. “[O]nly God orchestrates the call to be and make disciples, and disciple-making can be accomplished only through the events and conditions that make up life. Of course, disciples should certainly be encouraged to train others.... but discipleship is much more about the depth of character and spiritual passion of each disciple than it is a plan for church growth.”³⁰⁴

One of the primary understandings of discipleship among the interviewees was the sharing of information. There was a perception that more knowledge would translate to transformational life-change. According to Geiger, Kelley and Nation, they “have observed two common yet flawed views that unfortunately impact a church’s likelihood to make disciples that are transformed: equating information with discipleship and viewing discipleship merely as behavioral modification. Discipleship is much more than information and much deeper than

³⁰³ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 37.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

behavioral modification.”³⁰⁵ “Attention must be given to certain crucial internal tensions and external criticisms; new theological paradigms need to be constructed to address these tensions and criticisms and to unify elements of the spirituality which tend toward individual fragmentation, ecumenical isolation, and missionary narrowness.”³⁰⁶

While most of the interviewees lamented the lack of accountability in their ministry context, one interviewee mentioned the core practice of a successful accountability plan that embraces the responsibility of those involved to obediently surrender to God’s discipline. “Believers must share their lives with one another, ask one another hard questions, confess sins to one another in a safe environment, and invest so personally in one another that one believer has a profound spiritual impact on another.”³⁰⁷ The interviewee responded that people are held accountable by asking each other good questions and not being judgmental towards responses. The interviewee went on to describe good questions as those seeking to understand practices, habits, behaviors, and beliefs and not necessarily to change those practices, habits, behaviors, and beliefs. Once the person seeks to understand the other, then it is possible for accountability to take place through intentional relationships.

Holiness

The blessings of sanctifying grace are scripturally the legacy provided for God’s people. “It is not simply the will of God in the sense that he desires us to have this experience, but it is truly a blood-bought inheritance, provided and willed by our Father through Jesus Christ to every

³⁰⁵ Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, 18.

³⁰⁶ Steven J. Land, 180.

³⁰⁷ Jamie Archer, “Developing an Effective Biblical Method for the Rediscovery of Accountability in Christian Discipleship” (Doctor of Ministry diss., Liberty University School of Divinity, 2017), 49, <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2439&context=doctoral>.

child of God.”³⁰⁸ Holiness is both being “set-apart” for God’s purpose and being “perfected” in love. To focus only on being “set-apart” tends towards legalism. To focus on the other extreme is to cheapen the grace required to provide believers with the experience of sanctification.

“The goal of holiness is the same goal as discipleship: the restoration of human beings to the image of God.”³⁰⁹ God is Triune. God is relational. Five of the interviewees understood holiness in terms of life change that affected community (relational). Two had aspects that were personal and communal. This was a small number considering that 67% of the interviewees did not see holiness as having a relational component. In the ChoG AN, this belief was in keeping with the standard group doctrine on the subject. “The often repeated definition stated: Sanctification is a second definite instantaneous work of grace, subsequent to justification, wrought by faith through the Holy Spirit, which frees human beings from their inherited or Adamic nature, cleansing them from all desire or love for sin and enabling them to live a life free from sin in the present world.”³¹⁰ The fact that only 24% of the interviewees mentioned holiness as having relational aspects is deeply troubling. American culture is highly independent and has infiltrated holiness beliefs and practices.

Another finding in relation to the reading materials is that of holiness being a core value of the five interviewed church groups. The finding was deeply troubling because it did not come across from the interviews as a core value in practice. There were ample examples of holiness theology in theory, but very little of its practical application. A pamphlet sent out in the spring of 1999 by the Church of the Nazarene titled “Core Values” declared that “the Church of the

³⁰⁸ J. W. Byers, *Sanctification* (Guthrie, OK: Faith Publishing Company, 1902), 35.

³⁰⁹ Rondy Smith, 120.

³¹⁰ John W. V. Smith, *The Quest for Holiness: A Comprehensive History of the Church of God Reformation Movement* (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 2009), 180.

Nazarene had been historically defined by three primary values. The second of the three ‘core values’ was titled ‘Holiness,’ and it asserted without apology that Nazarenes were indeed a ‘holiness people.’³¹¹ The thesis of Steven J. Land’s seminal book on Pentecostal spirituality and on a smaller scale, the Church of God (Cleveland, TN), was “that the righteousness, holiness, and power of God are correlated with distinctive apocalyptic affections which are the integrating core of Pentecostal spirituality.”³¹² The United Methodist Church asks their ordinands a series of questions before confirmations. Three of the questions speak directly to the status of holiness within the church. “Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life? Are you earnestly striving after it?”³¹³ “Teachers in the Church of God movement have held, in common with Protestantism in general, emphasis on justification by grace alone.... They have affirmed more, however. The goal of God is the holiness of all creation.”³¹⁴ In fact, D. S. Warner wrote the first book published by CHoG AN entitled, *Bible Proofs of the Second Work of Grace*.

Unexpected Findings

Although many of the presuppositions going into this research were confirmed, there were some findings that were unexpected. The degree to which certain understandings pervaded all five church groups was unexpected as were the differences between doctrinal and experiential beliefs outlined by the interviewees. Many of the interviewees lived within the tension of professing a doctrinal stance in keeping with their specific church group but teaching and living

³¹¹ Mark R. Quanstrom, 174-75.

³¹² Steven J. Land, 12.

³¹³ Albert Outler, 66.

³¹⁴ Barry Callen, *Contours of a Cause: The Theological Vision of the Church of God Movement (Anderson)* (Anderson, IN: Anderson University School of Theology, 1995), 144.

something very different and more in line with their personal experiences. This is problematic because personal experience is limited in scope, time, and space.

Discipleship

Under discipleship as relational, it was intriguing to find that only one of the twenty-one who were interviewed said that those they discipled should follow them as they followed Jesus. Paul told the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.” The overwhelming majority of those interviewed saw their role as leading others to Christ and his character instead of modeling the character of Christ themselves. Perhaps this was a mistaken understanding of Paul’s words or a failure to read with understanding how discipleship occurs. This made the discipleship process more informational as compared to having people model the actions of the mentoring pastor.

Accountability was listed as a major component of the discipleship process in readings conducted for this research. Most of the interviewees did not see accountability taking place within their ministry context unless it was amongst church leaders. One interviewee placed accountability on the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual. Essentially, if God wanted a person to grow spiritually, the Holy Spirit would speak to that person individually. This was an unexpected finding that is probably more common in thought than the interviewees wanted to admit.

One interviewee responded that discipleship is “doing,” and holiness is “being.” This was an unexpected response that showed the depth of understanding concerning discipleship and holiness. However, it did not translate to focused discipleship practices within the church that were measurable in any significant way.

Holiness

In describing holiness theology for specific church groups, the interviewees would state their personal beliefs concerning holiness along with a doctrinal statement about holiness from their church group. Often these two beliefs would not be the same. This was unexpected because of the large number of interviewees who held this practice. Several were concerned that they would get “in trouble” with their denomination if they told their true beliefs that differed from those of their church group.

Ten of the twenty-one interviewees provided comprehensive spiritual nurture for their congregants by viewing their spiritual journey as one moving from being unsaved to being in church ministry or church leadership. The end goal in this group was people fitted for ministry opportunities within the church. This was unexpected because it showed the end goal of discipleship was not holy living or Christlikeness. The goal of discipleship from this understanding was filling much-needed church leadership positions.

