

ALLIANCE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

EVALUATING THE USE OF CULTURAL TRANSPOSITION IN  
MAKING DISCIPLESHIP MATERIALS UNDERSTANDABLE  
TO A MULTICULTURAL GROUP

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY  
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NYACK, NEW YORK  
March 27, 2015

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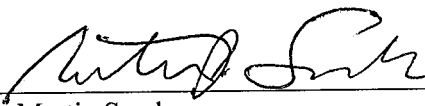
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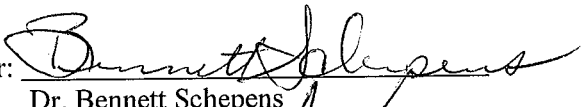
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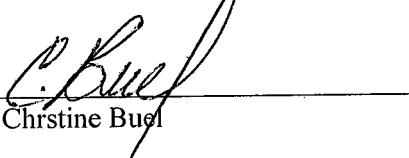
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## ABSTRACT

Title: Evaluating the Use of Cultural Transposition in Making Discipleship Materials Understandable to a Multi-Cultural Group  
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This doctoral project was developed to evaluate the use of cultural transposition in helping to make American-based discipleship material more understandable to a multicultural group. One session of the Navigator's "2:7 Discipleship Series" was transposed by a multicultural group. The transposed materials were coupled with the original versions on a survey questionnaire and a multicultural church congregation was asked to indicate its preference. The process of transposing the materials and the outcome of the survey questionnaire were used to determine if the transposition made the materials more understandable.

Chapter One details the ministry problem that occasioned the use of cultural transposition; develops the research author's hypothesis, purpose, and goals; and provides relevant contextual information.

The Literature Review in Chapter Two presents works that are related to the field of inquiry. It examines the subject of discipleship, models of discipleship, the challenges of cross-cultural discipleship, and the difficulties that language and culture pose in multicultural ministry.

Chapter Three explains the methodology used in the project. It includes the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research, the development of the scoring instrument, the administration of the survey, and the procedures for data collection and analysis.

The results of the accumulated data are presented and analyzed in Chapter Four. Details confirming the project hypotheses are presented. Four sub-hypotheses that were formed in the qualitative research are isolated and detailed. The chapter concludes with a summary of the results of the study.

Chapter Five presents the research author's summary and conclusions concerning the implications of the study. It begins with an overview of the project and details the issues and considerations that occasioned and guided the ministry project. Conclusions and implications are drawn from the literature review, the research design, and the reflective confirmation group's input for cultural transposition in general. Limitations of the study are noted and suggested directions for further research are offered.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Any such work as the present could not be accomplished without emotional, technical, and spiritual support. For the emotional, I acknowledge the deep love, encouragement, and affection of my wife, Irene. For the technical, I am indebted to the expertise of my Project Advisor, Dr. Bennett Schepens, who proved invaluable insight into every aspect of the work. Spiritually, I give all praise, honor, and glory to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, without whom and Whose Spirit even the thought of completing such a work would be impossible.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Dissertation Overview**

As people groups have immigrated to the United States, churches have struggled to keep up with the demands of discipleship. Culture, language, and communication have proved to be formidable challenges, particularly when the written materials used to disciple people are construed with an inherent American bias. This research project sought to address this ministry problem by utilizing the concept of cultural transposition. By having a multicultural work group transpose a portion of American-based discipleship materials, this project attempted to determine whether the transposed materials are more understandable to a multicultural church congregation than the original. The study also analyzed the interactions among the transposition group to identify common problems that culture groups experience in understanding American-based materials.

#### **General Overview**

The migration of people groups from one place to another has been noted as a Biblical/socio/historical pattern. The Biblical record begins in Genesis 1:28 with God instructing man to be fruitful, increase in number, and fill the earth and subdue it. However, after Adam and Eve fell to sin, they were forced to move from their home (the Garden of Eden); soon thereafter, their son Cain, after murdering his brother Abel, was

forced to move again, this time to “the land of Nod, east of Eden.”<sup>1</sup> From there, the Bible paints a picture of mankind spreading over the face of the earth, with the accompanying development of language, culture, and economic structures.<sup>2</sup> This pattern set the stage for migration’s continued propagation, as people have continued to cross geographic and national boundaries for political, religious, ethnic, and economic reasons.

In recent times, international mobility has become easier, and more frequent, with the combination of better transportation technologies and increased availability of communication, coupled with the continued economic, political, and social changes in the world.<sup>3</sup> The United Nations estimates that 76 million people migrated across countries in 1960, while 191 million did so by 2005, and in only two short years, by 2007, the figure rose to 200 million.<sup>4</sup> Most recent estimates available (2013) indicate that 232 million people lived abroad, comprising 3.2 percent of the world’s population.<sup>5</sup> The age of globalization has blossomed, with the world “becoming increasingly connected.”<sup>6</sup>

The United States has frequently been the endpoint for immigration, either voluntarily or involuntarily. African Americans were brought to the first 13 colonies compulsorily in the early seventeenth century; Chinese immigrants followed in the mid-nineteenth century to work on railroad construction; and as early as 1848, many Mexicans were living on land seized by the United States from Mexico. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was a widespread immigration of

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<sup>1</sup> The Holy Bible, *NIV version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), Genesis 4:16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Genesis 4:17-22.

<sup>3</sup> Helen Rose Ebaugh, “Transnationality and Religion in Immigrant Congregations: The Global Impact,” *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 23, no. 2 (2010): 105-19.

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

<sup>5</sup> *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2013 Revision*, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, accessed <http://esa.un.org/unmigration/wallchart2013.htm> (2013).

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Soerens and Jenny Hwang, *Welcoming the Stranger* (Downer’s Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2009), 118.

European peoples, most notably from Germany, Ireland, Italy, and the Scandinavian countries. In more recent times, the largest groups of immigrants have come from Asian and Latin American countries—approximately 16 million in 2013.<sup>7</sup> In fact, by 2013, “half of all international migrants lived in ten countries, with the United States hosting the largest number (45.8 million).”<sup>8</sup>

While this has reinforced the adage that the United States is a melting pot of peoples, it has also brought a great number of challenges to our society. The laments of amplified crime, strains on the educational system, the increased need for social services, overcrowded housing, language hindrances, and illegal immigration have filled the airwaves, the political debate, and our print media on a continual basis. The church in America has not escaped these challenges.

Historically, churches have been gathering places for immigrants and a place where they can receive help in assimilating to their new culture. The church community has consistently offered a place for integration, as typically, it is within the church community that one finds multiethnic and cross-cultural friendships, relationships, and marriages in a non-threatening setting.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, many immigrants who come to this country bring a spiritual foundation with them and seek to continue it in their new place of residence. Others come without a spiritual heritage, but in wanting to assimilate to their new country, often see the church as a place to establish a connection with the prevailing culture. In fact, many churches and peoples report that church congregations can provide a sacred space and positive social ties that are important in helping

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Darrell Jackson, *European Immigration Policy: Lessons and Challenges for the Church*, accessed [http://conversation/lausanne.org/en/resources/deatil/12909#article\\_page\\_1](http://conversation/lausanne.org/en/resources/deatil/12909#article_page_1)

immigrants to relocate and become established members in a new society.<sup>10</sup> However, in addition to these positive aspects of church and society, there has been an accompanying challenge to ecclesiastical institutions. In seeking to be a welcoming place for immigrants, churches have similarly felt the strain on resources, particularly in efforts to assimilate these newcomers through established programs of discipleship.

### **Statement of the Problem**

For church leaders in the United States, and more directly, the urban centers of the United States, this international movement of peoples has led to an increasingly multiethnic and multicultural composition to their congregations. On one hand, this is a positive development, for it reflects the future multiethnic nature of heaven (Revelation 5:9-10). However, it also brings challenges, specifically when American-based discipleship materials are utilized to help people grow in their faith. The cultural bias that American-based materials carry can impede understanding among immigrant groups.

This phenomenon has been cited in sociological studies,<sup>11</sup> as well as cognitive studies, which have shown that people from different cultures process and understand information differently.<sup>12</sup> In fact, the effects of culture are so powerful and pervasive that they shape virtually everything about a person's worldview and practices.<sup>13</sup> As a result, people interpret information from within cultural grids, which makes comprehension

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<sup>10</sup> R. Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner (Eds.), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> *Immigration and Learning a New Language*, accessed [http://www.workpermit.com/news/2006\\_05\\_23/global/immigration\\_and\\_learning\\_a\\_new\\_language.htm](http://www.workpermit.com/news/2006_05_23/global/immigration_and_learning_a_new_language.htm). Also see Olga Khazan, "Language Distance: The Reason Immigrants Have Trouble Assimilating," *The Atlantic* (May 7, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Beth Azar, "Your Brain on Culture," *APA Monitor on Psychology Series* 41, no. 10 (2010); Cathryn M. Delude, "Culture Influences Brain Function," *MIT Tech Talk* 52, no. 14 (2008).

<sup>13</sup> James E. Plueddemann, *Leading Across Cultures* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 74.

difficult. This has been cited as a problem in the field of business management,<sup>14</sup> education,<sup>15</sup> and more relevant to this study, ministry.<sup>16</sup>

The ministry problem that this study sought to address is how the church can overcome the cultural bias in American-based discipleship materials by making them more understandable to a broad range of multicultural people for whom English is not their primary language.

### **Intervention**

A proposed solution to the problem of multicultural groups understanding American-based discipleship materials involves the concept of cultural transposition. Cultural transposition refers to the rephrasing or translating of ideas expressed in one language (or cultural, ethnic, social group) into an appropriate expression of another to make them understandable.<sup>17</sup> The goal of transposition is not to identify a literal equivalent to the word or term, but to find something that has a similar cultural connotation.<sup>18</sup> This allows one culture group to better comprehend the intent of a word or term used by another cultural group; this in turn should increase their comprehension and application of the word or term.

In the realm of ministry, the theologian John Stott used this concept of transposition in a way that can potentially resolve the challenge of multicultural discipleship. He coined the phrase in a discussion relative to Biblical-exegetical work,

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<sup>14</sup> Terence Jackson, "The Management of Peoples Across Cultures: Valuing People Differently," *Human Resource Management* 41, no. 4 (2002).

<sup>15</sup> Danielle Martines, "Teacher Perceptions of Multicultural Issues in School Settings," *The Qualitative Report* 10, no. 1 (2005).

<sup>16</sup> Altagracia Perez, "Living into Multicultural Inclusive Ministry," *Anglican Theological Review* 93 (2011): 4; Samson Lo, "Toward Becoming a Multicultural Church," *Vision* 11, no. 1 (2010).

<sup>17</sup> Alejandra Patricia Karamanian, "Translation and Culture," *Translation Journal* 6, no. 1 (2002).

<sup>18</sup> Seyed M. H. Massoum, "An Analysis of Culture-Specific Items in the Persian Translation of 'Dubliners' Based on Newmark's Model," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 1, no. 12 (2011).

where he stated that the exegete's task was to separate the "profound, fundamental Word of God, [from its] surface cultural expression."<sup>19</sup> Stott claimed the goal of the exegete is to determine what the writers of Scripture intended the reader(s) to know, then to separate that core truth from the cultural milieu in which it was written. The core truth can then be transposed into the modern-day culture of the audience, to make it understandable and applicable. Cultural transposition offers a potential solution to the ministry problem of discipling people from other backgrounds in that material developed in one culture can be transposed in such a way that other cultures can understand them.

The need for this is outlined in a study by Cook,<sup>20</sup> who analyzed the LiFE educational curriculum for cultural bias. The author demonstrated how the material was written and marketed for White, middle-class churches. Words, phrases, pictures, examples, illustrations, and imaging were found to be construed with an American, suburban, sexist bias. She concluded that this made such material difficult to understand and relate to for certain people groups, particularly African American audiences. When this conclusion is extrapolated to the United States at large, with the many people groups who exist in our churches, the need for cultural transposition is heightened.

The use of transposition in the realm of multicultural/multiethnic discipleship offers the potential for a solution, by transposing American-based discipleship curriculum into a cross-cultural format. This may result in a better understanding of the material for people across a cultural spectrum.

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<sup>19</sup> J. R. W. Stott, *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus* (Downer's Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), 76.

<sup>20</sup> Karen J. Cross, "Analysis of LiFE Curriculum for White Cultural Bias," *Religious Education* 98, no 2 (Spring 2003): 240-59.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of the research was to determine the effectiveness of culturally transposing a portion of discipleship material to increase its comprehension in a multicultural setting. The discipleship material that was transposed is the “Navigator’s 2:7 Series,” a course in personal discipleship developed by the Navigator’s organization.<sup>21</sup> The Navigator’s material is written for a generic American middle-class audience and the concepts, words, and phrases may not be consistent with those of groups from other cultures. If the words and concepts are transposed in such a way that non-American cultures could better understand the material, it will be more effective. They will be able to understand and apply the concepts in ways that are natural and normal to their culture and experience.

### **Context and Overview of the Project**

In 2010-11, twenty-five people from a multiethnic/multicultural church participated in a one-year discipleship program using the Navigator’s 2:7 materials. Eight of the participants were contacted and asked to volunteer for a research work group and five agreed to participate. The five volunteers comprising the work group (the “transposition group”) matched the multicultural representation of the church. The transposition group studied a portion of the Navigator’s 2:7 material, starting with Course 1, Lesson 1, and went through as much as was possible in once-a-week hourly meetings over an eight-week timeframe. Each word and phrase of the material was analyzed for

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<sup>21</sup> *The Navigators: The 2:7 Series* (Colorado Springs: NavPress. 2011).

comprehension and, where necessary, transposed in a way that allowed it to be better understood by the people in the group.

When the eight-week period of study and transposition was completed, a survey questionnaire was developed (the “Understandability-Preference Scale”). The Understandability-Preference Scale listed the transposed words, phrases or sentences, coupled with the original word, phrase or sentence. The two sets of words, phrases or sentences were randomly ordered on the questionnaire, and the original and transposed entities were randomly ordered first or second for each question. The Understandability-Preference Scale asked the respondents to choose which word or phrase was more understandable. The Understandability-Preference Scale was administered to the congregation of the church over a two-week period in 2014.

The project data was analyzed in two ways. The first aspect of the research took the form of observing and documenting the work conducted by the transposition group in transposing the Navigator’s 2:7 discipleship materials. The research examined how the group’s thought processes and dialogue revealed the difficulties second-language people have with American-based curriculum. The second aspect of the research was done by statistically analyzing the responses on the Understandability-Preference Scale and conducting a factor analysis of the questions to determine what might have led to higher or lower scores for the transposed words and phrases. In addition, a reflective confirmation meeting was held to ensure the internal validity of the study and increase the credibility of the findings. The findings of the two aspects of research are elucidated in the body of the project dissertation in written form.



The ministry intervention addressed in the research was the transposition of a portion of American-based discipleship material to make it more understandable to people from other cultures. The research was applied to the broader body of Christian discipleship, Christian education, cross-cultural ministry, and Missiology. Additional interpretations were made with an anthropological focus, particularly as they relate to cultural patterns of learning and comprehension; similarly, grammar and word content were analyzed for relevance to second-language learners.

Implications and significance were limited to the field of multiethnic/multicultural discipleship, Christian education, and cross-cultural ministry in general. Special attention was paid to how discipleship material can be made more relevant, understandable, and applicable in ministry contexts in which various cultures are present.

### **Hypothesis and Research Questions**

The research intended to demonstrate that *transposing a portion of American-based discipleship material by a multicultural group will make it more understandable to a separate multicultural group*. The independent variable was the discipleship material (original, then transposed) and the dependent variable was the scores for understanding from the Understandability-Preference Scale.

Sub-questions to the research included:

1. Will the transposition group be able to understand the original meaning of the words and phrases well enough to transpose them?
2. Will the transposition group be able to understand the grammar of the phrases and sentences well enough to transpose them?

3. Will the transposition group be able to identify vocabulary equivalents to the words and phrases?
4. Will the transposition group be able to identify cultural equivalents to the words and phrases?
5. Will it be possible to transpose the words and phrases in a way that all of the cultures represented in the church can understand them?
6. Will it make a difference whether the transposed item is a word, phrase or sentence?
7. Will it make a difference whether the transposed item is spiritual in nature?
8. If the survey results indicate that transposed material is more understandable, does that necessarily infer that it is more applicable?

### **Model of Research**

The project design was experimental research. A research problem (understandability of American-based discipleship materials by multicultural groups) was addressed by an intervention (transposing discipleship material) and the effects of the intervention were measured (by the results of a survey questionnaire instrument). The quantitative analysis of the data was used to determine if the intervention was effective. The goal was to determine if the transposition of the discipleship material makes a difference in the ability of a multicultural group to understand the words and phrases used.

### **Empirical Unknowns**

The empirical unknown of the research was the level of understanding that would be attained by the transposition of the discipleship materials. That is, to what extent would the transposing of words and phrases make the materials more understandable in a multicultural setting? Additionally, what specific aspects of the transposition would make the materials more understandable? For example, would it be the transposition of the language, vocabulary or grammar? Or, would the process of transposing the materials make a difference—specifically, the time spent, the approach taken, or the composition of the group?

The research design addressed these issues by a combination of three measures. The first was observing the transposition group as it worked through the discipleship materials. The process of dialogue that took place among the participants, as well as the words and phrases they came up with as they transposed the materials, revealed the level of understandability within the group. It also addressed the unknown of what specifically poses problems for second-language people—for example, vocabulary, grammar or cultural insinuations. The research examined how the group's thought processes and dialogue revealed the difficulties second-language people have with American-based curriculum.

The second measure included statistically analyzing the responses to the Understandability-Preference Scale that was administered to a multicultural church congregation. This addressed the extent to which the transposed materials were understood across a broad cultural spectrum. The third measure was the factor analysis conducted on the questions on the survey. This revealed whether words, phrases or

sentences made a difference in how the respondents scored the survey, as well as the impact of spiritual, cultural or demographic factors on the same.

### **Definition of Terms**

The term *multiethnic* is used to describe ministry settings where multiple ethnicities are present, or those that are adapted to diverse ethnicities. *Ethnicity* refers to the racial affinity of a person, such as Caucasian, Asian or Hispanic. The research focused on the “descriptive” facet of multiethnicity, meaning the demographic makeup of an organization.<sup>22</sup> Closely related to this is the term *cross- or multicultural*, which means settings where diverse cultures are present. *Culture* refers to the shared set of beliefs, morals, and values that a group of people subscribe to and are raised with. For the purpose of this study, both multiethnic and cross- or multicultural descriptors were applicable.

The term *discipleship* refers to both a relationship and a process. The relational aspect denotes an individual with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ or between Jesus and His followers. The process of discipleship denotes an intentional course of learning whereby followers of Christ are taught what it means to “adopt His (Jesus’) teaching(s) as their way of life.”<sup>23</sup>

The process of *transposition* involves rephrasing or translating the ideas expressed in one language (or cultural, ethnic, social group) into an appropriate

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<sup>22</sup> Andrew Heywood, *Key Concepts in Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 227.

<sup>23</sup> G. F. Hawthorne, “Disciple,” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney (vol. 2) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), 130.

expression of another to make it understandable.<sup>24</sup> The goal is to find a similar word or phrase in the prevailing culture that would allow the reader to understand it.

The term *understandable* refers to the ability of someone to comprehend the meaning of a word or phrase, or being able to grasp or comprehend something within the context of one's culture. In the present study, understandability was measured by a survey questionnaire.

The term *cultural bias* refers to the experience of interpreting and judging phenomena by standards inherent to one's own culture. In the present study, the term specifically refers to the standards of American culture that are present in written materials used for discipleship.

The *Navigator's "2:7 Series"* is a specific discipleship training curriculum comprised of three workbooks of eleven lessons each. It is generally conducted in a small-group format and its purpose is to help Christians "become built up in Christ and strengthened (or established) in his or her faith."<sup>25</sup> The study utilized the most recent version of the curriculum available, completed in 2011.

### **Limitations/Delimitations**

The ministry project was limited to determining whether the transposition of a portion of the Navigator's 2:7 material by a multicultural group would make it more understandable to a separate multicultural group. In the research design, the second multicultural group was a church congregation in Brooklyn, New York; thus, the research may have limited applicability beyond the unique demographic of the church that exists at this time. Additionally, the work group that transposed the Navigator's material was

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<sup>24</sup> Karamanian.

<sup>25</sup> *The Navigators*, accessed September 2013, <http://2-7series.com/>

selected on the basis of the group members being representative of the cultural composition of the particular church. It is not possible to say whether their transposition would be understandable to other groups/churches that exist. Lastly, the research was focused on one multicultural church in one city of the United States, rendering it a small sample in the broad spectrum of global multicultural ministry.

Delimitations to the research included basing the transposition on only one specific discipleship curriculum (the Navigator's "2:7 Series"). Applicability to other discipleship curriculum may be limited. Also, the Understandability-Preference Scale was only distributed to the attendees of the church on two specific Sundays and to the church's youth group on one occasion. This limited the participation to whoever attended church on those two days and did not include people outside of the church congregation.

The ministry project carried several basic assumptions with it. First, written material is always developed within a cultural framework and, thus, will have a cultural bias. The same applies to the transposition work in this study. Even though the research sought to include broad cultural representation in the work group, the transposed material still reflected the unique cultural makeup of that specific group, potentially limiting its relevance for other multiethnic/multicultural settings.

Second, the unique demographic of the church does not reflect the world church at large; thus, applicability across the church spectrum will be limited. The research did not presuppose to include language and comprehension issues with the church in the United States or the world for that matter. The focus was specific to the church in Brooklyn, New York.

Third, the focus of the study was on transposing a portion of the Navigator's 2:7 discipleship curriculum alone, thus limiting the focus to that specific material. The selection of the Navigator's 2:7 curriculum was not made because it is more problematic in its choice of language than others, but only because the church was already familiar with it. Relevance of the findings to other discipleship materials may be inferred, but will not be definitive.

Lastly, the purpose of the study was to transpose an already existing set of material (the Navigator's "2:7 Series"), not to develop a new curriculum. The development of a multiethnic/multicultural discipleship curriculum may be the focus of additional work if the present study makes such an effort convincing.

### **Theological Framework**

People matter to God. In the creation account from Genesis, Chapter 1, we read six times that God's creation was "good" (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25), but that His creation of man was "very good" (verse 31). Additionally, we read in verses 26 and 27 that every person was created "in the image of God."<sup>26</sup> Thus, human beings are the crowning mark of God's creative work and are endowed with the distinct blessing of bearing the image of their Creator. The implications of this are profound; it means that human beings are unique among God's creation, have high value in His eyes, and are worthy of respect.

After the fall of man in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2), God dispersed mankind across the face of the earth (3:25, 4:12). The scattered people began populating the earth and establishing groups and boundaries (4:17ff). As people gathered in groups, they

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<sup>26</sup> *The Holy Bible*, NIV.

concurrently increased in wickedness, living out the sins of their fathers in greater measure (Genesis 6). Ultimately God decided to destroy the earth's people through a great flood, though reserved a righteous remnant in the person of Noah and his family (Genesis 6-8). After cleansing the earth in said manner, God re-established His covenant with mankind and vowed never to destroy it by a flood again (Genesis 9:17). He also gave Noah and his family the mandate to again populate the earth with people, which resulted in new generations of people and, ultimately, nations (Genesis 10).

As these new nations grew, they gathered in one place (Shinar) and mounted a great offensive against God's sovereign rule of the universe. In their desire to challenge God and exalt themselves, mankind built a great tower to "reach to the heavens."<sup>27</sup> God's response was to scatter the peoples once again, this time dividing them by a confusion of their language (Genesis 11:7). The result was a great dispersion across the face of the earth, with new people groups and nations being established along language lines. From this we see the genesis of cultures, which resulted from the language and nationalistic differentiation instituted by God; these two factors remain as identifiers of cultural disparity today.

Nevertheless, God still valued the crowning work of His creation, evidenced by a long history of reaching out to the people He loved. He called out a distinct subset of mankind to be His chosen people through the patriarch Abram (Genesis 12). That began a long relational period of interpersonal relationship, where God established a unique culture of people bound and governed by His Law (Deut. 26:18-19). Throughout God's relationship with His people, He called them to live as a distinct theocratic culture of

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, Genesis 11:4.



people: for example, to not follow the ways of the cultures around them (Deut. 7:2-4), to not intermarry with other peoples (Deut. 7:3), and to worship Him alone (Exodus 20:3, Deut. 13:4). These examples point to how cultures adopt and develop a unique set of morals, values, and interpersonal relations, which become normative and indicative of their singularity. This was true not only for God's chosen, but also for the plurality of cultures that evolved on the earth.

