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The Bethel Journal of Christian Theology and Ministry is designed to be a theologically based, practical, thoughtful and provocative publication. The objective of the Journal is to capture the attention of pastors and lay ministry leaders of varying backgrounds with the hope that they will find useful insights, practical solutions to ministry problems and concerns and the appropriate ministry tools for service,. BJCTM is also a forum for exploring new ministry ideas and discovering new perspectives on how to deal with situations that arise in ministry.

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Editorial

In producing the Bethel Journal of Christian Theology and Ministry (BJCTM), what have we set out to achieve? Primarily, we wanted to provide an outlet for scholarly writing both within and without the context of Bethel's Pentecostal heritage. What are the traditions of the Church of God, and how are these celebrated? How does the Church of God, with its peculiar mix of *pneuma* and *logos* impact the culture within which it exists? Further, and on an even larger scale, what is the diasporan influence on the cultures of the world in which they live?

There is so much to explore and there are so many questions yet to be answered. In our first issue we explore the mandate to go and make disciples of all nations. Whether the focus is on the content of the spoken word (locutionary), the context of the speaker (illocutionary) or the affective and consequential (perlocutionary), the mandate remains clear. It begins with self knowledge and realization and extends to the 'us' and 'we' as we set about doing the will of God. The command propels us to be salt and light in our families, in our communities and in our nation. It challenges us to be subversive by undermining and displacing evil with what is good and just and peaceable. It implores us to defend the cause of the poor and defenceless, to cross generational lines and get with the groove of post-modern youth, riding the wave of technological advances and helping create a paradigm shift that espouses just and righteous living.

We see where leaders have been thrust into a post-modern age that reflects anarchy and relativism. How do they lead in this time of change, creating a culture that is counter to the abstract, amoral norm? In our call to ministry and mission is it not the calling of the church to work alongside God in God's engagement in the world? What of the question, who is a disciple? Is it not one who incarnates the principles of his teacher, becomes his teacher and reproduces his own kind? To disciple is to transform into a new paradigm. It is the caterpillar becoming the butterfly. How do we do this? The answer is in the Spirit (*pneuma*) and wonderfully expressed cross-generationally in the words of Isaiah 61: 1, 4 ... "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me and he has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners ... Then they will rebuild the former desolations, and they will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations."

You are invited to join us on this exciting journey as we explore the unsearchable depths of God and unravel the deep mysteries of the Kingdom. BJCTM welcomes all who will walk this road with us!

Judith Johnston
Director of Admissions & Special Projects
Bethel Bible College

Foreword

Why another journal? What more could be said about theology and ministry without merely rehearsing the familiar? As a faculty member and administrator of a Bible College, I am conscious of the fact that many words have been written and ignored. I am equally convinced however that any attempt to do less, because of what already exists, will be an unforgivable act of stifling and dampening the creative energy of the Spirit. Therefore, led by the Spirit, we are recording our thoughts for this generation and the next. We make no attempt to be intellectually fancy; we simply enter the Kingdom dialogue to speak to others and to be spoken to by the Spirit.

This first issue of the *Bethel Journal of Christian Theology and Ministry* emerges from a community that values reflection and engagement in transformational action. Ongoing reflection leads to meaningful dialogue which, in turn, helps to give clarity and purpose to our action. Dialogue is a critical part of the thrust to bring renewal and awakening in the Caribbean. This Journal is an attempt to allow the voices of Pentecostals in the Caribbean to be heard. There is a commonly held notion that endemic to Pentecostalism is a profoundly anti-intellectual ethos. Persons further argue that this anti-intellectual ethos is manifested in a deep suspicion of biblical scholars and theologians. Pentecostal scholars in Latin America, North America and Africa have long dispelled this notion, and more Pentecostal pastors and lay leaders are playing their role in shaping the theological and ministry landscape of the Caribbean.

The Bethel Journal of Christian Theology and Ministry is theologically based, thoughtful, provocative, and practical. It is our hope that pastors, lay and ministry leaders of varying backgrounds will be drawn to the articles and ministry tools and find useful insights and practical solutions to ministry problems or concerns. Articles will assist leaders with the problems encountered in local church and ministry initiatives. The Journal provides a forum for exploring new ministry ideas and forums, where church and ministry/lay leaders can discover new perspectives on how or what to do, given a particular situation. The contributors to this first issue bring to the table years of theological training and ministry involvement. As a result, the articles are candid and honest reflecting not only the writers' theology and philosophy but also failures and achievements. This allows for more ready alignment on the part of the reader with the matter being presented. It is a mix of 'what you need to know' and 'what I learned from the experience' - a blend of theological perspective and practical engagement.

We are all theologians. We are all seeking to understand life and God in the midst of life. We are on a journey and this Journal seeks to capture some of our thoughts on this journey of life. It is my prayer that this Journal will create opportunities for Caribbean Pentecostals and others to express themselves and will help others to find themselves.

Roy Notice, D.Min.
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Church Changing Context: The Church's Discipleship Mission and National Transformation

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Introduction

The discipleship mission of the church should lead to national transformation. Authentic discipleship is not merely informational; it is transformational. This is the contention of this reflection. Although there are prevailing understandings of discipleship that serve as models of discipleship praxis, there is a need for clarity pertaining to the role of discipleship in national development and transformation. Some might argue that discipleship is a matter of personal and ecclesiastical importance with no national significance. This position should not be sustained in the light of biblical and social considerations.

There needs to be a widening of perspective and a broadening of understanding of discipleship to include national transformation. Indeed, "The ... church can actually have an impact on the society in which we live in a dramatic way that has not been seen since the First Century."¹ The challenges connected to this perspective are related to the church's self-understanding and its readiness to bring about such an impact on the national scene with special emphasis on discipleship. The age old questions of what discipleship is all about and what it means to be the church in society will be explored. The issue of nationhood and national transformation, the social challenges that confront an attempt at applying discipleship on a national level, the dimensions of transformative discipleship and the tension between individualism and nationalism will be examined as a case is made for the church as disciple-maker of the nation.

¹ Dough Hartman and Doug Sutherland, *A Guidebook to Discipleship* (Irvine, California: Harvest House Publishers), 161.

Discipleship Revisited: Ecclesiastical Mission and Action

It is obvious from a scriptural perspective that discipleship is not merely individualistic, it is nationalistic. This is the dimension of Christian discipleship that many fail to grasp. The biblical foundation of this view of discipleship is a well known passage of Scripture - Matthew 28:18-20. Whereas many refer to this passage as the Great Commission given to the Church, some do not comprehend or embrace its nationalistic focus and emphasis. What is significant about this commission is Jesus' undeniable and irrefutable reference to nations- "Go into all *nations*... (emphasis added)." There is a tendency to zero in on the command to "go" without exploring the context in which the "going" should take place. It is clear from Matthew 28:19 that the context is the nations of the earth. This means, therefore, that a nationalistic focus is imperative with respect to the discipleship mission and action of the Church.

We must jettison the notion that discipleship is only an individual to individual experience. It is much more than that. The historical individualistic accentuation should not be overlooked, but neither should the outward oriented and nationalistic emphasis be de-emphasized. Individualism must not be allowed to trump nationalism because of traditional practices that overemphasized the individualistic element of discipleship.

A Transformed Understanding of the Church

For the church to transform the nation, it is required not just to be a church in the nation but a church for the nation and to the nation with the aim of transforming the nation. It was H. Richard Niebuhr who articulated the perspective that there are five different points of view on Christ and culture. Some embrace the notion of Christ of culture. Others clamour for Christ against culture. Still others propose the idea of Christ above culture and many push the proposition of Christ and culture in paradox. A final position presents Christ transforming culture.²

² Angus Menuge, "Niebuhr's Christ and Culture Reexamined," in *Christ and Culture in Dialogue*, ed. Angus Menuge (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House). Available from Issues, Etc., <http://www.mtio.com/articles/bissar26.htm>. Accessed 27 May 2010.

The five perspectives on Christ, the ultimate Disciple Maker, and his attitude towards culture, and by extension nations, must be critically explored in an attempt to bring about a transformed and transformative viewpoint on the Church and discipleship. Whereas the Christ of human culture category seems interesting, it smacks of a thoroughgoing syncretism that sees no opposition between Christ and culture; it depicts him accepting culture blindly and uncritically. Indeed, the Christ against culture school of thought sees no inherent goodness or godliness in culture, which is deemed as secular and anti-Christ.³

The Christ above culture notion is interesting because it does not affirm or reject culture for Christ. Rather, this position posits the view that Christ stands above culture empowering the church to act within culture. In a real sense he is above culture, but not so far above and removed from it that he is not involved in it. The proponents of the Christ and culture in paradox perspective advocate for a dialectical tension between Christ and culture that cannot be reconciled. Those who embrace the Christ transforming culture point of view seem to have gotten it right in that the transcendental Christ is not seen as an aloof and unconcerned deity, but one who is deeply concerned about and involved in human affairs towards transformation. Although culture is dominated by sin, Christ can improve it through the church.⁴

It seems, therefore, that the Christ transforming culture position is the one that should be embraced with respect to discipleship and national transformation. It is cogent and balanced *vis à vis* the nexus between Christ, church, culture, and national change. It presents a balanced view of the twin theological towers of divine transcendence and divine immanence. The Christ who is indeed above culture is paradoxically within culture through the church with the aim of transforming culture. This is what many in the church have failed to realize and transmit to others.

The preceding considerations suggest that the Church of Jesus Christ must be like the Christ who transforms culture or nations. It must not lose sight of the significance of shifting its focus from internal affairs to external national issues through discipleship. Indeed, as Gary Badcock has noted in clear terms:

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

The fundamental sphere of Christian community... will always be in ordinary life in the secular world, and not in the life of a small group that withdraws from it. At best, the latter can be only a sign of and for the wider world.... If the Christian calling is supremely to love, then Christian love must come to be expressed where it matters most: in families, at work, in friendships, and even... in the sphere of the state.⁵

The Church should get back to its roots by emancipating itself from an ecclesiological *modus operandi* that is dominated by individualism and selfishness to an ecclesiology that is suffused with nationalism and otherness. The Church needs to reinvent itself as Christ's transformative agent, not just on an individual level, but on the national scene. In a real sense, "the church can become what it is intended to be " 'salt' and 'light,' a city set on a hill that all around can see.... But it can only ever be so if...the contemporary drain within the church toward the worldly values of individualism is checked by the demands of charity....⁶

The Church's discipleship mission must no longer be guilty of self-serving and short-sighted individualism in its discipleship theology and praxis. Charity demands a movement away from self to other selves within the nation. As servant of the kingdom of God, the Church cannot embrace the status quo; it should do whatever is required to align the nation with God's reign. In a real sense, the Church "...is a source of disturbance, an agent of subversion and an impetus for an alternative reality."⁷

A Theology of Nationhood and National Transformation

The discipleship perspective and ethos that is being championed in this reflection embraces a theology of nationhood that is built on a scriptural foundation. Nationhood is not just viewed through the lens of sociologists

⁵ Gary D. Badcock, *The Way of Life: A Theology of Christian Vocation*, (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998), 120.

⁶ Ibid., 120-212.

⁷ Delroy A. Reid-Salmon, *Home Away from Home: The Caribbean Diasporan Church in the Black Atlantic Tradition*, (London: Equinox Publishing Limited, 2008), 159.

and anthropologists; it is viewed through the eyes of biblical practitioners who were possessive of a fierce urgency of 'now' with respect to the overwhelming need to reach and transform the nations.

It is interesting to note that the Greek concept behind the word "nations" in Matthew 28:19 is *ethne*, from which the English word "ethnic" is derived. It is the plural of *ethnos*, which refers to "a multitude... 'a nation'... 'a people'".⁸ Nigel Rapport claims that *ethnos* as opposed to *anthropos* ("humanity") is relativistic rather than universalistic. *Ethnos* has "culturality" at its core with the social context giving rise to cultural practices within a geographical space.⁹ This suggests that the "nations" of which Jesus spoke would necessarily include all the people groups and cultural enclaves of the earth.

A nation is a community of persons gathered for a common purpose and around common goals and objectives. It is a well structured system of persons, groups and organizations associated by the accident of geography or by the perplexities of genetics. The discipleship perspective that is championed here carries the above articulated understanding of nation and nationhood. This biblical perspective on nationhood points to the significance of community and commonality of geographical space and genetic makeup. This community focus must be kept before the church as it continues to live out its discipleship driven commission.

Very few would refute the assertion that, "The categorical message of the Scriptures in their entirety is that God is at work in human history with a mission to heal the *nations* (emphasis added) through his people in the light of the imminent consummation of his kingdom."¹⁰ There is no doubt that Jesus was concerned about the transformation of nations and not just of

⁸ W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1984), 426.

⁹ Nigel Rapport, "Being Humans: Anthropological Universality and Particularity in Trans-Disciplinary Perspectives," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 8 (4) : 806+. Database on-line. Available from Questia, <http://www.questia.com>, (accessed 28 May 2010).

¹⁰ Earlmont Williams, "The Missionary Message of First Thessalonians," *Caribbean Journal of Evangelical Theology* 7 (2003), 22.

individuals. This nationalistic emphasis should no longer be de-emphasized by the church, which tends to retreat behind its four walls rather than reflect on and engage in externally focused transformation. The church cannot afford to appear to be disregarding or even rejecting the mandate that it has received concerning national transformation.

Since the Bible treats the nation as an entity that is integral to God's plan and purpose for humanity, then the Church must focus on national transformation where it is needed. Indeed, "God created the nations to foster godliness, so clearly the gospel and the new way of life it leads to are critical to national development."¹¹ From Genesis to Revelation, it is patently clear that the nation has been an important human grouping in God's eyes. Nations have been destroyed and built after prophetic utterances and warnings. The nation of Israel has served as an example to the other nations of the world. Whenever, they veered off the godly course, as it were, and got tangled up in immoral, ungodly, and questionable practices, there were always prophetic calls from within for transformation.

What constitutes this transformation? An analysis of the main Greek word for transformation as used in Romans 12:2 sheds some light on the theological meaning and practical significance of transformation on the national level. The Greek word is actually *metamorphoo*, which is a compound Greek concept. It brings together *meta*, which implies "change" and *morphe*, which means "form". It is used of the metamorphosis that takes place when a caterpillar is totally transformed into a butterfly. It is change that is internal or change from inside out. Applied to the national scene, transformation incorporates fundamental internal structural change across all the organs of the state. This is the change that the church should realize through discipleship.

Discipleship within a Market Economy and Materialistic Society

M. Douglas Meeks has indicated that the contemporary Church (as it seeks to bring about national transformation through discipleship) is faced with some seemingly intractable challenges including an emphasis in our modern

¹¹ Gordon E. Mullings, "Notes on the Mars Hill Strategy: Paul's Christocentric Fullness Vision, Discipleship and National Renewal/Transformation," Article Online. Available at: http://www.angelfire.com/pro/kairosfocus/resources/MARS_HILL_STRATEGY.pdf.

market economy on wealth accumulation and commodity exchange.¹² Many people's identity and sense of self-worth are inextricably and worryingly intertwined with their socio-economic standing. This market driven philosophy and praxis threatens to undermine attempts at concretizing Christian discipleship on the national level.

Market driven notions of nationhood proliferate in our post-modern world. It seems nations are now defined by their place on the capitalism continuum in terms of economic prosperity and sustainability at one extreme and entrenched poverty and underdevelopment at the other. Any discipleship theology and practice must grapple with this emerging understanding of nationhood. If indeed the worth of nations is determined by economic considerations, then the worth of individuals within these nations would be inevitably so determined. The Church's discipleship mission must demonstrate clear comprehension and rejection of this new philosophy.

Dimensions of Discipleship that Transforms Nations

The main contention of this reflection is that national transformation should be a logical outflow of the discipleship mission of the Church. This assertion is grounded in the Great Commission as outlined in Matthew 28:18-20. The call for and to national transformation that is espoused here is one that echoes the call that Jesus made to his disciples before his ascension. This is not a new call. It is an old call renewed in the twenty-first century.

Discipleship that transforms nations has a fourfold dimension. These elements include a rejection of partisan ecclesiology, an accentuation of human complexity, a facilitation of I-Thou spirituality with special emphasis on encounter, and a concretization of eschatological dualism- the tension between realized eschatology and futuristic eschatology. These four aspects of transforming and transformative discipleship should form the core of any move beyond the traditional individualistic emphasis of discipleship to nation changing discipleship.

¹² M. Douglas Meeks, "The Future of Theology in a Commodity Society," in *The Future of Theology: Essays in honour of Jurgen Moltmann*, ed. Miroslav Volf, Carmen Krieg, and Thomas Kucharz (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 254-255.