Of the twenty-one interviewees, only one evidenced practical applications of the pursuit of holiness as the fruit of the Spirit in the life of the believer. This was unexpected and shocking in connection with the previous paragraph. The goal of discipleship was not for members to be more Christlike, although that is what the interviewees espoused. The goal was for people to be volunteer-ready to fill positions and keep the church programs operational.

A Possible Way Forward

There are three components that are necessary for successful discipleship practices that lead to fuller practices of holy living—the Word of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, and a focused people of God. Currently, the focus of the people of God must shift from programs to purpose. LeRoy Eims asked the question, “Why are fruitful, dedicated, mature disciples so rare?”

The biggest reason is that all too often we have relied on programs or materials or some other thing to do the job. The ministry is to be carried on by people, not programs. It is to be carried out by someone and not by some thing. Disciples cannot be mass produced.”³¹⁵ When this shift takes place, spiritual maturity can occur in the lives of Christ followers and the purpose of the church to make disciples can be fulfilled. But, how do we begin? I believe we must redefine the traditional Americanized role of a ministry leader. The ministry leader must embrace, model, and embody what Paul calls in Ephesians 4:11-13 “the equipper.”

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Ministry should never be conducted as a one-person attraction based on who’s on the church payroll. The goal should be to equip others to do the work of service. The ministry leader must take on four main roles or build a team that encompasses the following roles in order to make the shift to discipleship practices that inform fuller practices of holy living. The ministry leader must be an authentic disciple of God. They must lead the church in creating systems within their context that promote effective discipleship. Different from discipleship but equally important, the leader must be able to develop other leaders. Finally, the church leader(s) must be able to cast a vision promoting the primary mission of the church to be discipleship and then return to it frequently and strategically.

Authentic Disciple of God

The ministry leader must be an authentic disciple of God. This means that the leader must practice a healthy walk with God daily. Church leaders need to be people of prayer, Bible study

³¹⁵ LeRoy Eims, 45.

(See Appendix H), and intimately aware of the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives (See Appendix I). Too often, church members look for church leaders with the same character and successes as in the secular world. Church leaders must be stable and maturing in their Christian faith and not just a person to fill a needed position.

Create Systems Promoting Effective Discipleship

The ministry leader must lead the church in creating systems within their context that promote effective discipleship. This looks different for individual groups but involves “relational environments for the purpose of discipleship.”³¹⁶ One way of looking at this is to create a system where people are released to carry out ministry that you feel responsible for as the trained professional of the church. Also, the carrying out of ministry moves beyond the walls of a physical location and into the lives of the believers.

Development of Leaders

The ministry leader must be able to develop other leaders (See Appendix J). The best way to describe this aspect is that of a high school coach. Unlike a college coach who goes out and recruits great players to complete his team, the ministry leader must be like a high school coach who develops great players by training them over the years so that when they reach high school, they are ready to play at a high level. The ministry leader must develop leaders who are following Jesus, going through Spirit-led transformation, and joining Jesus on his kingdom mission.

³¹⁶ Jim Putman, Bobby Harrington, and Robert Coleman, 120.

Cast a Vision of Discipleship as Primary Mission of the Church

The ministry leader(s) must be able to cast a vision promoting the primary mission of the church to be discipleship and then return to it frequently and strategically. Through discouragement, weariness, and people getting tired of the ministry leader being a broken record, the leader must persevere and remain faithful to God's purpose of discipleship. One way to do this is to celebrate even small victories that point to discipleship. Celebrate how many people serve in ministry. Celebrate people in leadership with disciple-making qualities.

Once the ministry leader is embodying the role of an equipper, they must know the stages of spiritual development and how to promote growth through each level in conjunction with the work of the Holy Spirit (See Appendix K). However, instead of focusing on behavior modification as many in the holiness movement do, ministry leaders must remind people of who they are as children of God. They connect God's commands to Christian identity while presenting obedience to his commandments as an overflow of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

The five stages illustration by Putman, Harrington, and Coleman (see Appendix K) is a great reference for discerning the spiritual development of the members within a ministry context.³¹⁷ It should be noted that there is a place for all of these stages within the church and movement through the stages is not linear but more cyclical in nature. Each stage has a leading verb for the stage (Share, Connect, Train, and Release). Every stage has actions that the disciple-maker initiates within a relational environment. Each stage corresponds to a stage of human development and comes with characteristics that are common to that level of development. As the disciple moves through each stage, their "rebirth bandwidth" increases in the areas of surrender to the will of God.

³¹⁷ Jim Putman, Bobby Harrington, and Robert E. Coleman, 60.

There are four types of relationships to which rebirth bandwidth should occur.

Discipleship practices need to be intentional and reproducible in these areas (See Appendix L). The main area from which the other three radiate is a personal relationship with Christ. The key is not to address the symptoms of a broken relationship but to reconcile the relationship as prescribed in 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 NASB. “Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” Before any other relationship can be reconciled, the sinner must be reconciled to Christ.

Once the sinner’s relationship is reconciled to God through Christ, the new disciple needs to start a daily practice of Bible study, prayer, and Scripture memorization. There are numerous ways to accomplish this important practice. NavPress has many resources through The Navigators for churches of the Wesleyan Holiness Movement to use for building relationships with God. A strong, growing relationship with God will go a long way in reconciling and prospering relationships in the other three areas.

In the ChoG AN, we sing a song entitled, *The Family of God*. Through reconciliation to God, comes loving relationships with likewise blood-bought followers of Christ. Discipleship practices that promote biblical unity, as outlined in Ephesians 4, define this area. In speaking of how the Holy Spirit works through the church, Kenneth Jones wrote:

God can only work in the church by working in individual members of the church. He speaks to the church by speaking to individual Christians. He guides the church by guiding individuals. He leads sinners to salvation by means of soul-winning Christians. He preaches to the church by speaking to and through a preacher, whether that preacher is the pastor or some Christian to whom God has spoken. He heals the sick through the prayers and faith of Christians. He leads the church to do the right things, and to make good decisions through leading individual Christians to make wise, godly decisions.³¹⁸

³¹⁸ Kenneth E. Jones, *Commitment to Holiness* (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1985), 141-42.

Communion, tithing, worship, and feet washing are just a few of the discipleship practices that help promote relationships within the church.

The natural outflow of maturing relationships within the church should be growing relationships within the home. A brief perusal of Ephesians 5 and 6 will show what Paul believed about relationships within the home. A church intent on nurturing family-based faith has three challenges to overcome with providing focused discipleship practices. Parents must be reminded of the value their influence has on their children. “All too often parents shuttle their children to Sunday schools and youth groups in hopes that their children will develop into godly individuals. ‘Christian education is the job of the pastor’ is often the assumed position of parents desiring their children to mature in the faith.”³¹⁹ Discipleship practices that can be implemented by the entire family are important. The church must also give parents a model of true faith. True faith is when people are transformed into the likeness of Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit. This is found in Romans 12:1-2. “Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Finally, the church must provide discipleship practices that help parents to put their faith into action within the family. Discipleship practices should help parents to understand the stages of Christian development outlined earlier and how best to teach their children God’s Word in each stage. A focus on intergenerational relationships is important for overcoming the challenges of family-based faith.

³¹⁹ John H. Aukerman, *Discipleship that Transforms: An Introduction to Christian Education from a Wesleyan Holiness Perspective*. 2nd ed. (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 2014), 309.