Although God's chosen people often wavered and fell short of God's desires, He remained a faithful God of this distinct culture/people. Ultimately, the inability of God's people to follow His ways resulted in the definitive act of love on God's part. He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, to the earth, to present the availability of a new life in relationship with Him (Romans 5:8). Jesus not only proclaimed this new life (John 11:25-26) but fulfilled the role of sacrifice that was necessary to bring it to fruition (1 Peter 3:18). Through Jesus, mankind could once again live in a loving relationship with its Creator, and this offer of new life was extended to all peoples on earth (Galatians 3:26-29). Thus, while the people on earth were initially scattered and differentiated by language at Babel, they could now be united again by the salvific work of Jesus, evidenced by the uniform understanding of the Gospel across language groups at Pentecost (Acts 2:6). This proved that God desired to be in relationship with people from every "tribe and tongue."<sup>28</sup>

This offer of global salvation was proclaimed by Jesus in one of His last conversations with His disciples. After appearing to them post-resurrection, pre-Pentecost, in Jerusalem, He informed them that they would soon be receiving the power

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, Revelation 5:9.

of the Holy Spirit, and that they were receiving this power to be His witnesses, “*in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*”<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, He told them in Matthew 28:19-20, “*to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*”<sup>30</sup> This vision of global discipleship was, and continues to be, the clarion call for both Jesus’ followers and the church at large today.<sup>31</sup> However, while few would challenge the divine etiology of this missionary endeavor, many have struggled with the means to accomplish it.

The challenge of presenting God’s truth to mankind, particularly the singularity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, has run up against cultural/ethnic barriers from the very beginning of God’s redemptive work with His people. Throughout Abraham and the Hebrews’ time in Canaan, marked cultural conflict was the norm, as God worked to create a new people, with a new morality and consciousness, in a land with pre-existing idolatry (e.g., Exodus 23:20-33). God’s divine Law, first given at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19-20) and then elucidated through the commands and festivals (Exodus 21 through the book of Leviticus), was a purposeful set of morals and values that were meant to differentiate their culture from that of the Canaanites. Even in God’s exile of His people to Babylon and Assyria, the conflict between cultures was evident, as the Lord had to instruct His people to strive to get along within the new cultural environment in which they found themselves (Jeremiah 29:4-9).

As one moves into the New Testament world of the first century, the disciples began their great missionary work in response to Jesus’ Great Commission (Matthew

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, Acts 1:8.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Bill Hull, *Jesus Christ: Disciplemaker* (Minneapolis, MN: Free Church Publications, 1984), 10.

28:19-20). After being anointed with the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:8, the disciples were scattered in Acts 8, a purposeful act of God to send the Gospel across boundaries and cultures. The disciples were thus faced with the task of making disciples of all nations as they traversed the new and strange lands of the known world, constantly encountering conflict with the cultures in their path. In preaching the Gospel, they struggled to “delineat(e) a ‘lifestyle’ for Christians who lived in a world completely at odds with everything they stood for.”<sup>32</sup> Examples of the cultural conflicts they experienced include those with Judaism (Acts 11:1-18), paganism (Acts 17:16ff, 19:23ff), Gentile conversion (Acts 15), and the Roman Empire (Acts 23-26). Repeatedly, the disciples sought to bring light into the darkness, and as they did, it buffeted against the pre-existing philosophies, theologies, and institutional processes of the surrounding cultures.

The basic supposition of this project is that this conflict continues today, not only as the Gospel comes in contact with the prevailing culture, but more specifically, in the multiethnic/multicultural church, as people from many tribes and tongues are called together as one Body. The singular manner in which this conflict is most palpable is when leaders seek to disciple people in what it means to be a committed follower of Jesus Christ. Cultural mores contend with Scriptural Truth and can lead to misunderstanding and confusion, and render efforts inconsequential. The mission as Christians is to present “that global God who calls all people into relationship with God and each other through Christ.”<sup>33</sup> The difficulty for multicultural/multiethnic ministry contexts is how to carry out this Christ-mandated effort.

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<sup>32</sup> H. L. Senkbeil, “Holiness: God’s Work or Ours?” in *Justified: Modern Reformation Essays on the Doctrine of Justification*, eds. Ryan Glomsrud and Michael S. Horton (Escondido: Modern Reformation, 2010), 96.

<sup>33</sup> A. B. Spencer and W. D. Spencer, *The Global God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books 1998), 10.

In the Bible we find a theological resolution to this age-old dilemma. In Ephesians 2:11-22, the apostle Paul presents a startling truth: that disparate groups of people, Gentiles and Jews, could be united as one new entity (“*he himself . . . has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier,*” v. 14).<sup>34</sup> This new entity of being was to be known as Christians, based solely on the merits of Jesus’ atonement. Even more significant from a cultural standpoint is that the two are “*no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people*” (v. 19).<sup>35</sup> Neither the *xenoi* nor the *paroikoi* in that verse had any intrinsic legal rights in the Kingdom of God. Only through the atonement of Christ could they “enjoy the privileges of God’s new people.”<sup>36</sup>

The Gospel of Christ has now presented a means to eradicate the age-old dilemma of cultural/ethnic divisiveness, in that the unifying Person of Jesus can erase the barriers of cultural conflict, misunderstanding, and communication. Thus, not only does this speak to the profound immensity of God’s reconciliatory work in Christ, but also to the very real and viable praxis of its intent through multiethnic/multicultural discipleship. This suggests that a unifying Truth can bring disparate cultures together, which intimates a unifying language to make it clear and applicable. The purpose of this research was to help identify how that unifying language may be brought about.

### Summary

God calls all the people of the world to Himself and offers them a personal relationship through His Son, Jesus Christ. However, because of sin, the peoples of the earth have been differentiated by language, customs, and traditions. This differentiation

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<sup>34</sup> *The Holy Bible*, NIV.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> A. Skevington Wood, “Ephesians,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. by Frank E. Gaebelein (vol. 11) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 41.

has led to numerous problems over the ages (war, slavery, racism), and to a great extent, these have been exacerbated by the inability of people to effectively communicate with each other. The varied cultures of the world have developed unique ways of processing and applying information, which explains many of the interpersonal and international problems that exist.

This dynamic has been evident in ministry contexts for generations, as peoples from varied cultures have come together in the church under the unifying work of Jesus' death and resurrection. As the church has sought to make disciples of all nations, they have found it to be a difficult task, primarily because of cross-cultural differences in how information is received and processed. Furthermore, the materials that have been developed to help disciple people are typically created within the cultural context of the author(s). Thus, they at times lack cross-cultural relevance as words, phrases, and idioms of the developer's culture pervade the material.

The purpose of this research was to determine whether American-based discipleship material can be transposed in such a way that it is understood by a multiethnic/multicultural group of people. Discovering the unique facets of multicultural transposition may result in the use of this methodology to enhance communication, learning, and teaching in cross-cultural settings more effectively. This will result in more effectively making disciples of all nations, which will increase the effectiveness of the church's central mandate. Ultimately, the Kingdom work we are commissioned to accomplish will be enhanced, speeding the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

## **Chapter Summaries**

Chapter Two provides a review of the literature pertaining to discipleship, models of discipleship, multicultural discipleship, the requirements and rewards of discipleship, the challenges of cross-cultural discipleship, and language and transposition concerns in cross-cultural discipleship.

Chapter Three describes the methodology of the project. This specifically includes the ministry setting of the project, the background to the methodology, the design of the project, the development of the Understandability-Preference Scale, the methodology of administering the Understandability-Preference Scale, and an overview of the data analysis.

Chapter Four presents the results of the project research data. It includes the findings of the transposition process and the statistical testing of the transposed materials, which included a factor analysis of the responses to the Understandability-Preference Scale. The survey data were subjected to statistical analyses of sum, mean, and a t-test for the project hypothesis. The factor analysis studied why certain transpositions scored higher or lower, and included a t-test for each of the four observations formed from the transposition process.

Chapter Five offers conclusions, implications, and areas of further study based on the findings in the research. These are applied to the fields of Christian discipleship, Christian education, cross-cultural ministry, and Missiology.

CHAPTER TWO  
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

**Discipleship**

The literature pertaining to discipleship reveals it to be of utmost significance, and even more so, the challenges associated with discipleship in cross-cultural contexts. The literature review addressed both, as well as the critical nature of language in cross-cultural discipleship.

**Definitions**

The concept of discipleship grew out of the ancient world's model of teaching, where a teacher would attract students by offering them a body of knowledge centered on moral and metaphysical instruction.<sup>1</sup> The student/disciple would submit to the teacher and was obedient to their commands, out of respect for their authority. In regards to Biblical discipleship, Jesus' students/followers began self-identifying themselves as those of "the way" (Acts 9:2, 19:9), with the "way" (*he hodos*) referring to the way of salvation through the blood of Christ. In Syrian Antioch, believers first called themselves "Christians" (*Christanoi*, Acts 11:26) or "Christ followers." However, based upon the teacher-pupil model mentioned, most early followers of Christ preferred calling themselves His "disciples" (*mathetes*), meaning they considered themselves as those who were taught by Jesus, either directly or through His apostles (Acts 2:42). This

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<sup>1</sup> Graham Ward, "Intercultural Theology," in *Intercultural Theology and Political Discipleship*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge and David Cheetham (London: SCM Press, 2011).

fundamental understanding and definition of discipleship have been broadened over time, as authors continue to study the ways Jesus disciplined His followers and apply those processes to our modern contexts.

As was stated earlier, discipleship can arguably be considered the clarion call and ultimate purpose of the church.<sup>2</sup> Ogden called it a vital necessity, the essential message of the church today.<sup>3</sup> Brueggemann considered discipleship to be the essence of the call of God in a person's life.<sup>4</sup> While most agree that discipleship is critical to the individual's and church's spiritual growth, it has been defined in a variety of ways. Some are specific and systematic, some are vague, some are poetic, some are radical, and some are political.

Cosgrave felt discipleship can be as simple as inspiration; namely, that the religious and moral values of Jesus can move people towards a deeper life of following Him.<sup>5</sup> He called the disciples to make these qualities their own, and to use them to shape one's character and life. His approach is highly individualistic, even subjective, in that the follower responds to God's love to us in Christ based on his or her own understanding of the Christian vision of life. Longnecker kept the definition uncomplicated as well, stating that a disciple is simply one committed to Christ.<sup>6</sup>

Ivory borrowed the musical expression of "call and response" from traditional Afro-American music to advocate for a "rhythm" of Christian discipleship.<sup>7</sup> He described

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<sup>2</sup> Hull, *Jesus Christ: Disciplemaker*, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials* (Downer's Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Word That Redescribes the World* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> William Cosgrave, *The Challenge of Christian Discipleship* (Dublin: Columbia Press, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Richard N. Longnecker (ed.), *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> Luther D. Ivory, *The Rhythm of Discipleship* (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 2008).



God's intervention in the life of a believer as the *call*, while the *response* of the believer is to accept that call and commit to a core of fundamental values, ideas, objectives, and ideals. This commitment will result in a transformed heart, a changed mind, spiritual discipline, Biblical guidance, and a general reshaping of the believer's reality, as the Holy Spirit works inwardly and outwardly through the Christian community. This rhythm between the individual and God grows the believers through discipleship and affects the community in which they live at the same time.

Conversely, several authors have contended that discipleship is not general, basic, or poetic at all; rather, it is a call to a radical life. For example, Yoder called for a more dramatic discipleship, defining it as inviting people to a changed life of non-conformity.<sup>8</sup> He included the qualities of rejecting societal norms of power, authority, wealth and worldliness, nationalism, and the individual's use of time. He posited that the process of discipleship would require the elements of radical stewardship, evangelism, fellowship, and a commitment to the cross and Jesus' story—in short, to create an alternative community within the world. Camp also spoke of discipleship as radical Christianity, in that the Gospel demands a total transformation through a conversion of every realm of human endeavor.<sup>9</sup> This would include personal relationships, economics, politics, life in the home, culture, and overall social order. He further delineated this conversion between what disciples believe (the Gospel, Jesus, the church) and what they do (worship, baptism, prayer, communion, and evangelism). The synthesis of the two will ultimately get at the root of our faith, which Camp defined as discipleship.

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<sup>8</sup> John Howard Yoder, *Radical Christian Discipleship* (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> Lee C. Camp, *Mere Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008).

Similarly, Brueggemann considered discipleship to be a call that should disrupt a person's life, even cast it into a form of crisis. What spurs this calamity is the uncompromising call "to follow God's presence, purpose and promise."<sup>10</sup> Although this journey is an exciting and dynamic one and will bring us to new spiritual heights, it must replicate Jesus' example and ultimately call us to follow His passion and mission, which leads to the cross. Along the way it will require a purposeful contradiction to the hopes and promises of the world, which will add to the sense of crisis. Additionally, this process will require a radical disentanglement from the habits we have learned throughout life, as we draw more intimate with God. Brueggemann admitted that such a call and path are seemingly impossible, as we follow a leader "with pricey habits."<sup>11</sup> Using similar coinage, Augsburg called for a *dissident* discipleship, which involves a radical attachment to Jesus and a spirituality which progresses from a monopolar (self-centered) to a tripolar (God-centered) focus. In describing this process, the author used terms such as "stubborn loyalty," "tenacious serenity," "habitual humility," "resolute non-violence," "concrete service," "authentic witness," and "subversive spirituality," all of which are meant to describe the radical qualities required of discipleship.<sup>12</sup>

In an equally compelling manner, Villafane saw discipleship as a significant challenge to the church in the twenty-first century. His premise was that the challenge to the church is "not to just speak the truth; the real challenge is to live the truth."<sup>13</sup> In living the truth of Christ, he proposed that we incarnate the Gospel, living a life informed by the cross. This would require a life of justice and courage, showing concrete acts of love as

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<sup>10</sup> Brueggemann, 93.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> David Augsburg, *Dissident Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Eldin Villafane, *Beyond Cheap Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 4.

our Savior did. Given that He left the comforts of heaven to come to a cold, harsh place, and in doing so identified with the poor, orphans and widows, His disciples today should emulate that through a purposeful redemptive and liberating spirituality that resembles His willingness to self-empty. This process of *kenosis* (emptying) in the disciple will ultimately lead to a *phronesis* (Christ-like thinking), which the Gospel demands. Because of this, discipleship is seen as a costly endeavor.

In addition to these activist interpretations, there are a plethora of definitions for discipleship that seek to ground themselves more deeply in Biblical history and theology. Stock defined discipleship relative to its inception in the New Testament and drew his basis for it from the early church. He elucidated the process by which the disciples, who were initially schooled in the traditions of Judaism, had to rethink their spirituality and theology after the events that took place after Pentecost, and the interchange between Peter and Cornelius (Acts 2, 10). This forced the early church (and disciples) “to discover for itself how Jesus’ instructions and examples were to be applied to the actual circumstances of life.”<sup>14</sup> This formed the core of the discipleship process, as they recalled Jesus’ instructions and the demands they made on the lives of His followers.

Dunn augmented this historical perspective by stating that discipleship in the present must be rooted in the past. He contended that we must base our models for discipleship on that of the Master: to scrutinize the Gospels and, more specifically, the teaching practices of Jesus, to gain insight into the original intent and design of the process. While admitting that discipleship today will need to look different than what it was two thousand years ago, its framework must be drawn from the record of those who

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<sup>14</sup> Augustine Stock, *Counting the Cost* (Minneapolis, MN: Liturgical Press, 1977), 100.

followed Jesus first.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, Stortz grounded his model of discipleship in the Beatitudes,<sup>16</sup> and Patte broadened this approach to include all of the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>17</sup>

Boice defined discipleship as forsaking everything to follow Jesus, likewise calling the church to follow the example of the original disciples of Christ (Mark 1:18, 20). Seeing the Christian life not as a door to pass through at one time but as a path to follow throughout life, he elucidated five key elements that must be incorporated into said journey: obedience, repentance, submission, commitment, and perseverance.<sup>18</sup>

Similar to Boice, Ogden believed that the church has made it acceptable to be a Christian without being a follower of Christ. He stated that becoming a Christian “is a statement about what Christ has done for me, and being a disciple is a statement about what I am doing for Christ.”<sup>19</sup> In drawing this distinction between a title and a lifestyle, he argued for discipleship being a necessary shaping-force in the life of a Christian. While all proponents of discipleship ground their definitions and models on the teachings of Jesus and the work of the early church, these authors have deliberately sought a more direct connection with what Jesus did with His disciples.

### Models

In addition to using Biblical-theological frameworks to define discipleship, these and other authors have used this framework in proposing models of discipleship. In Dunn’s insistence that we base our models for discipleship in Jesus’ original design, he

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<sup>15</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus’ Call to Discipleship* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>16</sup> Martha E. Stortz, *Blessed to Follow* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Patte, *The Challenge of Discipleship* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999).

<sup>18</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Christ’s Call to Discipleship* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986).

<sup>19</sup> Ogden, 7.

stated that our models must be practical and not merely theoretical; that they be social as well as spiritual; that they be open and committed; and that they be corporate and not merely for individuals. Thus, Dunn proposed a four-part generalized model to serve as a template for others: one, it must begin with God and focus on God (the call of salvation and the Kingdom); two, it must give primacy to the poor; three, it must give equal emphasis on sinners; four, it must reaffirm Jesus' approach and heritage in that it should be directed at the Jew first, then the Gentile (Matt. 15:24), while expanding outward to any that would share in His mission.

In proposing the Beatitudes as a framework, Stortz called the disciple to wrestle with Jesus' teaching on topics such as meekness, the true longing of the heart, and spiritual poverty, which, when incorporated into the life of a Christian, will allow for the empowering of the individual to model Jesus in successful living. In the same way, Patte's model, based on the Sermon on the Mount, challenges followers of Jesus to make fundamental changes to our lives. Given that the Sermon on the Mount's purpose was to transform the disciples' perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors, it should be used as a basis for the content of discipleship, in an effort to direct the life of modern-day disciples in like manner.

Hull based his overall model for discipleship on four stages that he modeled after Jesus' instruction with the twelve disciples. While not proposing a specific approach, he believed each one must be replicated in any current model of discipleship. Stage one is the "Come and See" stage,<sup>20</sup> where the disciple is invited to experience and learn about

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<sup>20</sup> Hull, *Jesus Christ: Disciplemaker*, 13.

Jesus. Stage two is the “Come and Follow Me” stage,<sup>21</sup> where the disciple makes a decision to follow Jesus and is presented with the vision and mission of the Kingdom. Stage three is the “Come and Be With Me” stage,<sup>22</sup> where the disciple is equipped to serve in the Kingdom through teaching, ministry experience, and the identification and development of spiritual gifts. Finally, stage four is the “Remain in Me” stage,<sup>23</sup> where the disciple takes purposeful action to reproduce themselves in the lives of others. These stages are correlated with the discipling ministry of Jesus and include facets of God’s Word, fellowship, witnessing, prayer, worship, and spiritual reproduction. The process is purposeful and Kingdom-minded.

Ogden articulated four stages in his model for discipleship, which describe an expanding process of growth: growing up in Christ (Bible study, prayer, and worship), understanding the message of Christ (learning about sin, grace, justification, adoption), becoming like Christ (fruit-filled living, love, justice), and serving Christ (using spiritual gifts, understanding spiritual warfare, stewardship). These are taught and modeled through intentional relationships, in which new disciples walk alongside seasoned Christians. By them they are encouraged, equipped, and challenged to grow towards maturity in Christ.

Hadidian believed that discipleship is difficult to define but easy to explicate as a process, and he suggested a three-part model. He deemed discipleship a three-fold incorporation of God’s desires: one, evangelizing men, which he referred to as “the birth of the child”<sup>24</sup> (drawn from 2 Peter 3:9, John 3:16); two, edifying men, which he referred

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>24</sup> Allen Hadidian, *Discipleship* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1987), 23.

to as “rearing the child”<sup>25</sup>; and three, equipping men, which he referred to as “sending out . . . to rear others.”<sup>26</sup> The author added to these desires several key markers of the process, including modeling, commitment, time, and guardianship. He concluded with a visual/poetic depiction of discipleship:

Discipling others is the process	
by which a Christian with a	
life worth emulating	(Example)
commits himself	(Commitment)
for an extended period of time	(Time)
to a few individuals	(Numerical limitation)
who have been	
won to Christ, the	(Phase 1)
purpose being to	(Direction)
aid and guide their	(Guardianship)
growth to maturity and	
equip them to	(Phase 2)
reproduce themselves in a	
third spiritual generation	(Phase 3) <sup>27</sup>

DeSiano maintained that models of discipleship must involve the heart, mind, and strength along seven key areas: the Word, worship, fidelity, witness, proclamation of the Word, carrying the burdens of others, and continuing on the journey of faith. Focusing on these seven areas will allow the disciple to structure the Christian life in conformity with Jesus.<sup>28</sup>

### Requirements and Rewards

In addition to these definitions and models of discipleship, many authors have stressed the spiritually intrinsic nature of discipleship, relative to sacrifice and rewards. The seminal work on this was done by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his treatise on the cost of

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>28</sup> Frank P. DeSiano, *The Seven Commandments of Discipleship* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003).

discipleship.<sup>29</sup> He portrayed the difference between a cheap and costly grace, which would ultimately be played out in the depth and quality of one's discipleship. Cheap grace speaks of an easy Christianity that does not cost too much, does not take much to maintain, and does not ask much of a disciple. This leads to a comfortable life, but one that is empty, produces little fruit for the Kingdom, and contradicts Jesus' call on our lives. This is grace without discipleship.

In contrast, costly grace requires true discipleship; it must be sought after, it requires a high cost and a deep commitment, it calls us to follow, and it requires total obedience. Bonhoeffer stated that "it is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life."<sup>30</sup> This is clearly a call to discipleship that transcends methodology, models, and styles and is rooted in the experience of sacrifice and suffering.

Henderson developed this idea relative to discipleship in stating that "the Gospel's defining trait of true discipleship has come to be seen in terms of a follower's willingness to suffer, and even lose life, for the sake of the Gospel."<sup>31</sup> She saw discipleship as a key part of Jesus' Christological purpose, which would encompass suffering and sacrifice. This is in part what Jesus empowered His disciples to do and experience as a part of repenting, trusting in Him, and following Him as a disciple. Likewise, Pattaruwadathil saw discipleship as a process comprised of two stages: one, the

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<sup>29</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1963).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>31</sup> Suzanne Watts Henderson, *Christology and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31.



present, or earthly; and two, the future, or Kingdom stage.<sup>32</sup> By responding to the Gospel, the believer enters into the present stage alongside the family of God, and starts a process of becoming a child of God. This process involves basic principles such as growing in the ability to listen to Jesus' words, putting them into practice, and teaching others to obey them. But it also includes the experience of suffering and trial, although the anticipated reward of the second stage, the Kingdom in heaven, serves as an encouragement to persevere. In that stage of the disciples' growth, it becomes eternal as they live fully as God's children in heaven.

Boice outlined five notable rewards of discipleship with Biblical substantiation. One, there is blessing and happiness, as life is restored to the standard that Jesus established (including ideas like hungering for righteousness, being merciful, pure in heart; Matt. 5:3-12); two, it encourages and helps disciples persevere under persecution; three, it builds trust in God; four, it provides for the continual presence of Jesus (Matt. 28:20); and five, it allows for eternal security. This idea of reward is vital to the concept of discipleship as it provides the impetus, encouragement, and outcome for and to a life of obedience to Christ.

This review of the definition, models, etiology, and intrinsic nature of discipleship substantiates its place in the center of both the Christian's life and the church. The majority of the literature stresses the importance of an individual commitment to the process, followed by the church's commitment to make it purposeful. This two-fold emphasis grew out of the established models of teaching in the ancient world mentioned earlier. Whereas ancient world teachers would attract students by offering them a body of

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<sup>32</sup> Henry Pattaruwadathil, *Your Father in Heaven: Discipleship in Matthew as a Process of Becoming Children of God* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 2007).

knowledge they would convey, Christian teaching and discipleship were markedly different; they were seen as being taught a true understanding of God by God Himself, through the Holy Spirit (John 16:13).