Discipleship that spawns national transformation repudiates partisan ecclesiological considerations. In other words, transformative discipleship making efforts should be done without reference to any one Church tradition or denominational affiliation. All Christian traditions have contributed to Christian discipleship as we know it today. There is no one tradition that has all the answers to the challenges that transformative discipleship faces. Attempts at shaping lives and nations should be made with due consideration given to the value and significance of all traditions. When the various traditional elements of discipleship come together in ecumenical dialogue, the power of discipleship will be evident in any nation.

Transformative discipleship also accentuates human complexity. Indeed, the spiritual dimension is emphasized and glorified in Christian transformative discipleship, but the other dimensions of human existence are not jettisoned or sacrificed on the altar of a one dimensional focus on spirituality. Christian discipleship that seeks to transform nations responds to the economic, social, physical, emotional, and psychological aspects of human reality. Provisions are made for all the areas of the human person to be addressed. This kind of discipleship is multi-dimensional rather than one-dimensional. It reflects the discipleship of Jesus more than the discipleship of the Church of Jesus.

Nation-transforming discipleship also embraces an I-Thou spirituality of encounter within the context of community. It is an unmistakable truth that the post-modern era is characterized by a focus on Eastern spiritualities, which accentuate communal engagement with and experience of the deity or deities that are the objects of worship. Discipleship that brings about lasting change stresses the need for an encounter with the Christian God on the personal level within community. The focus here is not on “personal,” but on “encounter”. This presupposes the immanence of God within the world. It repudiates a spirituality of otherness that places Jesus on the “highest plain” with no relevance and usefulness to nations.

The fourth dimension of transformative discipleship is the concretization of dualistic eschatology. This implies that whereas discipleship is done with the goal of transforming persons and nations towards the kingdom of God in the “here and now,” there is an aspect of this eschatological nexus that incorporates the “not yet” of the transformational experience. This means that, whereas discipleship that transforms nations zeroes in on bringing about changes of structures and persons in this age, it is, at the same time, aware of and prepares disciples for the coming age of international or global renewal

and transformation. This tension between realized and futuristic eschatology should be held by anyone who seeks to facilitate the transformation of any nation through discipleship.

The Personal “I” versus the Nationalistic “We”: Individualism in opposition to Nationalism

French philosopher Rene’ Descartes articulated a dictum that is still relevant to our times and to the church’s practice of discipleship. Through this maxim, Descartes claimed that he knew that he existed because he was a thinking being who could not refute that he was thinking. His *Cogito ergo Sum* (“I think; therefore, I am”)¹³ is well known within and without philosophical circles. It reflects a philosophical individualism that is still dominant today. This individualistic focus rejects the notion of the significance of others apart from reference to the self. The “I” is king of the domain of selves. Traditional discipleship has been done on the basis of this individualistic theological philosophy.

In contrast to Descartes’ European *Cogito*, there is an African concept that can be useful in transformative discipleship. It is the term *ubuntu*, which, in the theology of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, speaks of “community” or “the connectedness of all human beings”. African theologian John Mbiti claims that *ubuntu* espouses the anti-Cartesian idea of “I am because, we are”.¹⁴ Discipleship that is Christian and nation transforming de-individualizes the disciple and propels him/her away from *Cogito* towards *ubuntu*. In essence, it pushes the person towards community and all that it means and represents.

Interestingly, the word “church” in the *Koiné* Greek of the New Testament is *ecclesia*, which means “called out assembly”. A significant consideration here is that many persons in the church tend to overlook the meaning and import of the word “assembly,” which suggests community. The nationalistic drive behind transformative discipleship is grounded in the value of human community and of the human race as a whole. Discipleship must not be

¹³ Norman L. Geisler and Paul D. Feinberg., *Introduction to Philosophy: A Christian Perspective*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1980), 92.

¹⁴ Michael Battle, “The Theology of Community: the Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu,” *Interpretation* 54 (2) :173+. Database on-line. Available from Questia, <http://www.questia.com>, (accessed 27 May 2010).

allowed to dwell only on matters of individual import; it must accentuate issues of national significance and incorporate strategies for national transformation.

The Church as “Discipler” of the Nation

If indeed the Church has been called to transform the nation towards the reign of God, then it must play the role of a national disciple making entity. As Bill Hull has right noted, “...God wants disciple making to be the heart of ... church ministry.”¹⁵ The Church must think philosophically, strategically, and practically about becoming engaged in national affairs from a disciple-making perspective. There is no room for dilly-dallying or vacillation with respect to involvement in national transformation through discipleship. Although the Church is not called to play the role of government in terms of becoming an alternative body of governance, it must become more embracing of its role as nurturer of the nation.

The Body of Christ, as the Church is normally called, must be disciple-making in its outlook and praxis. Some may ask about the nature of the Church as a national disciple-making entity. This is a legitimate and welcomed question. It is clear to this writer that the disciple-making role of the Church should be reflected in its theology and wholistic engagement with society. This wholistic approach to discipleship ministry involves “the disciples of Jesus bring[ing] the kingdom to their communities.”¹⁶ Christians need to begin to see themselves as God’s people within a nation who move towards it with a view to its transformation. The propensity to move away from the nation and retreat within the four walls of local churches must be rejected and abandoned. This is a call for acceptance of John Calvin’s notion that the Church is God’s transforming agent in the world. The will of God for the nation is done through the Church. Calvin acknowledged that “the work of

¹⁵ Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Pastor*, (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1988), 27.

¹⁶ Serah Wambua, “Mission Spirituality and Authentic Discipleship: An African Reflection,” in *Consultation of Study Commission IX, Edinburgh 2010*, Seoul, March 23-24, 2009, by The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies and the Church Missionary Society (Oxford, England: Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, 2009), 52. Available online at: <http://www.edinburgh2010.org/fileadmin/files/edinburgh2010/files/pdf/Serah%20Wambua%20paper.pdf>. Accessed June 2010.

the church is the ceaseless activity of bringing order ...back into the world out of chaos.”¹⁷

Implications for the Practice of Transformative Discipleship

The Church, as a transformative discipleship force in the nation, should seek to practically outwork its identity. As Findley Edge argues, “If the purpose of the church is to do the will of God in the world... then one of the central assignments of the church is to find the practical implications of the Christian ethic [of love] in modern society and to take the lead in creating a social order that is increasingly in harmony with the will of God.”¹⁸ This “Christian ethic” of love incorporates discipleship as a tool of national transformation.

One of the practical components of the transformative discipleship that is proposed in this reflection is the dual function of denouncing and announcing. The Church is required to institute communication arms through which it denounces social injustice and inhumanity. This might mean naming and rejecting oppressive organizations and businesses as it sides with the oppressed and exploited. The announcing function includes legislative coercion through strategic advocacy and “cultural persuasion.” John Seel, in his book *The Evangelical Forfeit*, puts it this way: “We must accept the responsibility of winning public arguments through civil discourse. We must reach beyond our... enclaves... and engage with the national opinion shapers and institutional gatekeepers on their own turf, in their own language.”¹⁹ Announcing should not just be verbal though; it should also be non-verbal. In other words, as the liberation theologian Gustavo Gutierrez has well articulated this announcing function “...is made real and meaningful only by living... the gospel within a commitment to liberation.”²⁰

¹⁷ Robert Webber, *The Church in the World*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 130.

¹⁸ Findley B. Edge, *A Quest for Vitality in Religion*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1963), 19.

¹⁹ John Seel, *The Evangelical Forfeit: Can We Recover?* (Grand Rapids: Hourglass Books, 1993), 108.

²⁰ Webber, *The Church*, 202.

Another practical component of discipleship that transforms nations is the outworking of the theology of incarnation. When God was enfleshed in Jesus Christ, he became human so that he could transform humanity from the inside out. The Church should therefore move into villages, communities and towns incarnationally with the aim of being where people are in their pain and struggles and working to help them to move beyond their situation of struggle. Webber embraces this practical move as he notes that, "Contemporary thinkers seem to agree that the incarnation is an integral facet of Christological doctrine which reflects helpfully on the role of the Christian and the church in the world."²¹

Bill Hull has articulated a "churchocentric model" of discipleship that could be useful in discipling the nation. He asserts that, "In the churchocentric model, the key word is *shared*."²² In this paradigm there is shared power, leadership, and leadership training. There is also the natural penetration of the world. Hull calls this "love with feet" that coordinates the gifts of the Spirit to reach and transform the world. The churchocentric model also calls for the "decentralization" of pastoral care, which should incorporate the laity as care givers in the church and society. This Church of "sharedness" embraces a five-pronged programme that incorporates all believers as ministers, the discovery and development of believers' spiritual gifts, experimentation with gifts in interest areas, allowance for creativity, and the recruitment and shaping of "apprentices" for the task of discipleship.²³ Applied to the Caribbean situation, this "churchocentric" model of discipleship requires involvement in national affairs from the centre of the Church. This means that the Church should take the initiative to offer intellectual and moral leadership in the nations of the Caribbean. As Mullings accurately asserts:

In short, the church's leaders should play critical educational and strategic roles in nation-building, as is a

²¹ *Ibid.*, 274.

²² Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Church*, (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1990), 45.

²³ *Ibid.*, 45-49. Hull uses an unfamiliar word ("churchocentric"), which seems forced and unnecessary, to describe his model. However, it appears quite workable indeed. What I have sought to do is apply Hull's ideas to the notion of discipling the nation rather than discipling individuals within the context of the church.

direct inference from “disciple the nations.” We should be ashamed to see how often the church in the Caribbean can justly be accused of irrelevance! Our leaders should be in the vanguard of real national and regional development!²⁴

Conclusion

Many may scoff at the notion that discipleship can be used as a tool of national transformation. However, this reflection has demonstrated that, based on the Great Commission outlined in Matthew 28:18-20, the Church’s mission has to do with making disciples of nations. In other words, national transformation through discipleship is the main priority of the Church. The nation that is viewed as the domain of discipleship is inclusive of all people groups structured around laws, cultural mores, and developmental considerations. Indeed, “...there are many opportunities for the Church to speak prophetically into the national development process, promoting godly reformation so that ‘the blessing given to Abraham might come to the *ethne* (nations)’ (Gal. 3:14).”²⁵

The market economy and materialistic society as well as unique post-modern social challenges could be viewed as the bane of nation-transforming discipleship. Nevertheless, they can serve as the impetus for sustained disciple-making endeavours on the national scene. The four major dimensions of discipleship that transform nations should not be overlooked as we seek to move beyond individualism to nationalism. The practical implications of transformative discipleship could serve as a foundational paradigm through which the nation can be transformed.

The Church’s mandate demands discipleship-driven engagement with the aim of national transformation. Indeed, “The Church must move beyond her self-created walls and rebuild the waste places.”²⁶ . There has never been a better time for such movement away from the centre of Christian activity (the church building) to the centre of human reality (the nation).

²⁴ Mullings, Notes, 5.

²⁵ Gordon Mullings, “Ethics, Reformation and Development in the Caribbean,” *Caribbean Journal of Evangelical Theology* 7 (2003) : 61.

²⁶ Marva Mitchell, *It Takes a Church to Raise a Village*, (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers Inc., 2001), 12.

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***Engaging in God's Mission: Venturing into New
Dimensions***
(Graduation Address- Bethel Bible College, May 2009)

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Accept my congratulations, members of the graduating class. You are entering ministry at a challenging time, but it is also an exciting time. If I may paraphrase the words of the poet Charles Dickens, "It is the best of times, it is the worst of times it is the spring of hope it is the winter of despair" [A Tale of Two Cities 1859].

As we pause, therefore, to reflect on the theme 'Engaging in God's mission: Venturing into new dimensions,' I invite you to revisit with me an incident in the life of Jesus recorded in the Gospel according to St. John chapter 9. According to the narrative, Jesus and his disciples were going on a journey. They were travelling, when the disciples took note of a man sitting by the wayside. The only description offered of this man is that he was blind from birth; his name is not mentioned. He is just a nameless blind man. On observing the man's condition, the disciples turned to Jesus and asked what to them was an important and a relevant question. "Master, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind? Jesus responded by declaring "neither this man nor his parents but that God's works might be made manifest". We will examine this question and answer episode between Jesus and his disciples with the hope that it will remind us of the nature of God's Mission and that it might suggest ways that we may venture into new dimensions.

"Master, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" The question makes some assumptions. It assumes that the man's condition was as a result of sin. Since he was born blind it is either that his parents sinned or that this man sinned before he was born. The disciples took one look at the man and formed an opinion about him, they arrived at a conclusion that in a subtle way blamed him for his state and criticized him for his condition. Jesus, on the other hand, saw him as a worthy recipient of what Jesus described as "the works of God". His condition should, therefore, not be reduced simply to a discussion point but should be seen as an opportunity for the

manifestation of the works of God. It is this manifestation of the works of God that we call mission.

Mission Defined

The mission we are called to participate in, that which you have been prepared for here at Bethel, is what Karl Barth and later Phillip Potter called the *Missio Dei*- God's mission not ours. How do we define mission then? It is the calling of the church, at every level and in every place to work alongside God in God's engagement in the world.

Mission is the reason for the church's existence. We could say the church exists for mission. The German theologian Jurgen puts it in proper perspective when he said it is not that the church exists for mission but the mission of Christ creates the church. It is God's mission embodied in Jesus Christ that the church is called to and must continue. Soon it will be Pentecost Sunday when we will remember the event in the book of Acts 1:8 –“You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the world.” The words of Jesus to his disciples in John 20:20 remind us of our task here, “As the Father hath sent me so send I you.”

Mission is no longer thought of as the church's activities overseas or in another culture. The mission frontier spans the entire world. It is the line which separates belief from unbelief. So mission is from everywhere to everywhere (“Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the gospel” [Matthew 28:19]). Mission is that which the Christian community is sent to do beginning where it is located.

The man referred to in St. John 9 is therefore clearly not to be an object of criticism, but someone who presents an opportunity for the expression of God's grace. He presents an opportunity for me, said Jesus, to be engaged in mission, the mission for which I came.

Jesus' response to the disciple's questions offered them a new perspective and attempted to bring a new dimension to their understanding of mission.

Engagement not Argument

“Master who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?” It was a question that accepted the popular view and the popular teachings of the

time. Some sayings found in ancient Hebrew writings indicate that there may have been the popular belief that a child could sin in his mother's womb. It is likely that the disciples, being aware of this, wondered if it was the case with this man, or perhaps they wanted Jesus' perspective on that issue.

The Disciples were also aware that rabbinical teachings of the time held the view that the sins of the parents were visited upon the children. You have heard the proverb, "the parents eat sour grapes and the children teeth are set on edge" [Ezekiel 18:2]. The disciples accepted the prevailing view and perhaps out of curiosity wanted to engage Jesus in this debate. Faced with this man's suffering they wanted to involve Jesus in a discussion on the doctrine of original sin. Jesus' response amounts to a reminder that God's mission calls for engagement not argument. It requires that which the liberation theologians call *praxis*.

The disciples asked the wrong question. In the face of the man's suffering they wanted theological debate; they wanted academic discourse; they wanted doctrinal discussions. Jesus refused to be paralyzed by the debate; he refused to be blinded by endless arguments. Jesus did not see the man's condition as a matter for discussion. Instead, for him it was a call to action, an opportunity to see God's grace at work. This is the heart of our mission theology. God is worldly, he loves the world. God has no desire to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved. The world, the whole world, the people, the systems, the structures, the food market, the stock market, the street corner, the market place, the environment, the world in its brokenness, is the object of God's mission.

Class of 2009, you were called by God and prepared by the Holy Spirit through this College to be engaged in God's mission in this world. The theological disciplines you have acquired are not to enable you to win a good argument but they are instruments to guide you in your engagement. You are not called to observe the suffering of humanity, but in the name of the Missional God, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and following the example of our resurrected Lord, to be engaged in redeeming the human condition.

Don't get caught up in the long standing debate among some theologians about whether mission and evangelism are to be separated and evangelism given priority over mission; rather, see mission as something that is integral and important, that is about holistic transformation - the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other; rather, in integral mission,

our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love, and to repentance in all areas of life. Our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. That is the new dimension Jesus brought to his sermon. My mission, said Jesus, is about engagement not argument, it is about proclamation and demonstration, not one or the other, but both working together.

“Master, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?” If the man’s suffering could be explained as either his fault or that of his parents then they could be excused for not being concerned about his condition. They could justify their desire not to get involved. After all, it is God’s punishment on him - he deserved it. We have to guard against this attitude. It is the end times, so things have to be this way; children have to be destroyed by fire; thousands have to be murdered each year; we must be divided as a nation into political camps; some must die of hunger while others have more than they need; and the only thing we can do is have a good theological debate, a wonderful doctrinal argument.

We don’t have the luxury of being indifferent or apathetic, we have to care. God’s mission is motivated by God’s compassion, “God so loved...,” [John 3:16] that he got involved. This passage of scripture extends to us an invitation to pursue those things in our society that beg for God’s intervention. It calls us to open our eyes, to be sensitive to the needs and the challenges that surround us. Earlier in John’s gospel Jesus declared, “Do not say four months and then comes the harvest, lift up your eyes, look around you, the fields are ripe and ready for harvest” [John 4:35]. In a real sense it is not just the man who was blind but Jesus also had some blind disciples. They were blind to the condition of this man and blind to the suffering and the pain caused by his condition.