A natural outgrowth of focused discipleship practices within the Christian home is maturing relationships with the world. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, Paul was able to say in Acts 20:24, “But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of God’s grace.” “This is a very needy world in which we live, and the chief satisfaction we will enjoy as we journey through the years will come as we exercise our prerogatives and privileges as citizens of the kingdom of God.... We serve God by serving people.”³²⁰

Each ministry within the church needs to have discipleship practices. Ministry opportunities need to point people towards increasing their rebirth bandwidth as they grow in their relationships across the four aforementioned areas and move through the stages of development. Successes, no matter how small, should be celebrated and grace shown when success is less than optimal. The results will vary, but the church will be directly in God’s will. “For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification....” (1 Thess. 4:2-3a).

Conclusions

The implications for this research are based on understanding discipleship practices and how they reinvigorate fuller practices of holy living. The opinions expressed by the interviewees were numerous and based on personal experiences more than what they were taught to believe from their church group doctrine. While the interviewees held on to those doctrinal beliefs, they often held their own experiential beliefs in tension.

³²⁰ W. Dale Oldham, *How to Grow Spiritually* (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 2007), 111.

Discipleship was seen as different than holiness. There was no real connection between the two that was identified by most of the interviewees. This is problematic because it does not provide a way for people to mature in holiness. Further complicating the situation, most of the interviewees saw holiness as a process which made it as though holiness and discipleship were much the same. If there are no practices to move the process along, then what is to be done? The general consensus was that the Holy Spirit does all the work within the holiness process, but the research does not bear out.

Discipleship practices are needed to reinvigorate and lead to fuller practices of holy living. However, first ministers must learn that discipleship and holiness are deeply connected through personal and relational characteristics. As Bill Hull wrote, “As disciples, our quest should be to believe what he [Jesus] believed so we can live the way he lived.”³²¹ They must see the full transforming nature of discipleship practices and how these practices, in turn, lead to fuller practices of holy living. “Holiness always involves what we do and how we act.”³²²

Further research needs to be conducted on best practices for ministers to understand the fullness of discipleship and how the lifetime process cannot be neglected in holiness churches. Additionally, the tenure of ministers in churches should be researched to see how that detrimentally affects the implementation of discipleship within the ministry context. A comparative study of discipleship practices within churches that understand and act upon the six transformational areas outlined by Bill Hull and churches that do not focus on discipleship would be helpful in advancing this research.

Although beyond the scope of this thesis, the data suggests that spiritual disciplines taught in church programs for children need to be continued throughout adulthood for Christian

³²¹ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 131.

³²² Diane Leclerc, *Discovering Christian Holiness: The Heart of Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*, 277.

adults to reach their full potential of spiritual maturity. The intentionality of habit formation in children ministry could be developed for adults as well as a way to reinvigorate discipleship practices into local congregations. Further research in this area is warranted and needed.

In conclusion, the more I have learned about discipleship practices and how they have the possibility to lead to fuller practices of holy living, the more I realize the importance of the role of equipper for ministry. I cannot equip others with something I do not possess. First and foremost, I must be an authentic disciple of God, consecrated and obediently relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to lead. As a ministry leader, I must work within my ministry to create and implement a practical system of effective discipleship. A possible system could be the one by LeRoy Eims in Appendix J. Also, there must be a focus on developing leaders who are sanctified believers. Finally, I must cast a vision that keeps discipleship always at the forefront. However, this is only part of the solution.

Holiness has to be seen as a natural outcome of discipleship. Yet, there can be no segregation of the personal and relational. The purpose of personal holiness must be for the active service of God. Further, holy living does not signify the rebirth of self-sufficiency, but now with good intentions. Sanctification signals a perpetual absence of self-sufficiency. Just as discipleship requires obedience, holiness requires obedience by being directed by the Holy Spirit outward to the plight of others and freedom from sinful self-regard that minimizes others.

Without the neighbor, the other, as the goal of both holiness and discipleship, the individual will certainly fall into legalism or self-sufficiency. With the neighbor, the other in their rightful place, holiness and discipleship can be Christ-focused and relationally minded in working through the growth process. To that great end, let us now move forward.

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Appendix A

April 1, 2024

Hi Chris,

Thank you for confirming. I am pleased to grant you a one-time, non-exclusive, non-transferable permission to use the selected diagrams from Chapters 5,6 and 9 and the chart from Appendix 2 from The ***Lost Art of Disciple Making*** by Leroy Eims (ISBN: 9780310372813) in the appendix of your academic dissertation. Please note that the use is contingent upon proper copyright acknowledgment. Please use the citation style as recommended by your university.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Alison

Alison McEmber
Sr. Manager, Subsidiary Rights
Licensing & Subsidiary Rights

P.O. Box 141000
Nashville, Tennessee 37214

 HarperCollins *Christian Publishing*

 HarperCollins *Focus*

April 9, 2024

Dear Christopher,

Thank you for your request. I am pleased to grant you a one-time, non-exclusive, non-transferable permission to use the selected diagram from page 60 of *The Five Stages of Discipleship* by Jim Putnam and Bobby Harrington with Robert E. Coleman (ISBN: 9780310492627) in the appendix of your academic dissertation. Please note that the use is contingent upon proper copyright acknowledgment. Please use the citation style as recommended by your university.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Alison

Alison McEmber
Sr. Manager, Subsidiary Rights
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Appendix B



Date: 7/31/2023

Project Title: A Crisis of Rebirth: An Exploration of Holiness Doctrine Across Five Professing Holiness Groups and a Path Toward Discipleship

Primary Researcher: Chris Alexander

Introduction: This is not a new topic for exploration. However, just as John Wesley rebirthed holiness doctrine as a focus of the church, so now there is a need for a fuller understanding of what holiness is so that it informs discipleship.

Purpose of the Research: To ascertain a fuller understanding of what holiness is so that it informs discipleship.

Description of Research Procedures: The research will consist of in-person or Zoom-style interviews. A pre-interview questionnaire will be sent prior to the approximately one-hour meeting. The main interview questions will not be sent prior to the interview.

Time Associated with Research: The anticipated length of the interview is expected to be no longer than one hour.

Potential Risks: Some participants might assume that there may be repercussions from leaders in their church community if they do not have a strong focus on holiness or discipleship. However, the identities of the participants will not be linked to the audio recordings or transcripts of the interview in any way.

Potential Benefits: Revitalized practices of discipleship could be identified and lead to fuller practices of holy living.

Project Alternatives to Participation in the Research: Currently the only alternative is to not participate in the research.

Confidentiality of Data: The names and identifying information of the participants will be kept separately from the data collected so that confidentiality is protected.

Costs and/or Compensation for Participation: There is no compensation for participation and the researcher will be traveling to the location of participant’s ministry context to conduct the interview. The only cost associated with the participant is their time and travel to their own ministry location for the interview if in-person interview is conducted.

Circumstances for Dismissal from the Research: This research is limited to active ministers pastoring in the thirty-one counties designated as Eastern Tennessee. Further, ministers must be ordained with Church of God (Anderson, IN), Church of God (Cleveland, TN), United Methodist Church, the Salvation Army, and Church of the Nazarene. Retired pastors, associates, or leaders of parachurch organizations will not be considered for this research.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from this project at any time and for whatever reason. In the unfortunate event that you do withdraw from this research study, the information that you have provided will be kept in a confidential manner.

CONSENT: Federal regulations require precautionary measures to be taken to insure the protection of human subjects on physical, psychological, social, and other issues. This includes the use of “informed consent” procedures.