While all student-teacher relationships were important for the process, those of discipling were unique in that the Holy Spirit was the center of the process, traveling alongside and guiding the disciple into all truth. Rather than emulating a human mentor, the disciple is transformed by the knowledge of Jesus and conformed to His image. Furthermore, the process is incorporated into the life of the church, making it not only a direct teacher-disciple relationship, but one that is included in the corporate life of the Body of Christ. Not only does the individual increasingly emulate Christ, but the Body or the church as a whole benefits and grows toward the same resemblance together.

There is a consistent pattern of methodology noted in the literature that recognizes the incremental nature of a disciple's growth, with increasing measures of study content, ministry participation, and personal commitment. Across the spectrum of definition and design, one also finds a reliance on the Word of God as the material resource of training, alongside a Spirit-led process of sanctification. It is this deepening call upon the life of the believer that marks the true disciple from those who are simply members of the adoring crowd.

### **The Challenges of Cross-Cultural Discipleship**

Having identified and established the importance of discipleship, we must also acknowledge that many believe the church has lost its perspective relative to it. Authors have cited evidence for this in the lack of church growth, poor leadership development, a

failed system of world evangelism, and weak pastoral stewardship of the gospel.<sup>33</sup> Others have noted tendencies towards syncretism,<sup>34</sup> an unwillingness to embrace the radical nature of missional discipleship,<sup>35</sup> the encroachment of technology on the discipling process,<sup>36</sup> and the unique challenges of discipling our aging population.<sup>37</sup> Clearly the call to discipleship has, and does, face tremendous challenges. One particularly difficult challenge is discipling converts in cross-cultural settings.

The challenge of cross-cultural discipleship is cited as an increasingly prevalent dynamic due to the escalation of the worldwide movement of people. Wars, famine, political strife, and economic issues have led to a proliferation of people group movements across the globe. As a result, many of the challenges of preaching the gospel and discipling converts that used to reside primarily in the realm of missionary work has now become a conundrum for the local church. Rather than missionaries having to learn the customs, language, and religion of the people groups they sought to reach, churches now have to acclimate to the same dynamic within their local congregations. Making this work even more of a challenge is the fact that churches, unlike missionaries, often have to learn the language and customs of more than one people group, as multiethnic/multicultural ministry becomes the norm. This is especially amplified in the urban centers of our country.

Thus, it has become critical for the local church to understand and adjust to the variety of people groups entering its doors. Just as the movement of people influences the

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<sup>33</sup> Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Church* (Old Tappan, NY: The Fleming H. Revell Co., 1990).

<sup>34</sup> "Discipleship Is Messy," Editorial in *Christianity Today* 57, no. 1 (January-February 2013): 69.

<sup>35</sup> Norman C. Kraus, "From Radical to Missional Discipleship," *Vision* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 6-14.

<sup>36</sup> Philip R. Meadows, "Mission and Discipleship in a Digital Culture," *Mission Studies* 29, no. 2 (2012): 163-182.

<sup>37</sup> Paul J. Wadell, "The Call Goes On: Discipleship and Aging," *Christian Century* 128, no. 8 (April 19, 2011): 11-12.

communities in which they settle, these migratory groups have influenced the church as they bring new forms of worship into local congregations. Researchers believe that these migrant groups will “transform the religious landscape of the world’s countries well into the twenty-first century.”<sup>38</sup>

The data that support this movement of not only people but religion is highlighted in a study by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. That study defined an “international migrant” as “someone who has been living one year or longer in a country other than the one in which he or she was born.”<sup>39</sup> Based upon surveys and census data, Pew indicated that 3 percent of the global population (214 million people) is international migrants. Nearly half are Christians (49%) and over one-quarter are Muslims (27%); among the seven major religious groups in the world, the highest overall level of international migration was found among Jews (25%). The Asia-Pacific region sends out the majority of the world’s migrants (33%), followed by Europe (28%). Most of the Asian sector settles in North America and Europe, while the Europeans resettle in other European countries. Mexico is the largest single country source of migrants.<sup>40</sup>

Although immigrants come from virtually every country on the globe, they settle in relatively few areas: North America, Europe, and Australia. The United States is the end destination for more than three times as many migrants as any other single country.<sup>41</sup> The result of this movement of people, relative to religious practice, is that as people move, they bring their religious practices with them and they can significantly

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<sup>38</sup> Gina A. Bellofatto, *People and Their Religions on the Move: Challenge and Opportunities of International Migration* accessed <http://converastion.lausanne.org/en/resources/detail/12795>.

<sup>39</sup> *Faith on the Move: The Religious Affiliation of International Migrants*, Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, March 8, 2012, accessed <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/2214/religion-religious-migrants-christiansmuslims-jews>. This definition is according to the United Nations Population Division (2014).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

impact/alter the religious terrain of the places they settle. The challenge for the church is not only to understand the migrant people's religion and practices, but to seek to present the gospel of Jesus Christ in a way that will reach them for the Kingdom.

The danger in not acclimating to these migrant groups is the failure to reach them for Christ. If the church is unprepared to receive different peoples who speak different languages and practice different customs and forms of worship, it will miss out on the opportunity to significantly effect world evangelization in its sphere of influence.<sup>42</sup> Although the world is changing rapidly, the church must keep up; the human tendency towards homogeneity and individualization will result in ineffective evangelism and an impotent discipleship.<sup>43</sup> The only hope to overcome this trend is for the church to clarify the essence of what it does and deliberately set its focus and purpose to achieve it. This becomes especially acute when churches attempt to disciple these new converts from other countries and religions.

The reason cross-cultural awareness is so critical to discipleship is that programs and curriculum for discipleship are constructed within a particular culture and are consistent with the worldview, mindset, and perspective of their author. Thus, concepts and models of discipleship work well in theory, but often encounter difficulties when applied across cultures. While the basic tenets of the model or concept may be valid, the unique cultural practice and expression may not match the model's intended audience and outcome.

Culture is comprised of a shared set of values, beliefs, norms, symbols, and ideologies, which impact everything about a people group, from patterns of interpersonal

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<sup>42</sup> David F. D'Amico, "Evangelization Across Cultures in the U.S.: What to Do With the World Come to Us?" *Review and Expositor* 90, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 83-99.

<sup>43</sup> David E. Stevens, *God's New Humanity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012).

relationships, goals, worldview, and general “way of life.”<sup>44</sup> Cultures process information differently due to inherent variables. Hofstede et al. delineated several of these variables and how different cultures approach them. They included such variables as power distance (how cultures perceive and respond to authority), individualism/collectivism (the role of the individual vs. the role of the group), masculinity/femininity (gender roles), ambiguity intolerance (handling uncertainty), long-term/short-term orientation, and indulgence/restraint.<sup>45</sup> These variables will lead to cultural expressions of symbols, heroes, and rituals, all of which are subsumed under practices, based upon values. These have direct influence on the practice and understanding of religion; thus, the authors argued for a mutual understanding of these values to better facilitate cross-cultural communication, which can decrease the focus on one’s own culture and in the process advance the goal of cross-cultural discipleship.

In studying the challenges of cross-cultural discipleship, the literature presents a similarly strong case for cultural awareness. Before one can reach people across cultures, one must be aware of his or her own culture, including its unique traditions, values, styles of worship, method of communication, social roles, and idiosyncrasies of interpersonal interaction.<sup>46</sup> From there, one can begin the process of understanding the same dynamics in other cultures. Once the actual work of discipleship begins, the focus shifts to what the transcendent Kingdom values of Christ’s culture call us to emulate, and to use the mutual

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<sup>44</sup> Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis, and Aaron Wildavsky, *Cultural Theory* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990).

<sup>45</sup> Gert Hofstede, Jan Gert, and Michael Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Viggo Sogaard, “Go and Communicate Good News,” in *Paradigm Shifts in Christian Witness*, ed. Charles VanEngen, Darrell Whiteman, and J. Dudley Woodberry (New York: Orbis Books, 2008).

learning process elucidated to employ these new values, social roles, and expectations within the mutual learning process.

Plueddemann expounded upon this in his work on cross-cultural leadership. In discussing the tensions and conflict that will develop in such leadership, he reiterated the need for both partners to uncover their own unconscious cultural values, to seek to discover the cultural values of others, and ultimately to come to a place where Biblical principles are sought in Scripture to address the differences through mutual synthesis. Realizing that both God and Satan are at work in all cultures, the participants must avoid the traps of ethnocentrism (my culture is the best, others are inferior) and relativism (every culture is inherently noble). Working to understand other cultures offers us the opportunity to see God's grace across His creation, and supplement the unique elements of our own culture.

In doing so, the discipler must be constantly vigilant about not allowing what Lingenfelter called "default values"<sup>47</sup> to creep in. These values are the default methods and mechanisms of one's culture of primacy, which we learn in infancy, hone throughout life, and ultimately bring into our work. They consist of values and expectations that are typical of our culture, which we drift towards in times of ambiguity or crisis. These will negatively affect the ability to synthesize one's culture with another and will diffuse the focus on Kingdom values.

Theologians and missiologists have struggled to identify effective methods to accomplish this. Irazarry proposed an initial approach of "intercultural" church

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<sup>47</sup> Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Leading Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 71.

ministry.<sup>48</sup> He defined this as an intentional process where culturally defined groups within a multicultural community (e.g., the church) engage each other in a deliberate work of mutual understanding. Through this work, they develop strategies to live and work together as unique but joined members of the same community. This focus on mutual understanding and a common ground of relational ministry is also found in the idea of “cross-cultural competence,” which stresses the need to understand other cultures before we can effectively engage them.<sup>49</sup>

Lingenfelter has written extensively on this, labeling it the “contextualization” of the Gospel message. This stresses the importance of framing the Gospel in language forms that are “appropriate and meaningful”<sup>50</sup> to the local culture. The reason this is so critical to cross-cultural ministry is that cross-cultural workers will inherently carry their social values and expectations with them in doing cross-cultural work. This tendency is typically subconscious, but no less problematic because it colors the way we understand and communicate the Gospel. This is cited as an initial problem for Jesus’ disciples. The message of radical change and love that they brought to the world was met with great opposition. Their call to obedience to Christ, suffering for Him, and allegiance to the Kingdom conflicted with established value systems and traditions among Jews and pagans alike. It required constant contextualization for the Gospel to take hold in the known world.

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<sup>48</sup> Jose R. Irazzary, “Toward an Intercultural Approach to Theological Education for Ministry,” in *Shaping Beloved Community*, ed. David V. Esterlibne and Ogbu U. Kalu (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

<sup>49</sup> Mark DeYmaz, *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2007).

<sup>50</sup> Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Transforming Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 12.



The way the early church/disciples overcame these cross-cultural conflicts, offering a suggestion for us today, involves directing the work of discipleship to “pilgrim principles.”<sup>51</sup> Pilgrim principles are Biblical value systems, a set of values that transcend culture and direct Christians to those things that God, through His Word and the Holy Spirit, call us to. They do not neglect the person’s unique cultural norms, but challenge the Christian to evaluate them against the radical values of Christ’s Kingdom. These must be evaluated across the spectrum of functioning, from societal facets (labor, productivity, authority) to personal areas (generosity, family). The goal is not to impose a particular social system of values (i.e. American) but to call people to follow Christ.

This can be accomplished as Christians in cross-cultural settings understand the different people groups they minister to, develop competencies in how to address their needs, frame discipleship within the unique way that their culture processes information, yet at the same time call them to transcend that culture for the Kingdom values of Christ’s culture. Christians are called to be “agents of transformation,”<sup>52</sup> where those they minister to can accept the Gospel, become disciples of Christ, learn to live obedient lives in the context of their culture and communities, and do so by not merely replicating the values of the prevailing culture. This is done as committed disciples invest in the lives of others, ultimately leading them to follow Christ and make disciples of others. Lingenfelter stated that “transforming culture occurs when the people of God . . . walk in the light of God’s Word,” living as pilgrims as Jesus’ disciples did.<sup>53</sup>

This concept of cultural competency is also reflected in Ashby’s work in training multiethnic people in the field of pastoral care and counseling. He described the process

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>53</sup> Lingenfelter, *Leading Cross-Culturally*, 179.

of developing cross-cultural competency as a five-step paradigm: one, to develop the ability to first understand one's own culture; two, to develop the ability to identify experiences and information drawn from orientation's apart from one's own; three, to develop the capacity to demonstrate multicultural attitudes, approaches, and skills leading to effective communication; four, to develop the ability to identify contextual barriers, including one's own limitations in communication; and five, to demonstrate respect and willingness to learn from multicultural interaction.<sup>54</sup> This process of developing cultural competency starts with the individual's self-understanding and progresses to an understanding of, and synthesis with, the other culture. Most models for cross-cultural ministry emphasize this same general process, and have been cited in settings involving international business<sup>55</sup> and Biblical preaching.<sup>56</sup>

In the same way, Ward discussed the need for cultural awareness in the training of Pastors in multicultural settings, particularly when supervising trainees.<sup>57</sup> Her approach to the problem is for supervisors to be aware of their own cultural biases before entering into the cultural context of the students. Once the work is underway, supervisors must be constantly sensitive to the unique linguistic and cultural signals of the students' culture. This requires a continual contextualization of the work, without which the ministry of cross-cultural discipleship becomes one-sided and ineffective.

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<sup>54</sup> Homer U. Ashby, Jr., "Teaching Pastoral Care and Counseling in the Cross-Cultural Classroom," in *Shaping Beloved Community*, ed. David V. Esterlibne and Ogbu U. Kalu (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

<sup>55</sup> Tom Stallter, "Cultural Intelligence: A Model for Cross-Cultural Problem Solving," *Missiology: An International Review* 37, no. 4 (October 2009): 543-54.

<sup>56</sup> Nibs Stroupe, "Looking on the Other Side: Preaching in a Multicultural Society," *Journal for Preachers* (Pentecost 2006): 21-25.

<sup>57</sup> Edwina Ward, "Similarities and Differences in Cross-Cultural Pastoral Supervision," *Journal for Southern Africa* 116 (July 2003): 51-64.

Throughout the literature, what are consistently cited as the greatest challenges to cross-cultural discipleship are communication and, more specifically, language, which will be addressed in the following section.

### **Language, Transposition, and Cross-Cultural Discipleship**

The primary challenge to discipleship, cross-cultural discipleship, and effective cross-cultural ministry in general is language. Tomlinson stated that “language is unquestionably the fundamental medium through which we grasp and relate to the world today.”<sup>58</sup> If globalization is the norm today, then culture and language become paramount in how we will relate in this new era of increasingly common and complex globalization.

Garces-Foley stated that language and the way it is used is the key factor in the multiethnic church.<sup>59</sup> This is because differing styles of communication and the expectations that accompany them can lead to a sense of disconnection with the church community when not handled well. Nida reinforced this when stating, “Words only have meanings in terms of the culture of which the language is a part.”<sup>60</sup> When one set of people (or individuals) have a low understanding of the cultural differences in their midst, they assume others will understand the Bible in the same way they do. DeYmaz, in his discussion on cultural competence, stressed the need to be “proficient in the idiosyncrasies of language” as a vital part of training and discipling congregants.<sup>61</sup> All of these authors stressed that any block in effective communication will hinder discipleship.

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<sup>58</sup> John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 151.

<sup>59</sup> Kathleen Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>60</sup> Eugene A. Nida, “Reflections on Cultures, Language, Learning, and Communication,” in *Paradigm Shifts in Christian Witness*, ed. Charles VanEngen, Darrell Whiteman, and J. Dudley Woodberry (New York: Orbis Books, 2008).

<sup>61</sup> DeYmaz, 96.

Sanneh remarked how this dynamic is a significant aspect of cross-cultural translation work. He noted that while God is not a concept that can be interchanged with the culture at hand, neither can we see Him as outside of the cultural understanding of a particular group. Thus, translation work must “force a distinction between the essence of the message and its cultural presuppositions, with the assumption that such a separation enables us to affirm the primacy of the message over its cultural underpinnings.”<sup>62</sup> There must be an awareness and a sensitivity to the cultural understanding of the word or concept, and the translator must use that in determining how to communicate the information at hand effectively.

Similarly, Case-Winters observed that language is a primary concern in cross-cultural theological education because so much of the material does not translate linguistically or culturally.<sup>63</sup> She noted that what typically occurs is that the dominant group will end up controlling the communication, and the mutuality, which has been identified as so important in cross-cultural work, is diminished. In the same way, Angel discussed the effect that globalization has had on survey research. He noted that “language is not a precise instrument.”<sup>64</sup> The things that make for effective communication within a culture (i.e., metaphor, simile, metonymy) are all filtered through the individual’s cultural consciousness. These have led him and others to

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<sup>62</sup> Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 31.

<sup>63</sup> Anna Case-Winters, “Multi-Cultural Theological Education: On Doing Differences Differently,” in *Shaping Beloved Community*, ed. David V. Esterlibne and Ogbu U. Kalu (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

<sup>64</sup> Ronald J. Angel, “After Babel: Language and the Fundamental Challenges of Comparative Aging Research.” *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology* 28, no. 3 (September 2013), accessed <http://www.deepdyve.com/lp/springer-journals/after-babel-language-and-the-fundamental-challenges-of-comparative-91CYxG0H0E>

question how effective cross-cultural surveys can be, given the limitations that language poses.

Wendland likewise discussed the idea of “linguistic prejudice,” labeling it “communication interference.”<sup>65</sup> This occurs when one tries to communicate the Biblical message from a Western linguistic and conceptual perspective into another cultural setting. He cited this as an especially difficult issue in several areas: worldwide evangelism (where making decisions for Christ is difficult in settings in which people groups prefer to process important decisions); theological education (where the didactic style of Western education conflicts with inductive learning styles of African culture); preaching (the Western style of study and logic conflicts with the African style of oral tradition, story, topical arrangement of information, and a more dramatic presentation style); and Bible translation (where most of the training is based on English Bibles, which hinders effective communication by the students). The inability of the presenting culture to account adequately for these linguistic “prejudices” will hinder the communication of material to the receptor culture.

A comparable explanation was offered by Jandt, who identified common barriers to translation work that may hinder cross-cultural communication. He included vocabulary equivalence (lacking words that are directly translatable), idiomatic equivalence (where an idiom cannot be directly translated), grammatical-syntactical equivalence (where languages do not share the same grammar), experiential equivalence

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<sup>65</sup> Ernst R. Wendland, “The Interference Factor in Christian Cross-Cultural Communication: With Special Reference to South-Central Africa,” *Missiology: An International Review* 23, no. 3 (July 1995): 267-80.

(where the experience or object does not exist in a culture), and conceptual equivalence (where abstract ideas may not exist in the same way in different languages).<sup>66</sup>

Examples for this have been given by several authors. Ji related the particular problems associated with Western language in translation work among Japanese and Korean cultures. Bringing Western words and concepts into these cultures poses problems with simple things like capitalization, the lack of definite articles in those languages, and the “Christianization” of pagan words.<sup>67</sup> He stated that the translator must work to understand the varied cultural traditions of the target culture if effective translation of the Scriptures is to take place. Another example was offered by Raabe, who stated that just as cultural language is specific to the people group, so is Biblical language. He asked, “can an Eskimo, for example, understand terms such as ‘justification,’ ‘ransom,’ ‘atonement,’ and ‘covenant?’”<sup>68</sup> Biblical language was set in a specific cultural environment and those who seek to teach or preach it must work to make it meaningful in the receptor cultures of today.

Harries relayed an example of visiting Western Kenya and asking a local church elder how their understanding of God had changed from what it was one hundred years ago (prior to the time of missionary work). The elder replied, “Not at all.” The reason offered was that the Kenyans had already formulated their sense of God and had developed language to describe Him. Their oral tradition of knowing and teaching about God was not affected by the Western names given for God, which often impacted

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<sup>66</sup> Fred E. Jandt, *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication* (5th ed.) (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007).

<sup>67</sup> Won Yong Ji, “Being Cross-Cultural, Slogan or Reality?” *Concordia Journal* 19, no. 1 (January 1993): 9.

<sup>68</sup> Paul Raabe, “Cross-Cultural Communication and Biblical Language,” *Missio Apostolica* 4, no. 2 (1996): 79-82.

Westerners attempts to evangelize them. The refusal to understand these traditional names for God was a hindrance (in Western eyes) to further theological discussion.<sup>69</sup>

Mattam also called for a “new language in theology” relative to the Asian context. Similarly acknowledging that the Bible has its own historical, theological, and social conditioning, he recommended that the church rethink its approach to language and culture in presenting the Gospel in Indian cross-cultural settings. The historic European/colonial embodiment of the Gospel often conflicts with the Indian model that stresses the culture of the oppressed and suffering. The people of Asia have a unique theology of how God has worked in history and among their own people, and he called on the Western church to incorporate their stories, myths, folklore, arts, songs, plays, skills, proverbs, and metaphors into their expression of the person and message of Jesus Christ.<sup>70</sup>

Thistleton reminded the reader that “both the text and the interpreter are conditioned by their place in history and culture.”<sup>71</sup> He posited that these two factors must be brought together in relation to each other for effective communication across cultures to occur. Likewise, Smalley stated that “the Gospel has forever been clothed in multiple languages and has been colored by them.”<sup>72</sup> He provided the historical example of Adoniram Judson’s work in translating the Bible into the Burmese language. He attributed the success of that early work to Judson’s efforts in becoming well versed in both the language and customs of the Burmese people. The failure to adequately know

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<sup>69</sup> Jim Harries, “The Name of God in Africa and Related Contemporary Theological, Development and Linguistic Concerns,” *Exchange* 38 (2009): 271-91.

<sup>70</sup> J. Mattam, “The Message of Jesus and Our Customary Theological Language: An Indian Approach to a New Language in Theology and Inculturation,” *Exchange* 34, no. 3 (2005): 116-34.

<sup>71</sup> Anthony Thistleton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer and Wittgenstein* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1980), 16.

<sup>72</sup> William A. Smalley, “Language and Culture in the Development of Bible Society Translation Theory and Practice,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (April 1995): 61-71.

both the language and culture of the people has frustrated many missionary endeavors at Bible translation, and fosters a “missionary knows best” attitude, which makes cross-cultural ministry more difficult.

These examples reflect the challenges that language and cognition offer to translators, missionaries, and cross-cultural discipleship in general. To address this problem, several authors and researchers have offered ideas. In the most general sense, Goff reiterated that effective intercultural communication requires, first, a good understanding of the local cultural values in order to make a reasonable accommodation to the language of the receptor culture. He cited two core convictions: one, the Bible speaks to all people and cultures; and two, all people who come to faith must be discipled. Western culture has not been effective at articulating the Gospel to other cultures because of a lack of understanding of the receptor culture’s language, or because they have imposed behavioral mandates which are not acceptable to the receptor culture. He felt to be more effective, we need to “incarnate” the message to the receptor culture while never compromising the essentials that Christ taught.<sup>73</sup>

Fortosis restated the truth that the moral absolutes of God exist cross cultures, but they must be interpreted and applied uniquely to fit the forms of the given culture. His approach was to study how the moral behavior of a culture contrasts with the other (in his case, American), to explore the unique cultural rationale for the behavior, to relate the rationale to Biblical-ethical principles, and to formulate a proper perspective on the behavior. The goal is to place the principles of God’s Word into “new wineskins” that fit

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<sup>73</sup> Bill Goff, “Cross-Cultural Ethics for World-Class Christians,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 42, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 45-64.



the contours of the cultural context.<sup>74</sup> Analogous to this is deWaard and Nida's notion that in translating Biblical truth, the translator must strive to find functional and semantic equivalents that will match the receptor culture's original source-language.<sup>75</sup> In both cases, the translator or missionary seeks to find comparable language structures to match both contexts in order to communicate truth effectively.

Song affirmed this when he observed that discipleship in context is critical to its success. Missionaries have long sought to focus on the receptor culture when initially communicating the Gospel, to insure it is presented in a favorable way. However, he noted that the same ethic has not been applied to the follow-up work of discipleship; the result has been many decisions for Christ, but few real disciples for Christ. As has been noted previously, the missionary/discipler must realize that they have their own religious/spiritual orientation, which will tint the nature of their work. Once that is acknowledged and accounted for, the work of cross-cultural discipleship can proceed, but it must be grounded in the context of the receptor culture. Any curriculum that is used needs to be developed with a sensitivity to how it would be perceived in the receptor culture. Song's approach to this involves, one, to determine and state the supracontextual message of the Bible; two, to identify the needs/issues of the receptor culture; three, to create a unique discipleship curriculum; and four, to determine the best pedagogical approach to the context. In all, the goal is to pay attention to the context while being faithful to the message.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Steve A. Fortosis, "A Model for Understanding Cross-Cultural Morality," *Missiology: An International Review* 18, no. 2 (April 1990): 163-76.