Who sinned is not the question! Whose fault it is, is not our issue! It compels you to be involved in the trenches. Engagement in mission is not an option but an imperative. To serve is a call to action. It is a call to be involved and to be engaged. There is no justification or any reason whatsoever for non-engagement. By our own definition of our mission, we must use the opportunities to display God’s grace.

Mission and Salvation

The mission of God is soteriological. What do I mean by that? It is about salvation. You must reject the definition of salvation that reduces its significance to repeating a few statements. Salvation is the goal of God's Mission. The mission of God is always redemptive. It is geared towards the restoring of human dignity as beings made in the image of God.

As a man blind from birth the man in John 9 was a disadvantaged member of community. His condition was regarded by some as the consequence of sin so he was the object of discrimination. As a so called blemished human being he was not even allowed in some areas of the temple. He was an excluded member of society, excluded even by religion. He was a disabled person in a society that was not friendly to the disabled. Jesus spat on the ground made some mud from saliva, placed it on the man's eyes and told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam. Jesus made mud and placed it on the man's eyes! We can perhaps understand that by doing this act Jesus was symbolizing the creative act found in Genesis 2:7. Life was created from clay, the dust of the earth. Salvation or redemption, therefore, is to recreate deformed humanity to be what God intended it to be.

It was Lewin Williams who reminded us that one translation of sin, *harmatia*, is failure to reach our highest potential. **Salvation is about helping persons fulfill their God given potential.** Unlike many other episodes of healing, here we see Jesus not just saying the word, but sending the man to do something, in this case to go the pool of Siloam to wash his eyes. Jesus, by this action, had the man participate in his own healing, this is what we call empowerment - **salvation is about empowerment.** The mission of God is not patronizing. The man was being equipped with the tools of self-determination. Jesus restored his sight and by so doing he removed the stigma, the prejudice, the scorn usually directed at him. That is the salvation which is an act of God that restores the dignity of humanity.

His transformation was so stark that his neighbours could not believe it. "Is not this the man who used to sit and beg, they asked themselves?" In essence, some said, "Yes it is he"; others said, "No it cannot be him". The man overheard and proudly declared, "I am the man". His neighbours were astonished at the transformation. That is salvation. It seeks spiritual, physical, social health; it restores dignity, offers justice and at the same time, it offers mercy.

The Pharisees did not believe him so they sent for his parents. "Is this your son who was born blind, how come he now sees?" The parents responded, "We can confirm this is our son. We can confirm he was born blind. As to how he is now seeing, we don't know. Ask him he is of age let him speak for himself". Because of the intervention of Jesus, he now had a voice. We don't speak for him. That is an offshoot of salvation and a part of our mission, in this status loving world, **to give a voice to the voiceless.**

The formerly voiceless, nameless man now had a voice. Not just a voice, but a confident voice. Listen to the conversation between him and the Pharisees.

Pharisees: "Give glory to God, this man is a sinner."

Man: "I do not know that he is a sinner; one thing I do know, I was blind but now I can see."

Pharisee: "What did he do to you?" "How did he open your eyes?"

Man: "How many times must I tell you the same thing? Why do you want you to hear again? Do you want to become his disciples too?"

Pharisees: "You are his disciple, we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, as for this man, we do not know who he is."

Man: "What a funny thing though. You do not know where this man comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships and obeys him. Never in the history of the world have we ever heard of a man restoring the sight of the blind. If this man was not from God he could do nothing."

Pharisees: "You sinner, trying to teach us, get out of here."

The redemptive work of God transformed this man from a criticized beggar into a confident theologian. That is salvation. It is not the repetition of a formula. Salvation has many facets; we are saved from sin. Salvation involves restoration of human dignity. Salvation brings hope to a life in the midst of despair. Salvation reconciles human beings with each other. It heals relationships. Salvation involves converting a society from injustice to justice. Salvation involves the destruction of oppression. Salvation is what God offers to the world and what we are called to mediate. You are not called to save but to partner with God in the enterprise of salvation. Salvation is the goal of Mission.

Congratulations class of 2009, you enter the world and leave the shelter of academia, some would say, at a bad time. But it is the best of times and it is the worst of times. It is time to recommit ourselves to God's mission; it is

about engagement not argument; its goal is salvation. Go forth to the length and breath of Jamaica, the Caribbean, the world asking the right questions and partnering with God in God's enterprise of redemption.

Pentecostal Identity and Christian Discipleship

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"Discipleship is the only epistemological location for understanding Jesus Christ,"¹ echoes the voice of Liberation Theology from 1989. Discipleship, however, is no longer a popular term. Today, a look at the major representatives in the field of religious education reveals that the "disappearing disciple"² has become a reality in much of Christian education. In this crisis many look to the growing Pentecostal movement in hope of finding a solution to the problem. This study will evaluate in two parts the relationship of Pentecostalism and contemporary Christian discipleship. The focus of the first part is placed on the role of Pentecostal identity. The second part evaluates implications for Pentecostal discipleship.

The term "discipleship" allows for a general and a more specific definition. In general terms it is the whole of Christian existence, the self-understanding of Christian believers as believers.³ In a more narrow sense, it is a "following-after" (*Nachfolge*) as an expression of a "teacher-disciple relationship with all its accompanying and derivative terminology."⁴ Physical and temporal separation from the one we follow, however, changes the nature of discipleship. It produces questions in regard to what we do (meaning), why we do (consequences), and how we do it (condition).

The Role of Pentecostal Identity

One starting point for approaching Pentecostal identity from the viewpoint of discipleship is the fact that the Christian faith is communicable.⁵ To further borrow from linguistic terminology, Christian education is "illocutionary."⁶ Contemporary approaches to Christian education, however, are by nature either "locutionary" or "perlocutionary". In simple terms, a "locutionary" act is the act of saying something,⁷ an "illocutionary" act takes a certain condition or force *in* saying something, and a "perlocutionary" act produces certain consequences *by* saying something.⁸ The keywords are "meaning", "conditions" and "consequences" respectively. How does this terminology relate to Christian discipleship?

A "locutionary" act of discipleship refers to an educational act done with a certain sense and reference to content and meaning. Examples of this are the contemporary approaches of Religious Instruction, Spiritual Development, and the Interpretation model. A characteristic statement of a "locutionary" act is "God is love." A "perlocutionary" act refers to the production of certain consequential effects, such as convincing or persuading. Examples of this are the contemporary approaches of Faith Community and Liberation Theology. A characteristic statement of "perlocutionary" education would be "*Because* God is love, we must also love God and one another."

In contrast to these two, an "illocutionary" act connects both approaches by focusing on "the determination of the actual conditions that communicate meaning."⁹ Such conditions can be situation- and culture-specific, that is, they must be aligned with what the individual situation and culture demands of the educational act, conveying a certain force, such as warning, exhorting, or encouraging. A characteristic statement of "illocutionary" education would be "*How* do we love (knowing that God is love and we are to love one another)?"

To say then that Christian discipleship is by nature "illocutionary" is to put the focus not on what (meaning) or why (consequences), but on how (condition) to conduct discipleship. Furthermore, a holistic approach to Christian formation must place the focus on all three segments. The problems of contemporary approaches to Christian education illuminate this. "Locutionary" education is biased toward the content and meaning of education and expects a higher level of professionalism than often present in a particular educational environment.¹⁰ This is particularly true of the Religious Instruction model. One of the side effects is that it leads to difficulty with actual theological reflection (the Interpretation model), as this is by nature an "illocutionary" act. Another common problem is the preference of one educational setting over another, disregarding the demands of a particular situation or culture, as in the case of the Spiritual Development model with its overemphasis on the individual.

"Perlocutionary" education, with its straight focus on consequential effects of discipleship, reveals further problems that can be clearly related to the absence of an "illocutionary" approach. As in the case of the Faith Community model, there is difficulty of intentionally utilizing particular cultural structures.¹¹ In the same manner, the Liberation model has problems

dealing with the role of the church.¹² Educational approaches that center upon "meaning" (locutionary) or "consequences" (perlocutionary) are important segments of any approach to Christian education and discipleship. However, they are not holistic and sometimes mutually exclusive. The history of Christian education confirms this.

Education for survival,¹³ as in ancient societies, was a prime example of a "perlocutionary" act. The history of Israel, however, soon reveals a shift from "consequences" to "content", from keeping the covenant relationship (perlocutionary) to observing the law (locutionary). Both might have actually been present in society when the teaching of Jesus first introduced an "illocutionary" approach to discipleship. His methods ranged from instruction, discussion, asking questions, or telling stories to giving projects.¹⁴ His method was variety; his goal "illocutionary": determining the actual condition that best communicated his message.

The instrument Jesus used for his illocutionary education was his *identity*. Meaning was communicated and produced consequences only through the identity of Christ. A distinctly Christian discipleship emerged likewise only as the church became aware of its identity.¹⁵ This struggle for a definition of the identity of the church and the understanding of humans as rational beings returned the emphasis of Christian education to a "locutionary" act. Its prime expressions are monastic education, scholasticism, and the unprecedented institutional and hierarchical growth in the Middle Ages.¹⁶ The Renaissance and Reformation, finally, with their emphasis on liberty, criticism and universality, brought a revival of "perlocutionary" education. The emphasis was now divided among the two.

The history of Christian education in America clearly shows the grown strength of "locutionary" education with its emphasis on religious instruction¹⁷ and the emergence of the Sunday School.¹⁸ On the other hand, the renewed emphasis on nurture,¹⁹ holiness and the social gospel corresponded with the inherent desire of Christian education for consequential effects. However, Christian education is still missing the very instrument with which to determine the actual condition that best communicates its message: the identity of the church.

Realizing this and reintroducing a form of social gospel, in 1965, Harvey Cox challenged the churches to join secular movements.²⁰ However, the challenge was largely unheeded. With the rise of liberation theology, emerging from a

practice of transformation and directed toward future transformation, an educational paradigm developed on the borderline to illocutionary education.²¹ In 1970, Paulo Freire introduced the concept of *conscientization*,²² "the process whereby persons become aware of the socio-cultural reality"²³ that determines the actual conditions of discipleship. The purpose of this process is the development of critical attitudes in people which will then lead to the transformation of the world.²⁴ Freire's work is most akin to secular theology, political theology and liberation theology similar to the social gospel of the late 19th century.²⁵ Freire's focus, however, is "perlocutionary": an education necessary for bringing about consequences in the form of drastic political and social changes in society.²⁶ Freire disregards locutionary education²⁷ and moves swiftly to its perlocutionary counterpart. Unfortunately, his failure to consider the identity of the church in sharpening the existing level of political, social and cultural awareness in society is one of Freire's greatest weaknesses.

In a recent re-evaluation of Freire's educational theory, Cheryl Bridges Johns identified Pentecostalism as an environment for conscientization.²⁸ Johns criticizes the neglect of developing a Pentecostal catechesis for conscientization and urges the church to move beyond Freire.²⁹ Her critique of the narrow, sterile and spiritually un-affective dimension of Freire's paradigm digs down into the heart of illocutionary education. As an alternative, she suggests that conscientization may happen within the boundaries of a covenantal knowledge of God.³⁰ However, her thesis faces the danger of remaining meaningless in a Pentecostal church with an educational paradigm that is quasi-illocutionary - it seems to embody the content but fails to embrace the deep structure in such a way as to radically advance its understanding of the message. Christian formation begins with self-cognitive development³¹ before it can move to socio-cognitive action.

The greatest obstacle to this Pentecostal conscientization is the neglect of developing a coherent *identity* of Pentecostalism. The nature of discipleship is deeply rooted in the identity of the church. Awareness of social, cultural or political structures begins with an awareness of who we are. Conceptions of Christian education, theology and reality are standpoint dependent.³² Christian formation begins neither with the content of education nor with the consequences of it but with defining the Christian standpoint by defining the identity of the church in the world and over against the world.

The theological basis for this identity is consequently not found in epistemological standpoints but in objective truth.³³ Jesus proclaims in John 8:32 that "the truth will make you free." He further explains that identity is not found in pedigree (John 8:33-37) nor in the physical world at all, but that it is a matter of authority (v. 34). Identity is found in a relationship with God (v. 35-38) through Jesus Christ (v. 36) in love (v. 42) and by the Word of God (v. 51). Jesus further proclaims that identity is found only through a life in the Spirit (Luke 4:18) which alone brings a liberated relationship with God and with others (2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 2:4). The Church is called to stand fast in this liberty which we received in Christ (Gal. 5:1) for the purpose of self-realization and serving one another (5:13). It is the authority within which we exist and by which we will be judged (James 2:12; 1 Peter 2:16).

The challenge of defining Pentecostal identity inevitably becomes a search, a struggle of interpreting the role of the individual within the community of faith in an ever-changing environment.³⁴ In order to come to a conclusion, however, this search must be individual as well as communal. It is the story of one and yet many, all at one decisive point touching the story of Christ, which turns us around, defines us, calls us, and identifies us as who we are in the context of suffering and healing.

Implications for Pentecostal Discipleship

Pentecostal identity is the central issue in the quest for contemporary Christian discipleship. Only a Pentecostal movement that understands its identity will be able to communicate and pass on that knowledge to future generations. The church's work of Christian formation must return to the fundamental issue of identity of both the Christian and the Christian church. The crisis in discipleship is essentially reflecting a broader ecclesiastical identity crisis.³⁵

James P. Bowers identified five characteristic symptoms of this crisis in Pentecostalism.³⁶ The first characteristic symptom is the lack of adequate theological definition. The second symptom is conflicting visions of spirituality. The third indicator of the crisis is socioeconomic differences between members from various parts of the world. The fourth has to do with questions raised about identity by the media, and fifth, differing understandings of the nature of hermeneutics. Additional symptoms, which are often neglected, are individualism, cultural seclusion, racism, spiritual

content and secularism. The critical question here is this: "How do Christians, confused about their identity, make disciples?"³⁷

In order to develop an appropriate model of discipleship within Pentecostalism, we need to first answer the question of Pentecostal identity. The need is for a vision that is spiritual, theological, renewing, and unifying.³⁸ In other words, discipleship that is identity-forming must on its basis be spiritual, theological, renewing, and unifying.

Spiritual Discipleship

Spiritual discipleship is spirit-centered formation³⁹ that is from God through Christ; it is a discipleship in which the Spirit is instrumental to the purpose of God through Christ⁴⁰ in the believer. It is spiritually and not theologically defined. To say it more clearly, the basis for discipleship is life in the Spirit of God not in the knowledge of God. In concrete terms, this calls for people born of the Spirit and not born out of educational paradigms - people born for formation not for education. This does not exclude instruction and knowledge from the agenda of Christian education. It does, however, remove it from first place. The Spirit forms instruction out of transformation and knowledge out of understanding.⁴¹

Spiritual discipleship is discipleship coordinated under authority. God not humankind initiates true education. Under God's delegated authority all must serve in coordination.⁴² Authority is God's appointment not human attainment. This understanding has several consequences for Christian education that is Pentecostal. First, the Christian teacher exists and acts by divine appointment (1 Cor. 12:28). Teaching must be a response to the call of God not the mere carrying out of a (secular) profession. This means that a pastor is not necessarily called to teach any more than any available member of the congregation. The keyword is not availability or obedience⁴³ but submission. Submission is a matter of attitude, and is thus absolute; obedience is a matter of conduct, and is thus relative.⁴⁴ The crisis in discipleship is not based on matters of outward disobedience; mostly it is related to a lack of inward submission. Submission as a teacher, however, requires that such a person denies himself and acknowledges that all authority comes from God in a life of constant fellowship with God. Secondly, the teacher must live a sanctified life. Without sanctification there is no true discipleship.⁴⁵ A holy and sanctified life is the appropriate basis for discipleship that has as its primary purpose to glorify God.

Thirdly, sanctification must also be the goal of the teacher-student relationship. Knowledge does not provide adequate means to achieve this purpose. Rather, discipleship must call on the exercise of Christian rituals and spiritual gifts. Water baptism, footwashing, testimony, healing rituals, Spirit baptism and songs and dances are essential to the task of Christian education. They will provide identity and direction as part of a truly Pentecostal formation.

Theological Discipleship

Discipleship that is spiritually defined must be theologically informed. The dynamic, experiential relationship that can be developed in spiritual discipleship calls for sufficient theological attention to the definition of the nature of life in the Spirit.⁴⁶ In more concrete forms this demands the adequate theological education of teacher and student in all areas of Christian living. The need is not for specific theological expertise and segmentation but for a balanced curriculum that is identity-forming through the communication of the essentials of discipleship, such as salvation, sanctification, ecclesiology, and eschatology.⁴⁷ The curriculum must be reflective of its spirituality. As James P. Bowers exclaims, "borrowed educational resources will not support true Pentecostal formation."⁴⁸ A thorough rethinking of methods, purpose, content and contexts of Christian education, as it is called for,⁴⁹ has at its basis a reflection on educational resources, paradigms, assumptions, models, and processes characteristic of a life in the Spirit.