I, _____, (Printed Name of Participant) have been adequately informed regarding the risks and benefits of participating in this research. My signature also indicates that I can change my mind and withdraw my consent to participate at any time without penalty or consequence. Any and all questions I had about my participation in this research study have been fully answered. I understand that I will receive no compensation for participation in this research. Further, I understand that I will receive a copy of this consent form for my personal records.

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Appendix C



Institutional Review Board

Research Proposal Recommendations

Principal Researcher: Christopher Alexander

Proposed Research Title: A Crisis of Rebirth: An Exploration of Holiness Doctrine Across Five Professing Holiness Groups and a Path Toward Discipleship

Dear Christopher:

Congratulations! Upon review of your research proposal and related materials, the Winebrenner Institutional Review Board has approved your research proposal indicating that you may begin to implement your research procedures according to the timeline established by you and your research advisor.

Due to the nature of qualitative research, the Institutional Review Board is *withdrawing* their request for research participants to receive the interview questions prior to the interview to allow for free-flowing information which may increase the effectiveness of your research. Please discuss the advantages and disadvantages of participants previewing questions and act according to the decision of you and your advisor.

Once again, congratulations and best wishes upon implementing your research. May God grant you His wisdom, knowledge, understanding, strength, and persistence as you carry out this work. In all, may He be gloried.

Please contact me if you have any questions (ijames@winebrenner.edu).

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary S. James".

Dr. Mary Steiner James
Winebrenner Theological
Seminary Institutional
Review Board Chair

May 04, 2024

Dr. Kathryn Helleman:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval letter received from Dr. Mary Iames on August 24, 2023 did not list any requirement for submitting a final IRB report. The key recommendation of providing the interview questions prior to the interview was withdrawn by the IRB and all other recommendations were submitted and accepted. The approval letter is being sent through email along with this letter for your consideration.

Sincerely in His Service,

Chris Alexander

Chris Alexander

Appendix D



IRB Use Only

Project # _____
 _____ Exempt Review
 _____ Expedited Review
 _____ Full Review

Institutional Review Board Ethical Research Plan

Involving the Use of Human Subjects

Complete this form by typing and e-mail it to the IRB Chair using your findlay.edu or your winebrenner.edu e-mail address ONLY. Be thorough. Type your information in the boxes below. If you need more space, please attach additional pages. Please allow 30 days for the IRB to review this Ethical Research Plan.

PROJECT TITLE: A CRISIS OF REBIRTH: AN EXPLORATION OF HOLINESS DOCTRINE ACROSS FIVE PROFESSING HOLINESS GROUPS AND A PATH TOWARD DISCIPLESHIP

SUBMISSION DATE: 07/31/2023

PROPOSED START DATE: 09/01/2023 **PROPOSED END DATE:** 11/01/2023 **COURSE/DEGREE PROGRAM:** DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

FUNDING AGENCY (IF ANY): N/A

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER (PR): CHRIS ALEXANDER

PR CONTACT (PHONE, E-MAIL, ADDRESS): 205-300-3373, ALEXANDERC2@FINDLAY.EDU, 900 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE ETOWAH TN, 37331

SECONDARY RESEARCHER(S) (SR) (IF ANY): N/A

SR CONTACT (PHONE, E-MAIL, ADDRESS):

TYPES OF DATA (Choose All That Apply)

Primary Data Secondary Data

REASON FOR RESEARCH CONDUCTED

Faculty Research
 Undergraduate Course Number: _____
 Graduate Course Number: _____
 Master's Thesis/Project*: _____
 Doctoral Dissertation/Project*: _____
 Other: _____

**Note: Before applying for human subjects review, the thesis or dissertation proposal must be formally approved by the project advisor, thesis committee, or program director, and a copy of the approval must accompany this form to the IRB.*

TYPE OF RESEARCH (Choose One)

Quantitative Qualitative Mixed-Methods

RESEARCH DESIGN (Choose One)

Experimental Quasi Experimental Non-Experimental

RESEARCH INVOLVES EXTERNAL ORGANIZATION

No Yes: _____
 (Approval Documentation Must be Provided)

Please describe how you will recruit participants and attach copies or script (if recruiting orally) of the recruitment material (e.g. flyers, advertisements, letters, etc.):

THE PARTICIPANTS WILL BE RECRUITED BY THE RESEARCHER VIA EMAIL AND PHONE CALL FROM THE 31 COUNTIES OF EASTERN TENNESSEE.

e. Sampling Plan: Check which one applies.

Random Sampling Stratified Sampling Convenience Sampling Other

Please provide a rationale for your sampling plan:

ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT AS DESIRABLE AS A RANDOM SAMPLING, THE PARTICIPANTS ARE BEING CHOSEN BASED ON PROXIMITY TO THE RESEARCHER AND THEIR AVAILABILITY TO BE REACHED IN-PERSON VIA THE RESEARCHER'S PERSONAL TRANSPORTATION.

f. Sample Size

Please provide the total number of expected participants and rationale.

THE CHURCH OF GOD (ANDERSON, IN) HAS APPROXIMATELY 62 ACTIVE CHURCHES IN THE STATE OF TENNESSEE. THE SAMPLE SIZE WILL BE CONFINED TO ALL THE CHURCH OF GOD (ANDERSON, IN) ACTIVE PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS IN EASTERN TENNESSEE. THIS WILL COMPOSE 50% OF MY SAMPLE SIZE. THE REMAINING 50% WILL COME FROM ACTIVE PASTORS OF CONGREGATIONS IN THE OTHER FOUR CHURCH GROUPS IN EASTERN TENNESSEE. IF SATURATION IS NOT ACHIEVED WITH THIS SAMPLE SIZE, ADDITIONAL INTERVIEWS WILL BE CONDUCTED WITHIN THE TARGETED AREA UNTIL SATURATION IS ACHIEVED.

5. Instruments (Attach all instruments to be used.)

Please briefly describe all means used to collect data and attach the instruments to be used (e.g. interview questions, surveys, assessments, etc.):

INSTRUMENT USED FOR DATA COLLECTION WILL BE AN IN-PERSON OR ZOOM-STYLE INTERVIEW THAT IS AUDIO RECORDED FOR ACCURACY. THE QUESTIONS WILL BE OPEN-ENDED. (SEE ATTACHED INTERVIEW SAMPLE.)

6. Procedures

Please briefly describe the procedures used to collect data based on identified instruments and total time investment of the participant:

DATA WILL BE COLLECTED VIA IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS. THE INTERVIEW LENGTH IS ANTICIPATED TO BE APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR IN DURATION WITH A PRE-INTERVIEW INTAKE QUESTIONNAIRE BEING SENT PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW. THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WILL NOT BE PROVIDED PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW. THE HOPE IS THAT THESE INTERVIEWS WILL BE CONDUCTED IN THE PARTICIPANT'S LOCAL CONTEXT OF MINISTRY SO THAT ANY HOLINESS AND/OR DISCIPLESHIP INFORMATION THAT IS DISPLAYED WITHIN THE CHURCH CAN ALSO BE NOTED.

7. Analysis

Please briefly describe how you will analyze the data collected:

THE DATA WILL BE CODED INITIALLY BASED ON HOLINESS THEOLOGY AND DISCIPLESHIP PRACTICES FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW. AFTER THE INTERVIEWS, THERE WILL BE MULTIPLE CODING PASSES.

8. Risk to the subjects Identify the following risk categories and your perception of the level of risk involved

Please note that the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) states that there is always risk to the subject and have defined the categories of risk as follows.