<sup>75</sup> Jan deWaard and Eugene A. Nida, *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 1986).

<sup>76</sup> Minho Song, "Contextualization and Discipleship: Closing the Gap Between Theory and Practice," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 30, no. 3 (July 2006): 249-63.

Resolving the problems associated with culture and context in language processing invariably leads to the concept of transposition. As was noted in Chapter One, transposition involves rephrasing or translating the ideas expressed in one language (or cultural, ethnic, social group) into an appropriate expression of another to make it understandable, according to Karamanian. For Massoum, the goal of transposition is not to identify a literal equivalent to the word or term, but to find something that has a similar cultural connotation. This allows a culture group to better comprehend the intent of a word or term used by another cultural group; this in turn should increase their comprehension and application of the word or term. Many of the works noted use the mechanics of transposition as a part of their solution to the culture/context dilemma.

Loba-Mkole chose another term for transposition in calling for “intercultural biblical hermeneutics.”<sup>77</sup> In this, the exegete is conscious of the fact that the Bible and its message are both sacred and normative for living the Christian life. But in presenting it interculturally, the chosen text must be reread and rephrased against the contextual background of the reader. In other words, the Gospel of Jesus must be rooted in the culture of a people and incarnated to make it understandable to that culture. The process of incarnating the message forms the basis for the cultural transposition of language.

This is reinforced by Moreau, who utilized the idea of contextualization in describing the cultural transposition of language. He believed that cross-cultural communication must comprise a process whereby the Christian adapts the forms, content, and praxis of the faith to make it comprehensible to the receptor culture. He noted that historically, this process has favored one of two approaches: either a “scriptural model”

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<sup>77</sup> Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole, “The New Testament and Intercultural Exegesis in Africa,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 30, no. 1 (September 2007): 7-28.

(or translation model), where the Christian seeks to translate the message directly so that it will fit into the new culture; or the “setting model” (or existential model), where the existential context of the setting is prioritized, out of which the contextualized work of translation takes place. Moreau advocated for a combined approach where the timeless truth of the message is dynamically contextualized to the receptor culture in ways that protect the sacredness of the text, yet is indigenously understandable to the receiving culture.<sup>78</sup>

Smalley called this process “dynamic equivalence translation,” drawing on work done by Nida and deWaard. Dynamic equivalence translation contains six key facets. One, the translator will do good exegetical work to determine the essential truth of the text. Two, the translator must not only understand the meaning of the text, but be able to state it in natural equivalents; this would require a consideration of cultural and linguistic differences. Three, the translation must be understandable and accessible across the spectrum of the receptor culture (linguistic, socioeconomic, educational, literacy); the idea of “common language translation”<sup>79</sup> relates to this idea. Four, the message must be understood as a part of a whole rather than as separate pieces. Translation work often focuses on specific words and phrases, whereas a book of the Bible has a comprehensive message and theme. Dynamic equivalence seeks to consider stories and typology of the receptor culture in understanding the complete message intended. Five, there must be consideration of the behavioral descriptions in the Bible which may not have an equivalent in the receptor culture. For example, what would beating one’s breast mean in

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<sup>78</sup> Scott Moreau, “Contextualization that is Comprehensive,” *Missiology* 34, no 3 (July 2006): 325-35.

<sup>79</sup> William L. Wonderly, *Bible Translations for Popular Use* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1968).

different cultures, and how could the intent of that be better understood in the other culture? Six, meaning must take precedence over form, although when the form is significant to understanding, it should be reflected in the translation. Dynamic equivalence is a helpful construct in the cultural transposition of language because in its comprehensive approach, it seeks to include meaning, intent, context, and behavioral considerations in and of the receptor culture.

The dominant thought throughout the literature is that in cross-cultural education, missionary work, ministry, discipleship, and theological education, we need to use language that is understandable to our hearers, and doing that requires that we know the culture of those to whom we are trying to speak. Bernstein affirmed that “cultures do not stand to each other like self-enclosed windowless monads. Insofar as all cultures are linguistic, they are porous—open to understanding.”<sup>80</sup> Similarly, Mittwede maintained that Biblical knowledge can be best incorporated into a person’s cognitive structure when it is assimilated into their pre-existing schemata.<sup>81</sup> Thus, rather than trying to invent a new, culturally-specific language, the essential truths of the Bible should be transposed in ways that the receptor culture can understand them. One of the prime benefits of this, not only in Biblical understanding, is that it can significantly impact the receptor culture’s worldview, which has significant implications for cross-cultural discipleship.

Lastly, the field of teaching English as a second language (ESL) has offered helpful insight into the mechanics of transposition. Given that ESL seeks to “help

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<sup>80</sup> Richard J. Bernstein, “The Hermeneutics of Cross-Cultural Understanding,” in *Cross Cultural Conversation* (The American Academy of Religion, Cultural Criticism Series, 5th d.), ed. by Cleo McNelly Kearns (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996), 35.

<sup>81</sup> Steven K. Mittwede, “Cognitive Educational Approaches as Means of Envisioning and Effecting Worldview,” *Journal of Education and Christian Belief* 17, no. 2 (2013): 301-24.

students acquire facility with the English language and function in everyday life,”<sup>82</sup> the methods employed can provide insight into how people from differing cultures can acquire Biblical truth in a way that facilitates understandability and applicability to their everyday lives. Two of the most common techniques involve simplifying language and identifying a common core subset of vocabulary.

Gray and Fleischman stated that word comprehension is made easier by keeping the language simple and clear; using short, complete sentences; and avoiding the use of slang, figures of speech, and idioms.<sup>83</sup> In a report prepared for the U.S. Department of Education, Condelli et al. found that an effective resource, the *Sam and Pat* textbook, significantly helped ESL students because it sequenced the teaching of English sound and spelling by moving from a simple to complex set of literacy skills. Furthermore, it used a simplified grammar and a vocabulary that was relevant to the lives of this population. The value in this was reinforced in a study by Stahl, who found that the difficulty of the words in a text is the most important element in determining the difficulty of the text itself.<sup>84</sup> The size of the students’ vocabulary was a strong predictor of their ability in reading comprehension, suggesting simplicity of language as one of the most effective means to language comprehension.

In regards to a common core language, McCarten found it important to isolate the most frequent two thousand to five thousand vocabulary items and to give them priority

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<sup>82</sup> Larry Condelli, Stephanie Cronen, and Johannes Bos, *The Impact of a Reading Intervention for Low-Literate Adult ESL Learners*, Report prepared by the Institute of Education Sciences for the U. S. Department of Education, December 2010, 4.

<sup>83</sup> Tracy Gray and Steve Fleischman, “Successful Strategies for English Language Learners,” *Educational Leadership* 62, no. 4 (December 2004-January 2005), 84-85.

<sup>84</sup> S. Stahl, “Vocabulary and Readability: How Knowing Word Meanings Affects Comprehension,” *Topics in Language Disorders* 23 (July-September 2003): 241-7.

in teaching.<sup>85</sup> This was also mentioned in the study by Stahl, in that trying to teach too large a vocabulary will negatively impact reading comprehension. These methods and theories from the field of ESL augment the studies on cross-cultural discipleship by offering a simple formula for the work of language transposition: use simple words and phrases, avoid complex grammar, make the transposition relevant to the receptor culture, and work with a limited subset of the primary language group's vocabulary.

### Summary

Authors such as Hull, Brueggemann, Villafane, and Boice presented a strong case for discipleship being one of the core necessities of church ministry and missionary endeavor. While the focus in said work is often geared towards winning souls for Christ, without the grounding in the essentials of the Word, prayer, witnessing, fellowship, and worship, the church will be blessed with many converts, but few true disciples.

There are many approaches and models to how best to accomplish this, but the literature advocates for the requisites of a deep commitment to Christ (Longnecker, Brueggemann), a radical, uncompromising devotion to the process (Yoder, Camp, Augsburg, Bonhoeffer), a willingness to sacrifice (Bonhoeffer, Henderson, Pattaruwadathil), a strong Biblio-historical/theological framework for content (Dunn, Stock, Stortz, Patte), incorporating a practical and experiential component (Dunn, Ogden), a teacher/pupil model of instruction (Ogden, Graham Ward), a focus on deep spiritual transformation (Cosgrave, Ivory), the necessity of the process being reproducible in others (Hadidian, Hull), local church buy-in with the process (Hull), and purposeful engagement with the world (Dunn, Villafane, Camp).

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<sup>85</sup> Jeanne McCarten, *Teaching Vocabulary: Lessons From the Corpus, Lessons for the Classroom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

However, discipleship has historically been most efficacious when developed and taught in homogeneous cultures. Problems arise when discipleship models and curriculum are brought across cultural borders, or when different cultures enter the homogeneous culture, as has been evident with the increasing globalization of the Christian community. Discipleship material that once sufficed for the homogeneous community now faces challenges, as it is often not understandable or applicable to the receptor culture. Even God's Word, though transcendent of culture, was written in a particular culture and time and is understood differently within different cultures. Cross-cultural discipleship thus becomes a complicated venture which requires a complex set of actions.

The pivotal piece of any cross-cultural discipleship effort is language. Language is the primary mode of communication in the world and it becomes a critical piece in the enterprise of cross-cultural discipleship. The literature presents a varied approach to how language can be used effectively; whether through contextualization (Lingenfelter, Moreau), dynamic equivalence (Smalley), intercultural biblical hermeneutics (Loba-Mkole), common language theory (Wonderly), or incarnating the message (Goff), all strive to take the existing language of one culture and reshape it in a way that makes it understandable to another—in short, transposition (Stott, Karamanian).

Some of the key requirements of this work are that it requires awareness and sensitivity of the originating culture's language and context; it requires a significant exegesis of the culture of destination, including common ways of communicating, styles, modes, and methods of the language, and an awareness of their place and context; it requires more than straightforward translation (substituting one word for another) to

include the theme and narrative of the text; it requires the use of simple, uncomplicated language and grammar that are relevant to the receptor culture; it requires the utilization of other resources inherent in the receptor culture, such as story, metaphor, and historical meaning; it requires humility on the part of the transposer; it requires a commitment to communicate the core, essential truths of Scripture, while not compromising the truths of God in the attempt to make them relevant; and it requires that the exegete approach the work with the attitude of the apostle Paul, who sought to be all things to all people in order to win them to Christ (1 Cor. 11:19).



CHAPTER THREE  
PROCEDURE AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Ministry Setting of the Project**

The ministry context of the research project was a church (“the church”) located in the Sunset Park neighborhood of Brooklyn. Sunset Park lies between Fifteenth Street and Sixty-fifth Street (north-south) and Ninth Avenue to New York Harbor (east-west).<sup>1</sup> The area was originally rural in character, but with the development of the Brooklyn waterfront and accompanying factories, warehouses and piers, it became a drawing point for immigrants and employment since the late nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The neighborhood’s ethnic composition has reflected the waves of immigration that occurred in New York City as a whole; in the 1800s, the area was primarily Irish, Italian, and German. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, a large Scandinavian community developed and, most recently, an Asian population has emerged, primarily from China.

The church was founded in 1913 by Norwegian immigrants who came to work on the docks of Brooklyn during the period of Scandinavian immigration. The church originally conducted all services in the Norwegian language and transitioned to English during the 1930s. Since the 1980s, the neighborhood has become home to a large Chinese population, as well as Latin American and Asian Indian.<sup>3</sup> In response to these

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<sup>1</sup> *A History of Sunset Park*, <http://www.sunset-park.com/history.html> (2013).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

demographic trends, the church called a Chinese Pastor in 2005 to create a second congregation that would minister to this burgeoning group of Chinese immigrants. This second congregation is still in existence today. It is exclusively Chinese, with worship services, printed materials, and general language activities all conducted in the Chinese dialects of Mandarin and Cantonese.

The population of the Sunset Park neighborhood has grown from 136,334 in 2000 to 150,460 in 2008.<sup>4</sup> The population density is 53,800 people per square mile.<sup>5</sup> Approximately 57.1% of the neighborhood is foreign-born, with the primary ethnicities being Hispanic (54%), Asian (27%), and Caucasian (15%). In the immediate vicinity of the church (the eight-block range north-south, and the two-avenue range east-west), there are 10,263 people; 6,007 are Asian (58.5%) and 2,222 are Hispanic (21.6%).<sup>6</sup> Eighteen percent of the population is below the age of eighteen, the average household size is 3.1, and the percentage of households headed by single mothers is 10.2.<sup>7</sup> Educationally, 55% of the residents have less than a high school education, and 10% have completed college; 34.3% of the residents of Sunset Park “do not speak English well.”<sup>8</sup> Socioeconomically, 25.3% of its residents live below the Federal poverty level, and median household income for 2011 was \$39,650.<sup>9</sup>

Since its inception, the ethnic and cultural demographic of the original church congregation (now called the “English” congregation) fluctuated with the community at

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<sup>4</sup> *Center for the Study of Brooklyn. Census 2010 Hard-To-Count Project.* Produced by Karen Duffy, Intergovernmental Relations, New York State Senate. March 2010. [http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/pub/departments/csb/documents/csb/Sunset\\_Park\\_Hard\\_To\\_Count\\_Report.pdf](http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/pub/departments/csb/documents/csb/Sunset_Park_Hard_To_Count_Report.pdf) (2013).

<sup>5</sup> *Sunset Park Demographics*, <http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Sunset-Park-Bkln-NY.html> (2013).

<sup>6</sup> *Center for the Study of Brooklyn.*

<sup>7</sup> *Sunset Park Demographics.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

large. Originally 100% Norwegian, it is presently comprised of approximately 55% Asian Indian, 20% Chinese, 10% Latino, 10% European-Anglo, and 5% Caribbean Islanders. The “Chinese” congregation (initiated in 2005) is 100% Chinese; when this congregation was started, the majority of the people came from Hong Kong and spoke the Cantonese dialect. More recently, the majority of the people come from the province of Fujian and speaks the Mandarin dialect.

The salient feature of the church’s context is that despite the two distinct congregations, the church considers itself one unified Body and is fused in vision, mission, leadership, and financial matters. This has been a positive development in terms of Kingdom ministry, in that the multiethnic/multicultural church is the earthly model for heavenly worship (Revelation 5:9). However, this has been easier to state than to live. Efforts to minister, worship, and serve together have been frustrated by the language and cultural barriers that exist. Whereas at one time the two congregations had periodic joint services, the amount of work required to conduct them has proven so onerous that the church leadership decided to hold them for special events only. In its place, the church has moved towards a service model of cross-cultural ministry, where the two congregations focus on service activities in the community. In that model, the Chinese congregation can take the lead when speech is required and the English congregation does so for acts of service.

In addition to this service model of ministry, the church’s philosophy of ministry holds the concept of discipleship in very high regard.<sup>10</sup> The church believes that Jesus’

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<sup>10</sup> Second Evangelical Free Church *Information Brochure*, section on “Our Mission” states, “The purpose of Second EFC is to bring glory to God by making disciples of Jesus Christ, who proclaim and live-out the Good News to all people. 2EFC seeks to accomplish this mission by using both one-on-one and

last words to His disciples, to “go and make disciples of all nations,”<sup>11</sup> is normative for the church today and must inform every aspect of her mission. Given the unique demographics of the two congregations, the church believes that to make disciples of all nations not only is the mandate for the church, but also is within her grasp to actualize.

Thus far, the church has focused on a two-pronged approach to discipleship: one conducted in Chinese and one in English. In both, discipleship is done in small group settings and one-on-one arrangements, depending on the individual’s needs and availability. The discipleship materials used have been determined by the language of the group, although in the case of the Navigator’s 2:7, the curriculum was located in both the Chinese and English languages.

As the church seeks to make disciples “from every tribe and language and people and nation,”<sup>12</sup> the multiplicities of cultures present, along with the varied customs, worldviews, traditions, and languages that accompany them, have made this difficult. This ministry problem is addressed in the research by determining whether culturally transposing a portion of the Navigator’s 2:7 discipleship material will increase the understanding of the material among the multiethnic/multicultural church congregation.

In summary, the history and present amalgamation of the church present a ministry setting for cross-cultural discipleship—more specifically, a situation where a uniform curriculum could potentially bridge the church’s ethnic and cultural divides.

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group discipleship models, to train and equip the Body. The goal of our discipleship is to ‘make disciples who will make disciples.’”

<sup>11</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Matthew 28:20.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Revelation 5:9.

## Methodology Background

In 2010-11, twenty-five people from the church participated in a one-year discipleship program using the Navigator's 2:7 discipleship material.<sup>13</sup> As was previously stated, given the ethnic/cultural demographic of the church, the majority of the participants did not consider English their first language. In the course of leading the discipleship program, many of the students struggled with words and phrases contained in the books. Often, the group had to pause and allow idioms or figures of speech that were alien to the participants to be explained. Two of the students required additional help outside of the group, as the language proved to be especially problematic.

During the course of the teaching and for several months thereafter, several organizations, churches, and publishing groups were contacted in an effort to identify a suitable cross-cultural discipleship curriculum to use in subsequent groups. Most of the groups contacted used American-based materials and simply adapted them on-the-fly. Others, who were primarily monocultural, used materials in their native language and developed in their home countries. In some cases, churches developed their own materials, but they were singularly focused on the unique demographics of their church. The struggle to identify a curriculum that people from different cultural backgrounds could understand formed the basis for the research project.

The question arose of whether one uniform discipleship curriculum could be developed that could be used across the ethnic/cultural spectrum of the church. In doing so, the conclusion was that language would be the most challenging aspect. Could a uniform set of words, expressions, and ideas be applied across cultures that would

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<sup>13</sup> The Navigators. *The 2:7 Series*, 2011.

facilitate cross-cultural discipleship? Or, as was mentioned in Chapter Two in discussing ESL methodology, would it be better to focus on a simple version of written English, with a set vocabulary that second language learners could comprehend?

Most of the research reviewed in Chapter Two focused on transposing words and phrases from one culture to another (Song<sup>14</sup>, Ji<sup>15</sup>). Few studies were found that made an effort to transpose a language in such a way that it would be applicable to several cultures at once. Though Moreau<sup>16</sup> and Smalley<sup>17</sup> supported the understanding of the receptor culture's unique beliefs, morals, and traditions in conducting a successful transposition, rarely was the effort made to understand multiple sets of indices all at once, and to create a common language that all could comprehend together.

The purpose of the research was to make discipleship material understandable across a broad cultural array such as existed at the church. The method employed was to have a multicultural group study and transpose the material together, then survey the church's two congregations to determine whether it was more understandable. The church was chosen for the setting of the study because of its multicultural composition, and its familiarity with and commitment to the ministry of discipleship. Since the church's experience with discipleship material focused on one specific curriculum, the Navigator's 2:7 course, it was concluded that this same material would be utilized in conducting a cultural transposition of the words and phrases.

Permission was granted by the Navigator's organization and the following statement was included with the transposed material:

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<sup>14</sup> Song, *Contextualization and Discipleship: Closing the Gap Between Theory and Practice*, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Ji, *Being Cross-Cultural, Slogan or Reality?*

<sup>16</sup> Moreau, *Contextualization That Is Comprehensive*.

<sup>17</sup> Smalley, *Language and Culture in the Development of Bible Society Translation Theory and Practice*.

This is some discipleship material that is based upon the *Updated 2:7 Series* published by The Navigators (©2011 by The Navigators), which has been modified for this group. It is for research purposes only and is not a published/recognized curriculum in its own right.<sup>18</sup>

### **Project Design**

The project design was experimental research. A research problem (understandability of American-based discipleship materials by multicultural groups) was addressed by an intervention (transposing discipleship material) and the effects of the intervention were measured (by the results of a survey instrument). The method for measuring the effectiveness of the transposition was accomplished through two primary means: the transposition process and the transposed materials testing.

The transposition process involved the formation of the group to transpose the Navigator's 2:7 materials, and to observe their thinking and interactions as they did so. Additionally, this facet of the project design included using a representative subset of the church congregation to do the transposing. This helps make the research be "grounded in the social world of experience," seeking "to make sense of lived experience."<sup>19</sup> This is also referred to as "action research,"<sup>20</sup> which seeks to engage the people of an organization to "study their own problems in order to solve those problems."<sup>21</sup> The goal was to make every aspect of the research understandable and meaningful to the participants.

In regards to the transposed materials testing, a survey questionnaire was developed based on the transposition group's work (the Understandability-Preference

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<sup>18</sup> See Appendix B, "Permission From Navigator's to Use 2:7 Discipleship Materials."

<sup>19</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 57.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

Scale), and it was administered to the congregation of the church to test whether the group's work was effective. The results of the Understandability-Preference Scale were subject to statistical analysis to answer the hypothesis related to the understandability of transposed discipleship material. Additionally, a factor analysis of the questions on the Understandability-Preference Scale was performed.

The Project Methodology section which follows reflects both the transposition process and transposed materials testing of the survey research, as will the results presented in Chapter Four.

## **Project Methodology**

### Transposition Process

In April 2013, eight of the congregants who had participated in the Navigator's 2:7 discipleship course in 2010-11 were contacted and asked if they would be willing to serve as members of a research work team (see Appendix A, *Request to Participate in the Research Work Group*, for the script of the request). The eight were given a general overview of what the work would involve; namely, they would be studying a portion of the Navigator's 2:7 material they had used in 2010-11 and looking for ways to transpose the language to make it more understandable. The group was assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of the process. Additionally, they were informed that they could drop out of the group at any time if the commitment became problematic without any consequence. These eight were approached because together, they closely approximated the cultural composition and age/educational range of the church. Given that the research was focused on a multicultural transposition that could be tested in the



congregation of the church, it made sense to intentionally select a similar multicultural subset of the church to do the transposition of the material. All eight volunteers were born in a country outside of the United States, had a language other than English as their first, and learned the bulk of their English after immigrating to the United States.

Five of the eight people who were asked agreed to serve on the transposition group and four of them fulfilled the commitment of the group's work. (One of them missed the last two classes due to an unanticipated responsibility.) The five members of the transposition group are identified in the table below.

Table 3.1. Transposition Group Members

	Gender	Age	Country of Origin	Education Level	Years Living in the United States
Participant 1	Male	63	India	College	24
Participant 2	Female	69	India	Some College	41
Participant 3	Female	52	China	College	8
Participant 4	Female	71	Dominican Republic	High School	32
Participant 5	Female	26	Guatemala	High School	22

The transposition group began meeting on May 21, 2013 and convened for eight consecutive Tuesdays for one hour, finishing on July 9, 2013. The format of the transposition group meetings was to first pray, asking God's blessing and His Spirit's leading in the work. The group then systematically worked through the Navigator's 2:7 discipleship materials as outlined below. When the hour was up, the group stopped

wherever they were in the material and picked it up from the same spot the next time they met. They closed in prayer, thanking the Lord for His help.

The transposition group used the first lesson in the first workbook of the Navigator's 2:7 discipleship series ("Growing Strong in God's Family"<sup>22</sup>). A copy of the material was given to each member of the group so that they could feel free to mark it with comments or thoughts (see Appendix F for a sample excerpt of the lesson). The copies were collected at the end of each meeting and handed out at the beginning of each new session.

The work of the transposition group proceeded by reading each line of the material, pausing after to ask, "Is there anything in that sentence that was hard to understand?" If anyone in the group replied in the affirmative, the word, phrase or grammatical structure that was difficult to understand was noted. The individual who identified the item was asked what change(s) could be made to make it more understandable, and then the group at large was invited to join in the discussion. The group worked together to identify a suitable transposition, and if/when consensus was attained, the change was recorded. The word, phrase or sentence was read back to the group for final approval. Once affirmed, the group proceeded to the next sentence.

Over the course of the eight weeks, the transposition group was able to study and transpose the totality of Session One of "Growing Strong in God's Family." A master copy of the proceedings, which contains all of the suggestions and amendments made by the group, is contained in Appendix G. The individual copies of the group member's notes were retained as well, for purposes of clarification where needed.

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<sup>22</sup> Sensing, 60.

In addition to noting and processing the problematic words and phrases, observations and notes were recorded as the group participants worked to transpose the material. This provided insightful evidence for the cultural differences in language and comprehension, which would not be reflected in the finished product. The results of this qualitative analysis are reflected in Chapter Four and transcripts of the dialogues are contained in Appendix E.