Discipleship must step aside from a deductionist model and reflective method and return to inductive study and "imaginal insight."⁵⁰ Yielding to the Spirit of God in the theological context of the movement will answer the question of who we are.⁵¹ The role of the teacher is then to provide opportunity for conscientization and transformation under the leadership of the Spirit. Response must be both individual and corporate, or in other words, the response of the individual must be expressed in the community of God's people. Such response must be expressed spiritually rather than theologically and brings Christian formation back to the exercise of spiritual discipleship in the form of rituals and spiritual gifts.

Renewing Discipleship

Discipleship that is both spiritually defined and theologically informed is inevitably renewing. It moves from identity formation and transformation of the individual and the community to a response to God's authority and transformation of the environment. However, renewal is illocutionary not perlocutionary. Thus, transformation of the self and the community comes before transformation (or liberation) of the environment. The Spirit liberates to life, as Jürgen Moltmann writes,⁵² a life that is first renewed and transformed and from this new identity draws its new vitality.

This focus has often been neglected in reality. ⁵³ A transformed understanding of our identity under the authority of God and the response to this transformation are not interdependent.⁵⁴ Only a well-informed and developed identity will lead to transformation and cause an appropriate response. Discipleship that focuses on formation but neglects the identity of the disciple and of the transforming community is doomed to repeat its mechanisms until they are run down. Response must be sought in light of the purpose of discipleship, that is, to bring glory to God.

Unifying Discipleship

Discipleship that is spiritually defined, theologically informed, and responsive to God's call by giving glory and thanksgiving to God is ultimately unifying. Unification is the absolute expression of glory to God.⁵⁵ This view has several consequences for Pentecostal formation. First, the community of faith must be aware of its potential for formation and transformation of its members and the body as a whole. Christian education calls for the unifying practices of worship, fellowship, witness, sacraments, and ministry to be part of discipleship, not apart from it.⁵⁶ Unifying discipleship will have to seek more ways to enhance the corporate character of Christian education by eliminating the walls that currently exist between age, gender and race.

Secondly, discipleship must not be denominational. The quest is not for disciples that are denominationally circumscribed as Pentecostals or Catholics or Evangelicals but for those that are spiritually, theologically and responsibly defined as children of God. Thus discipleship and the development of educational models must happen in dialogue with others. Christian education must essentially become ecumenical.⁵⁷

Conclusion

Pentecostal discipleship is facing one of its greatest challenges. It is possible for Pentecostalism to eventually become synonymous with an ecumenical umbrella that is capable of overcoming Christian and educational boundaries. The challenge is less in the content or in the consequences of Christian discipleship but rather in how the content is going to be applied to a people that are unaware of their identity and unconcerned about the consequences. The first turn must be a turn to the Spirit of God and with it to the ultimate authority. This move must be a corporate move of the body of Christ not just of some of its members. The mission is for spiritual union not theological agreement. Shared responsibility and accountability will have to become the characteristic hallmarks of Pentecostalism. It will then be able to lead Christian discipleship beyond an already apparent paradigm shift into a new era.

Notes

¹ Jose Miguez Bonino, "On Discipleship, Justice and Power." D.S. Schipani (ed.) *Freedom and Discipleship: Liberation Theology in an Anabaptist Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989), 132.

² Lawrence O. Richards acknowledges the phenomenon in Biblical interpretation; cf. "The Disappearing Disciple: Why Is the Use of "Disciple" Limited to the Gospels and Acts?" *Evangelical Journal* 10 (Spring 1992):3-11.

³ Fernando F. Segovia (ed.), *Discipleship in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵ C. Ellis Nelson, *Where Faith Begins* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1971), 15.

⁶ This terminology was first introduced by J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1962), 98.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁹ Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 63.

¹⁰ Cf. Jack L. Seymour, et.al., *Contemporary Approaches to Christian Education* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), 33.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

- ¹² John L. Elias, *Conscientization and Deschooling* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 58-59.
- ¹³ James E. Reed and R. Provost, *A History of Christian Education* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 25-58.
- ¹⁴ J.M. Price, *A Survey of Religious Education* (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1959), 39-41.
- ¹⁵ Reed, 107.
- ¹⁶ Cf. Eleanor Daniel et al., *Introduction to Christian Education* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1991), 40-43.
- ¹⁷ Henry C. Potter, *Principles of Religious Education* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1900) gives a good picture of the ideas of that time.
- ¹⁸ C.B. Eavey, *History of Christian Education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973), 215-304.
- ¹⁹ Especially Horace Bushnell, *Christian Nurture* (New York: Charles Scribner and Co., 1861).
- ²⁰ *The Secular City* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1965).
- ²¹ Cf. Matias Preiswerk, *Educating in the Living Word* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), 112.
- ²² *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), 19.
- ²³ Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 13.
- ²⁴ P. Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (New York: The Seabury Press, Inc., 1973), 34.
- ²⁵ Elias, 62.
- ²⁶ Cf. in particular *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970).
- ²⁷ He states "the specific subject matter of education is of little importance ." "The Educational Role of the Churches is Latin America." (Washington, D.C.: LADOC, 2, 29c, 1972), 14.
- ²⁸ Johns, 13, note 1.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 138
- ³⁰ *Ibid.* 139.
- ³¹ Daniel S. Schipani, *Conscientization and Creativity* (New York: University of America Press, 1984), 13.

³² Cf. Gayle Gerber Koontz, "Freedom, Discipleship and Theological Reflection." D.S. Schipani (ed.) *Freedom and Discipleship: Liberation Theology in an Anabaptist Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989), 170.

³³ One may object that truth is an epistemological concept. That understanding would then reflect on a particular Christology and would make it a rationale of knowledge rather than of faith. Truth, however, is independent of all human concepts of perception and bound only to a righteous discernment of the person of Christ.

³⁴ Cf. Grant S. Schockley, "Liberation Theology, Black Theology, and Religious Education." M.J. Taylor (ed.) *Foundations for Christian Education in an Era of Change* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 80-95 and Robert A. Evans, "The Quest for Community." *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 30.2-4(1975), 188-202.

³⁵ James P. Bowers identified this problem in Pentecostalism in 1995. "A Wesleyan-Pentecostal Approach," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 6 (April 1995): 58.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 58.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

³⁸ The need is not for a return to past models and foundations, such as Wesleyanism (cf. Bowers, 60), but for a development of a renewed, re-defined or completely new model for a true identity of the church.

³⁹ This does not elevate the Holy Spirit above the role of Christ but expresses that in the Trinitarian relationship the Spirit is the instrument of God in order to work through and to essentially be with us (Acts 10:38).

⁴⁰ Cf. Acts 10:38. "God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost..."

⁴¹ With the words of J.D. Johns and C.B. Johns, "the Spirit will bring the mission and being of the resurrected Christ into the present reality of the church." "Yielding to the Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to Group Bible Study", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992):132.

⁴² The principle of coordination has been laid out by Watchman Nee in his masterpiece *Spiritual Authority* (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, Inc., 1972), 28-31.

⁴³ Availability has long been the predominant teaching, cf. Robert J. Wicks, *Availability: The Problem and the Gift* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986). Availability, however, is an autonomous act. Discipleship does not require availability in the first place but rather faith, calling and obedience.

⁴⁴ Nee, 107 –109.

⁴⁵ As R. Hollis Gause says, "the Holy Spirit is the personal agent by whom this grace is given... it is the cleansing of the vessel for the infilling of the Holy Spirit." *Living in the Spirit: The Way of Salvation* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1980.), 47.

⁴⁶ For this problem in Wesleyan-Pentecostalism see Bowers, 63.

⁴⁷ Bowers lays out eight pedagogical objectives as reflective of the Wesleyan-Pentecostal vision of Christian life. *Ibid.*, 78-81.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁵⁰ This term was coined by Craig Dykstra, *Vision and Character* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 87. This underlines that the "events that give our lives their particular shape and quality" form our identity in relationship with one another and with God.

⁵¹ The question "Lord, what would you have us do in response to your word?", as asked by J.D. Johns and C.B. Johns, overlooks the critical aspect of identity. "Yielding to the Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to Group Bible Study", 134. We need to know who we are before we can respond to God's word. Those who know their identity will then automatically respond "correctly to the word of God."

⁵² *Der Geist des Lebens* (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1991).

⁵³ Whether it is Lois LeBar's approach of "Way-Truth-Life", cf. *Education that is Christian*; Donald Joy's paradigm "Intersection-Investigation-Inference-Implementation", cf. *Meaningful Learning in the Church* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1969); Larry Richards' "Hook-Book-Look-Took", *Creative Bible Teaching* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1970), or J.D. Johns and C.B. Johns' paradigm of "sharing-searching-yielding-responding", "Johns, 124; the response to God's authority and our identity has often been left underdeveloped.

⁵⁴ This was suggested by Jackie D. and Cheryl B. Johns, 125. Mutual dependence is only reached if identification and transformation lead to response. The neglect of an appropriate response is due largely to a misunderstood identity which then leads to incomplete transformation and deformed response.

⁵⁵ The theme of union as a means to give glory to God is often repeated in the Word of God. Consider especially Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 10, 12; Eph. 2, 4; Col. 3:15.

⁵⁶ As James P. Bowers remarks, this also involves "identifying obstacles and hindrances to vital community experience," Bowers, 83.

⁵⁷ Konrad Raiser noted a paradigm shift in the ecumenical movement in 1989 but was yet unclear about what the new paradigm (*Orientierungsrahmen*) would be. Cf. *Ökumene im Übergang* (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1989), 51-86. Ten years later the ecumenical movement is in its last stage of that paradigm shift from the classical Christocentric universalism to a Pentecostal pneumatic orientation. Christian discipleship must not miss this development or it will be left behind.

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Leading in a Time of Change

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In 1998 I enrolled in seminary to pursue graduate studies in Discipleship and Christian Formation and started paying keen attention to the macro philosophical shift labelled post modernity/postmodernism. It was a great experience to participate in the numerous discussions and debates about how this emerging philosophical wave would impact the life and ministry of the Church. Some, if not all of us, did agree that it would have significant and far reaching impact on the life of the church and how we do Christian ministry, but none of us (certainly not me) imagined how quickly we would need to re-align our thoughts and approaches to ministry so that we did not become besieged and confused by the changes rushing in upon us.

So, in 2000 I came away from the seminary experience thinking of the many realities likely to be encountered in my ministry context. Now, ten years later, I have become even more deeply concerned about this impact, in particular, the issue of pastoral leadership and how it affects worship and Christian formation. The nature of this concern is skilfully itemized in the words of Brian D. McLaren. He suggests that today,

- 1) Pastors are preaching more and more sermons to spiritual seekers and not sermons to challenge sinners to repentance.
- 2) Pastors are becoming increasingly concerned about the problems they have to address in counselling sessions with Christians, in particular, as it relates to marriage, family and human sexuality.
- 3) Pastors are struggling with the tensions that exist between the theologies or doctrines they have inherited and their personal understanding of Scripture.²⁷

I also notice that, operating parallel to these alarming trends regarding our pastors that are raised by McLaren, the ordinary Christians in the market

²⁷ Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (New York: Jossey Bass Company, 2001), 10.

places and plazas are becoming more and more sceptical about the established brand of Western Christianity. The common expression is that, it seems like the church is flawed, failing, untrue, and has left worshippers and adherents “searching for something more meaningful and more enduring.”²⁸ This search is ascribed to the pain and isolation caused by reliance on material things and a shift from creating a genuine authentic community of love. Churches are accused of becoming more occupied with maintaining their hyper religious stance, which comes across to the un-churched as too rigid²⁹. There is the claim that the theological language of church leaders is demeaning, and betraying the fundamental pillars of the church’s foundational doctrines of the resurrection of Christ and the affective involvement of God in human affairs. So, the call is that we need a third alternative in pastoral leadership, one which offers a new expression of the Christian faith.

Is the church and are church leaders guilty of this charge? Can we honestly accuse the church of going to these extremes and not proving to be God’s transforming agent, or is it that people have developed misconceptions of the church and have become indifferent towards it, simply because they do not believe the message? In an attempt to offer an answer, bear in mind that it would be naïve to assume that the far reaching changes of post modernity would not impact the manner in which we lead. Further, it should also be borne in mind that contemporary models of leadership should ponder the context in which the church operates or the framework in which the believers worship God and serve humanity. What then, are the ramifications for church leadership?

The New Worldview: The Quest for Religious and Cultural Leadership and Identities

We are living in a new age, which is neither ancient nor medieval, nor is it modern, but it is the outcome of the rapid emergence of a new worldview. The term “worldview” speaks of the basic beliefs that form a framework that ties everything together and helps us to understand society, the world, and our place in it. Most historians divide western civilization into three

²⁸ Beasley and Payne, 22.

²⁹ Ibid.

historical ages which are “bound together by remarkable continuities,”³⁰ but are guided by a particular worldview. These ages are ancient, medieval and modern. However, thinkers such as Toynbee postulate that we have now gone beyond the modern age into a new era constituted by a dramatic mutation and rupture from the previous modern age. Toynbee described this age as “one of anarchy and total relativism.”³¹ Middleton and Walsh describe it best in saying it is an age that has lost “the enthusiasm in the grounding conviction of modernity.”³²

Hence, there is no transcendent significance – life is senseless, and national cultures no longer govern the circulation of culture worldwide³³. This has been replaced by the dynamics of global and national cultural interactions or fusions. In this mix, countries and major organizations are struggling to preserve their traditional identities. Churches are struggling with denominational leadership and traditional Christian identities. For example, countries like Jamaica are resisting the Western European brand of Christianity that came to us wrapped in the package of colonization, and the hierarchical style of leadership that accompanied such.

New Challenges for Church Leadership

This shift in worldview has presented new challenges for pastoral leadership and, in many ways, significantly challenges existing church models of leadership. For example, where members of churches were once docile and fully satisfied to remain inert, they are now craving for opportunities to be experimental and participatory. They do not want to be controlled and have decisions made for them. As life becomes more open and information more accessible, the issues of “integrity,” “accountability,” and “responsibility” are bona fide because leadership has shifted from controlling people to empowering people to lead. Maclaren writes, “The modern version of

³⁰ Romano Guardini, *The End of the Modern World*. (Wilmington: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1998), 118.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Richard Middleton and Brian Walsh. *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used To Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age*. (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1995), 11.

³³ Ibid., 12.

Christianity (Church leadership) that you have learned from your parents, your Sunday school teachers, is over, or almost over”³⁴

The essential factor is that, **in the time of change, wise church leadership involves an awareness of the changes within the context** in which the church operates, or the framework in which the believers worship God and serve humanity. I agree with Leonard Sweet’s view that in this present context, individuals who are serious about leadership should **NOT** ignore the reality and impact of a macro postmodern cultural shift on our immediate ministry context. As such, we must understand that church leadership endeavours must bear in mind the following:

- 1) That people are operating on a completely different worldview, core values and set of assumptions.
- 2) That people are moving from one faith group to another and one wonders if real conversion is actually happening.
- 3) That people are moving across borders and in this exodus the new arrivals have a sense of being lost in anonymity or marginalized and are frequently outside the pastoral structures of their own church.
- 4) That people are experiencing profound urge for a community “where relationships are deeply valued and as such create safety and opportunity for everyone to participate.”
- 5) That people will follow leaders who are willing to engage and address new problems in particular as it relates to anchoring their faith in their life experiences.³⁵

Invariables in Church Leadership

In the time of change **wise church leadership recognizes that which is constant within the structure in which the believers worship God and serve humanity**. It is a fact that the nature of the church remains constant in that it

³⁴ Brain D. McLaren, *New Kind of Christian* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001)

³⁵ Leonard Sweet, *First Century Passion for the 21st Century World: Post-Modern Pilgrims*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000).

"lives out its dual identity as an entity in this world that has 'citizenship' in another."³⁶ During His earthly ministry, Jesus, upon arriving in the region of Caesarea Philippi, asked His disciples, saying "*....who do men say that I, the Son of Man am?*" Jesus, in responding to Peter's declaration, "*...You are the Christ the Son of the living God,*" said, "*I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it*" (Matthew 16:13-18). This is the assembly that Jesus loves and all who join this assembly believes in Jesus. It comprises the people that Jesus calls to Himself and who covenant with Him to live as He lived, and to share His message. It is interesting to see St. Paul's expression in Romans 16:16 "*all the churches belonging to Christ, greet you.*"

All church leaders **should note carefully the fundamental, the non-negotiable in the life of this assembly as defined by St. Luke in Acts 2:42, they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer**":

- 1) Teaching Biblical doctrine
- 2) Providing a place of fellowship for believers
- 3) Participating in worship and prayer
- 4) Sharing and caring

The constant permeating factor is Jesus. He is the truth and the life, and the testimony of the believers proved the sufficiency of the Truth they proclaimed. The lesson is that Christian doctrine does not vary from day to day, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever*" (Hebrews 13:8). Therefore, the goal of church leadership remains constant, that is, to communicate the full gospel of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19, 20) in the Spirit and power of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 6, 13-18). Solid pastoral or church leadership guide people to the Word; to hear the Word proclaimed, to receive the Word enacted in sacrament/ordinances, to discover the Word in the world, to be sent to follow the Word into the world.