Physical Psychological Social Legal

Please describe the risk in detail:

THE RISK TO CLERGY PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH IS THAT DENOMINATIONAL LEADERSHIP MIGHT EXPECT THEM TO FOCUS ON HOLINESS AND DISCIPLESHIP MORE THAN THE RESEARCH REVEALS WHICH COULD CAUSE REVIEWS OF THEIR JOB PERFORMANCE TO BE LESS THAN IDEAL.

Perceived level of risk: Less-Than-Minimal Minimal Severe

9. Mitigation of Risk to the Subject

a. Researcher Mitigation

Please describe how the researcher will try to mitigate the risk:

THE RESEARCHER WILL NOT RELEASE ANY PERSONAL INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS TO OUTSIDE AGENCIES. THE PERSONAL INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT ON AN EXTERNAL HARD DRIVE THAT IS PASSWORD PROTECTED. AFTER THE RESEARCH IS CONCLUDED, THE DATA COLLECTED WILL BE DELETED FROM THE EXTERNAL HARD DRIVE AND PAPER DOCUMENTS WILL BE SHREDDED AND DISPOSED.

b. Research Gain

Please describe the importance of the information gained in relationship to the risk:

THE INFORMATION GAINED WILL BE UTILIZED TO DEVELOP REVITALIZED PRACTICES OF DISCIPLESHIP FOR LOCAL CHURCHES.

c. Equity and Equality

Please describe how the researcher will ensure equity and equality for the participants:

THE RESEARCHER WILL PROVIDE THE SAME AMOUNT OF TIME FOR EACH PARTICIPANT ALONG WITH ANY ACCOMMODATIONS THAT DO NOT CHANGE THE NATURE OF THE DATA.

10. Compensations and Benefits

a. Are you offering any compensations to individuals for participating in your study?
 Yes* No
 If yes, please describe:

b. Benefits to individual

Outside of any compensation offered what are the benefits for the individual for participating?

GAINING A REFRESHED UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE THAT HOLINESS AND DISCIPLESHIP HAVE IN THEIR LOCAL CHURCH AND IN THE GREATER CULTURAL AREA OF EASTERN TENNESSEE.

c. Benefits to society

How will participating in this study benefit society?

IT IS THE BELIEF OF THIS RESEARCHER THAT THE INFORMATION GATHERED FROM EASTERN TENNESSEE CAN BE EXTRAPOLATED TO INFORM AREAS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES.

11. Consent Procedures

Federal regulations require precautionary measures to be taken to insure the protection of human subjects on physical, psychological, social, economic, and other issues. This includes the use of "informed consent" procedures.

a. Type of Consent

Which one(s) applies to your study?

Oral Consent

Written Consent

Waiver

(Example of the script

(Example of consent form)

*Implied Consent

must be provided to the IRB.) must be provided to the IRB.)(Example of consent

*(In conjunctio
consent fo*

** If requesting a waiver please give rationale for waver request.*

b. Are your subject(s) minors or mentally impaired?

Yes*

No

*If yes, describe how and by whom permission will be granted. *Subject Assent form must accompany legal guardian's consent form.*

c. Do subject(s) have a cognitive limitation/impairment and/or a language/literacy barrier?

Please describe the limitation/impairments and/or barrier and how you plan to ensure participants understanding for informed consent.

Yes

d. Will subject(s) be provided copies of all consent documentation including implied consent description?

Yes

No

If consent/assent documentation is not provided to participants please justify why.

12. Disclosure

Mark which one applies.

Federal regulations require precautionary measures to be taken to insure the protection of human subjects on physical, psychological, social, economic, and other issues. This includes the use of "informed consent" procedures.

Full-disclosure

Less than Full Disclosure

Necessary Deception

Please describe how you will disclose the study to the participants. If less than full disclosure or necessary deception is chosen, please justify the need for such action. All studies using less than full disclosure or necessary deception must provide a debriefing script or handout explaining to the participants the true purpose of the study and need for deception.

WRITTEN CONSENT WILL BE OBTAINED FROM THE PARTICIPANTS AND THEY WILL BE PROVIDED WITH A DETAILED CONSENT FORM DESCRIBING THE RESEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED.

13. Data Confidentiality

a. Does this data fall within: Public Domain Confidential Domain

b. Data Access

Please describe all parties who will have access to the data.

THIS RESEARCHER WILL BE THE ONLY ONE WITH ACCESS TO THE PERSONAL INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE PARTICIPANTS.

Please provide (in an attachment) evidence of human subject training/confidentiality agreement for those who have access.

c. Subjects' anonymity/confidentiality

How do you plan to protect the individual subjects' anonymity/confidentiality?

THE PERSONAL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION WILL NOT BE INCLUDED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS SO THAT PERSONAL IDENTITY CANNOT BE DETERMINED.

d. Data Storage

How, where and for how long will the data be stored? (Please note that for IRB purposes all data must be stored for a minimum of three years.)

AUDIO AND ANY WRITTEN DATA WILL BE DESTROYED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAM.

e. Data Deletion

How will the data be destroyed? (Please address all data sources, e.g. video, audio-visual, interview, questionnaires, consent forms, electronic data, etc.)

AUDIO FILES WILL BE DELETED AND WRITTEN FORMS WILL BE SHREDDED AND DISPOSED.

14. HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)

If you answer "Yes" to any of the following questions, your project is subject to HIPAA and you must complete the HIPAA Supplement (available on IRB Organization page on Blackboard) and attach it to this Ethical Research Plan.

Will health information be obtained from a covered entity (a health plan, health care clearing house, or a health care provider who bills health insurers, e.g. hospitals, doctor's offices, dentists, counseling services, etc.)?

Yes

No

Will the study involve the provision of health care in a covered entity?

Yes

No

If the study involves the provision of health care, will a health insurer or billing agency be contacted for billing or eligibility?

Yes

No

Upon completion of this form (including all documentation), please submit to the Chair of the IRB via e-mail using your findlay.edu or your winebrenner.edu e-mail address ONLY. If you do not receive a confirmation receipt within three days, please contact the Chair of the IRB and re-send.

Appendix E

Pre-Interview Intake Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to be a part of this research study. I am attempting to answer the key question of how can revitalized practices of discipleship lead to fuller practices of holy living? I am especially interested in how churches within the Wesleyan Holiness Tradition believe and practice discipleship considering their holiness theology. Your participation will help with that endeavor. Please return this questionnaire via email to alexanderc2@findlay.edu prior to our in-person meeting. I look forward to your responses and our time together in the research process.

In what church group do you currently hold formal ecclesial status recognized by your denominational/church group leadership structure?

How many years have you currently been involved in active ministry? (This includes as a volunteer/paid position with children, youth, adults, family, music, discipleship, evangelism, and/or missions) How many years as a lead/senior pastor?

In your current ministry context, would you consider your responsibilities to be full-time (40+ hours a week), bi-vocational (Up to 39 hours a week), or would you use another descriptor to explain your responsibilities in ministry?

How would you describe your educational training for ministry? **Check all that apply.** (No training prior to licensing/ordination, some clinical pastoral education, associate degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, MDiv, DMin, PhD, some seminary training, continuous education, on-the-job training, other)

Is your approach to teaching/preaching God's word best described as random or systematic?

Please indicate below a few dates and times that you are available to meet at your church and be interviewed.

Appendix F

Interview Questions

Tell me about your understanding of the term “discipleship.”

Ephesians 4:11-13 says, “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” Using this biblical understanding of the role of a pastor, what are practical applications of discipleship within your ministry context?