The changes that were made to words, phrases, and sentences in the curriculum were compiled. The result was approximately seventy changes/transpositions (see Appendix G, which contains the original material, with mark-ups). Of the seventy transpositions, nineteen were singled out as the best examples of cultural transposition. The basis for this decision was as follows:

- The items selected were complete ideas, able to be understood in isolation and to be compared with the original word or phrase.
- The items selected were the result of the most discussion among the work group members, reflecting a positive cross-cultural interchange on the meaning of the words and phrases.

Conversely, given that the technical meaning of transposition involves the substitution of a word or phrase with another that has like meaning:

- Cases where the alteration involved adding a word in front or at the end of a sentence to improve the grammatical structure of a language group were not used.
- Cases where the alteration involved removing a simple word, such as “the” or “a” or “it” that did not have cultural significance, were not used.

- Cases where the alteration was so extreme that it altered the original meaning of the word or phrase to the extent that it could not be effectively compared to the original were deemed unsuitable.
- Cases where the alteration did not have the full consensus from the work group were excluded.

### Transposed Materials Testing

#### *The Understandability-Preference Scale*

A survey questionnaire titled “Understandability-Preference Scale” was developed based on the results of the transposition process (see Appendix C, *The Understandability-Preference Scale*). The survey was designed to maximize the survey response rate. Davies stated that this can be achieved in several ways: by designing the form well; using a clean, simple, and easy-to-read format; treating the respondents courteously, and explaining clearly why the information is being sought.<sup>23</sup> In an effort to comply with these guidelines, the instructions on the Understandability-Preference Scale stated, “Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Below you will find two statements to compare. Please mark which of the two statements is more understandable to you.”

Below the instructions, the nineteen transposed words, phrases or sentences were coupled with the original word, phrase or sentence from the Navigator’s material, and placed one above the other. The coupled words and phrases were randomly ordered on the questionnaire, and the original and transposed entities were randomly ordered as the

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<sup>23</sup> Richard E. Davies, *Handbook for Doctor of Ministry Projects* (Lanham, M: University Press of America, 1984), 139.

first or second choice for each question. Each of the two entities had a line to the left of it on which the respondents could note their choice in response to the instructions. Sensing suggested making the questionnaire “eye-catching and uncluttered, with plenty of white spaces”<sup>24</sup> and using a “clear, readable font.”<sup>25</sup> In response, the Understandability-Preference Scale was printed on an 8.5"x11" standard piece of off-white paper, in Times New Roman 12, which is the general standard font for most written material.

In conducting the statistical analysis, the original word, phrase or statement on the Understandability-Preference Scale was assigned a value of 1, and the transposed choice was assigned a value of 2. If every respondent had selected the original word or phrase, the total for that question would be 67; conversely, if every respondent chose the transposed word or phrase for a question, the total for that question would be 134.

Since the scoring instrument was specifically designed for, and came out of the work of this study, it lacked prior use to establish a record of reliability and validity. However, given that its purpose was not to develop a generalized testing instrument for widespread use but to test the hypothesis of this specific research, it was not a significant concern.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, reliability and validity were accounted for in the following ways.

The reliability of the Understandability-Preference Scale was determined to be good because of the lack of ambiguity in the two choices. Both choices essentially said the same thing, albeit with different cultural slants. Additionally, a Reflective Confirmation group was formed to assess the reliability of the instrument in accomplishing its intended research goal. The group’s findings affirmed the reliability of the Understandability-Preference Scale.

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<sup>24</sup> Sensing, 118.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Davies, 123.

The validity of the Understandability-Preference Scale was test-run by a panel of experts. Four people with a background in multicultural ministry reviewed the instrument for any perceived ambiguities, general understandability, word choice, instructions, length, and estimated time to complete. In all cases, the validity of the instrument was affirmed. Validity was also verified by the work done in the “Transposition Process” section of this study. By using participants who experienced the materials first-hand and carefully evaluating each phrase of each sentence, the researcher was able to establish a content validity. Based on the above, the Understandability-Preference Scale was determined to be reliable and valid for the purposes of the research study.

#### *Administration of the Understandability-Preference Scale*

The Understandability-Preference Scale was administered following worship services at the church. The survey was given in this way to increase the return rate.<sup>27</sup> This method also allowed a clear explanation of the purpose of the survey and the process of filling it out, and insured that those who completed the survey were regular attendees of the church.

The Understandability-Preference Scale was administered on two successive Sundays (March 30 and April 6, 2014). A request was made at the conclusion of the “English” morning worship service for assistance in completing a survey questionnaire. Following Sensing’s suggestion that the questionnaire be introduced “with a short statement about who is sponsoring the survey, why it is being done, whether the information will be confidential or not,”<sup>28</sup> and with “any special instructions,”<sup>29</sup> the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

announcement to the congregation included what the purpose of the study was, the reason for their participation, anonymity and confidentiality as significant aspects of their participation, and their ability to terminate their involvement at any time if they wished. The statement that the Navigator's organization required of the research was included in the announcement (the content of the announcement can be found in Appendix D, *Survey Request/Instructions*).

Those who volunteered to fill out the Understandability-Preference Scale were asked to remain in their seats, and an Usher of the church handed out the surveys and offered writing utensils to any who needed them. Congregants were given as much time as they needed to complete the surveys; when they finished, they were asked to bring them to the front of the church and place them on a table designated for said purpose.

The same procedure was done in the two Sunday afternoon services for the Chinese congregation, with the instructions given in Chinese by the Chinese Pastor. Completed surveys were submitted the day following the request. Lastly, the same request/instructions were given to the church Youth Group on Friday, April 4, 2013, by the Youth Pastor, and completed surveys were collected that day.

The total number of surveys submitted was 76. Nine were removed from the study for having one or more questions left blank. The final number of completed Understandability-Preference Scales that was used for data analysis was 67 (N = 67).

### Reflective Confirmation of the Study

At the close of the study, a reflective confirmation group was formed to review the research process, its methodology, and the statistical analyses, and to confirm the initial findings. The reflective confirmation group was comprised of four people from the

church congregation who participated in the survey questionnaire and two missionaries who work in cross-cultural settings, one of whom was not an attendee of the church.

This process is one angle of the triangulation evaluation process and allows participants and outside observers the opportunity to assess the process and generate ideas and interpretations that may have been missed.<sup>30</sup> It also helps to ensure the internal validity of the study and increase the credibility of the findings. The group met for a two-hour evaluation session on November 3, 2014.

### Summary

In this section, the methodology of the project was described. It was noted that the design of the project was one of experimental research, including both observations and notes from the work group (Transposition Process) and the survey questionnaire and factor analysis (Transposed Materials Testing). The method of administering the Understandability-Preference Scale was described. Sixty-seven valid surveys were collected.

### Data Analysis

Chapter Four presents the transposition process of the research, which includes an analysis of the observations and data generated by the group who transposed the Navigator's curriculum. The observations focus on the process and interactions that occurred as the transposition group did its work—specifically, the kinds of difficulties they encountered in transposing the materials. The results of the transposition process are in the form of four observations that were measured by the transposed materials testing.

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<sup>30</sup> Sensing, 221.



The data for the transposed materials testing were based on the results of the Understandability-Preference Scale and a factor analysis of the survey. The survey data were subjected to statistical analyses that looked at the mean score for each question, trends of the data, patterns of response, and whether the transposed words and phrases were more understandable (the project's main hypothesis). The factor analysis analyzed each question on the survey to determine how choices may have been made and was used to test the four observations generated from the transposition process work.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA RESULTS AND INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS

In Chapter Three, the Project Methodology reflected both the transposition process and the transposed materials testing of the research. The results of the research are reported in this chapter in the same two subdivisions.

#### **Transposition Process Results**

The transposition process took the form of observing and documenting the work conducted by the group who transposed the Navigator's 2:7 discipleship materials. This research examined how the group's thought processes and dialogue revealed the difficulties second-language people have with an American-based discipleship curriculum. The transposition group began by being led through an example of how to process the Navigator's 2:7 workbook for changes. The group then shaped the wording of the transposition for the remainder of the material. Notes were transcribed for the changes made, as well as the nature and direction of the dialogue among the group members. Appendix E offers four case scenarios that demonstrate the types of interchanges observed as the group did the transposing.

The results of the transposition process formed four observations that were measured by statistical analysis. The table below lists the findings/observations of the transposition process.

Table 4.1. Transposition Process Observations

1. Culturally sensitive insinuations in a word or phrase impacted the way they were transposed.
2. Finding cultural counterparts to words that did not exist in the second language vocabulary was difficult.
3. Difficult or complex grammar in sentences resulted in the need to transpose the total entity.
4. Difficult or complex words led to problems with vocabulary equivalence.

The first observation was formed as the transposition group faced problems transposing English words or phrases that carried culturally sensitive insinuations. For example, the group encountered the American term “get to know one another” in the workbook. This carried threatening connotations of intimacy for a represented culture that was not comfortable with transparency in the early stage of a relationship. It was transposed as “briefly introduce yourself” because this seemed less threatening to the culture group (this transposition was not used in the Understandability-Preference Scale).

Examples from the Understandability-Preference Scale are noted in the table below.

Table 4.2. Examples for Observation 1, Culturally Sensitive Insinuations

Question Number	Original Word or Phrase	Reason Identified	Transposed Word or Phrase
8	Transaction	Implied a financial matter rather than a spiritual benefit	Change
9	Possessor of good parents	Connotation of ownership; Communist overtones	With good parents
10	Strategic	Suggested having to develop a strategy; a difficult course of action	Important
13	Invincible	Too close to “invisible,” making it seem unimportant	Supreme
14	Forsake the sin	Strong emotional connotation relative to the act	Stop it (sin)
15	Work on the verses	Implied manual labor rather than memorization	Say the verses
18	Goals of the training	Sports event association	Purpose of the training

The second observation was formed as the transposition group occasionally found it difficult to identify cultural counterparts to English words or phrases. This was cited in the literature review of Chapter Two (Jandt, in discussing vocabulary and idiomatic equivalence<sup>1</sup>). In these instances, close approximations were made, often at the expense of what the English word or phrase intended. For example, a member of the group stated that her culture had no direct counterpart for the English phrase “to be excited.” The group settled on the word “enjoyable,” which is less emphatic in its English meaning. Similarly, in cases where cultural counterparts could be identified, they often had

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<sup>1</sup> Jandt, *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication*.

additional meanings associated with them that altered the original intent of the word or phrase in English. For example, the English phrase “to meet with Satan” suggests an interaction of some sort (in this case, between Satan and Jesus in the desert temptation, Matthew 4). Lacking a suitable transposition, the group settled on the phrase “to confront Satan.” This change served to strengthen the intention and character of the original English word, making it sound more adversarial and aggressive (these two examples were not used in the Understandability-Preference Scale).

Examples from the Understandability-Preference Scale are noted in the table below.

Table 4.3. Examples for Observation 2, Vocabulary Equivalence

Question Number	Original Word or Phrase	Transposed Word or Phrase
1	Devotional	Love for Jesus
4	Purposeful effort	Hard work
6	Interspersing	In between
11	Written on the table of your heart	Placed deeply in your heart
12	Be along this line	Sound like this
13	Resort	Rely on
14	Implicit	Sentence reworded to eliminate the word

The third observation was formed as the transposition group struggled in transposing phrases and sentences that contained complex grammar. The most common issue was when sentences began with a short, introductory statement, followed by the primary thought. This often served to confuse the group, as it seemed like two disparate thoughts that were awkwardly linked. For example, in question #4 on the Understandability-Preference Scale, the original discipleship curriculum stated, “While not difficult, to benefit most from each course will require purposeful effort.”<sup>2</sup> This grammatical structure starts with a dependent clause, with a substantial amount of implied grammar; the group had difficulty making the implied connections. The sentence was transposed to “The course work is not difficult but it will require hard work.” This transposition simplifies the construction into two independent clauses with a simple subject-verb relationship, joined by a simple conjunction, with no implied grammar.<sup>3</sup>

Other examples included on the Understandability-Preference Scale are noted in the table below, followed by the rationale for the transposition.

Table 4.4. Examples for Observation 3, Complex Grammar

Question Number	Complex Grammatical Phrase	Transposed Version
9	Become the possessor of good parents	Have good parents
12	Still another	Another
14	Implicit in	If we are going to . . . then
15	Work on the verses audibly	Say the verses out loud
18	Sentence starts with “What,” but is not a formal question	Dropped the “what” and made it a statement

<sup>2</sup> The Navigator’s *Growing Strong in God’s Family*, 14.

<sup>3</sup> My thanks to Ryan Blackwell Knowles, Ph.D. candidate at Boston University, for his inestimable help in English grammar.

The rationale for the transposition was as follows. For question #9, the transposition group felt the grammar implied that children could possess or control their destiny and/or parents, which was a difficult concept to transpose culturally. In question #12, the transposition group found that starting the sentence with the word “still” made it difficult to comprehend and it was a hard word to transpose. In question #14, the group felt the grammar of the sentence was awkward because it started with “Implicit in.” The word “implicit” was hard to transpose, and to start a sentence with it made it more difficult. The work group changed the sentence by removing the word “implicit” and utilizing a grammatical tool (an “if-then” clause), which served to simplify the grammar. In question #15, the group found this presented an awkward correlation between working on something (suggesting a manual act with the hands) and “audibly,” which suggested something done passively with the ears. The group transposed it to “Say the verses out loud,” which offered a better correspondence between speaking and hearing. Lastly, the transposition group found question #18 difficult to understand because the sentence started with the word “What,” but was not a formal question. It was transposed as a statement, dropping the word “what” from the final version. These types of changes are consistent with the ESL research noted in Chapter Two regarding the preference for simple vocabulary and grammar in second language learners (Gray and Fleischman<sup>4</sup>).

The fourth observation was formed as the transposition group experienced challenges transposing complex English words. The literature review in Chapter Two

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<sup>4</sup> Gray and Fleischman, *Successful Strategies for English Language Learners*.

identified this as well, citing the need for a simple subset of vocabulary to facilitate second language comprehension (Gray,<sup>5</sup> McCarten<sup>6</sup>).

Examples from the Understandability-Preference Scale are noted in the table below.

Table 4.5. Examples for Observation 4, Complex Words/Phrases

Question Number	Complex Word or Phrase	Transposed Word or Phrase
1	Devotional	Love for
5	Less tedious	Easier
6	Interspersing	In between
8	Transaction	Change
10	Strategic	Important
15	Audibly	Out loud
16	Sequence	Order

In summary, the dialogue and interactions noted in the transposing of the material revealed the challenges second-language users of English have in understanding certain words and phrases; particularly when the second-language users are comprised of several different cultural and ethnic groups. The complexity of words and grammar, the cultural perception of the word's intent, and the intricacy of finding cultural equivalents all proved especially difficult.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> McCarten, *Teaching Vocabulary: Lessons From the Corpus, Lessons for the Classroom*.



## Transposed Materials Testing Results

### Results of the Understandability-Preference Scale Measurement

The transposed material testing measured the project's main  $h_0$  hypothesis and the four observations formed by the transposition process. The measurement of the project's main  $h_0$  hypothesis was done by statistically analyzing the responses on the Understandability-Preference Scale and conducting a factor analysis of the questions on the survey. The measurement of the four observations was done statistically by using a t-test.

The project's main  $h_0$  hypothesis was that transposing a portion of American-based discipleship material by a multicultural group will make it more understandable to a separate multicultural group. The statistical analysis was based on the 67 responses to the Understandability-Preference Scale ( $N = 67$ ). The Understandability-Preference Scale consisted of 19 questions, and each question had two possible choices (Appendix C, *The Understandability-Preference Scale*). The choices were either for the original word, phrase or sentence, or for the transposed word, phrase or sentence, and they were randomly assigned the first or second position in the question. The questionnaire asked the respondent which word, phrase or sentence was more understandable to them.

In conducting the statistical analysis, the first measure was a simple sum of the choices. Using the scoring assignation referenced in Chapter Three (1 for the original word or phrase and 2 for the transposed word or phrase, leading to a low score of 67 and a high of 134 for each question), 100.5 would be the mid-point, indicating no real preference for either. In the table below, the data indicate that for all but two of the questions (#7 and #19), the total was greater than the mid-point, indicating a trend

towards the transposed choices. For those questions that were greater than the mid-point, the range was between 0.5 and 25.5, for an average of 13 responses above a “no preference” point. For the two questions that scored below the mid-point, the range was 3.5 to 6.5, for an average of 5 responses below a “no preference” point. Thus, it appears as though the majority of the responses were in the direction of the transposed choices; for those that were not, they were relatively close to the mid-point.

Table 4.6. Overall Sum for Each Question

Question Number	Sum	Amount Over Mid-Point
1	118	17.5
2	101	0.5
3	101	0.5
4	109	8.5
5	122	21.5
6	120	19.5
7	97	-3.5
8	123	22.5
9	117	16.5
10	126	25.5
11	116	15.5
12	108	7.5
13	117	16.5
14	119	18.5
15	118	17.5
16	118	17.5
17	120	19.5
18	102	1.5
19	94	-6.5

A further statistical analysis was conducted by scoring the mean for the responses made on the Understandability-Preference Scale and assigning a value for each question. Utilizing the same scoring assignation noted in Chapter Three, the mean score for the

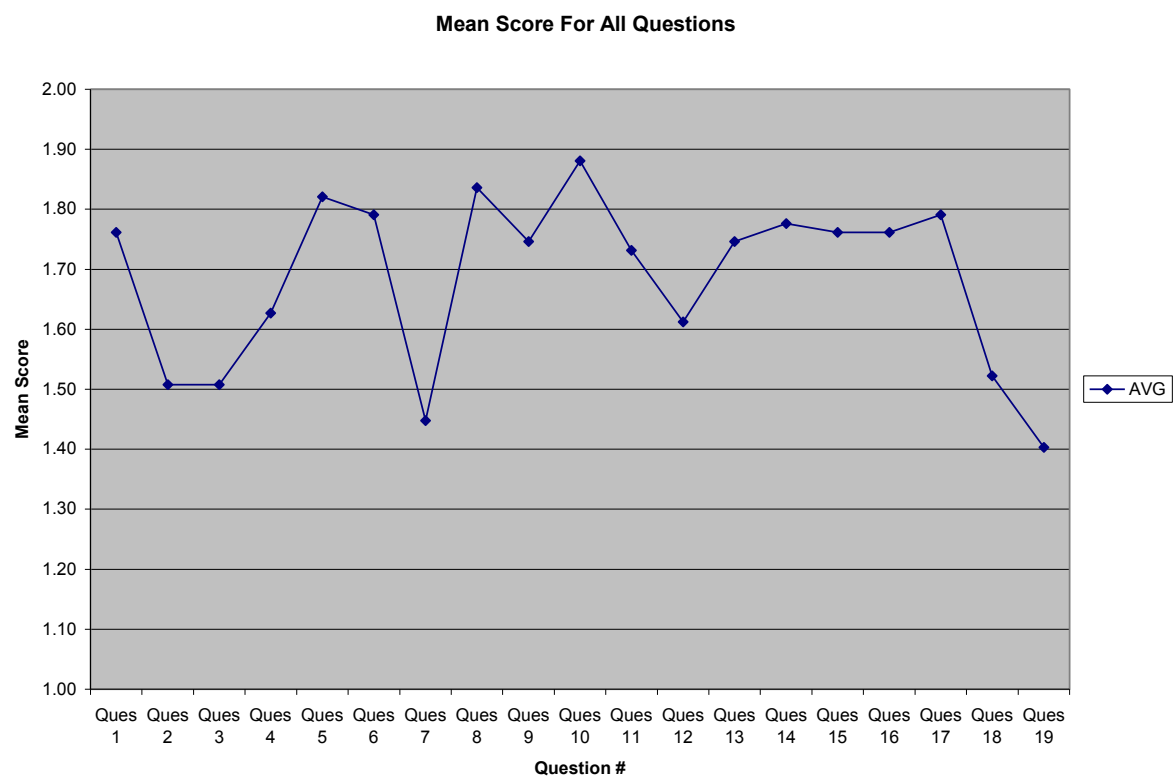
questions follows the same trend. A 1.00 would indicate a complete preference for the original word or phrase, and 2.00 the same for the transposed word or phrase. A mean score of 1.50 would represent a mid-point or “no preference” demarcation. As was seen in the first computation, for all but two of the questions (#7 and #19), the means were above 1.50; thus, 17 of the 19 questions had an overall leaning towards the transposed choice (89.4%). Furthermore, the overall mean score for all of the responses was 1.69, indicating a strong trend towards the transposed words and phrases in general. The mean scores for the nineteen questions are depicted in the table below.

Table 4.7. Overall Sum for Each Question, With Mean

Question Number	Sum	Mean
1	118	1.76
2	101	1.51
3	101	1.51
4	109	1.63
5	122	1.82
6	120	1.79
7	97	1.45
8	123	1.84
9	117	1.75
10	126	1.88
11	116	1.73
12	108	1.61
13	117	1.75
14	119	1.78
15	118	1.76
16	118	1.76
17	120	1.79
18	102	1.52
19	94	<u>1.40</u>
Overall Mean		1.69

The same data are represented in the figure presented below.

Figure 4.1. Mean Score for Each Question



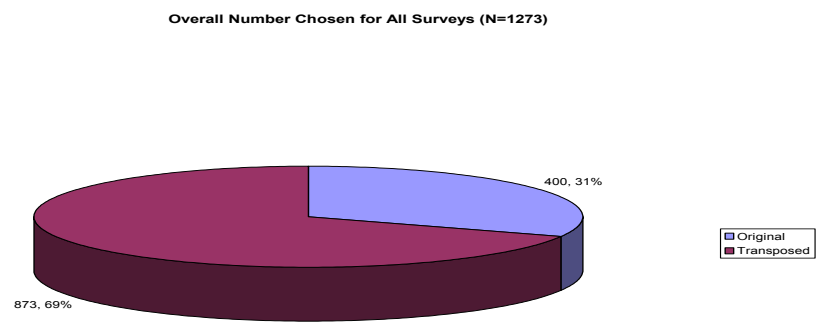
Another statistical computation was performed on the total number of responses given on all of the survey questionnaires. There were a total of 67 responses for each of the 19 questions, making a total of 1,273 possible choices (N = 1273). The following table indicates the number of choices that were made for the original and those for the transposed words or phrases, and the percentage of the total that were made for the transposed choice alone.

Table 4.8. Total Number of Choices for Original and Transposed, for Each Question

Question Number	# Chosen Original	# Chosen Transposed	% Transposed Choice
1	16	51	76
2	33	34	51
3	33	34	51
4	25	42	63
5	12	55	82
6	14	53	79
7	37	30	45
8	11	56	84
9	17	50	75
10	8	59	88
11	18	49	73
12	26	41	61
13	17	50	75
14	15	52	78
15	16	51	76
16	16	51	76
17	14	53	79
18	32	35	52
19	40	27	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>69</b>

This is further elucidated in the following figure as a pie chart.

Figure 4.2. Pie Chart Showing Total Number of Choices for All Questions/Surveys



The same data in is presented in the following figure as a graph.

Figure 4.3. Graph of Total Number of Choices for All Questions/Surveys



Of the total choices ( $N = 1273$ ), 873 (69%) were made for the transposed word or phrase, and 400 (31%) were made for the original word or phrase. This demarcation suggests a strong trend towards the transposed choices. For the two questions that preferred the original word or phrase (#7 and #19), an average of 42.5% of the responses were still made for the transposed choices. Comparatively, for the other 17 questions that preferred the transposed word or phrase, an average of only 28% of the responses were made for the original word or phrase.

A t-test was performed on the survey questionnaire results, as presented in the following table.

Table 4.9. t-test for Survey Questionnaire Results

<b>One-Sample Statistics</b>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SUM	19	112.9474	9.62331	2.20774

<b>One-Sample Test</b>						
	Test Value = 100					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
SUM	5.865	18	.000	12.94737	8.3091	17.5857

The differences between the value of 100 and the items chosen for the main hypothesis in null form were statistically significant at the .05 level ( $t = 5.86$ ,  $df = 18$ , significance = .000) Thus the null hypothesis, that transposing a portion of American-based discipleship material by a multicultural group will not be more understandable to a multicultural group, is rejected. Therefore, the main research hypothesis, that transposing a portion of American-based discipleship material by a multicultural group will make it more understandable to a separate multicultural group, is accepted.