Consequently, by the help of the Holy Spirit, effective pastoral leadership guides people to Jesus and then gets out of the way. For it is the Holy Spirit who calls, gathers, orders, and empowers the church. To each member, the Spirit gives gifts for building up the body of Christ and for equipping it for

³⁶ Earlmont Williams, "The role of the church in society." The Jamaica Observer (Kingston), January 16, 2010.

the work of ministry. The Holy Spirit is therefore the 'authoritative presence'³⁷ in church leadership. He works quietly without drawing attention to Himself, to bring individuals to awareness of sin and the need for a new relationship with God (John 16:18). He binds the worshippers into a community of love.

Embracing these non-negotiable characteristics of church leadership and the pronounced shift in worldview, as church leaders, we are obligated to help each other live the Christian life through mutual support, Christian fellowship, and loving accountability. John Wesley said, "God has drawn us into community and has given us to each other to strengthen each other's hands."³⁸ Church leaders must appreciate the fact that the Christian's response to God is for community and a personal response to God is as part of the community of the people of God, the body of Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit. This response is clearly demonstrated in worship as the people of God respond with words and deeds of praise and thanksgiving in acts of prayer, proclamation, remembrance, and offering. In the name of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Christian community worships and serves God

The Gospel writers clearly show that fellowship was essential to maturation of the believers and was exemplified by Jesus. It was a vital goal of church leadership. In the Gospels we see the disciples spending time with Jesus, speaking with him, listening to His teachings and observing His miracles. In St. Mark 6:6-13, the tense of the verb used indicates that a continuous communion is described.³⁹

Conclusion

It is reasonable to say that church leadership is constantly evolving and plays a vital role in the church's ability to disciple its members. In this regard, the essential factors to bear in mind are that, in the time of change, wise church

³⁷ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to St. John xii-xxi* (New York: Double Day, 1979), 690. David Kelsey, "The Authority of Scripture: A Pietist Perspective," *Covenant Quarterly* 49:1 (February, 1991), 9.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Christopher Thomas. "Pentecostal Theology in the Twenty-first Century," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, 20, I (Spring 1998), 70.

leadership involves an awareness of the changes within our ministry context and recognizes that which is constant within the structure in which the believers worship God and serve humanity. To lead in the time of change, all church leaders should therefore hold in high esteem the non-negotiables in the life of church as defined by St. Luke in Acts 2:42.

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Theological Education and the Discipleship Mandate

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"There is no other professional organization in the world that is as functionally incompetent as seminaries. Most of our students emerge from seminaries less prepared than they entered, biblically uncertain, spiritually cold, theologically confused, relationally calloused and professionally unequipped." Timothy Dearborn, Director of the Seattle Association for Theological Education⁴⁰

The focus of this reflection is to establish the need for theological education to demonstrate its commitment to the discipleship mandate by placing that mandate high on its training agenda. This need is evident in the light of Dearborn's poignant criticism of seminaries. The first section of this paper examines discipleship in relation to theological training. The second portion explores the partnership between church and seminary as the discipleship mission is pursued. The remaining portion of the paper outlines four planks upon which must be established a foundation for theological education that is geared towards discipleship.

Discipleship and Theological Training

A disciple making theological institution produces students who are well prepared, biblically rooted, spiritually ablaze, theologically sound, relationally warm and, professionally equipped. This is in contrast to Dearborn's scathing remarks directed at functionally incompetent seminaries. Perhaps the only way to ensure that a theological institution does not fall into Dearborn's category is for it to become a dynamic community in which both faculty and students are active participants in Christian discipleship. The nexus between church and theological institution is held together by this common discipleship priority.

Theological education is not simply about preparing persons to articulate the faith, but even more importantly, it is about empowering persons to live out

⁴⁰ Jon Mark Ruthven, "Are Pentecostal Seminaries a Good Idea?" Regent University. <http://www.tffps.org/docs/Are%20Pentecostal%20Seminaries%20a%20Good%20Idea.pdf>. Accessed April 18, 2010).

the faith in the world. It is the extent to which theological education results in or influences the latter responsibility that will determine its effectiveness in making disciples of Christ who are equipped to disciple others.

Simply stated, Christian discipleship is the Spirit empowered and biblically guided process of saturating mind, body and spirit with the love of God that leads ultimately to a Christ-like life of selfless service and sanctified living. Expressed another way, biblical discipleship is the *diligent and intentional teaching and practice of a lifestyle* like that of Jesus, that promotes and reproduces the Christ-life in others. Though discipleship can be defined as growth in knowledge, it is not an academic exercise nor is it reducible to book learning. Discipleship cannot simply be encapsulated in a programme or set of activities; it is comprehensive and wholistic.

The discipleship mission is held together by the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, and revolves around the person and work of Jesus Christ. Christ is the centre of the intimate and relational knowledge that the Spirit uses to transform lives. Jesus Christ is the gospel by virtue of His position at the centre of it. He is the object of our faith (1 Timothy 1:14) and the mediator of the message (1 Timothy 2:5) that is the “power of God for salvation” (Romans 1:16). Both the seminary and the church must accept Scripture as the authentic revelation of God and embrace it as a foundation and compass for the fulfilment of the discipleship mandate. When this happens Jesus Christ will occupy his rightful place in both church and seminary.

Paul puts emphasis on the importance of Scripture as he nurtured his protégé Timothy. He asserts in 2 Timothy 3: 16-7: *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* Holy Scripture should not simply be analyzed, interpreted and admired but must be applied to the lives of readers and hearers and be expressed in good works.

Discipleship is about knowing, doing and, being. The Apostle Paul alludes to this in his letter to the church in Ephesus: *“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Christian discipleship must have at its foundation the Word of God combined with spiritual maturity as expressed through Christ-like character. Discipleship is a twin affair between theology and ministry. It is unfortunate that many in the Christian community have built a wall between these two aspects of a singular idea. "A discipleship that is without theology is cosmetically appealing, but empty and powerless. A discipleship that is without ministry is foundationally strong, but expressionless and unseen. The two must go together."⁴¹

The Kingdom of God will be established in the hearts and lives of men and women only when the mission of theological education is in line with the discipleship mandate of the Christian church. The challenge of theological education is to transform not just head but heart, hands and feet. Robert Banks raises some critical questions that we need to ask as we wrestle with the discipleship goal of theological education. Some of these questions are:

1. Is theological education attaining its primary goal?
2. Does it need to strike a better balance between spiritual formation, professional development and academic excellence?
3. Is it relating adequately to its contemporary context?
4. How can it become more aware of its immediate local and wider church setting?
5. Is it providing the most appropriate curriculum to achieve spiritual maturity?
6. How well is it managing to integrate theory and practice, and relating theology to significant contemporary issues?⁴²

We should not dodge these questions. Both denominational and seminary leaders must seek answers together. Some observers would say that theological education has been too focused on the cognitive dimension of learning as opposed to personal and social transformation - doing and feeling.

⁴¹ Patrick J. Griffiths, "Holistic Theological Training in, through, and for the Local Church," Available at: <http://waukeshabible.org/sermons/Missions2009/Articles/2009-07-05%20Article%20-%20Theological%20and%20Ministry%20Training.pdf> . Accessed May 21, 2010.

⁴² Robert Banks, *Re-envisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models*, (Grand Rapids, MA: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 9.

Discipleship in theological institutions cannot be preformed. It must grow out of the tasks in which God's people are involved; it must be deliberate and intentional.

The Seminary and the Sanctuary in Partnership

Ministerial formation and theological education are inextricably bound up with the life and vitality of the community of faith. Theological institutions have no rationale for existence outside of the shared Kingdom mandate of the faith community. It is only when the church and theological training institutions forge functional partnerships that the mandate to practice transformational discipleship will be honoured. The seminary⁴³ and the sanctuary are willing but sometimes uncomfortable partners seeking to fulfil God's mission in the world.

The strained relationship between seminary and church may be due to any of a number of factors. First, there is the perception held by many that are deeply involved in congregational life that those in the seminary are too far removed from the realities of church life. This, they argue, make seminaries irrelevant in their responses to the daily realities of the faith community and the world. "The ivory tower" is an uncomplimentary phrase often used to describe theological institutions, hinting at the degree to which they are out of touch. The argument is that the seminary does not make enough effort in ensuring that students remain in contact with and participate in congregational life.

Second, many in the sanctuary also believe that those in theological institutions are arrogant and very impractical in their approach to ministry. This, they posit, is amply demonstrated in the extent to which those from the seminary prize themselves in using esoteric language and high sounding theological jargon that go way above the heads of listeners.

Third, a common view held by the seminary is that the church is too steeped in its traditions and is inflexible in its doctrinal positions and its ministry practices. The church is accused of being too shallow, placing too little emphasis on theological reflection.

⁴³ For the purposes of this paper the word "seminary" is used interchangeably with the expressions "theological institutions" and "Bible colleges".

If the church and the seminary are to be more effective it is important that they find common ground and become enthusiastic partners in the area of biblical discipleship. Even a cursory glance at the state of discipleship in the church and the seminary will reveal the following:

1. A lack of a clear understanding of the call of Jesus to transformational discipleship.
2. A less than clearly defined strategy to lead every pastor along a path of discipleship.
3. A curriculum that does not reflect the centrality of discipleship training.
4. A view that discipleship is an option and not a mandate from Christ and so it is treated tritely.

Both theologians and practitioners from seminary and church agree that the church's main focus ought not to be the preservation of denominational traditions and structures; nor can the seminary have as its primary goal the achievement of academic excellence and intellectual sharpness. The response to the call to discipleship must supersede all other commitments in the faith community. The primary task of theological education is to take persons on a journey of authentic biblical discipleship. "Theological education ought not to have as its central focus the acquisition of ministry skills and techniques nor the development of a more comprehensive or complex view of the faith, as important as these are, but rather the Christian formation and wholistic development of ministry candidates."⁴⁴

The task of the seminary is the preparation of persons to serve in and with the Christian community as exemplars of the gospel. It is the discipleship mandate that must give theological education its content, drive and direction. The discipleship mandate embraced by the church is the same mandate given to the seminary. Theological education will only be effective when both the seminary and the sanctuary demonstrate equal levels of understanding of and commitment to the discipleship mandate.

⁴⁴ Graeme L. Chapman, "Spiritual Development: The Purpose of Theological Education- An examination of the purpose, content and context of theological education,". 1986. Available at: <http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/gchapman/SPIRDEV.HTM>. Accessed May 17, 2010.

The Indispensable Planks of Disciple-Making Theological Education

For theological education to achieve its goal of making disciples of Christ, it must seek to give priority to fostering theological training that is contextual, relationships that are authentic, local church involvement that is transforming, and spiritual formation that is Spirit led, Christ centered and, biblically driven. The core of this section's reflection is centred on these four planks.

Contextual Theological Training

Theological training cannot be effective if it ignores the context of ministry. The process of training, teaching, nurturing, guiding and modelling takes place within a context. The contextual web includes sanctuary, seminary and society. Inasmuch as we live in a global village, it is within the contours of the Caribbean reality that we must prepare ministry candidates to navigate. Discipleship is a journey in reality, and those who lead others must fully understand the dynamics of such a reality. One of the priorities of theological education in the Caribbean context should be to equip Christians to overcome their sense of powerlessness and complacency, to engage in the evangelical works of mercy and service, prophetic proclamation and priestly nurturing, advocacy and resistance, and community building.

The history and legacy of slavery and colonialism did immeasurable damage to the Caribbean collective psyche. Many Caribbean persons suffer from a negative sense of selfhood and struggle to lift themselves to become persons of value and worth. Anyone who is prepared to do ministry in this region must develop sensitivity to this reality and must be equipped to guide persons to full selfhood in Jesus Christ. The seminary therefore has a responsibility to develop leaders with this level of sensitivity, but only secondarily. To achieve this it must first nurture within them a spirit of love for humanity that is grounded in Christian literacy, in Word and world, to build capacity for the community of faith in its mission and witness. Theological education and ministerial training is meant to prepare all 'God's People' to engage in mission in their concrete context. It is a local act with global vision and reach. "The primary purpose of theological education and ministerial training is not the creating of standard shepherds for tending the

sheep, but leading the sheep to fight with the ‘beasts’ that dominate and destroy God’s world.”⁴⁵

A discipleship driven curriculum entails courses and activities that seek to make students aware of their culture, history, contemporary dynamics. This awareness is built not just through classroom interaction but through meaningful field education and community building endeavours. Students who desire to be serving disciples must not wait until the completion of their formal studies to engage the context. This engagement must be ongoing. It is very clear that we are called upon to live as disciples in society. We celebrate our faith in the sanctuary, we live out our faith on the streets, but it is the seminary that prepares us to minister in the context in which we do ministry.

The church exists in the web of human realities. The streets are the centre of God’s action in the world, not the church. The church is called upon to follow Christ to the streets and the seminary must help the church to exegete the culture, to influence the culture and to prepare disciples to live and do ministry in the culture. These realities cannot be ignored. In fact, it is the potential that these realities possess to detour individuals away from their path of full potential that makes Christian discipleship an absolute necessity. The seminary endeavours to prepare persons to be effective in the context in which they are called to serve.

Authentic Relationships

Jesus presents us with a model of discipleship that was built on trusting relationships that fostered honest dialogue and wholesome empowerment. The disciples of Jesus could navigate their way through a world governed by avarice, self seeking attitudes and individualistic behaviour only because of the life changing and sustaining relationship they enjoyed with Jesus. Jesus spent quality time with his disciples in prayer, in ministry, in worship and reflection and in teaching and learning. He often marvelled at his disciples’ lack of spiritual insight and their slowness to grasp ultimate truths. At one point we hear the exasperation in his voice as he asked them, “how long have I been with you and yet you do not know me [John 14:9]?” He took them on a

⁴⁵ Israel Selvanayagam, “Theological Education and Participation in Global Mission,” Available online at: <http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/p5/ete/Theological%20Education%20and%20Participation%20in%20Global%20Mission%20-%20Israel%20Selvanayagam.pdf>. Accessed May 27, 2010.

journey and was able to walk with them, even when they were slowed down by the burdens of their own imperfections. These men emerged as true disciples. They turned the world upside-down for Jesus and people exclaimed about them, “Weren’t these men with Jesus?”

Authentic relationships must undergird true discipleship in church and seminary. In the Bible College setting, accountability and covenant groups are useful ways to ensure that both students and faculty engage in meaningful relationships. Leaders of the institution should ensure that groups are structured and monitored for the right kind of engagement to take place. Theological institutions have no foolproof system that guarantees that only those who are whole and mature occupy their walls. The imperfect, the wounded, the mature, the holy and the tainted are all huddled within the walls of the seminary. This human mix requires authentic relationships in order for there to be healing and movement toward wholeness. Love and forgiveness undergird mentoring relationships. It is within the context of these relationships that persons develop trust that in turn creates the atmosphere for self disclosure and healing. Authentic relationships take effort and work and to some extent have to be intentional and structured.

The involvement of faculty as mentors is a critical plank in the disciple making structure of any theological institution. Faculty members who understand their task as not simply being that of imparting knowledge but, more importantly, one of shaping lives, tend to be more effective. This effectiveness mainly results from their presence and availability and their willingness to listen to and hold the hands of students as they grow to become true disciples of Christ. Faculty, therefore, need to be persons who are spiritually mature, morally sound and, unconditionally loving. Those who lead theological institutions must do everything to renew their faith in the redemptive and transformative work of Jesus Christ. It is this faith that will propel them to forge meaningful life changing relationships with students. Faculty members must model the life that the students they mentor can emulate.

Engagement in the Local Church

The Bible College provides an adequate model and framework for preparing persons to lead local congregations along a path of authentic biblical discipleship. It can be argued, however, that many who administer and lecture in Bible Colleges today are out of touch with the realities of the local

congregation and seem to prepare persons for existence in the sheltered world of academia and not to become leaders of the demanding ministries of the church. The local church should be highly valued by all Christians. For that reason, the seminary should attach the greatest importance to a student's regular participation in a local church. This participation is in line with the scriptural mandate that emphasizes this as a normal responsibility for every Christian (Heb. 10:25). The local church also offers distinctive opportunities for sharpening and honing one's spiritual gifts. It is a true-life training station for the practice of ministry during Bible college years.