Describe a clear, measurable definition of spiritual success in discipleship.

Church groups within the Wesleyan Holiness Movement have key terms that they use to describe holiness. Some that you may have heard are sanctification, Christian perfection, sinless perfection, holy living, perfection, entire sanctification process, glorification, etc. What theological term would you use to describe holiness?

Hebrews 12:14 says, “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.” What are practical applications of the pursuit of sanctification within your ministry context?

Describe how holiness and discipleship are the same or different depending on your understanding of the two terms.

Tell me how congregants are held accountable to pursue sanctification within your ministry context.

Describe an experience providing comprehensive spiritual nurture for the spiritual development of someone.

What percentage of your Sunday morning sermons over the previous year would you estimate dealt with discipleship as a biblical mandate for all Christians?

Of those sermons, what percentage would you estimate also provided a practical application that could be implemented by congregants individually? Within community?

What percentage of your Sunday morning sermons over the previous year would you estimate dealt with holiness as a biblical mandate for all Christians?

Of those sermons, what percentage would you estimate provided a practical application that could be implemented by congregants individually? Within community?

Appendix G

Email Script

Dear _____,

I hope this email finds you well and blessed. My name is Chris Alexander and I am the pastor at Englewood First Church of God in Englewood, TN. I am currently working on my doctoral dissertation through Winebrenner Theological Seminary in Findlay, Ohio.

I am researching the question, “How can revitalized practices of discipleship lead to fuller practices of holy living?” My research will be focused on churches affiliated with the Wesleyan Holiness Tradition, and more directly, churches from the Church of God (Anderson, IN), Church of God (Cleveland, TN), the United Methodist Church, the Salvation Army, and Church of the Nazarene.

I would love for you to be a part of this research. I believe this can help reveal best practices for discipleship within the local church. Would you be willing to meet with me at your church for an approximately one-hour interview concerning holiness beliefs and discipleship practices, I would be eternally grateful for your valuable input.

If you are willing, please fill out the attached pre-interview questionnaire and return it to me via email at alexanderc2@findlay.edu. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Phone Script

Hello! May I speak with _____. This is Chris Alexander. I'm the pastor at Englewood First Church of God in Englewood, TN. How are you doing? [Wait for response and respond back.] I am currently working on my doctoral dissertation through Winebrenner Theological Seminary in Findlay, Ohio and I am hoping I can get your valuable input. I am researching the question, "How can revitalized practices of discipleship lead to fuller practices of holy living?" My research will be focused on churches affiliated with the Wesleyan Holiness Tradition, and more directly, churches from the Church of God (Anderson, IN), Church of God (Cleveland, TN), the United Methodist Church, the Salvation Army, and Church of the Nazarene.

I would love for you to be a part of this research. I believe this can help reveal best practices for discipleship within the local church. Would you be willing to meet with me at your church for an approximately one-hour interview concerning holiness beliefs and discipleship practices, I would be eternally grateful for your wisdom and input. If you are willing, I can send the pre-interview questionnaire to you via email and you can send it back to me upon completion.

Thank you for your willingness to participate. What is your email address? You will receive an email from alexanderc2@findlay.edu shortly so check your spam folder if you do not see it within the next ten minutes.

OR

Thank you for considering my research. I know life is busy and I fully understand that you are unable to participate currently. Take care and God bless.

Appendix H

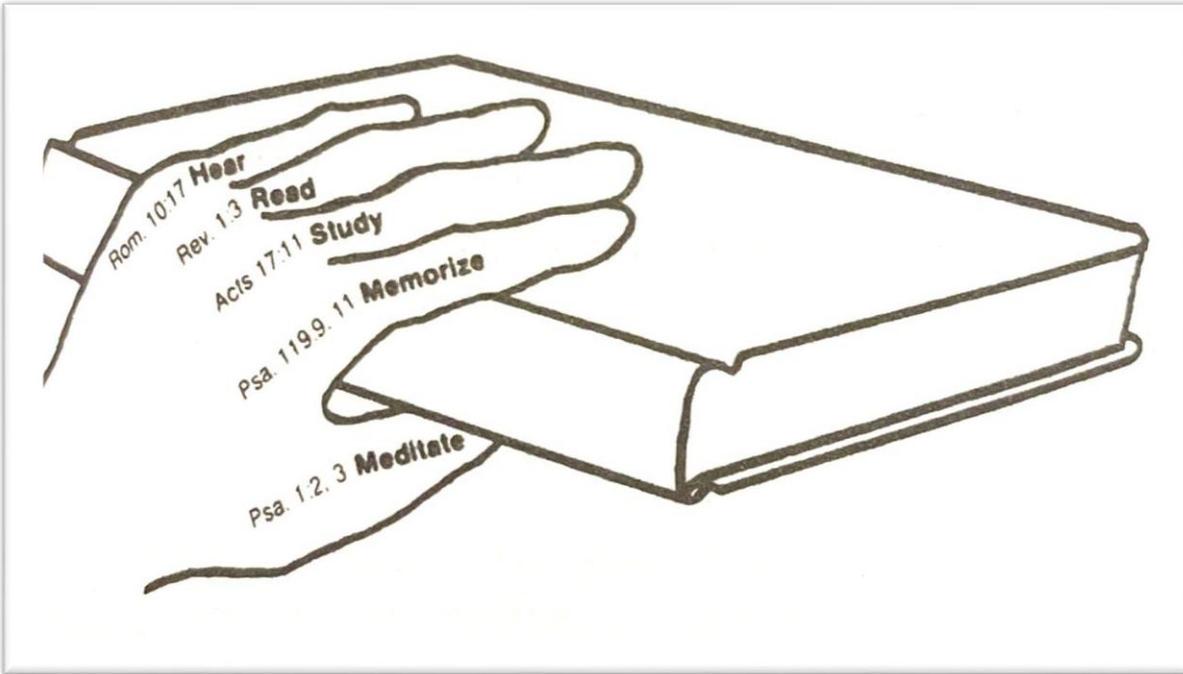


Figure 8. The Hand Illustration, Illustration by LeRoy Eims.³²³

³²³Reproduced with permission from LeRoy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 81.

Appendix I



Figure 9. The Wheel Illustration, Illustration by LeRoy Eims.³²⁴

³²⁴ Reproduced with permission from LeRoy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 80.