### Factor/Content Analysis

In addition to the statistical analysis, the transposed materials testing also involved a factor analysis of the Understandability-Preference Scale content. The specific intent of this analysis was to identify why certain questions may have scored higher or lower than others, to help identify what aspects of the transposition were most effective, and to measure the four observations formed from the transposition process.

The first observation formed from the transposition process was that transposing culturally sensitive words or phrases would make them more understandable to the respondents. In the examples given in the transposition process section in Table 4.2, the results from the statistical analysis indicated the following preferences, as presented in the following table.

Table 4.10. Values for Observation 1, Culturally Sensitive Insinuations

Question Number	% Chosen for Original Version	% Chosen for Transposed Version
8	16	84
9	15	75
10	12	88
13	25	75
14	22	78
15	24	76
18	48	52

The t-test for these data is presented in the following table.



Table 4.11. t-test for Data

<b>One-Sample Statistics</b>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Hyp1	7	117.4286	7.59072	2.86902

<b>One-Sample Test</b>						
	Test Value = 100					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Hyp1	6.075	6	.001	17.42857	10.4083	24.4488

The differences between the value of 100 and the items chosen for the observation “culturally sensitive insinuations” is statistically significant at the .05 level ( $t = 6.07$ ,  $df = 6$ , significance = .001) The data support the observation that transposing culturally sensitive insinuations in a word or phrase will make them more understandable. Therefore, the main research hypothesis, that transposing a portion of American-based discipleship material by a multicultural group will make it more understandable to a separate multicultural group, is accepted.

The second observation formed from the transposition process was that vocabulary equivalence would be significant in how understandable a word or phrase was. In the examples given in the transposition process section (Table 4.3), the results from the statistical analysis indicated the following preferences, as presented in the following table.

Table 4.12. Values for Observation 2, Vocabulary Equivalence

Question Number	% Chosen for Original Version	% Chosen for Transposed Version
1	24	76
4	37	63
6	21	79
11	27	73
12	39	61
13	25	75
14	22	78

The t-test for the data is presented in the following table.

Table 4.13. t-test for the Data

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Hyp2	7	115.2857	4.82059	1.82201

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 100					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Hyp2	8.389	6	.000	15.28571	10.8274	19.7440

The differences between the value of 100 and the items chosen for the observation “vocabulary equivalence” is statistically significant at the .05 level ( $t = 8.38$ ,  $df = 6$ , significance = .000). The observation that finding cultural counterparts to words that did not exist in the second-language vocabulary will influence the choices made on the survey is supported. Therefore, the main research hypothesis, that transposing a portion

of American-based discipleship material by a multicultural group will make it more understandable to a separate multicultural group, is accepted.

The third observation formed from the transposition process was that transposing phrases or sentences with complex grammar would affect understanding. In the examples given in the transposition process section (Table 4.4), the results from the statistical analysis indicated the following preferences, as presented in the following table.

Table 4.14. Values for Observation 3, Complex Grammar

Question Number	% Chosen for Original Version	% Chosen for Transposed Version
4	37	63
9	25	75
12	39	61
14	22	78
15	24	76
18	48	52

The t-test for the data is presented in the following table.

Table 4.15. t-test for Data

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Hyp3	6	112.1667	6.85322	2.79782

	Test Value = 100					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Hyp3	4.349	5	.007	12.16667	4.9747	19.3587

The differences between the value of 100 and the items chosen for the observation “complex grammar” is statistically significant at the .05 level ( $t = 4.34$ ,  $df = 5$ ,  $significance = .007$ ). The data support the observation that transposing phrases or sentences with complex grammar would affect understanding. Therefore, the main research hypothesis, that transposing a portion of American-based discipleship material by a multicultural group will make it more understandable to a separate multicultural group, is accepted.

The fourth observation formed from the transposition process was that difficult or complex words and phrases would impact understandability. In the examples given in the transposition process section (Table 4.5), the results from the statistical analysis indicated the following preferences, as presented in the following table.

Table 4.16. Values for Observation 4, Complex Words/Phrases

Question Number	% Chosen for Original Version	% Chosen for Transposed Version
1	24	76
5	18	82
6	21	79
8	16	84
10	12	88
15	24	76
16	24	76

The t-test for the data is presented in the following table.

Table 4.17. t-test for Data

<b>One-Sample Statistics</b>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Hyp4	7	120.7143	3.09377	1.16934

<b>One-Sample Test</b>						
	Test Value = 100					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Hyp4	17.715	6	.000	20.71429	17.8530	23.5755

The differences between the value of 100 and the items chosen for the observation “complex words/phrases” is statistically significant at the .05 level ( $t = 17.71$ ,  $df = 6$ , significance = .000). The data validate the observation that difficult or complex words and phrases would impact understandability. Therefore, the main research hypothesis, that transposing a portion of American-based discipleship material by a multicultural group will make it more understandable to a separate multicultural group, is accepted.

### **Additional Findings**

In addition to testing the observations, the factor analysis indicated that the form, type or character of the survey question did not seem to make a difference in outcome. In other words, whether the choice involved a word, phrase or complete sentence did not seem to correlate with how the question was scored. For example, questions #1 and #7 were comprised of only one or two words, yet question #1 scored high for the transposed choice and question #7 scored high for the original wording. Similarly, questions #8 and #9 scored high for the transposed choice and are complex sentences; in the same way,

questions #18 and #19 scored high for the original version and are also complex sentences. Lastly, questions #3 and #5 are both comprised of simple phrases and they trended in opposite directions. Consequently, whether the choice involved a short word or phrase or a complete sentence did not seem to have an effect on how respondents made choices.

Additionally, the analysis revealed that simply replacing one word or phrase for another did not seem to be noteworthy. In some cases, the original word or phrase was discarded and a substitute was found, such as with question #1, where “Devotional life” was transposed to “Love for Jesus,” or question #7, where “Insights” was transposed to “Special understandings.” Question #1 scored high for the transposed version while question #7 scored high for the original version. In the same way, question #2 transposed “Glance through” to “Take a quick look at,” and question #17 transposed “critical element” to “important thing.” Question #2 scored only slightly higher for the transposed choice, while question #17 scored high for the transposed choice.

Lastly, whether the choices included spiritual/Biblical words or phrases did not seem to make a difference. For example, questions #3, #7, and #18 reference spiritual identifications (the Holy Spirit, spiritual “insight,” and a reference of Paul’s from Colossians 2:7), yet they scored low for transposition. Conversely, the content of questions #11, #13, and #14 referenced a scripture verse (“table(t) of your heart” from Proverbs 3:3, 7:3), the Word of God, and confession/forgiveness of sin, yet scored high for the transposed choice. Hence, attempts to make Biblical terms and concepts more understandable by transposing them did not seem to influence how respondents made choices.

For the two questions that did not show an overall preference for the transposed option (#7 and #19), the factor analysis upheld the observations and statistical analyses mentioned. The original word used in question #7 was relatively simple (“insight”), and transposing it to “special understanding” lengthened it, and if anything, complicated it. Correspondingly, question #19 was a long sentence, but the grammar and wording was fairly simple and straightforward. The transposed version did not significantly alter the original grammar and did not substitute any complex words; thus, it did not appear to be a more attractive option for the respondents.

In summary, the factor analysis indicated that whether the phrase or sentence was long or short, comprised of simple word substitutes, or consisting of spiritually-based content did not seem to make a difference in how respondents made choices. What was significant was whether the original word, phrase or sentence carried negative cultural insinuations, or if a suitable equivalent could be found for those that were not found in the original language. Additionally, the transposition of complex grammar and/or words made the word, phrase or sentence more understandable. This reinforced what was noted throughout the literature review, that language and grammar comprehension poses significant issues in cross-cultural ministry and discipleship.

### **Findings of the Reflective Confirmation Group**

The reflective evaluation done by the confirmation group affirmed the findings generated by the transposition process and transposed materials testing. The group concluded that the study achieved its goal on the basis of the statistical results and the observations of the work group who transposed the materials. The group determined that

the main hypothesis of the study could be accepted, as well as the observations formed out of the transposition process.

Aside from establishing the plausibility of the study, the group identified several questions about the research for further review or analysis:

1. After transposing the complete first lesson from the Navigator's workbook, should the work group have rewritten the chapter and reviewed it for unity of thought and meaning? In other words, simply transposing the individual words, phrases, and sentences was helpful, but did the finished product maintain cohesion?
2. The study focused on multiculturalism from a nationalistic standpoint, but would a similar project be worthwhile for subsets of a culture (e.g., Millennials and Baby-Boomers in the United States)?
3. Could members of the group who transposed the materials have influenced friends or family members' responses to the survey by talking about their work ahead of time?
4. Did the study identify general principles of cultural transposition that could be applied across different settings? If so, could people trained in those principles transpose any material anywhere?
5. What does the study imply for the efficacy of written discipleship models in cross-cultural settings?
6. Could a monocultural group who was sensitive to cross-cultural ministry have done an equally effective transposition of the material? Would it have been



helpful to have a monocultural work group transpose the materials at the same time as the multicultural group and compare the results?

7. Because the individuals who completed the survey had to have been somewhat literate in the English language to complete it, could the degree of literacy have influenced the outcome?

The responses to and implications of these questions are addressed in Chapter Five.

### **Summary**

Both the transposition process and transposed materials testing that were conducted, and the evaluation by the reflective confirmation group, appear to substantiate the idea that the transposition of a portion of American-based discipleship material by a multicultural group made the material more understandable to a separate multicultural group. The observations of the efforts of the transposition group, the statistical analyses of the survey responses, the factor analysis of the responses, and the input of the reflective evaluation group all substantiated the four observations and disproved the main project  $H_0$  null hypothesis; thus the  $H_r$  research hypothesis can be accepted.

CHAPTER FIVE  
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

**Introduction**

The purpose of the research was to determine if transposing a portion of American-based discipleship material by a multicultural group would make it more understandable to a separate multicultural group.

The transposition materials testing in Chapter Four supports the project's main hypothesis, indicating that it made a significant difference in understanding when words and phrases were culturally transposed. When the transposed discipleship material was randomly presented alongside the original words and phrases on the Understandability-Preference Scale, 69% of the responses were made for the transposed version. Seventeen of the nineteen questions trended in the direction of the transposed choices (89%), and for the two questions that preferred the original wording, an average of 42.5% of the responses were still made for the transposed option. A t-test confirmed that the differences between the value of 100 and the items chosen for the main hypothesis were found to be statistically significant at the .05 level ( $t = 5.86$ ,  $df = 18$ ,  $significance = .000$ ).

The four observations that were formed by the work of the transposition group were also analyzed statistically for significance and were all accepted at the .05 level. (The observations were: culturally sensitive insinuations in a word or phrase impacted the way they were transposed; finding vocabulary equivalence for words that did not exist in

the second language was difficult; difficult or complex grammar in sentences resulted in needing to transpose the total entity; and difficult or complex words led to problems with understanding). The factor analysis conducted also indicated that it made a significant difference in understanding when words and phrases were culturally transposed.

The transposition process findings also supported the project's main hypothesis. The observations of the transposition group and the findings of the four observations formed from their work all indicated that it made a significant difference in understanding when words and phrases were culturally transposed. Lastly, the reflective evaluation done by the confirmation group affirmed the findings generated by the research. The group concluded that the study achieved its goal on the basis of the statistical results and the observations of the work group who transposed the materials.

In summary, the observations of the transposition group, the statistical analyses of the survey responses, the factor analysis of the responses, and the input of the reflective evaluation group all disproved the  $H_0$  null hypothesis; thus the  $H_r$  research hypotheses can be accepted.

### **Conclusions in Relation to Literature**

The findings of the research support the idea that in multicultural ministry settings, the language, vocabulary, and grammar of the source culture can be difficult for the receptor culture to understand. Tomlinson,<sup>1</sup> Garces-Foley,<sup>2</sup> Nida, and Case-Winters<sup>3</sup> noted the significance that language plays in cross-cultural work, and how language is undoubtedly the key factor in discipleship and missiological ministry. Virtually

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<sup>1</sup> Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture*.

<sup>2</sup> Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*.

<sup>3</sup> Case-Winters, *Multi-Cultural Theological Education: On Doing Differences Differently*.

everything done in cross-cultural ministry involves communication on some level, and when it involves verbal or written interaction, the source culture's history, traditions, and idioms of speech will have a significant impact on whether the receptor culture can understand the information relayed. The transposition process revealed that the multicultural work group had difficulty understanding the original discipleship material and had to transpose it to make it understandable. The transposed materials testing reinforced these observations, in that the culturally transposed words and phrases were significantly more understandable to the respondents in the Understandability-Preference Scale. Thus, in the simplest sense, the research supported the notion that language is a significant factor in cross-cultural ministry.

The research also revealed that the problems with language in multicultural ministry go beyond the need for basic translation. It is not enough to simply translate words from one language to another; the meaning, history, and insinuations of those words need to be considered and further transposed. Sanneh<sup>4</sup> and Wendland<sup>5</sup> noted the problems in translating Western concepts into other cultural settings, in that the message and its cultural presuppositions need to be established and understood before effective transmission of information can occur. In the present study, when the transposition group came across difficult words and phrases, it was not enough to simply find a suitable translation. For the cultures represented in the group, the initial suggestion for change often carried additional insinuations that were negative and required a deeper level of transposition (see Tables 4.2 and 4.5). This finding implies that basic notions of translation would benefit from the addition of deeper levels of transposition. This allows

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<sup>4</sup> Sanneh, *Translating the Message*.

<sup>5</sup> Wendland, *The Interference Factor in Christian Cross-Cultural Communication*.

for the underlying meaning of words and phrases to be unearthed simultaneous with language conversion.

Additionally, the research exposed the unique challenges of ministering to a multiplicity of cultures at once. With the phenomenon of globalization, ministry in the United States, particularly in our urban centers, is becoming increasingly multicultural. Many of the approaches to cross-cultural ministry have focused on understanding the culture of the majority group present and adapting accordingly (Ji,<sup>6</sup> Harries,<sup>7</sup> and Mattam<sup>8</sup>). However, the present research was based on what will undoubtedly be an increasingly common phenomenon: many cultural groups present in one place at one time. This calls for an expansion of our cultural study and understanding, as well as a more complex transposition of language, traditions, and mores, which the research supported.

The potential danger in this is bifurcating ministry to address the unique needs of each culture. Rather, what the research demonstrated was that ministering to a variety of cultures at once is possible and necessary. In the research, the transposition group was purposely formed to match the cultural composition of the congregation to be tested. This made possible an end-product that would be understandable to the whole. At times, this resulted in a less than optimal transposition (such as when a replacement could not be agreed upon by all and a second-best choice was made), and occasionally led to a frustrating search for something suitable (see Appendix E). But ultimately the effort proved worthwhile, as evidenced by the overall preference for the work noted in the

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<sup>6</sup> Ji, *Being Cross-Cultural, Slogan or Reality?*

<sup>7</sup> Harries, *The Name of God in Africa and Related Contemporary Theological, Development and Linguistic Concerns.*

<sup>8</sup> Mattam, *The Message of Jesus and Our Customary Theological Language.*

statistical analyses. The implications for effective cross-cultural ministry, especially in our increasingly multicultural settings, are that an expansion of our efforts to include all of the potential cultures affected by our work is warranted, and will make the fruit of such work more efficacious.

In addition to cross-cultural language and communication, the implications of the research for written ministry materials are noteworthy. In contrast to Jesus' approach to discipleship, which was modeled on a first-century teacher-pupil system of verbal instruction (Ward<sup>9</sup>), most of the models for discipleship cited (Hull,<sup>10</sup> Stortz,<sup>11</sup> Dunn<sup>12</sup>), follow today's educational paradigm of instruction, which typically includes written materials in transmitting information. However, for second-language users of English, the materials often used in American church settings are challenging not only for vocabulary and grammar, but for meaning as well. The research divulged three implications relative to written materials.

One, the difficulty cross-cultural/multiethnic peoples have with American-based discipleship material may not be a function of type or length of the phrase or sentence. In the research results, there was no apparent correlation between the length of the phrase or sentence and whether the transposed choice was preferred. Thus, attempts to simplify discipleship material for said audience by shortening its content do not seem to be the right solution. Second, simply replacing one word for another is not always effective; there needs to be a deeper understanding of what *kind* of replacement will have more of an impact on the reader. The transcripts of the work group (Appendix E) indicated that

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<sup>9</sup> Ward, *Intercultural Theology*.

<sup>10</sup> Hull, *Jesus Christ: Disciplemaker*.

<sup>11</sup> Stortz, *Blessed to Follow*.

<sup>12</sup> Dunn, *Jesus' Call to Discipleship*.

more than simple word replacement was necessary and the data reinforced this as well (Tables 4.2-4.5). Third, the unique spiritual language and words that are used in the source culture do not seem to make a difference in transposition. For questions on the survey that contained original and transposed spiritual terms, no associations were clear in regards to preference. However, a more detailed study would be required to determine whether the transposed words and phrases that scored low are also employed in the respondents' native tongue. Similarly, the spiritual language questions that scored high may have used words and phrases that were unknown in the respondents' native tongue in the original version. These would warrant further review for future studies of this sort.

What the research demonstrated as significant was that the transposition of complex grammar and/or words made the words, phrases or sentences more understandable, regardless of length (see Tables 4.4 and 4.5). Additionally, it was more important to identify whether the original word, phrase or sentence carried negative cultural insinuations, or if a suitable equivalent could be found for those that were not present in the original language (see Tables 4.2 and 4.3). In other words, the meaning behind the word or phrase rather than its translation was significant. These implications reinforce what was noted about cross-cultural language and communication; that for written instructional materials used in multicultural ministry settings, a deeper translation/transposition is required. This has significant implications for the developers of discipleship, Christian education, and Bible study materials in the United States who want to make their materials relevant to multicultural settings.

To summarize, as the United States becomes increasingly multicultural, written materials will need to be broadened in scope. More so, they will need to be reflective of

the varied cultures that make up our churches and communities. To do so, the research has made a case for multiethnic/multicultural involvement in the development process. It cannot do to simply have source-culture individuals and organizations study the diversity of peoples and attempt to accommodate their assorted learning needs. Rather, such groups would benefit from engaging multicultural involvement in the developmental process, where the varied ideas, opinions, and suggestions can be obliged in the course of the work. This would propel the work beyond simple translation to a more meaningful and understandable product. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to consider this process for pre-existing materials, so that the present array of literature can be brought to compliance with the cultural milieu of our society.

### **Reflections on the Research Design**

The research was designed to determine whether the transposition of a portion of discipleship curriculum by a multicultural group would make it more understandable to a multicultural church congregation. The transposition group closely matched the congregation in regards to its major cultural/ethnic groups (e.g., Asian Indian, Chinese, and Latino). Additionally, a purposeful effort was made to have the work group comprised of people who were born in other countries (thus, second-language learners of English). However, the church congregation that was surveyed, though culturally and ethnically diverse, was proportionally comprised of more American-born people than the work group represented. Thus, the majority were raised with English as their primary language.

This suggests two possible outcomes. One, culture and meaning are more important than language ability. Second, the process undertaken to transpose the



materials made the language used more understandable even to those who were native English speakers. In either scenario, it might have been advantageous to account for this empirically in the administration of the survey. The request to participate in the survey could have been worded in such a way that only second-language learners of English were solicited; or, the survey itself could have asked whether the respondents were born in or outside of the United States (and only second-language surveys would have been scored or compared). This may have made the scores for the transposed words and phrases even stronger. Then again, given that the design of the project was to survey a multicultural congregation of a church, not a subset of a congregation, this may have strengthened the data but weakened the desired goal. Narrowing the scope to only second-language learners of English may have limited applicability to the reality of multicultural churches in America today.

Moreover, the design of the project was such that its findings were only applicable to the church setting of the study. The unique demographic of the church congregation proved favorable for the desired results, primarily because the work group who did the transposing closely matched it. But whether the same results would be found in other multicultural churches or organizations would require further study. One way to account for this would be to have broadened the representation of cultures in the work group beyond those of the church surveyed. This could ultimately point towards a universal or single-language design for written materials, an interesting concept.

Lastly, the design of the study focused on transposing one lesson from one workbook of the Navigator's 2:7 series, which limits the focus of the work. However, general principles of cultural transposition were developed out of this study (see

“Implications for Cultural Transposition”), and those could be applied to other written discipleship materials in a further study.

### **Surprises**

The observation of the transposition group revealed an interesting dynamic of diversity, yet unity, in the Body of Christ. Every one of the participants came from very different cultures, upbringing, educational levels, socioeconomic strata, church experiences, spiritual maturity levels, familiarity with American culture, and comfort with group processes. Yet when charged with the task, they came together utilizing their diverse backgrounds to arrive at an effective solution to a ministry problem.<sup>13</sup>

This has significant implications for multicultural ministry in general, and for problem-solving in cross-cultural settings in particular. Namely, it demonstrates that they are possible. What the League of Nations, the United Nations, and countless human social service organizations have struggled with—true multicultural/multiethnic unity, co-understanding, and reconciliation—is possible through the unifying work of God’s Spirit. True, the challenges to multicultural ministry are tremendous, but they are plausible, achievable, and most importantly, Biblical, as was posited in Chapter One (Ephesians 2:13-22, Revelation 5:9-10).

The research was also surprising in that it reinforced the challenges of cross-cultural communication, yet demonstrably broadened them to multiple-culture settings. Missional studies note the difficulties of source and receptor culture interchange (Ji,<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Given that each session started with a prayer for the Holy Spirit’s leading, one could draw the conclusion that the Spirit can and will draw all manner of people together for the “common good,” utilizing the gifts and talents He provides (Romans 12:7).

<sup>14</sup> Ji, *Being Cross-Cultural, Slogan or Reality?*

Harries,<sup>15</sup> Mattam<sup>16</sup>), but few mentioned the challenges of one source culture trying to minister to multiple receptor cultures at once. Some of the items noted in regard to one-to-one interchange, such as the complexity of words or grammar and the difficulties with vocabulary equivalence, were noted in the study's research. This suggests that the basic concepts and approaches to cross-cultural ministry are applicable to different settings, specifically, multiple-culture settings. Thus, the present research both reinforces and adds upon already existing cross-cultural studies.

### **Implications for Cultural Transposition**

One of the questions that the research posed was whether a uniform set of guidelines was possible for doing transposition work in cross-cultural settings. The observations of the transposition group and the input of reflective confirmation group reinforced the value of this idea, resulting in the following thoughts/implications regarding what made a significant difference in the work:

1. Cultural transposition calls for many of the same pre-requisites as any cross-cultural ministry. The source culture needs to study the receptor culture(s), identifying things like modes of thinking, means of communication, unique facets of history and tradition, and the past relationship between the cultures present. These provide an essential background and framework for the effectiveness of the transposing work.
2. The source culture will have to develop a deeper sensitivity to the connotations that words carry in the receptor culture. The simple translation of

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<sup>15</sup> Harries, *The Name of God in Africa and Related Contemporary Theological, Development and Linguistic Concerns*.

<sup>16</sup> Mattam, *The Message of Jesus and Our Customary Theological Language*.

words is a good start, but may be ineffective in bringing about the desired result.

3. Transposing efficacy requires a realization that some words and phrases cannot be suitably translated/transposed. This speaks to the need for awareness of the idiomatic use of language, humility on the part of the source culture, willingness to find neutral ground, the will to work cooperatively to find a solution, and willingness to teach new meanings, new culture, and new understandings as part of the curriculum.
4. Complex vocabulary and grammar need to be factored in when doing transposing work. This will require that the preliminary work of the source culture (point 1) will need to include a basic understanding of the rules of grammar in the receptor culture's language and that they strive for a simplified grammar in the transposition.
5. Leaders and writers need to recognize that the challenges people from other cultures experience in understanding source culture materials are not strictly a matter of intelligence. Understanding is a function of many things (e.g., the ability to read a language, process it audibly, make sense of idiomatic nuances, and make associations with concepts and ideas); if anything, it requires greater levels of intelligence to function in cross-cultural settings.
6. It is incumbent upon both source and receptor cultures to engage in the hard work of understanding each other, utilizing the principles noted to be successful. To the extent possible, there should be open dialogue and

reflective listening before, during, and after the transposing work by all the cultures represented.

7. All of the above can be facilitated by including a mix of cultural representation among the people doing the transposing work.

### **Implications of the Reflective Confirmation Findings**

The reflective work of the confirmation group identified several questions and implications for the study (see Chapter Four). They first identified the need to go over the completed transposition project to insure that it is cohesive and holds together. This is an important implication for any translation/transposition work, so as to prevent a piecemeal result. This was not done in the present study because the intent was to identify and test specific instances of culturally problematic words and phrases, not to develop a new lesson plan. Nevertheless, this would be a wise course of action in any study or work that involves transposing a corpus of materials to be taught or read as a whole.