Academic excellence, by itself, provides inadequate and incomplete formation. For students to become effective leaders in the local church they must be exposed to and experience the local church as an integral part of their training. The local church is an indispensable part of the equipping process (Eph. 4:13). Those who are being prepared to serve the faith community cannot see their preparation as a sabbatical from the community. Each student is first a Christian before he or she can be regarded as a theological student. It is our faith encounter with Jesus Christ that gives us our true identity and also places us within a community of brothers and sisters. Retreat from the faith community is therefore not an option for the Christian student.

Involvement in the community of faith should take place at two levels as the seminary seeks to further its discipleship mission. The first is that all students must participate in a local faith community as a worshipper and an available servant of Christ. Theological institutions should encourage all students to attend and participate in church life. This participation will give each student opportunities for confession, ministry, worship and, fellowship. Those who are not themselves true worshippers ought not to be placed as leaders of the worship life of the community. The second level of participation is through a structured internship programme. The placing of students with a seasoned ministry practitioner is a valuable part of the mentoring process. This is not simply for perfecting the student in the leading of rituals but, equally important, for the sake of their benefitting from the insights and nurture of more experienced pastors. Both teachers and learners need to be people of faith involved in congregational life if the discipleship mission is to be truly fulfilled.

Spiritual Formation

Another of the major priorities of theological education is spiritual formation. According to Graeme L. Chapman, "Theological education can only begin to recover its existential, philosophic and pedagogic unity when spiritual formation is accepted as its central aim and fulcrum."⁴⁶ When spiritual formation retains its central place, one of the greatest spinoffs is the re-energizing of the discipleship mission. It is the emphasis on spiritual formation that gives theological education its central focus. Spiritual formation is not an ethereal, flimsy endeavour but a very substantial part of the discipleship mandate of theological education.

Spiritual formation is all the processes involved in getting Matthew 22:37, 39 to come alive in the lives and experiences of both faculty and students. "Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'" Learning to love God and neighbour is the goal of spiritual formation. Humanity's greatest capacity is the capacity to give and receive love. Learning to love is a process, a lifelong process that must be inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual formation of a Pentecostal minister requires far more than excellent academic accomplishment. Hendricks and Clarke define "spirituality" in a theological sense as the relationship between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit "in lived experience and reflective understanding." However, students in Pentecostal educational institutions often adhere to an understanding of the "spiritual" that reflects cultural or worldly practices that have been accepted in the church but that differs from the biblical definition."⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Chapman, 9.

⁴⁷ Everett L. McKinney, "Some Spiritual Aspects of Pentecostal Education: A Personal Journey," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3 [2] (2000), 253.

The central training foci of Jesus for his disciples, and they for theirs, are in faith, prayer, exorcism and healing, which rarely find a place in a seminary graduate's transcript, much less as core educational experiences.

Spiritual formation places emphasis on prayer, spirit led worship, reflection, Bible study and Christian service. The college chapel has enormous potential for contributing to the spiritual growth of students. The absence of the chapel experience will make seminary life arid. Many students enter seminary with great expectations about the depth and quality of the chapel experience only to be disappointed by the ritualistic, cold and uninspiring worship they are called to experience.

Prayer is one of the key elements in spiritual formation. True disciples of Christ are persons who pray passionately and purposefully. "Prayer is at the heart of theological education. The quality of our prayer lives measures the progress of our faith journey."⁴⁸ The prayer life of the student should be fuelled by what he or she learns in the classroom. Too often the classroom experience serves to make critics of students or relegates their time for private devotions to a sermon search or a meaningless exercise.

The journey of discipleship is a journey with the Holy Spirit. The college community must always be sensitive to the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit and this sensitivity is heightened through meaningful worship. The worship life of a disciple-making college must be saturated with the practice of the spiritual disciplines and an acute awareness of the presence of the Spirit not just in chapel services but also in the classrooms, corridors and residences. Both students and faculty should feel at ease to declare faith and also to articulate their faith struggles. Prayer meetings, Bible studies, spiritual retreats and personal pilgrimages should become common place in seminaries.

Another important element in the spiritual formation process is directing students to write and implement spiritual and personal development plans for their lives. These plans give students an opportunity not only to set goals and objectives for their lives but also gives them a tool to use to evaluate their

⁴⁸ Carnegie Samuel Calian, *The Ideal Seminary: Pursuing Excellence in Theological Education*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 99.

progress over time. Students should not be left on their own but should be guided and supported by faculty in their spiritual endeavours. Training in godliness is not an academic exercise; it is a spiritual process that must be sustained in order to bear fruit. Without this kind of training, colleges will produce students who are spiritually shallow and morally unstable. Colleges that graduate under prepared students prove themselves to be ineffective in the discipleship mission and detrimental to the church's mission and purpose.

Conclusion

Dearborn's assessment of seminaries as places that produce students who are, "less prepared than they entered, biblically uncertain, spiritually cold, theologically confused, relationally calloused and professionally unequipped," cannot be ignored. For the college to be successful there must be deliberate and comprehensive discipleship efforts. These efforts must be tridactic in nature. The church, the seminary and the Spirit must be in relationship if persons are to emerge from the seminary as well equipped disciples of Christ who are ready to serve the world.

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Discipling the Next Generation

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Introduction

The degree to which families, cultures, societies, organizations, religions and denominations progress is dependent on the extent to which the current generation is able to successfully commit the history, teachings, core values and best practices of the group to the emerging generation, and allow that emerging generation to transform the group using their creativity, dynamism and new methodologies in light of the new realities they face. In this article I draw from my theology and experience in ministry to provide some critical insights concerning the discipling of our children and youths. The article will underscore the biblical imperative for discipling the next generation, highlight some fundamentals in discipling the next generation and propose some areas of focus for discipling the next generation. It is my hope that this presentation will jolt the church to fulfill its divine mandate to make disciples.

The Biblical and Denominational Imperative

Scripture is emphatic in its focus on the importance of discipling the next generation. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 is explicit in outlining that discipling the next generation is a primary role of parents and families and should be manifested in the homes: *"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."* Psalms 145: 4 indicates clearly that the current generation is responsible for discipling the next generation when it states, *"One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts"*.

The Lord ensures that there is new leadership to take the mantle to fulfil the divine program. Abraham had his Isaac, Isaac had his Jacob, Jacob had his Joseph, Joseph was succeeded by Moses and Moses by Joshua; Elisha succeeded Elijah and Samuel succeeded Eli. Scripture is clear about the imperative to disciple the next generation. Yahweh is a multi-generational God and he reveals himself as such: "I am the God of your father--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:15).

Jesus Christ continued the Jewish tradition by highlighting discipleship as the essential strategy for spiritual formation. In this regard, Jesus taught discipleship (John 12:26), modelled discipleship (Matthew 5:10), and commissioned discipleship (Matthew 28:29). The Early Church and its leaders demonstrated that they had grasped Jesus' teaching and embraced his commission to make disciples. The Early Church was successful because they embraced discipleship as the essential strategy for Church growth, for the preservation of the Christian faith and for the promulgation of the Gospel. Paul was emphatic in his charge to Timothy to promote a cycle of discipleship: *'What you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well'* (2 Timothy 2:22)

Luis Bush, a leading missiologist and international facilitator of Transform World Connections, coined the term "10/40 Window" two decades ago and urged the church to focus on the regions of the eastern hemisphere located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator - home to the largest population of non-Christians in the world. In a remarkable shift, Bush is now urging the church to direct its attention to discipling the next generation:

It is crucial that mission efforts be re-prioritized and re-directed toward the 4/14 age group worldwide. This requires that we become acutely aware of what is taking place in their lives. We must also endeavor to understand their nature and the essential means to nurture them. Only with this kind of informed awareness will we be able to reach them, shape them, and raise them up to transform the world..... open your heart and mind to the idea of reaching and raising up a new generation from within that vast group—a generation that can experience personal transformation and can be mobilized as agents for transformation throughout the world.....To maximize the transformational impact of children and youth in the 4/14 Window we must address the spiritual, mental, physical, relational, economic, and social issues they face. We must also confront their "ministerial poverty"—the scarcity of opportunities for them to exercise their gifts and achieve

their potential in ways that honor God and advance His Kingdom.⁴⁹

It is abundantly clear that the church needs to focus most of its energies and resources to reach and disciple our children and youths. We need to expose our children to the Gospel message at an early age, conduct evangelism training for youths, encourage personal and friendship evangelism and involve them in missions and community outreach. Importantly, we need to assist our youths in developing personal spiritual growth plans and encourage them to dedicate themselves to prayer, fasting, meditation and Bible study. The urgency of the need to reach children and youths for Christ is evident in the fact that:

The current Barna study indicates that nearly half of all Americans who accept Jesus Christ as their saviour do so before reaching the age of 13 (43%), and that two out of three born again Christians (64%) made that commitment to Christ before their 18th birthday. One out of eight born again people (13%) made their profession of faith while 18 to 21 years old. Less than one out of every four born again Christians (23%) embraced Christ after their twenty-first birthday.⁵⁰

Make no mistake about it, the quality of tomorrow's church and its impact in the world will depend on the extent to which we disciple our children and teens today.

Over the years we have committed an error in creating a false dichotomy between evangelism and discipleship. A careful analysis of the Great Commission passages indicates no such separation between evangelism and discipleship. The commission is simple-'make disciples'. In an article in the Christian Post aptly entitled "Discipleship Is Evangelism," S. Michael Craven

⁴⁹ Luis Bush, "Raising up a New Generation from the 4/14 Window to Transform the World," by World Global Initiative (Flushing, New York: World Global Initiative, 2010). Available Online at: <http://4to14window.com/4-14-window-booklet>

⁵⁰ The Barna Group, "Evangelism is Most Effective Among Kids," (11 Oct 2004), Online, Available from: <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/196-evangelism-is-most-effective-among-kids> [accessed June 2010].

asserts, "Where discipleship precedes conversion it is evangelism; where it follows conversion it serves sanctification."⁵¹ The prevailing approach of doing evangelism while paying little or no attention to discipleship has led to a high 'drop out' rate from our churches and has led to a significant number of Christians remaining weak and anaemic in their spiritual development. What is required is not merely a discipleship program. What is required is for us to see the church as God's discipleship program.

The New Testament Church of God in Jamaica is in danger of losing the gains for which our forebears struggled and sacrificed. This is evident in the fact that many of our youths are becoming increasingly alienated from the church. Many pastors struggle to provide replacements for youth workers. Church leaders are reluctant to facilitate the development of young leaders and refuse to give way to younger leaders. We need to pause and ask ourselves some serious questions: Will our children and youths grow up and worship the God of the Bible? Will they hold to the absolute authority of the Bible for faith and conduct? Will they embrace the claims of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour? Will they accept holiness as God's standard for his people? Will they remain Pentecostals and will they live in anticipation of the second return of Jesus Christ? The answers to these questions lie in the answer to this one question – have we disciplined our children and youths?

The Fundamentals of Discipling the Next Generation

When I mention discipling the next generation, I am not just suggesting that we establish converts or discipleship classes for our children and youths, neither am I talking about just running them through a discipleship manual. Discipling the next generation is not just about teaching our children about the history, traditions and customs of the church. Make no mistake, discipling the next generation is not just about teaching them about the hymns, songs and rituals of the Church of God. Discipling the next generation is too critical a process to be reduced to these activities. What, therefore, are some fundamentals in discipling the next generation? Let me highlight four (4).

The Authority of the Bible – If we are going to successfully disciple the next generation, we must once again affirm the inerrancy, infallibility and authority of the Holy Scriptures. We must once again elevate the Bible as the

⁵¹ S. Michael Craven, "Discipleship is Evangelism," in *Dakota Voice* (Rapid City, South Dakota), 30 August 2009.

main source book for life, worship and conduct. Pastors and youth leaders should ensure that Bible characters, Bible stories, biblical themes and biblical principles form a major component of the ministry to children and youths. Bible Studies, Sunday School and other such Bible centered programmes, must be given greater priority in the local church. Since discipleship ought to begin in the home, parents must collaborate with the church in promoting the reading, study and practice of the Bible.

Christ-centeredness – Discipleship can be described as the process of assisting believers to become more like Jesus Christ. Too much of our church life and culture is pastor-centred. In discipling the next generation we must ensure that the life, ministry, programs, and culture of the church is saturated by the Jesus ethos. The goal and focus of children and youth ministries are not just about entertainment and excitement. In ministering to youth and children, we must be clear that the goal and focus are designed to bring glory and honour to Jesus Christ and to facilitate our children and youths in establishing and maintaining a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In a world dominated by role models and icons, we must promote Jesus Christ as the best role model for our youths and children. The most powerful way for us to promote Christ as the ideal role model, is for us to model him ourselves in our approach to leadership, ministry and in our general conduct (1 Corinthians 11:1)

The Work of the Holy Spirit – We must once again reaffirm the important role of the Holy Spirit in discipling the next generation. Children and youths must be exposed, from an early age, to age appropriate teaching on the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Pastors and youth leaders should make a concerted effort to promote the baptism and the gifts of the Holy Spirit and encourage our youths to seek for His infilling. We must, however, assist the emerging generation to avoid a fundamental error those previous generations of Pentecostals made-emphasizing the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit at the expense of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We must encourage our children and youths to 'walk in the Spirit' and to live their lives characterized by the Spirit's fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness gentleness, and self-control.

Intergenerational Fellowship – A casual observation of how we do church will reveal that most of the church ministries and programs are done in a segregated manner and do not provide sufficient opportunity for meaningful interaction among the various age levels represented within the church. The

church auxiliaries are all arranged along gender and age lines - Youth Fellowship, Ladies Ministries and Men's Fellowship. The Sunday school is similarly structured and even the worship services are defined as Youth Sunday, Ladies Sunday and Men's Sunday. Pastors and Church leaders need to develop a more intergenerational and family centred approach to doing church. Intergenerational Sunday school, intergenerational choirs, cell groups and fellowships will go a far way in providing meaningful interaction between adults and youths and provide the needed context for discipling the next generation. It must be noted that discipleship is not just about giving instruction and providing training. Essentially, discipleship is about shared experiences, fellowship and love. Discipleship is all about relationship.

A Dynamic Approach to Discipling The Next Generation

If we are going to successfully minister to the current and emerging generations of young people, old mindsets and old approaches must go. A 'coal pot' mindset cannot understand this 'microwave' generation. The 'telegram' approach cannot reach this 'instant messaging' generation. If we are going to be successful in discipling the next generation we must adopt a new mindset and new approaches. We must be active rather than passive, proactive rather than reactive, community based rather than church based, relational rather than ceremonial. We must seek to minister with and through our youths rather than to them. If we are to be successful in discipling the next generation the church must be willing to move from the traditional to the transformational. In this regard, while the message of the Gospel and the biblical content of discipleship remain sacrosanct, new approaches, methods and strategies must be employed to reach and disciple the emerging generation. Ministering to youths and children cannot be lopsided and imbalanced; it must be dynamic and holistic, incorporating the spiritual, physical, emotional and educational needs of our youths. A greater level of focus must be given to the following:

Sports – Sports is one of the most powerful tools available to the Jamaican church to disciple the next generation. The Jamaican youth has a natural propensity to embrace sports; this is evident in their involvement in sports in schools and at the community level. An effective sports ministry in the local church can be used to inculcate discipline, personal responsibility and teamwork. Sports can also be used as an effective evangelism and mission strategy, with the additional value of promoting leadership development and healthy

lifestyle practices. Most importantly, because of its practicality, sports provide a good context for youth to demonstrate their Christ likeness.

The Performing Arts – There are few things more effective in ministering to a child than puppetry, miming, ballooning and other such creative activities. Praise dance, group skit, choral speaking, monologue, human video, pantomime and other such art forms can be used in a variety of ways to reach, minister to and disciple youths. The performing arts are a powerful vehicle in delivering and reinforcing biblical content. The performing arts is important in providing outlets for self expression and creativity. It is very important that pastors and church leaders appreciate and affirm the value of the performing arts as legitimate forms of worship and ministry.

Technology – The present Internet based communication technology revolution provides both challenges and opportunities as we seek to minister to youth and children. Five years ago all of my counselling with youths was done face to face; three years ago a significant amount of my counselling with youths was via telephone. However, today over 90% of my counselling with youths is done courtesy of the Internet. If the church is to be relevant in the eyes and minds of today's youth, it must urgently utilize the available technologies to enhance its ministry.

There is a wide variety of technological tools that can be used for training, teaching, communicating, promoting, advertising, presenting and managing data. Some examples are emailing – sending and receiving information, reports; text messaging – sending announcements, last-minute reminders, birthday wishes, Bible verses and short devotions; doing contests, quizzes and polls; sending prayer chains and praise reports; introducing the upcoming Sunday School lesson; receiving and giving quick feedback about an idea or question; website – communication, research, evangelism, promotion and fundraising; digital camera – taking pictures and recording videos; multi-media projector – used to enhance worship and showing presentations and videos; social sites (Facebook, Twitter, My Space, etc.) – establish a 'group' to share announcements, pictures, videos, links and exchange comments; and data management systems (Gmail, Google Groups, etc.) used to store and organize personal data and send mass emails. There is no turning back the hands of time, internet communication technology will continue to dominate the way we communicate and will significantly influence the way we do ministry, especially youth ministry.