Appendix J

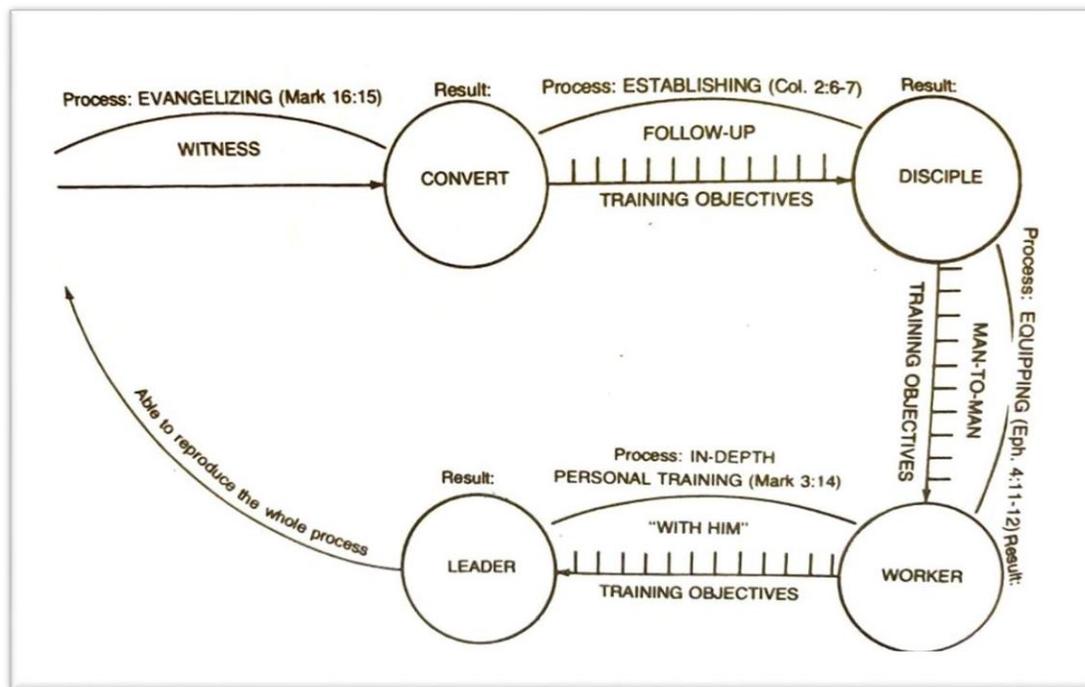


Figure 10. Chart on How to Multiply the Ministry, Illustration by LeRoy Eims.³²⁵

³²⁵ Reproduced with permission from LeRoy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 183.

Appendix K

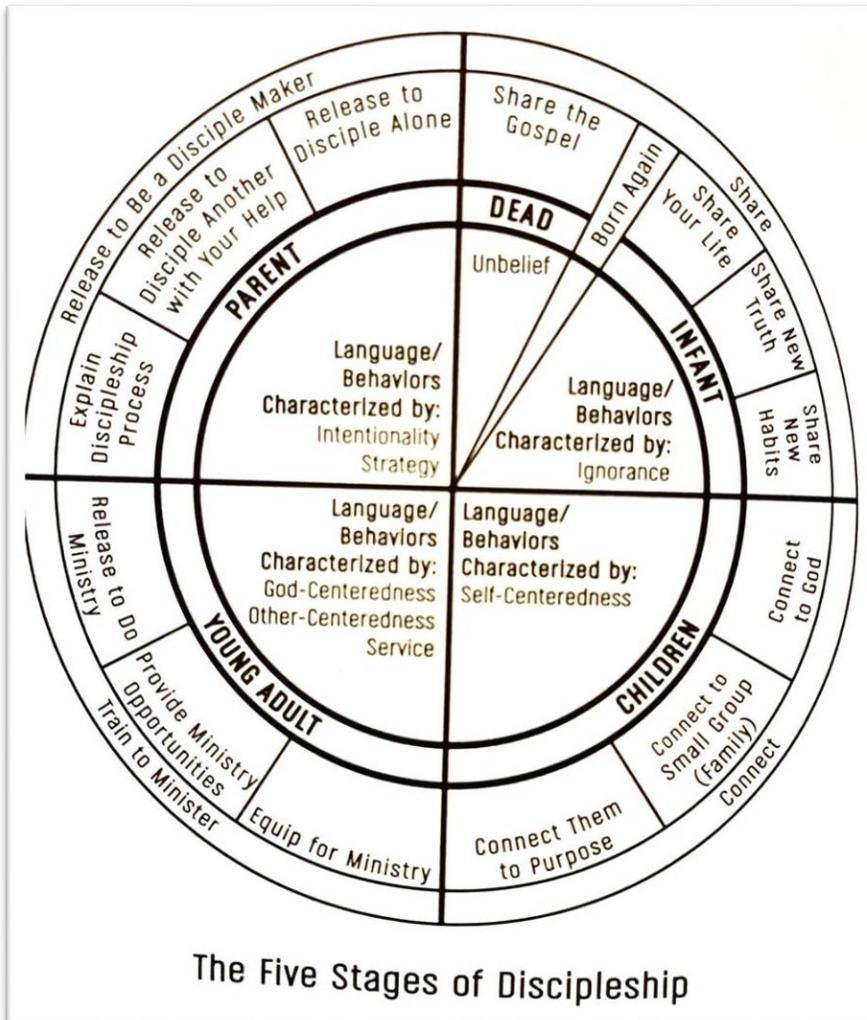


Figure 11. The Five Stages of Discipleship, Illustration by Jim Putman, Bobby Harrington, and Robert E. Coleman.³²⁶

³²⁶ Reproduced with permission from Jim Putman, Bobby Harrington, and Robert E. Coleman, *Discipleship: Five Steps that Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 60.

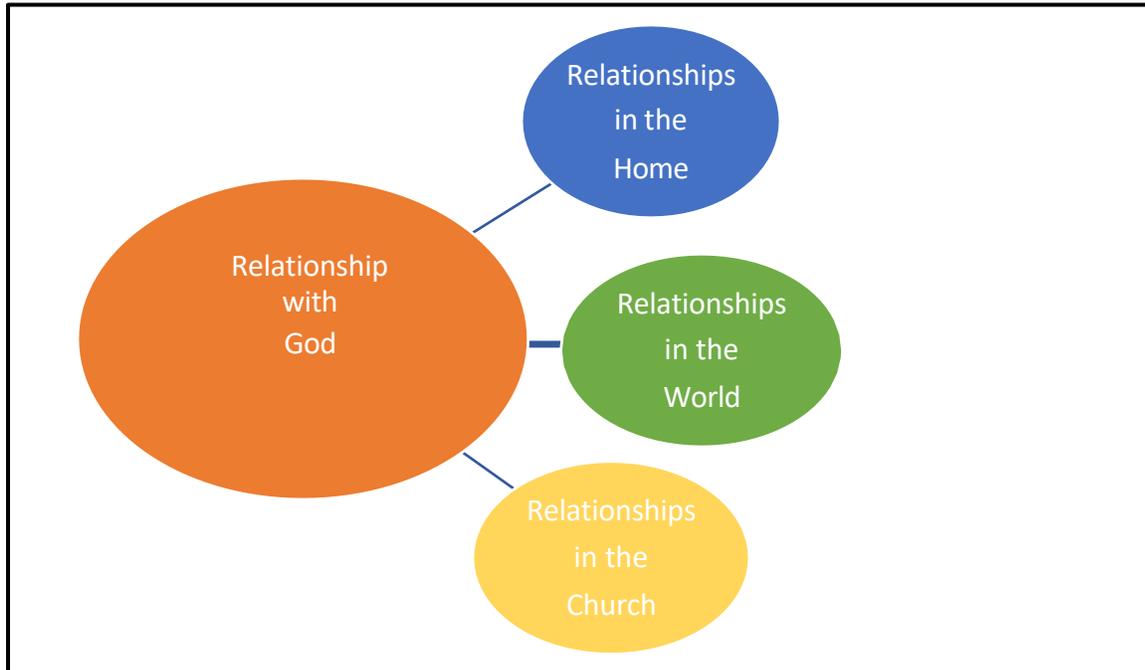
Appendix L

Figure 12. Relationship Areas of Reconciliation in Discipleship Ministries

Appendix M

1. Bandwidth: “The emotional or mental capacity necessary to do or consider something.”³²⁷
2. Christian Perfection: The purification of intentions within a justified person resolving to dedicate their whole life (thoughts, words, and actions), to control by God as a willing sacrifice of conformity to the image of Christ.³²⁸
3. Church of God (Anderson, IN) (ChoG AN): “The Church of God with general headquarters in Anderson, Indiana, grew out of the nineteenth-century American Holiness Movement, but both Anabaptist and Pietistic emphases also influenced it... They understood unity as being a natural outgrowth of personal holiness, and holiness to be the basis of biblical unity.”³²⁹
4. Church of God (Cleveland, TN) (ChoG CL): “The church’s major doctrines blend many Protestant and Holiness themes with those that are specifically Pentecostal: personal conversion (being ‘born again’), justification by faith, entire sanctification, baptism of the Holy Spirit signaled by speaking in tongues, fruitfulness in Christian living, and a strong interest in the premillennial return of Christ.”³³⁰
5. Church of the Nazarene (CoN): “The doctrine of the church is built around the justification and sanctification of believers by faith. This includes a believer’s entire sanctification as a second work of grace, subsequent to regeneration. All clergy, both men

³²⁷ Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, accessed May 27, 2023, <http://www.merriam-webster.com>.