The reflective confirmation group also noted that it would have been interesting to expand the scope of the study to include cultures within cultures. While the focus of the present research was to examine cross-cultural communication between various nationality-based cultures, using the principles identified to transpose materials within subcultures could be helpful and useful in future research as well.

The reflective confirmation group pondered whether the transposition group may have influenced friends and family in the completion of the survey. This is always a possibility, especially in cultures that are very communal (as exist at the church in question). This was addressed by introducing an eight-month lapse between the completion of the work group's transposition and the administration of the survey to the

congregation. It was anticipated that any discussion of the work group's efforts that may have occurred were most likely forgotten or minimized by that point in time.

The reflective confirmation group also sought general principles of cultural transposition that could be applied across different settings. These were identified in the prior section. These principles could be applied in various settings and would be effective in any form of transposition. People who were trained in those principles could use them in cross-cultural ministry, missionary work, curriculum design or anthropological work.

The efficacy of written discipleship models in cross-cultural settings was questioned and this offers an interesting implication. Given the many challenges cited in using written materials in cross-cultural discipleship, would it be better to opt for a verbal/relational model of instruction? A one-on-one verbal discipleship model could potentially eliminate the problems associated with transposing source material for several different cultures at once and would possibly reduce the occurrence of misunderstandings. There might also be a more rapid acquisition of mutual understanding and acceptance, further facilitating the relational aspect of discipleship. This idea warrants further review and study in the research involving cross-cultural discipleship models.

In light of the discussion on transposition principles, another reflection centered on whether a monocultural group could have done the same work as effectively as the multicultural group. As was posited, this would be possible if they utilized the principles identified in the previous section. But for the present study, a significant part of the research focused on the interactions between the various cultures represented in the transposition group as they worked through the material. The transposition principles

identified in the previous section came out of that work and would not have been possible with a monocultural group (they may have generated other kinds of principles, but not multicultural principles). The richness of cross-cultural interaction was a significant aspect of the research and only that design could provide the fertile environment required for identifying the unique features of cross-cultural communication.

Lastly, the question of literacy was raised. This was cited as an issue in the genesis of the research study, the literature review, the transposition process, and the design of the Understandability-Preference Scale. Clearly, the level of literacy in the receptor culture will significantly impact the efficacy of communication and must be a factor for consideration in the development of written materials. In the present study, the instructions given to the congregation when the survey was distributed allowed for exemption in the case of English language illiteracy (see Appendix D).

In summary, the conclusions and implications of the reflective group reinforced many of the ideas that the research project sought to address. They affirmed that when working in cross-cultural settings, it is imperative that the source culture understand the receptor culture's language, traditions, mores, and unique facets of communication. To address these in the development of written materials, it makes sense to involve people from the receptor culture(s) in the work. They are best equipped to develop objectives, goals, approaches, and structures that will enhance the final product. If a subset of the larger group can transpose difficult words, phrases, and sentences, then the larger group will most likely understand the finished product as well. All of the people involved in the work will need to be cognizant of the principles identified and be willing to work

cooperatively to do the work. The effectiveness of cross-cultural and Kingdom ministry are at stake, underpinning the importance and magnitude of the effort.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The research study focused on the effectiveness of transposing one piece of discipleship material in one unique multicultural church setting in Brooklyn, New York.

Future research could focus on broadening the scope of the work in several ways:

1. To expand the variety of cultures performing the transposing work. This could potentially create a more uniform set of language that would be applicable to a greater range of multicultural settings.
2. To expand the settings in which the survey is administered. In addition to different nationalistic culture groups, this could include divergent age ranges, life stages, and subcultures within a culture. It could also be expanded beyond ecclesiastical settings. This would determine whether the transposed materials are understandable to a broader range of groups.
3. To expand the range of items transposed. This could include Bible studies, Sunday School curriculum, other discipleship materials, and cross-cultural training manuals. This could test the efficacy of transposition in a more expansive array of ministry tools.

Future research could also focus on aspects of the study's design. For example, a control group of monocultural participants could be trained in the principles of cross-cultural transposition (elucidated earlier), after which they could transpose the same portion of the Navigator's materials. A comparison could be made with the multicultural group's work to see if it was as effective. Another option would be to compile the



transposed discipleship material into a new, complete lesson and have a multicultural group of participants evaluate the original and transposed versions for understandability; or, teach the transposed version as a new lesson and determine if there is a preference or a greater comprehension among the group.

Further research could also focus on the use of non-written curriculum in the discipleship process. Two multicultural groups could be taught a standard course in discipleship, one using a traditional written question-and-answer format, the other being taught verbally. Following the instruction, a test for comprehension and applicability could be administered to determine if one method or the other was more effective in cross-cultural discipleship. Similarly, the increased use of media in ministry offers the opportunity to study whether a visually-based discipleship model is more effective in cross-cultural settings. It would be beneficial to study whether a transposed discipleship curriculum could be applied to a media-based format. This would allow the recipient to replay portions of the teaching that are not immediately clear. Furthermore, the disciplers would not need to be present, making possible a more expanded audience, nationally and even internationally.

These measures could have a tremendous impact on the ministry problem of multicultural discipleship in the church today. By expanding the scope of the research, discipleship materials could be developed for a greater range of cultures and ethnicities. Churches would be better prepared to disciple the people who enter their doors, regardless of their place of origin. Churches would also have at their disposal the options of written, verbal, and/or media-based discipleship materials to help them meet the needs

of their congregants. Moreover, the range of materials available to them would be increased, allowing for cross-cultural ministry across the age/stage spectrums of life.

For monocultural churches that want to engage in cross-cultural work, the general principles and guidelines that were suggested could be employed to enhance the nature and quality of their work. Planning for church missions trips, urban ministry initiatives, or outreach to disaffected subcultures would be greatly improved. It would also benefit monocultural settings to transpose materials to meet the needs of subcultures within the culture of their churches.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The world is becoming increasingly multicultural and multiethnic as the effects of globalization manifest. Wars, economic devastation, oppression, and religious persecution continue to induce the peoples of the earth to migrate, and with advances in transportation and the greed of human traffickers, it has resulted in the displacement of millions. Other than in severely repressive societies, isolationism is virtually impossible today, and nations and their leaders must face the reality of our increasingly fluid world. In the United States, this is a greater reality than in any other nation as it is the desired endpoint for most immigration.

Aside from social, economic, crime, and quality-of-life concerns, the church in America faces a significant challenge with this migratory phenomenon. People from different cultures are flocking to our places of worship, some to continue spiritual lives that started in their native lands, some to explore the spiritual life of their host country, others to bring their spiritual experiences with them, ultimately reshaping the religious landscape of America. Regardless of their motive, these newly arrived attendees of our

churches are seeking to know and grow in the faith of their choice. For the evangelical church, this offers a wonderful opportunity to disciple people from many nations and tongues in what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

This is not only a current opportunity but a mandate from our Lord. Jesus commanded His followers in Matthew 28:19, “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations.” For His disciples, that took place as they spread out across the known world with the message of the Gospel. This great commission has continued throughout Christian history, primarily through the efforts of missionaries, as they seek to be obedient to this call on their lives. Interestingly, the world is coming to the United States, at once making the task a bit easier yet more difficult. The difficulty comes in when the church in the United States is faced with the task of trying to communicate with people who not only have different languages, but bring with them a diverse set of traditions, means of communicating, approaches to relationships, values, ethics, and worldviews—in short, cultures.

These exigencies of culture offer a rich experience of learning for those willing to explore them, as well as adding to the tapestry of our shared existence. However, they also pose problems for ministry in that so much of what is done requires effective communication between peoples. The church has realized that not only does language make communication difficult, but the underlying facets of culture that contribute to the expression of ideas make for difficult mutual understanding. Both the source and receptor cultures bring much to the table in the attempt to communicate and this has often led to frustration, misunderstanding, and ineffective ministry in multicultural and cross-cultural settings.

The present research study has posited a potential solution—cultural transposition. Cultural transposition involves rephrasing or translating the ideas expressed in one language (or cultural, ethnic, social group) into an appropriate expression of another, to make them understandable. It goes beyond simple word replacement to a deeper sense of what is trying to be said. The research conducted demonstrated that this is an effective tool in cross-cultural communication.

Words, phrases, and sentences that were culturally transposed made them easier to understand in multicultural settings. What made that work effective was to have representative cultures do the transposition and to do it in a mutually respectful, process-oriented manner. The results were significant and offered a solution to the problem of communication in multicultural ministry settings. More so, the research offered hope for better communication in the world at large, despite the increasing challenges that globalization has brought about.

APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Request to Participate in the Research Work Group

This is the script that was presented to potential participants for the work group, who were a part of the original Navigator's discipleship group.

#### Sample Script Requesting Participation in the Study Group

“Hi, \_\_\_\_\_ . I am conducting a study for a D.Min. project at Alliance Theological Seminary and was wondering if you would consider being a part of it. I am asking people who participated in the Navigator's 2:7 discipleship course I led in 2010-11 to volunteer for a study group that will be analyzing the material we used in that group. In particular, I want to see if we can re-phrase the material in such a way that it makes it easier for people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to understand it.

The study group is completely voluntary, all information collected will be kept in strict confidence, and anonymity will be maintained for everyone involved in the group. There is no financial compensation for participation, but the results of the study will help me complete my study, and potentially enhance the way future discipleship material is developed for multi-ethnic groups.

My plan is to meet every week for approximately an hour, for two months. If at any point you feel you can longer be a part, you are free to drop-out. We will work through as much of the material as we can in that time period, then stop.

Thank you for considering being a part of this, I will follow-up with you in a week to see if you would like to participate.”

## Appendix B

### Permission From Navigator's to Use 2:7 Discipleship Material

This contains the string of email correspondence the researcher had with the Navigators organization requesting permission to transpose their material.

#### Material Utilization Question

  
Carol Rebell <carol.rebell@navigator.org> 9/13/12

to me, Steven

Hi Doug,

This is Carol responding this time instead of Cindy. Our Church Discipleship Ministry [CDM] of The Navigators holds the copyright permission for the *2:7 Series* rather than NavPress, so we have some crossover on this product. I appreciate Cindy's gathering the information from you regarding this project. And we appreciate your integrity in consulting with us regarding permission.

Your DMin dissertation project sounds quite interesting, and we are very pleased that you are willing to share your findings with us. We are choosing not to apply a permissions fee for this project, as your results could also help us have a better sense of the multicultural issues related to the *2:7 Series*.

We would like to request that you use the *Updated 2:7 Series* which came out in 2011. Though over 90% of the content of the 2011 edition is the same, some changes have been made in the organization of the material, statistics have been updated, and some terminology has been changed to accommodate younger participants. We have a dedicated website for this edition which also includes on-line Leader's Guides and other helpful information. The website is: [www.2-7series.org](http://www.2-7series.org). There is also a link to order the books from NavPress, which right now are 25% off retail.

The wording you suggested for the "transposed material" permission is good, with an addition as follows: "This is some discipleship material that is based upon the *Updated 2:7 Series* published by The Navigators (©2011 by The Navigators), which has been modified for this group. It is for research purposes only and is not a published/recognized curriculum in its own right."

Please let us know if these stipulations are agreeable with you. May God bless your dissertation project and use the results for His glory.

Blessings,

Carol

P.S. I looked at your church website and loved seeing the picture of your church family.

***Carol Rebell***

The Navigators

Church Discipleship Ministry  
PO Box 6000, Colorado Springs, CO 80934

Office: 719-594-2445

Fax: 719-594-2442

**From:** Cindy Caruso  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 12, 2012 1:31 PM  
**To:** Carol Rebell  
**Subject:** FW: FW: Material Utilization Question

fyi

Cindy Caruso

Royalties, Rights & Permissions Coordinator

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**From:** Douglas Knowles [<mailto:pastordoug2efc@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Monday, September 10, 2012 12:05 PM

**To:** Cindy Caruso

**Subject:** Re: FW: Material Utilization Question

Hi Cindy-

Thanks so much for getting back to me. Your questions are good and valid, so let me attempt to address them:

What portion of the 2:7 would you be transposing? (The smaller the portion the better.)

I don't have an exact portion of material in mind, because that will depend on what kind of progress we make. My hunch at this point is that we would get through about one-half of a book. Given that I will probably start with Growing Strong in God's Family, we might get through the first 6-lessons or so of that book.

Which version are you wanting to transpose? This series was recently updated last year for this reason.

The version we last worked with is called "The New 2:7 Series," and is comprised of 3 books. The inside cover has a notation, "Revised edition 1999." Is there a newer version than that?

How many students would this be presented to? (The fewer copies made, the better.)

The work group would be comprised of 5-6 people. The second group that works through the "transposed material" would probably be about the same.

What would you "pass it off" as if not 2:7 material? (Changing something that is copyrighted becomes precarious in light of copyright law.)

The first group would be working with the original material, so that would be acknowledged as such to them. For the second group that would be working through the "transposed material," I would present it along the lines of, "This is some discipleship material that is based upon a series put out by the Navigators (and CDM), which has been modified for this group. It is for research purposes only and is not a published/recognized curriculum in its own right."

I can understand the reason and benefit for doing this, but what would you do with the "findings"?

(It would be a lot of work for the sole purpose of sharing your findings with us.)

This study is a part of my Doctor of Ministry dissertation project, so the findings would be reflected in that document. (This is why I want to be clear up front about using it, since it will be entered into a public document of a sort.) The findings will be used in the dissertation to reflect upon the problems of multicultural discipleship and how we can make it more effective.

Are you planning on eventually creating your own study from the findings? If so, would that be published, sold, or only used within your church?

At this point I don't have any plans to develop my own curriculum and only want to do this to complete my degree program. However, I can't say that wouldn't happen in the future, but how far that would go (used locally or sought to be published) remains unclear. In either case, the Navigators/CDM material would in no manner or form be used or represented in the new product.

Those are my initial responses, please get back to me if you have additional questions. As I stated previously, I have personally benefited from your material tremendously (as have the churches I have pastored) and I hold it in very high regard. This study in no way is intended to point out weaknesses in it, or to try to improve it (it has been highly effective in its present form). Thanks again-

Doug Knowles

On Thu, Sep 6, 2012 at 5:50 PM, Cindy Caruso <[Cindy.Caruso@navpress.com](mailto:Cindy.Caruso@navpress.com)> wrote:

Doug,

You are right. Your request is a little bit more complicated.

First, I want to let you know that the 2:7 Series is actually owned by Church Discipleship Ministries which is a division of The Navigators so I have copied Carol Rebell on this email. Her and I work closely together.

I have a few questions for you . . . (Please reply to all when responding)

What portion of the 2:7 would you be transposing? (The smaller the portion the better.)

Which version are you wanting to transpose? This series was recently updated last year for this reason.

How many students would this be presented to? (The fewer copies made, the better.)

What would you "pass it off" as if not 2:7 material? (Changing something that is copyrighted becomes precarious in light of copyright law.)

I can understand the reason and benefit for doing this, but what would you do with the "findings"?

(It would be a lot of work for the sole purpose of sharing your findings with us.)

Are you planning on eventually creating your own study from the findings? If so, would that be published, sold, or only used within your church?

I will wait to hear from you. Thanks!

Cindy Caruso

Royalties, Rights & Permissions Coordinator

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**From:** Douglas Knowles [mailto:[pastordoug2efc@gmail.com](mailto:pastordoug2efc@gmail.com)]

**Sent:** Thursday, August 30, 2012 1:15 PM

**To:** Customer Service

**Subject:** Material Utilization Question

Greetings-

I perused your website and read about the procedures for securing permission to copy/use Navigators material. However, my request went a bit beyond that, so I would like to know what kind of permission, if any, would be required in my case.

To summarize, I am planning on pursuing a DMin project that addresses the complications of multicultural discipleship. In my present ministry context I serve as Senior Pastor of an urban, multicultural church, comprised of "many nations, many tongues." I have used the Nav 2:7 material as my primary discipleship tool and have found it fairly successful. Where I have run up against problems is where people unaccustomed to basic middle-class American values, language and understanding, have difficulty comprehending some of the concepts presented. Thus, what I would like to do is take a portion of the 2:7 material and work through it with a cohort of people who completed the course, and see if there are ways we can transpose the material to make it more applicable across the cultural continuum. In essence we would be re-writing portions of the material to make them more understandable and applicable to their

Christian walk. Then, we would present the modified material to a new group of students , to see if they are better able to understand and apply the principles.

The new curriculum would not be published, advertised or sold in any way, nor would we try to pass it off as Navigators 2:7 material. Our findings would only be used to demonstrate the potential benefits of transposing (not translating) discipleship material to make it more applicable; I would be happy to share my findings with the Navigators for future consideration in multicultural settings, but there would be no implied expectation of personal gain from this. I simply want my congregation to be able to benefit from a purposeful program of discipleship, in ways that are understandable to all of them.

I would be happy to talk more about this with you if need be, please let me know how it would be best to proceed. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Douglas R. Knowles

Second Evangelical Free Church

Brooklyn, NY

Douglas Knowles <pastordoug2efc@gmail.com> 9/17/12

to Carol

Hi Carol-

Thanks so much for your reply. I'm honored to be able to take this on with your blessing...I trust it will benefit the Kingdom work we're both engaged in! Thanks as well for the local contact. Ministry in NYC is very tough, so it's good to have contacts with others engaged in the work here.

I'll be making a formal proposal to the seminary soon to see if they're good with my plan. If their response necessitates any additional contact with you and CDM I'll let you know. Otherwise, I'll keep you posted on the work

Thanks again-

Doug Knowles

## Appendix C

### The Understandability-Preference Scale

This is the survey questionnaire that resulted from the qualitative work of the group and used in the quantitative research.

#### Understandability-Preference Scale

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Below you will find two statements to compare. Please mark which of the two statements is more understandable to you:

1.     Love for Jesus.  
       Devotional life.
  
2.     Glance through a document.  
       Take a quick look at a document.
  
3.     Listening to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.  
       Paying attention to those times the Holy Spirit speaks.
  
4.     The course work is not difficult but it will require hard work.  
       While not difficult, to benefit most from each course will require purposeful effort.
  
5.     Markings are easier than understanding.  
       Markings are less tedious than understanding.
  
6.     Instead of reading the gospels consecutively, add variety by interspersing them with other books.  
       Instead of reading the gospels one after another, add variety by reading other books of the Bible in between them.
  
7.     Insights.  
       Special understanding.
  
8.     It is impossible in these few pages to go into all the wonderful results of the transaction that took place.  
       It is impossible in these few pages to describe all the wonderful results of the change that took place.
  
9.     Children may be born into a wealthy home with good parents.  
       Children may be born into a wealthy home and become the possessor of good Parents.

10.  This is an important moment in your life.  
 This is a strategic moment in your life.
11.  This passage has been written on the table of your heart.  
 This passage has been placed deeply in your heart.
12.  Still another attack may be along this line:  
 Another attack may sound like this:
13.  Will you rely on what this person or that one says, or will you rely on the supreme Word?  
 Will you rely on what this person or that one says, or will you resort to the invincible Word?
14.  Implicit in honest confession is the willingness to forsake the sin.  
 If we are going to confess our sin, then we have to be willing to stop it as well.
15.  Say the verses out loud.  
 Work on the verses audibly.
16.  Review the verse in this order.  
 Review the verse in this sequence.
17.  The most critical element in Scripture memory is review.  
 The most important thing about memorizing Scripture is to review.
18.  What the Holy Spirit expresses through Paul in Colossians 2:7 clearly describes the specific goals of the training.  
 The Holy Spirit says through Paul in Colossians 2:7 what the specific purpose of this training is.
19.  The marriages and families of individual members have been helped as they have grown spiritually.  
 Marriages and families have been helped as individual members have grown spiritually and become firmly established in their daily walk with God.

Thank you!

## Appendix D

### Survey Request/Instructions

This request was given to the two congregations of the church and the youth group, requesting participation in completing the survey questionnaire (*The Understandability-Preference Scale*).

### Questionnaire Request/Instructions

“I would like to ask for your help in filling-out a survey questionnaire. As a part of a research project that I am doing at the Alliance Theological Seminary for my Doctor of Ministry, I am conducting a study on comprehension and understanding. I have a survey that lists two words or phrases for each of 19 questions, and I would like you to simply choose which one is more understandable to you. The words and phrases are based on some material developed by the Navigator’s, which has been modified for this study. Anything altered from the original is being used for research purposes only and is not a published/recognized curriculum in its own right

I want you know that the Internal Review Board of Alliance Theological Seminary requires me to follow strict protocols to ensure anonymity, confidentiality, and integrity in how I conduct this research. Thus, your involvement in the study will be completely anonymous and voluntary. Your names will not be attached to your surveys and I will not be in the room as you fill them out. The completed surveys will be stored in a locked cabinet before and after I tabulate the statistics for results. If you begin the survey and part-way through it decide you do not want to continue, you can opt-out at any time. If you can not understand the English language well enough to complete the questionnaire, you may drop out of the study as well.

If you are willing to participate in this survey, please remain seated and an usher will pass out the surveys. If you need a writing implement, an usher can give you one as well. When you are done, please place the completed survey on the table at the front of the Sanctuary. Thank you in advance for your help in this research.”

## Appendix E

### Manuscripts of Work Group Dialogue in Transposing the Discipleship Materials

The following are four scenarios that were noted in the course of the transposition group's work with the Navigator's 2:7 materials.

	Gender	Age	Country of Origin	Education Level	Years Living in the United States
Participant 1	Male	63	India	College	24
Participant 2	Female	69	India	Some College	41
Participant 3	Female	52	China	College	8
Participant 4	Female	71	Dominican Republic	High School	32
Participant 5	Female	26	Guatemala	High School	22

#### Scenario #1

*Researcher* – “On page thirteen, item number two, it says, ‘Get acquainted with other members in your group.’ Is there anything in that sentence that is hard to understand?”

*(Several at once)* – “What exactly does it mean to ‘get acquainted?’”

*Researcher* – “It means to get to know each other better.”

*Participant#3* – “That might be a threatening idea for the Chinese; they tend to be more ‘surface’ at first, then grow more deep later.”

*Participant #1* – “In the Gujarat community it would sound like getting to know each other very well; maybe in a deeper sense than the English means.”

*Researcher* - “What would be a better word or phrase to use there?”

*Participant #5* – “Maybe something less threatening; like just introduce yourself.”

*Participant #3* – “But it would have to imply nothing too deep.”



*Participant #1* – “How about, ‘have the group members briefly introduce themselves?’”

*Researcher* – “Does that sound more general, less threatening?”

*(Several at once)* – “Yes”

## Scenario #2

*Researcher* – “On page thirteen, item number four, it says, ‘Learn how to make your Bible reading exciting.’ Is there anything in that sentence that is hard to understand?”

*Participant #3* – “This would be hard for the Chinese to understand because the Chinese don’t have a word for ‘being excited’ about something.”

*Researcher* - “What would be a better word or phrase to use there?”

*Participant #3* – “How about ‘interesting’?”

*Participant #5* – “But that takes away from the idea of being excited or eager to do something.”

*Participant #2* – “Is there a word in Chinese that gets across the idea of being excited?”

*Participant #3* – “Maybe the word ‘enjoyable.’”

*Researcher* – “Does the group feel that ‘enjoyable’ is a close enough approximation to ‘excited’?”

The work group felt it was a bit weak, but for the sake of uniformity, they agreed that “enjoyable” could be substituted for “excited.”

Scenario #3

*Researcher* – “On page twenty-one, paragraph three, it says, ‘It is impossible in these few pages to go into all the wonderful results of the transaction that took place when you received Christ.’ Is there anything in that sentence that is hard to understand?”

*Participant #1* – “For the Indian community, the word ‘transaction’ could be a problem.”

*Researcher* – “Why is that?”

*Participant #1* – “The Gujarati people in the church come from a community of business people and the word ‘transaction’ will make them think of a *financial* transaction. They might think that becoming a Christian has financial benefits, which has been a problem among the people. They want to become Christians because they think they will be blessed financially if they do.”

*Researcher* – “What would be a better word for that sentence?”

*Participant #2* – “How about ‘changes’?”

*Participant #1* – “That would be better, yes.”