Education – One important access the church gets to minister to children and youth is through education. Some strategies the church can use include establishing GSAT and CSEC classes for students, utilizing the church's facilities as homework centres, establishing a remedial education program for adults and children, establishing mentorship programs for students, organizing youth groups to conduct devotions at schools and establishing an Academic Support Committee to provide academic, financial and moral support for students. The church must realize that educational development and spiritual development go hand in hand.

Social Involvement – In the past there was a tendency to isolate the church's youth from the wider society with a view of protecting their spirituality. In this approach, most of the church's activities were done at the church and just for the church. This has resulted in the church and its members being detached from the community and without social relevance. Both biblical injunction and the exigencies of the time call for us to develop a new generation of believers who are both socially aware and socially active. In this regard, we need to encourage our young people to join and participate in wholesome community based groups and activities, assume leadership of community clubs and teams, utilize the community space and facilities such as the square, the schools, the playfield and the community centre to host youth ministry programs, conduct Labour Day projects and other community projects and develop strategic partnerships with community-based organizations' state agencies and NGO's to tackle community problems such as violence, crime, illiteracy and unemployment.

Male Development – One of the major crises facing the church and the wider society is the underperformance and irresponsibility of the male population. Our boys and young men are of major concern as they are underrepresented in the church, in educational achievement and in things that are positive. A significant number of our boys have taken on negative role models and are gravitating to that which is vulgar, vile and violent, while others have become feminized. This is a most ominous trend and if left unchecked will have a profound impact on marriage, family life, church leadership and social stability. The issues affecting males are varied and multi-faceted and have deep historical and sociological roots. The church alone cannot solve them all. However, the church is well placed to play a lead role in fostering the positive development of males. The church should therefore give priority attention to the male population, particularly to our boys and young men. Mentorship programmes, uniform groups, sports, missions, and rites of passage

programmes have all proven to be effective in reaching, ministering and discipling boys and young men.

Youth Leadership – If we are serious about discipling the next generation, a premium must be placed on preparing the next generation of leaders through discipleship. Pastors and youth leaders must identify and disciple potential leaders from an early age. Churches should ensure that youths are provided with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and serve in appropriate leadership capacities. Affirmative action for young leaders could be instituted to facilitate the representation of youths in church leadership. In addition, parents and church leaders should encourage Christian youths to assume leadership positions at school and in the wider community. The emphasis on this focus on youth should not be on position and power but on preparing youths to model Christ likeness as the measure of true leadership.

Conclusion

In this article I have sought to make the case for the church to prioritize its attention to the discipling of its youths and children. I have indicated that both biblical and denominational imperatives demand that we develop this focus. The 4/14 window was highlighted as a great area of opportunity to the church. I identified the authority of the Bible, Christ-centeredness, the work of the Holy Spirit and intergenerational fellowship as fundamentals in discipling the next generation. Finally, I called for a holistic and dynamic approach to discipling the next generation with particular focus on sports, the performing arts, technology, education, social involvement, male development and youth leadership. The call to disciple the next generation is a call to partner with the God who plans inter-generationally (Psalm 33:11). It is a call to model the discipleship ministry of Jesus. It is a call to fulfil the Great Commission. It is a call to preserve the New Testament Church of God and other denominations. It is call for us to understand the times and know what to do (1 Chronicles 12: 32). It is a call to equip our children and youths to “serve the purpose of God in their generation” (Acts 13: 35).

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The Law and Pastoral Ministry

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The legal vocation has often been frowned upon as being incongruous with the position of a full-time minister of the gospel. This objection seems to stem from a general mistrust of lawyers whose job title appears to be synonymous with “liar”. When I contemplated my legal training, I was approached by a well-intentioned friend of mine who reminded me of Jesus’ warning in the Gospel, “Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! For you lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers” (Luke 11: 46 AV). Knowing that the Bible is usually more balanced than those who quote it, my emotional equilibrium was restored by the Apostle Paul’s request in Titus 3:13, “Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.” Clearly, the Apostle has no objections to lawyers being involved in Christian ministry. Of course, one has to take a broad view of Christian ministry in order to accommodate such a proposition.

The concept of what it means to be God’s minister has to transcend ecclesiastical boundaries. One would be hard pressed to find scriptural support for a pastoral ministry which is confined only to the community of the saints. Such ministry would suggest that God is the God of only a part of the world, instead of being supreme ruler over all creation. The Old Testament prophets affirmed that the Lord God was sovereign not only over the affairs of Israel but also over all the nations of the earth (Ezekiel 39:21). They have written in an understanding of God’s ability to use even pagan kings as instruments of his purpose and also in the proclamation of divine judgement against the nations for their sins¹. Jesus reaffirmed the importance of the call to justice that the prophets declared. He criticised the Pharisees who claimed great knowledge of God but neglected the more important matters: justice, mercy and faithfulness (Matt. 23:23). The reality in the Scriptures is that the character of the Sovereign God is inextricably linked

¹ David McIlroy, *Christian Perspectives on Law: A Biblical View of Law and Justice*, (UK: Paternoster Press, 2009), 105.

with his justice and his ministers are called to a ministry of justice (Deut. 16:18-20).

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the fact that the pastoral ministry is God's plan to bring justice to the world. In my elucidation of this theme, I shall reflect on my own pastoral experience with special emphasis on how it inspired me to train as a lawyer and the challenges the dual positions present. I shall also explain the important role of the law in the warfare being waged against the church in Britain. The pastoral ministry of word and sacrament or what Martin Luther called "the sword of doctrine"² will not be dealt with in this article because of limitation on space. Suffice it to say, it remains central to the self-understanding of the church³.

Socio-Political Intervention

Time and again we see in Scripture that God's people are his workforce to bring freedom and justice to those who suffer under the yoke of oppression and to restrain the arm of the oppressor. In other words, the divine call is to get into the public arena, where the moral battle is being fought, and infuse the principles of the kingdom. Barack Obama puts it well when he said, "To say that men and women should not inject their personal morality into public policy debates is a practical absurdity; our law is by definition a codification of morality, much of it grounded in the Judeo-Christian tradition."⁴ The Christian pastor's view of history and of God's power to achieve his purposes must therefore stand in opposition to that of the process theologians, who think God is somehow limited to using only persuasive means to achieve his purposes⁵.

My conversion from an unwitting position of process theology began when I read *A Christian Manifesto* by Francis A. Schaeffer, while serving as pastor for a small church in West Rural St. Andrew, Jamaica. I started immediately to

² A.C. Sippo, "Totalitarianism: the Effects of Martin Luther, St. Catherine," *Review* (Nov/Dec 1996).

³ Kevin E. McKenna, *The Ministry of Law In The Church Today*, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 7.

⁴ Obama, Barack, *The Audacity of Hope*, (New York: Crown Publishers, 2006), 218.

⁵ McIlroy, *Christian Perspectives*, 107.

bring the practice of my pastoral calling into radical conformity with a theology which could bring true and lasting liberation to all of God's people. I quickly realised that, as with the majority of the country, the mass of people in that community was not just poor, they were impoverished by an entrenched system of injustice, manifesting either in unjust laws or the disregard for proper laws. I therefore broadened my focus to see not only the victims of sin but also the perpetrators. Clearly, if I am an active agent in God's programme to establish righteousness on the earth something had to be done to remove the cloud of injustice that deprived the people of a clear vision of God's love.

One glaring case of injustice in West Rural St. Andrew was the unimaginable hardship faced by the residents who lived across the Wag Water River. When the land was settled, it was written in the residents' agreements that a bridge would be provided as part of the settlement, but decades had passed and successive governments turned a blind eye to the plight of the people. When the river was in spate, mothers coming from work could not get to their children and children who had gone to school could not get back home, sometimes until the next morning. I remembered the embarrassment encountered by one family when the burial of a loved one was significantly delayed because it was too dangerous to cross the river. I felt powerless as a pastor because what was needed was legal action against the government of the day to compel them to perform their contract or pay compensation to the residents. This option was not pursued, not only because of the massively unaffordable legal cost it would incur, but also no lawyer could be found who would be willing to take on the government. Faced with an unworkable option, I resorted to lobbying the politicians which amounted to, not surprisingly, several empty promises.

The injustice to the poor in that community was painfully palpable, whether it was a pregnant school girl whose future had been tarnished, with legal impunity, by a man thrice her age or the victim of police brutality. The charity of the church was insufficient to fix what was a systemic problem. Ecclesiastes 4:1 sums it up succinctly, "I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun: I saw the tears of the oppressed-and they have no comforter; power was on the side of their oppressors."

Incontestably, pastoral intervention of a different sort was overwhelmingly necessary. Gary Haugen, the president and CEO of International Justice Mission (IJM), defines socio-political intervention as the process by which the

isolation of the weaker individual is overcome and legitimate power is introduced on the side of the weaker brother or sister.⁶ Haugen talks of four components of intervention⁷ - four ways to tangibly express God's love for the oppressed. The first is Victim Rescue. This step is for the victim currently suffering - the under aged pregnant girl or the illegally detained youth must be brought out of places of great darkness and harm to places of safety. The second component is Perpetrator Accountability, which is the appropriate intervention after the abuse has taken place. The injury can't be undone, but the perpetrators can be brought to account for their abuse and compensation or restoration sought for the victim.

Thirdly, Victim After Care seeks to provide access to the services necessary to address the effects of the abuse and the vulnerabilities that linger beyond the relief of the immediate abuse. The fourth way is Structural Transformation, which is the pursuit of structural change that will bring sustainable protection to the poor and vulnerable. My approach to intervention was radical to some extent. I wanted to acquire knowledge of the law because I saw it as a useful tool in the process of liberation. I subsequently moved to England to be trained as a lawyer, after being refused a place in the faculty of law at the University of the West Indies, even though there were no inadequacies in my matriculation. Needless to say, I could not satisfactorily explain to my friends how I would combine a legal occupation with my calling as a pastor.

Minister and Magistrate

It was not too long after my family and I arrived in Britain that I realised that the law was an essential battleground for the British church, whether it be the struggle for racial equality or the fight against the marginalization of Christians by Secular Humanism. Black people still suffer enormously from racism in twenty-first century Britain. This was brought to the fore horrifyingly by the racially motivated killing of the black teenager, Stephen Lawrence. An inquiry into his death has labelled the Metropolitan Police as institutionally racist and this in spite of race relations laws. For example, as Robert Beckford says, Black British people know that despite Equal

⁶ Gary A. Haugen, *Good News About Injustice: A Witness of Courage in a Hurting World*, (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999), 171.

⁷ Ibid.

Opportunities legislation in Britain racism does not disappear.⁸ Therefore, a legal knowledge is an essential element in the praxis of black theology in the UK, especially in the area of criminal law. Emmanuel Lartey alludes to this in noting that,

Black theology entails a commitment to the struggle for social justice, criminal justice and social wellbeing for all. At present the fact of black disadvantage and the complicity of the organs of state in black oppression is well documented. This struggle includes that against crime, drugs and the gun culture. A black political theology for the UK that takes the contemporary scene seriously is needed to mobilise us all in the struggle.⁹

As a pastor who has acquired legal training, my new role in the church is not only that of the ministry of the word and sacraments of Christ, but also that of empowering the people with a protective knowledge of their legal rights and joining the lobby for just laws in the country. If young black youths do not know their rights when they are detained by the police, they may ignorantly incriminate themselves. Similarly, the many immigrants who have found themselves in breach of immigration laws and those who have come to the UK seeking asylum from political or religious persecution, in their own countries, need to be told the government procedures in such matters. For many of these people, the church is the first port of call.

The most extraordinary extension of my pastoral service is my being on the bench as a magistrate. This, in itself, is a profound statement of hope in the black community, as not many black people are represented in the magistracy, and even less are ministers. However, the job is not without its challenges. It is always a terribly disheartening experience when an adherent of the church appears before me in court, to be sentenced for a criminal offence. Of course, as per the directive of the Lord Chancellor, my duty under such circumstances is to withdraw from the case. There is also the possibility of

⁸ Robert Beckford, "Doing Black Theology in the UKKK," *Black Theology in Britain: Journal of Contextual Praxis* 4 (2000) : 58.

⁹ Emmanuel Y. Lartey, "After Stephen Lawrence: Characteristics and Agenda for Black Theology in Britain," *Black Theology in Britain: A Journal of Contextual Praxis* 3 (1999) : 90.

meeting someone in church whom I sent to prison. Obviously, this is not going to be a moment of delight for me, as Gary A. Haugen puts it, “Though we do not celebrate any pain perpetrators face, we do indeed celebrate peace, safety and justice in the lives of those they have harmed.”¹⁰

Quite often I am asked the question pertaining to how I balance justice with forgiveness, in my dual roles of pastor and judge. In response, I usually remind people that justice serves the interest of the whole community and forgiveness and justice are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Jesus obviously did not think that forgiveness of sins always meant exoneration from punishment. The dying thief on the cross was forgiven by Christ but received his legal punishment for his wrongdoing, for which he obviously pleaded guilty – “We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve” (Luke 23:41). The woman caught in adultery was told by Jesus that he did not condemn her but she should go and leave her life of sin (John 8:3-11). This is what is called a conditional discharge by the criminal courts: a person may be found guilty of a crime but there are enough mitigating circumstances to forego the punishment. Incidentally, a great deal of the sentences issued by the criminal courts is not aimed at punishing the criminal (though, we must not forget that justice demands that a person who seriously endangers the lives of the general public should be incarcerated); they are aimed at rehabilitation and reparation. The truth is that justice is a universal value; hence, for justice to make sense it must be the same in the church and in the courts.

Being a Pastor in Britain

One of the greatest challenges facing the church in Britain is Secular Humanism. The British Humanist Association (BHA) is an organised group of intellectuals with a definite, anti religion agenda. Richard Dawkins, Oxford University Professor and one who may be safely called the high priest of Secular Humanism, in his book, *The God Delusion*, has declared, “I am attacking God, all gods, anything and everything supernatural, wherever and whenever they have been or will be invented.”¹¹ Humanists are strategically placed in the upper echelons of British institutions. At the time of writing this

¹⁰ Haugen, *Good News*, 179.

¹¹ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, (UK: Black Swan, 2007), 57.

paper, at least two members of the cabinet of the current government have declared openly that they are Humanists.

As with all other aspects of Humanist worldview, their legal theory is founded on the basic assumptions that God does not exist and that man, as an evolving animal, is perfectible¹². They reject the notion of natural law posited by people like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas because “the concept of natural law assumes that there is one true morality-one proper way for man to behave and it is discoverable by man”¹³. Carl F. H. Henry advances this argument profoundly:

Christians believe that God is the only Legislator and earthly rulers and legislative bodies are alike accountable to him from whom stems all obligation-religious, ethical and civil.¹⁴

Over the last ten years parliament has passed several laws which quite clearly privilege the values of secular humanism and thereby making it difficult for Christians to practise their faith. Legislation like the Equality Bill and the Children’s Bill, now before parliament, if passed, will substantially advance the cause of the humanists. The Equality Bill would mean that Christian ministers would be under a legal obligation to perform civil partnership ceremonies between homosexuals on church premises. The Children’s Bill provides for homosexuality to be given the same standing as heterosexuality in our schools’ curriculum.

Under the guise of equality legislation a Christian employee of British Airways has been dismissed for wearing a small cross to work and the National Health Service has threatened a nurse with the sack because she offered to pray for a patient. Local councils and public authorities have used religious non-discrimination laws as a pretext for removing any public reference to Christianity, replacing it with more politically correct themes. Christmas celebrations have also been affected by religious equality rules. Local councils have told their employees that they must not send Christmas cards to one another and churches have been banned from advertising their

¹² David Noebel, *The Battle for Truth*, (Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2001), 221.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 213.

¹⁴ Carl F. H. Henry, *Twilight of A Great Civilisation* (Westchester, IL; Crossway Books, 1988), 147.

Christmas services, in case members of other religions are offended. The term “Christmas lights” has been replaced by “festive decorations”, and some councils have even tried to rename Christmas with non-Christian titles, such as “Winterval”.