³²⁸ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1971), 9-11.

³²⁹ Roger E. Olson, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 14th ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2018), 208.

³³⁰ Roger E. Olson, 225.

and women, and local church officials must profess this experience of entire sanctification.”³³¹

6. Come-Outers: A late nineteenth-century movement in America involving “no minor adjustments to institutionalized church life, but a coming out *of denominationalism* and starting over in the power of the Spirit.”³³² (italics mine)
7. Consecration: “The act or ceremony of consecrating; to make or declare sacred.”³³³
8. Disciple: “A disciple, *mathetes*, is a learner or follower—usually someone committed to a significant master.”³³⁴
9. Discipleship: “Discipleship is commitment to Christ. Because Christ exists, he must be followed.”³³⁵ “The widely accepted term that describes the ongoing life of the disciple, also describes the broader Christian experience.”³³⁶
10. Entire Sanctification (ES): “Love replacing sin, holy love conquering every vile passion and temper. It not only includes a ‘heart and life all devoted to God,’ but also embraces the *entire* purification of the relation between God and humanity such that the *imago Dei*, especially the moral image, has been renewed in its glory and splendor.”³³⁷ (italics mine)

³³¹ Ibid., 211.

³³² Barry L. Callen, ed., *Following Our Lord: Understanding the Beliefs and Practices of the Church of God Movement (Anderson)* (Anderson: Warner Press, 2008), 11.

³³³ Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, accessed May 28, 2023, <http://www.merriam-webster.com>.

³³⁴ Bill Hull, 32.

³³⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 19.

³³⁶ Bill Hull, 35.

³³⁷ Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 302.

11. Entire Sanctification Process (ESP): A complete process after regeneration and by faith alone in which the power of sin is broken by God's grace, resulting in obedience to God's desires for us, love for God and others, and purified intentions. Entire sanctification is characterized by subsequent spiritual growth that is intentionally nurtured, spiritual growth that promotes Christlike behavior, and the witness of the Holy Spirit.³³⁸
12. Glorification: A dimension of salvation in which we are delivered "from the very *presence* of sin in the facet of the Way of Salvation."³³⁹
13. Grace: God's character path of bringing us salvation and teaching us "to deny ungodly living. If we have experienced it at all, we will experience not only forgiveness of our sins but also freedom from sin's dominion."³⁴⁰
14. Holiness: "I mean by scriptural holiness the experience of sanctification as a second work of grace received by faith instantaneously...."³⁴¹
15. Holy Love: The establishment by the Holy Spirit of God's law of love in the human heart. "The stress falls on inherent ethical transformation in man, by which he becomes the subject of love."³⁴²
16. Holy Spirit: "The ministration of the New Testament was that of a 'Spirit which giveth life;'—a Spirit, not only promised, but actually conferred; which should both enable

³³⁸ Diane Leclerc, *Discovering Christian Holiness: The Heart of Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2010), 182-184.

³³⁹ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1994), 190.

³⁴⁰ Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 2006), 22.

³⁴¹ Bud Robinson, 4.

³⁴² Harald Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification* (Nappanee, IN: Francis Asbury Press, 1980), 173.

Christians now to live unto God, and fulfill precepts even more spiritual than the former; and restore them hereafter to perfect life, after the ruins of sin and death.”³⁴³

17. Morality: “Conformity to ideals of right human conduct; moral conduct: virtue.”³⁴⁴

18. Orthodoxy: Right beliefs.

19. Orthopathy: Right passions.

20. Orthopraxy: Right actions.

21. Post-Christian: A cultural “campaign to undermine all human acknowledgment of the transcendent, to whittle away all human respect for objective restraints on the individualistic self. The hold of this campaign on the media is such that the masses are brainwashed as they read the press, listen to the radio, or watch television.”³⁴⁵

22. Purity: “Cleanness; chastity.”³⁴⁶

23. Rebirth: “Freedom from the power of sin marked by the obedience of faith that earnestly keeps the commandments of God and thereby avoids willful sin...but also *freedom* to love God and neighbor.”³⁴⁷

24. Salvation: Justification by faith in the salvific work of Jesus Christ that makes us free from all previously committed sins, regenerates us in new life for good works prepared by God, and is the initial crisis point for the Holy Spirit's work of grace in leading a person to obedient commitment to Christlikeness.

³⁴³ John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions* (Ilkeston, UK: Moorley's Print and Publishing, 1987). <https://ccel.org/ccel/wesley/sermons/sermons.ix.viii.html#l1>

³⁴⁴ Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, accessed May 28, 2023, <http://www.merriam-webster.com>.

³⁴⁵ Harry Blamires, *The Post-Christian Mind* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2001), 1.

³⁴⁶ J. W. Byers, *Sanctification* (Moundsville, WV: Gospel Trumpet Company, 1902), 3.

³⁴⁷ Kenneth J. Collins, 226.

25. Sanctification: “Scripturally, the word *sanctification* has three meanings: First, separation; second, dedication; third, spirit-filling. Webster’s definition of it is as follows: ‘1. Sanctification is the act of God’s grace by which the affections of man are purified, or alienated from sin and the world, and exalted to a supreme love of God; also, the state of being thus purified or sanctified.’”³⁴⁸
26. Second Work of Grace: Used to denote the aspect of a crisis moment in the life of a justified believer when they determine that the sinful (carnal) nature has not been removed from their desires and intentions (nature). Some have said this is the realization of being of two minds or thought patterns.
27. The Salvation Army (TSA): “The Salvation Army (TSA) and its related organizations grew out of the Methodist Church’s concern for outreach to the impoverished peoples of the growing metropolises in England. In order to bring the gospel to these neglected souls, a new type of religious organization was created. It is neither traditional denomination nor a traditional service organization.....”³⁴⁹
28. United Methodist Church (UMC): “As noted in its *Book of Discipline* on ‘Sanctification and Perfection,’ The United Methodist Church promotes ‘The Distinctive Wesleyan Emphases’ and affirms: ‘We hold that the wonder of God’s acceptance and pardon does not end God’s saving work, which continues to nurture our growth in grace.’”³⁵⁰
29. Wesleyan Holiness movement (WHm): Church groups or denominations that have historically applied the practical holiness theology of John Wesley in word and action.

³⁴⁸ J. W. Byers, 3.

³⁴⁹ Roger E. Olson, 214-15.

³⁵⁰ Barry L. Callen, ed., *The Holy River of God: Currents and Contributions of the Wesleyan Holiness Stream of Christianity* (Glendora, CA: Aldersgate Press, 2016), 131.