The secularization of the British society with its humanistic aim to eradicate religion has gained further grounds, recently, through a ruling on employment law, in *New Testament Church of God v Rev. Stewart*. Reverend Sylvester Stewart is an Ordained Bishop of the New Testament Church of God (NTCG) in England. He was removed from his pastorate following an audit which appeared to show financial irregularities in the church funds. He took the church to the Employment Tribunal (ET) on a claim of unfair dismissal, claiming reinstatement and compensation. The ET found that Rev. Stewart was an employee of NTCG and directed that the claim for unfair dismissal should proceed. NTCG appealed the finding and lost. In his judgement, Pill LJ said,

The standards to be expected of a pastor, and guidelines as to what the pastor was expected to do, are set out in the minutes. There was an obligation to report regularly to the national office. Salary was paid from that office; the respondent was described as an employee on the pay advice slips and income tax and National Insurance contributions were deducted. The Chairman was entitled to conclude that the contract found to exist was a contract of employment.¹⁵

It goes without saying that this ruling will revolutionise the conventional understanding of the position of minister of religion. For a start, the national overseer of the NTCG will not be able to transfer a minister without following the procedures of employment law. The ruling by the Court of Appeal has also open the door more widely for secular people, even atheists, to seek employment with churches; it may even be their legal rights to apply for the position of pastor in the church.

¹⁵ *New Testament Church of God v Rev. Stewart* [2007] EWCA Civ 1004 (19 October 2007).

There is no doubt that Christians are being sidelined from British public life through equality laws. This trajectory will not be reversed by egalitarian platitudes from the pulpit. The church must make use of the rule of law and challenge, in the courts, legislation which infringes upon religious liberty. Human Rights legislation protects the freedom to hold Christian views and beliefs and the freedom to manifest those beliefs in action. Therefore, the courts and tribunals, as state bodies, must ensure that their decisions are consistent with the legislation¹⁶. It is incumbent on all pastors in Britain to become conversant with the European Convention on Human Rights (now a part of British law) in order to join the struggle to protect religious freedom.

Conclusion

I must state, in conclusion, that Justice must be seen as God's law in action and this, to me, is where the battle line is drawn between the church and the state. Both are the agents of God but as Martin Luther maintained, "The magistrate was to elaborate and enforce God's word and will, to reflect God's justice and judgement on earthly citizens."¹⁷ Now that the world has shifted toward a more humanistic and unjust culture, Francis Schaeffer asks, "Where were the Christian lawyers during the crucial shift? ...surely the Christian lawyers should have seen the change taking place and stood on the wall and blown the trumpets loud and clear."¹⁸ It is perverse to think that, in the struggle against injustice, all pastors should become lawyers. But, it is equally perverse to amass a great understanding of God's law while the legal systems that affect people's lives remain unaffected by our divine knowledge.

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¹⁷ McIlroy, 134.

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MINISTRY TOOLS

The Discipleship Pathway Construct Applying the Pattern and Principles of Jesus in Today's Church

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The Discipleship Pathway Construct is a pastoral outline structured for the Local Church. It is designed for each member to follow a disciplined journey of growth and development toward becoming a disciple-maker and an effective witness in the nation. A basic programme could last 18 to 24 months.

It is a curriculum built around instructional teaching, mentorship, research and reflective analysis. It must be relational and contextual allowing for practical field experience and ongoing enrichment exercises.

I have developed and applied the grid you will see at the end of the document bearing in mind the following pattern and principles learned from Jesus:

1. The Purpose of Discipleship is not primarily to enlarge the Church but to redeem individuals and transform the community. The Church grew as they impacted the community.
2. The programme is not detached from the world within a cloistered class room setting. It is immersed within the active community setting of the people within the home, schools, workplaces, halls of leadership and community organizations.
3. Success is not measured by the size of the Church but by succession of leadership. The goal of discipleship is achieved when the city can testify: *"These are they that are turning the world upside down"*.

This “*Discipleship Pathway Construct*” is developed with FIVE phases, each with three defined activities. The following narrative is my own personal experience in implementing it. It is for the most part set within the contextual environment of practical witness in the community. It also recognizes the need for relational commitments between leadership and mentees, as well as the need for formal settings within the traditional class room setting.

The Entry Phase

Fish pool evangelism takes place in the shallows as well as out in the deep. I have sought to build a church culture in which the believers see themselves as a witnessing community rather than preaching machines. They have learned to listen to the hearts of people within the natural living environment of the home, workplace and public places. They attend to their needs “in the way”. Invariably it leads to sharing and praying in public or in private. The impact is unforgettable.

New converts are then embraced into the family of God and nurtured personally as new born babes. They are encouraged to become part of the household of faith within a local church or within a caring home cell group.

The Home Phase

In my experience, the most disciplined churches are those in which pastors build relationships that nurture a servant attitude and provide obedience training in young converts. Christian Life Seminars and Ministerial Mentorship provide practical opportunities for “armour bearing” and other support ministries such as helps and logistical responsibilities. Those who learn to serve make the best leaders.

The Training Phase

Every local church should have its own school for basic training in ministerial gifts, Biblical scholarship and leadership development. Dr Myles Munroe (President of the International Third World Leaders Association) has a mentorship programme in which he invites committed individuals to travel with him in ministry and then to sit with him in conferences and seminars until they have learned his teachings and have been shaped in ministry. He prepares them for ordination in whatever field of calling is their gifting. He

has produced in recent years hundreds of disciples who now minister in business, government, entertainment and within the church.

The Outreach Phase

Disciples become friends when they are allowed to replicate ministries in partnership with and with the approval of their mentor. As a mentor/father, I oversee and give endorsement to a number of churches, ministries and missions both locally and overseas. This has resulted from my relationships with them where I can now entrust my reputation to their integrity. Now I visit them as a mentor/father and we fellowship together as covenant friends conscious that there is a common cause for which we lived and for which we are prepared to die, the salvation of the people and the transformation of whole communities.

The Masters Phase

Very few Christians are trained to give leadership in the civic, business, professional and entertainment world. The church still lacks the theological grounding and passionate mission to produce leadership for the world. We are ill-equipped to be a lobby force for justice, truth and righteousness in the nation. Perhaps the challenge will be for those who take this discipleship pathway seriously. We will know we have succeeded when it is reported of us *“These are they that are turning the world upside down”*.

The Discipleship Pathway Grid

Stage One: Entry Phase

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Fish Pool/Evangelism | Setting to attract and win converts to Christ |
| 2. New Converts Classes | For assurance of faith and basic Christian habits |
| 3. New Members Orientation | Guided instruction into covenanted Commitment within the Local Community Fellowship |

Stage Two: Home Phase

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Cell Life | For caring and accountability within a spiritual family context |
| 2. Christian Life Seminars | Systematic teaching of the Word for personal practical application |
| 3. Ministerial Mentorship | Serving within the Body with close supervision |

Stage Three: Training Phase

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Ministerial Training | Developing skills in areas of ministerial giftings |
| 2. Vocational Training | Theological training to fulfil spiritual and vocational call |
| 3. Leadership Training | Qualification for office and supervisory roles in and out of the Church |

Stage Four: Outreach Phase

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Evangelism Strategies | Skills and programmes for personal and public witness |
| 2. Church Planting | Functioning in church planting teams |
| 3. Missions | Participating in local and overseas missions projects |

Stage Five: Masters Phase

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Community Impact Programmes (CIP) | Supervised Training for Immersion Witness |
| 2. Community Leadership Influence | Strategic Job placement and Civic |
| 3. Senatorial Mediation | Researching and lobbying for righteousness in the “city gates” as “salt” “light” and “yeast” |

I will make you to becomedisciple-makers

Book Review

Jesus Christ - Disciple Maker by Bill Hull

Ernie Nelson, B.Th. (Bethel Bible College)
Pastor/Lecturer, Jamaica

Although written close to three decades ago, Bill Hull's book, *Jesus Christ-Disciple Maker*, is still a breath of fresh air as far as our understanding of the path and process of discipleship goes. This book is a must read. It is concise but complete. It pulls on and parades the principles that Jesus, the Master Teacher and Disciple Maker perfected. It captures the reader's interest by making contemporary and facile a historical context which many have found to be complex, contradictory, and confusing.

Two millennia have passed and one of the clearest and most direct commands of Christ to His church is still very far from completion! Some take consolation in fractional fruit bearing, emphasizing faithfulness over fruitfulness. The two are not mutually exclusive. The cannon of scripture comprise a consistent coherent chronicle of the Creator's compassion that culminates at Calvary. Any call made by the church, on behalf of Christ, must consider the concepts that characterized His ministry.

The conduit created to 'corner' converts and the compulsive desire of some to 'capture' through discipleship have created a cataclysmic short-circuit that Jesus never intended for His Church. Developing disciples, ideally and theoretically, presents itself as a priority on the progressive agenda of many churches. However, the revolutionary breakthrough, success and efficiency that Jesus achieved and the pattern and the paradigm that He postulated have left many wondering if those 'secrets' returned with Him at His ascension! There is no doubt we have had passionate prayers for this mysterious revelation. Others have tried the laying on of hands. The most common concept is a fast, microwaveable, cut-and-dried program. With the right classroom, curriculum, and creative clerics or clergy, we can certainly create or carve out cutting-edge Christian disciples. Really! With our advanced technology, theology, and tools, this is yet to happen.

Hull is an unintentional ironist! He is not a deliberate critic. However, authenticity does to counterfeit what light does to darkness. Who is Bill Hull? Prior to the composition of his book, he had served over nine years in the

pastorate; obtained a B.S. from Oral Roberts University and a M.Div. from Talbot Theological Seminary. Between college and seminary, he served on the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ.

The readers are guided on a walk with Christ through the short years of his ministry. This walk is a journey of discovery through the Gospels, following the Master Disciple-Maker through four growth phases: *Evangelizing – Come and See; Establishing – Come and Follow me; Equipping – Come and be with me; Leading – you will remain in me.* These four main divisions are subdivided into twelve chapters with a summary of the principles shared and further suggestions at the end of each growth phase. Hull succinctly selects significant principles, sown in the familiar scenes of the sacred Scriptures. The author does not take for granted the simplicity of common terms. Rather, he understands the undetected dilemma when simple terms are ignorantly and inadvertently used interchangeably. Hence, he includes a glossary of terms.

A profound principle in this book is “giving people the option of saying no.” This is an acutely sharp contrast from, particularly, our local evangelistic zealotry. We have cultivated the concept and created the culture of ‘cornering’ (our) converts. Unrealistically very tight targets are set, deadlines are established, and ultimatums are given.

Building the church through making disciples requires time, patience, and loving sacrifice. The disciples were given an invitation not a responsibility. Jesus assumed full responsibility: “follow me and I will make you...” He would bear the weight of their training. He would not ask of them anything that He himself had not shown them. Hull firmly believes that the discipler’s task is to increase the convert’s appetite through selective exposure.

The writer is deliberate in painting a biographical portrait that he describes as “A rag-tag band of misfits.” It is very apparent that the list (group of disciples) is not meant to be held up as a model of perfection. As we renew our commitment to carrying out Jesus’ Great Commission, we will discover that investing our lives in people rather than programs yields lasting fruits.

When God calls a man, he bids him to come and die! Wow! This is the inevitable incremental illumination and inspiration with which a disciple will ultimately find resonance. Disciple-making is a teaching ministry achieved through touch, time, and transitions. It is moving from a simple no-strings-attached invitation extended to any individual, to that individual sensing an

intrinsic invitation to embrace and imitate the image of a selfless, sacrificial servant leader and Saviour.

Bill Hull's, *Jesus Christ– Disciple-Maker*, in a clear and lucid manner, efficiently takes us through a process and not a program. Without time-lines, dead-lines, or ultimatums it really does come full circle. It is the shepherd's, pastor's, and disciple-maker's dream to see an individual who, having been given a simple invitation to "come and see," and having seen and been timely exposed, refracts this stimulus into an inspired intrinsic imitation of the image of the incarnate Word – Jesus Christ.

MINISTRY TESTIMONIALS

My Call to Ministry

Rhoan Parkins, B.Th. (Bethel Bible College)
Pastor, New Testament Church of God, Jamaica

In 1983, when I passed my Common Entrance examination and was assigned to the most distinguished high school in Jamaica, the elders of my community encouraged me to do medicine. In fact, even to this day, a few still call me “Doc”. However, deep in my heart I desired to be an engineer, nothing more, nothing less.

I had a vision of what my life would be. I had dreams, but I never knew they would slip right through my hands like grains of sand. Early in 1990 my life was transformed. I had heard dozens of gospel messages, resisted and quenched many convictions, made many excuses for not attending services and even concocted many justifications for not surrendering my life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. However, it was not very long before I was rescued from the sentence of sin and drafted in the “service”. Salvation was mine for the taking.

I got baptized and in the same year I enrolled in the then College of Arts Science and Technology (now UTECH) to study Industrial Technology. After all, my desire was to be an engineer. I struggled through and finished triumphantly. It was now time to work.

My working life started in Mandeville and the prospects were great, but gradually my inner being began to retreat. I started to feel hollow, empty and unfulfilled. I thought it was the job; so I changed my job, but again I became restless and miserable. I then started to sense a pull on my life towards Christian ministry, but I dismissed this strongly and resolutely. My line was “I am not in the pastor thing”. Besides, my family had expended all their resources on me *as an investment*, at least that’s how I felt. My constant response in this entire struggle was, “If the Lord wanted me to be in Bethel, He should never have allowed me to start and finish CAST”.

The emptiness and hollowness never left me. One night I had a vision of someone telling me about a fruitful ministry that I would have. That caused me to be depressed, because I began to feel trapped. As a warrior I resisted and took my life into my hands. In the midst of my futility, I changed jobs again; I began to teach. I got what turned out to be a temporary reprieve. I got married started a family and continued to work within my church. Things settled for a while and just when I thought I was off the hook the same familiar feeling of emptiness and bewilderment resurfaced.

Now being older and somewhat wiser, I began to take all the impressions and pulls on my life seriously and dealt with them prayerfully. Being married, I began to rationalize, always arriving at the same conclusion. It is too much; I can't. The pressure became unbearable; I was literally wrestling. I did not want to be a minister. The temperature intensified; I became unhappy; my life stopped progressing. I started to build my house, and even that stopped. I was just that bit short of being a wreck. I continued to smile, but within there was a void. Everything began to work against me- everything! By this time I was an angry man, wanting to achieve my goals and objectives, while the Lord wanted to have his way in my life. This misery drove me to seek the Lord even more earnestly.

In the midst of what I considered to be the focal point of my struggles, my anguish and my pain, and in the midst of my contrition, I heard the voice of the Lord saying to me, "I have allowed you to have your own way. I have allowed you to do your own thing. Now it is time for you to do My thing". This led me to tears. I had lost my wrestling match. I had to bow at the Saviours' feet and I cried out, "I retreat. I retreat".

On reflection, I can truly say with all assurance 'YOU CANNOT KICK AGAINST THE PRICKS (and win). Now my life is in the Lords' order. I have done what God wants me to do. Now I am doing what I never wanted to do, and being that which I never intended to be – A PASTOR. God is truly amazing!

Submission Guidelines

BJCTM invites the submission of scholarly and/or professional articles that are in accordance with its stated objectives and relevant to its target audience. Consideration will be given to articles that are theologically based, thoughtful, provocative, and practical. Submissions must be accompanied by a completed Information Form available upon request from Bethel Bible College.

The following guidelines must be observed for all submissions:

1. Typed, double spaced material (even those of footnotes and indented quotations) submitted digitally and on 8 1/2 X 11 inch paper.
2. 3000 words maximum.
3. Full name, title, mailing address, email address and phone number(s) of the author on the first page of the manuscript with the last name appearing in the footer alongside the number on succeeding pages.
4. Word processing software - Microsoft Word 2003 or 2007.
5. Margins of at least 1¼ inches are to be left on all edges of the page.
6. Manuscripts must use parenthetical referencing according to the format guidelines of Kate L. Turabian, *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 6th ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996)
7. Print quotations of four or more typewritten lines in any language as a separate indented paragraph in smaller type than that used in the body of the article (without opening and closing quotation marks). Such quotations should be double-spaced in the typed manuscript, indented, and marked with a marginal note (e.g., "smaller type").
8. Respect for accuracy in verbatim quotations demands that the spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and abbreviations of the original publication be reproduced exactly, even if they differ from the style of this Journal. Should the quotation contain an error, this may be indicated by [*sic*] or [?], at the author's discretion.
9. Special material (e.g., lists, tables, charts, diagrams, blocks of Greek or Hebrew text), should be typed (or drawn) on sheets separate from the main text. However, the location of such material in the main text should be *clearly* indicated (e.g., "Insert here Chart I").

10. **Transliterate Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic words.** Type the words, using English letters that correspond to the Hebrew and Greek letters, and using long vowel symbols (ē) and circumflex marks (û). Use *Scholar* font for *all* transliterated words. NOTE: Please use the letter "u" for "upsilon" when it is used to form a diphthong. Otherwise, please use "y."
11. Send a printed copy of manuscripts to: The Editor, BJCTM, P.O. Box 1694, Mandeville, Jamaica. An electronic copy may be emailed to contact.bbcjm@yahoo.com.
12. Authors will be advised of the Editorial Committee's decision regarding acceptance of submission as soon as a review is completed.

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