*Researcher* – “Is the group OK with that sentence being changed to, ‘It is impossible in these few pages to go into all the wonderful results of the changes that took place when you received Christ.’?”

The work group agreed that the change would better convey a personal change of heart, rather than a financial transaction.

Scenario #4

*Researcher* – “On page twenty-two, paragraph two, it says, ‘If Christ deemed it necessary to meet Satan this way, how much more do we need this mighty weapon, the Word of God?’ Is there anything in that sentence that is hard to understand?”

*Participants #2 & 3* (simultaneously) – “This is hard to understand.”

*Researcher* – “What in particular?”

*Participant #2* – “The word deemed – what does that mean?”

*Participant #3* – “I agree; plus, the idea of Jesus ‘meeting’ Satan would sound like they met for lunch or something in Chinese.”

*Participant #5* – “Also, the phrase ‘how much more’ is hard to translate in Spanish.”

*Researcher* – “How can we change the sentence to make it more understandable?”

*Participant #1* – “Can we say ‘considered’ instead of ‘deemed’?”

(Several of the volunteers agree).

*Researcher* – “How about the idea of ‘meeting’ Satan?”

*Participant #3* – “In Chinese, a better word would be ‘confront;’ doesn’t that get the same idea across?”

(Several of the volunteers agree)

*Participant #5* – “In terms of the phrase ‘how much more,’ we have an expression in Spanish, ‘*mucho mas*, which means the same thing.”

*Participant #4* – “Yes, you’re right. I guess that would work OK; it sounds close enough and people would get the point.”

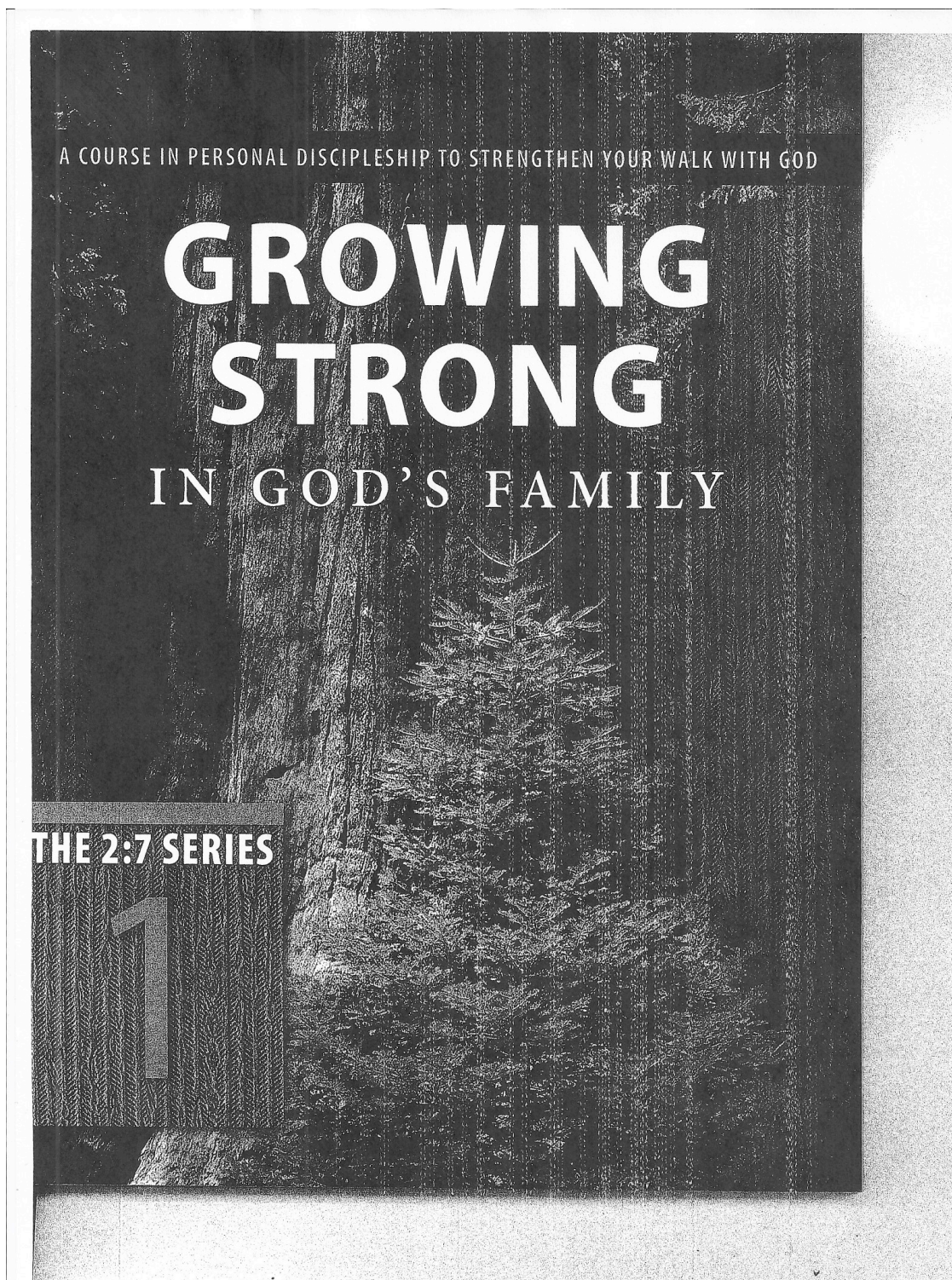
*Researcher* – “So are we in agreement that the sentence could read, ‘If Christ considered it necessary to confront Satan in this way, how much more do we need this

mighty weapon, the Word of God?' Is that more understandable and does it convey the same general idea?"

(The group agrees).

**Appendix F**

**Excerpt From Lesson One of the Navigator's 2:7 Workbook,  
"Growing Strong in God's Family"**





NavPress is the publishing ministry of The Navigators, an international Christian organization and leader in personal spiritual development. NavPress is committed to helping people grow spiritually and enjoy lives of meaning and hope through personal and group resources that are biblically rooted, culturally relevant, and highly practical.

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12 11 10 9 8 7

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are grateful for the dedicated efforts of Ron Oertli, who originated the concept of THE 2:7 SERIES and is its principal author. Ron is also the key person responsible for this updated edition. This discipleship training approach began in Denver in 1970 and continues to be highly effective in many places around the world.

# SESSION 1

13  
SESSION 1

## OUTLINE OF THIS SESSION

1. Open the session in prayer.
2. Get acquainted with other members in your group.
3. Read “Based on Colossians 2:7” (pages 13–14) and “General Comments” (pages 14–15).
4. Learn how to make your Bible reading exciting (pages 15–18).
  - a. “Why Read and Mark a Bible” (page 15)
  - b. “Ways to Mark Your Bible as You Read” (pages 15–17)
  - c. “Choosing Where to Read in Your Bible” (page 17)
  - d. “What to Mark” (page 18)
5. Complete the “Reading and Marking Exercise” (pages 18–19).
6. Discuss “Scripture Memory Overview” (pages 19–20).
7. Glance through “*Beginning with Christ* Explanation” (pages 20–24) in preparation for its corresponding Bible study in session 2.
8. Read “Proven Ways to Memorize a Verse Effectively” (pages 24–25).
9. Read “Assignment for Session 2” (page 25).
10. Close the session in prayer.

## BASED ON COLOSSIANS 2:7

Rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

—COLOSSIANS 2:7

What is the purpose of THE 2:7 SERIES? What the Holy Spirit expresses through Paul in Colossians 2:7 clearly describes the specific goals of this training:

1. **For a Christian to become *built up in Christ and strengthened in his or her faith*.** This series of courses includes instruction in practical Bible study, Scripture memory skills, how to sharpen one’s devotional

- life, and how to be more effective in evangelism. The objective is to become consistent in these disciplines rather than to just accumulate Bible knowledge.
2. **For a Christian to learn to *overflow with thankfulness in everyday life.***  
The series will help an individual learn to experience and enjoy a stable and consistent daily walk with Christ.
  3. **For a Christian to be *taught.*** The learning that strengthens our life does not come from lectures. Over time we see life transformation if we stay consistent in Scripture, listening to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and applying what we learn. The discussions can impact every member of a group in positive ways.

What are some results of THE 2:7 SERIES? Many who have worked through this series have developed qualities enabling them to assume greater responsibilities and become more effective in their local churches. Marriages and families have been helped as individual members have grown spiritually and become firmly established in their daily walk with God. After graduating from this series of courses, these maturing Christians have acquired additional tools for helping others with their growth in Christ and in reaching out to those not yet committed to Christ.

Each of the three courses consists of eleven interactive sessions. The class sessions last one to two hours. You will find THE 2:7 SERIES to be an enriching relational experience, both with those in your group and with God Himself.

### GENERAL COMMENTS

1. Ideally there should be four to twelve people in a discipleship group (including the leader). A group of this size allows time for each person in the group to participate.
2. Individuals should not join the group after session 2, because catching up would require hurrying through the material.
3. Certain requirements need to be completed to graduate from this course. While not difficult, to benefit most from each course will require purposeful effort. Plan to finish strong.
4. Keep in mind that almost anything truly worthwhile may be costly in some way.
5. Most class sessions will require about one hour of preparation time.
6. Investing time in your lesson early helps you avoid the last-minute rush. When your homework is done well, you will find that you gain the most



permanent benefit from the training.

7. It is best if you do not miss more than two sessions during this course. It becomes difficult to catch up once you get behind.
8. This is not a lecture course. You will have an opportunity to participate in every session.

### WHY READ AND MARK A BIBLE





One of the most valuable spiritual disciplines in the life of a healthy Christian is the regular reading of Scripture. Previous 2:7 groups have shown that people get more out of Bible reading when they mark ideas that catch their eye or touch their heart. You and those in your group will often experience great mutual encouragement or challenge when you share what you have read and marked.

You will find it helpful to choose an inexpensive contemporary translation or paraphrase for your reading and marking. Your group leader might suggest some options. You can also check [www.2-7series.org](http://www.2-7series.org).

### WAYS TO MARK YOUR BIBLE AS YOU READ

One option is to use a highlighter to mark words, phrases, or sentences. Most Bible bookstores sell dry highlighters or colored pencils that work well for Bible marking. (Regular highlighters can bleed through the thinner paper often found in Bibles.)

Some people like to mark with a ballpoint pen. Following are some commonly used pen markings that you might want to choose from if using a ballpoint pen.

1. **Brackets**-- [ ]  
Brackets can be put around a phrase or even a sentence or two.
2. **Short diagonal lead-in**-- \   
The short diagonal lead-in refers to the phrase that immediately follows it.
3. **Parallel diagonal lines in the margin**-- //   
Parallel diagonal lines can be used when the passage being marked is longer than one verse.
4. **Circle**--   
A circle can be used for repeated words within a passage or to indicate the people who are the principal characters in that passage.
5. **Vertical line in the margin**-- | 

A vertical line in the margin refers to the phrase or sentence(s) beside it.

#### 6. Underlining—

Underlining can be used for words, phrases, or a sentence. For a block of verses, other markings are less tedious than underlining.

The important point is to mark the parts of a passage that impress you either in your mind or in your heart.

The following four segments of Scripture show examples of how others have marked these passages as they were reading.

#### ISAIAH 11:1-7

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. <sup>2</sup>The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—[the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD]—<sup>3</sup>and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; <sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. <sup>6</sup>The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. <sup>7</sup>The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

#### LUKE 5:15-17

<sup>15</sup>Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. <sup>16</sup>But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. <sup>17</sup>One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick.

#### 1 KINGS 12:3-9 (MLB)

<sup>3</sup>When Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel arrived, they addressed Rehoboam, saying, <sup>4</sup>“Your father made our yoke unbearable. [Now lighten the unbearable service of your father and the heavy yoke he laid upon us, and we will serve you.]”<sup>5</sup> He responded, “Give me three more days; then return to me.”

When the people left, <sup>6</sup>Rehoboam conferred with the elders who had stood by Solomon when he was still alive, saying, “How would you advise me to reply to the people?”<sup>7</sup> They

advised him, <sup>1</sup>“If you will be a servant to this people now and serve them and reply to them with kind words, they will always be your servants.”<sup>2</sup> But he rejected the advice which the elders gave him. Then he conferred with the young men who grew up with him and stood by him. <sup>3</sup>“What do you advise us to say to this people who petitioned me, ‘Make lighter the yoke your father laid upon us?’”

#### 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-7 (AMP)

<sup>1</sup>Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy, to the assembly (church) of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah): <sup>2</sup>[Grace (spiritual blessing and divine favor) to you and [heart] peace.]

<sup>3</sup>We are ever giving thanks to God for all of you, continually mentioning [you when engaged] in our prayers, <sup>4</sup>recalling unceasingly before our God and Father your work energized by faith and service motivated by love, and unwavering hope in [the return of] our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah). <sup>5</sup>[O] brethren beloved by God, we recognize *and* know that He has selected (chosen) you; <sup>6</sup>for our [preaching of the] glad tidings (the Gospel) came to you not only in word, but also [in [its own inherent] power] and in the Holy Spirit, and with great conviction *and* absolute certainty [on our part]. You know what kind of men we proved [ourselves] to be among you for your good. <sup>7</sup>And you [set yourselves to] become imitators of us and [through us] of the Lord Himself, for you welcomed our message in [spite of] much persecution, with joy [inspired] by the Holy Spirit; <sup>8</sup>so that you [thus] became a pattern to all the believers (those who adhere to, trust in, and rely on Christ Jesus) in Macedonia and Achaia [most of Greece].

### CHOOSING WHERE TO READ IN YOUR BIBLE

1. If reading the Bible is fairly new to you, you may find it helpful to start with a New Testament book such as John or Philippians.
2. It is better to finish reading all of one book before starting another.
3. For many, the two most difficult books in the Bible are Leviticus and Revelation. It is wise to put off reading these two books until after completing book 1 of this series.
4. Instead of reading the gospels consecutively, add variety by interspersing them with other books.
5. When you are ready to begin reading in the Old Testament, it might be helpful to start with one of the following books: Joshua, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Genesis, or Daniel.

## Appendix G

### Copy of Lesson One from the Navigator's 2:7 Workbook, "Growing Strong in God's Family," with Mark-ups from the Transposition Group's Work

## SESSION 1

13  
SESSION 1

#### OUTLINE OF THIS SESSION

1. Open the session in prayer. *Have the gr members briefly introduce themselves*
2. Get acquainted with other members in your group.
3. Read "Based on Colossians 2:7" (pages 13-14) and "General Comments" (pages 14-15).
4. Learn how to make your Bible reading *exciting* (pages 15-18). *enjoyable*
  - a. "Why Read and Mark a Bible" (page 15)
  - b. "Ways to Mark Your Bible as You Read" (pages 15-17)
  - c. "Choosing Where to Read in Your Bible" (page 17)
  - d. "What to Mark" (page 18)
5. Complete the "Reading and Marking Exercise" (pages 18-19).
6. Discuss "Scripture Memory Overview" (pages 19-20).
7. *Take a quick look at* (Glance through) "Beginning with Christ Explanation" (pages 20-24) *in to* preparation for *the* *the* corresponding Bible study in session 2.
8. Read "Proven Ways to Memorize a Verse Effectively" (pages 24-25).
9. Read "Assignment for Session 2" (page 25).
10. Close the session in prayer.

#### BASED ON COLOSSIANS 2:7

Rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

—COLOSSIANS 2:7

What is the purpose of THE 2:7 SERIES? *What* the Holy Spirit expresses through Paul in Colossians 2:7 *clearly describes* the specific *goals* of this training: *15.*

1. For a Christian to become *built up in Christ and strengthened in his or her faith*. This series of courses includes instruction in practical Bible study, Scripture memory skills, how to sharpen one's devotion *at love for Christ*

life, and how to be more effective in evangelism. The <sup>purpose</sup> objective is to become consistent in these disciplines rather than to just ~~accumulate~~ <sup>collect</sup> Bible knowledge.

- 2. **For a Christian to learn to overflow with thankfulness in everyday life.** The series will help an individual learn to experience and enjoy a stable and consistent daily walk with Christ. 8.
- 3. **For a Christian to be taught.** The learning that strengthens our life does not come from lectures. Over time we see life transformation if we stay consistent in Scripture, <sup>[paying attention to those times when the HS speaks]</sup> listening to the <sup>(promptings)</sup> of the Holy Spirit and applying what we learn. The discussions can impact every member of a group in positive ways.

What are some results of THE 2:7 SERIES? Many who have worked through this series have developed qualities <sup>that have helped</sup> enabling them to <sup>take on</sup> assume greater responsibilities <sup>to</sup> and become more effective in their local churches. Marriages and families <sup>have been helped as</sup> individual members have grown spiritually <sup>the</sup> and become firmly established in their daily walk with God. After graduating from this series of courses, these maturing Christians have <sup>gained</sup> acquired additional tools for helping others with their growth in Christ and in reaching out to those not yet committed to Christ.

Each of the three courses consists of eleven interactive sessions. The class sessions last one to two hours. You will find THE 2:7 SERIES to be an enriching relational experience, both with those in your group and with God Himself.

<sup>preferably</sup> **GENERAL COMMENTS**

- 1. (Ideally) there should be four to twelve people in a discipleship group (including the leader). A group of this size allows time for each person in the group to participate.
- 2. Individuals should not join the group after session 2, because catching up would require hurrying through the material.
- 3. Certain requirements need to be completed to graduate from this course. <sup>The course work is</sup> While not difficult, <sup>to</sup> to benefit most from each course will require purposeful effort. Plan to finish strong. <sup>it</sup> <sup>is</sup> <sup>worth</sup> worthwhile.
- 4. Keep in mind that almost anything truly worthwhile may be costly in some way.
- 5. Most class sessions will require about one hour of preparation time.
- 6. (Investing time in your lesson early helps you avoid the last-minute rush.) When your homework is done well, you will find that you gain the most

*Doing the work early will help you avoid rushing at the last minute.*

permanent benefit from the training.

7. It is best if you do not miss more than two sessions during this course. It becomes difficult to catch up once you get behind.
8. This is not a lecture course. You will have an opportunity to participate in every session.

### WHY READ AND MARK A BIBLE

One of the most valuable spiritual disciplines in the life of a healthy Christian is the regular reading of Scripture. Previous 2:7 groups have shown that people get more out of Bible reading when they mark ideas that catch their eye or touch their heart. You and those in your group will often ~~experience great mutual encouragement or challenge~~ when you share what you have read and marked.

You will find it helpful to choose an inexpensive ~~contemporary translation or paraphrase~~ for your reading and marking. Your group leader might suggest some options. You can also check [www.2-7series.org](http://www.2-7series.org).

*encourage  
one another  
or exchange  
ideas*

*newer  
version  
of the Bible*

### WAYS TO MARK YOUR BIBLE AS YOU READ

One option is to use a highlighter to mark words, phrases, or sentences. Most Bible bookstores sell dry highlighters or colored pencils that work well for Bible marking. (Regular highlighters can bleed through the thinner paper often found in Bibles.)

Some people like to mark with a ~~ballpoint~~ pen. Following are some commonly used pen markings that you might want to choose from if using a ~~ballpoint~~ pen.

#### 1. Brackets—[ ]

Brackets can be put around a phrase or even a sentence or two.

#### 2. Short diagonal lead-in—

The short diagonal ~~lead-in~~ refers to the phrase that immediately follows it.

*line  
marks*

#### 3. Parallel diagonal lines in the margin—

Parallel diagonal lines can be used when the passage being marked is longer than one verse.

#### 4. Circle—

A circle can be used for repeated words within a passage or to indicate the people who are the principal characters in that passage.

#### 5. Vertical line in the margin—

A vertical line in the margin refers to the phrase or sentence(s) beside it.

#### 6. Underlining —

Underlining can be used for words, phrases, or a sentence. For a block of verses, other markings are *less tedious* than underlining.

The important point is to mark the parts of a passage that impress you either in your mind or in your heart.

The following four segments of Scripture show examples of how others have marked these passages as they were reading.

#### ISAIAH 11:1-7

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. <sup>2</sup>The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—[the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD]—<sup>3</sup>and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; <sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. <sup>6</sup>The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. <sup>7</sup>The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

#### LUKE 5:15-17

<sup>15</sup>Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. <sup>16</sup>But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. <sup>17</sup>One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick.

#### 1 KINGS 12:3-9 (MLB)

<sup>3</sup>When Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel arrived, they addressed Rehoboam, saying, <sup>4</sup>“Your father made our yoke unbearable. Now lighten the unbearable service of your father and the heavy yoke he laid upon us, and we will serve you.”<sup>5</sup>He responded, “Give me three more days; then return to me.”

When the people left, <sup>6</sup>Rehoboam conferred with the elders who had stood by Solomon when he was still alive, saying, “How would you advise me to reply to the people?”<sup>7</sup>They

advised him, [If you will be a servant to this people now and serve them and reply to them with kind words, they will always be your servants.]<sup>8</sup> But he rejected the advice which the elders gave him. Then he conferred with the young men who grew up with him and stood by him.<sup>9</sup> "What do you advise us to say to this people who petitioned me, 'Make lighter the yoke your father laid upon us'?"

#### 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-7 (AMP)

<sup>1</sup>Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy, to the assembly (church) of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah): [Grace (spiritual blessing and divine favor) to you and [heart] peace.]

<sup>2</sup>We are ever giving thanks to God for all of you, continually mentioning [you when engaged] in our prayers, <sup>3</sup>recalling unceasingly before our God and Father your work energized by

faith and service motivated by love, and unwavering hope in [the return of] our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah). <sup>4</sup>[O] brethren beloved by God, we recognize *and* know that He has selected (chosen) you; <sup>5</sup>for our [preaching of the] glad tidings (the Gospel) came to you not only in word, but also [in [its own inherent] power] and in the Holy Spirit, and with great conviction *and* absolute certainty [on our part]. You know what kind of men we proved [ourselves] to be among you for your good. <sup>6</sup>And you [set yourselves to] become imitators of us and [through us] of the Lord Himself, for you welcomed our message in [spite of] much persecution, with joy [inspired] by the Holy Spirit; <sup>7</sup>so that you [thus] became a pattern to all the believers (those who adhere to, trust in, and rely on Christ Jesus) in Macedonia and Achaia [most of Greece].

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1. If reading the Bible is fairly new to you, you may find it helpful to start with a New Testament book such as John or Philippians.
2. It is better ~~(to finish reading all of one book before starting another.~~ *not to read these 2 books*
3. For many, the two most difficult books in the Bible are Leviticus and Revelation. It is wise to put off reading these two books ~~until after completing book 1 of this series.~~ *better not to read these*
4. Instead of reading the gospels ~~(consecutively)~~ *one after the other* add variety by ~~interspersing them with other books.~~ *reading other books & in the Bible.*
5. When you are ready to begin reading in the Old Testament, it might be helpful to start with one of the following books: Joshua, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Genesis, or Daniel. *between them.*



## WHAT TO MARK

*most important*

You are not looking for the main theological teaching when you read—that would be something that's done through Bible study. Mark things you like: words of encouragement, *special understandings* insights, challenges, observations, or something interesting. Read for enjoyment. When you finish a chapter, go back to review what you have marked. You may see a pattern *indicating something God may be bringing to your attention.* *that shows*

## READING AND MARKING EXERCISE

*activity*

For this reading and marking exercise, you are working through Romans 12. As you do this exercise:

1. Pray that God will speak to you from His Word.
2. Think through the passage.
3. Mark the thoughts that stand out or impress you.

After you have read this passage, you will have an opportunity to share with the group one or two things that you marked.

### ROMANS 12

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—that is your spiritual act of worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

<sup>3</sup>For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. <sup>4</sup>Just as each of us has one body with

many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. <sup>6</sup>We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. <sup>7</sup>If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach, <sup>8</sup>if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

<sup>9</sup>Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup>Be devoted to one another in brotherly

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love. Honor one another above yourselves. <sup>11</sup>Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. <sup>12</sup>Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. <sup>13</sup>Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

<sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. <sup>16</sup>Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

<sup>17</sup>Do not repay anyone evil for

evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. <sup>18</sup>If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. <sup>19</sup>Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup>On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

### SCRIPTURE MEMORY OVERVIEW

are

During this course, you will memorize five important passages of Scripture. For <sup>many</sup> years to come, you will find <sup>these</sup> key memorized verses to be helpful in your own life and for helping others. As you memorize each passage, you will also memorize the topic and the Bible reference. The verses are taken from The Navigator's Scripture memory packet called *Beginning with Christ*. Here are the topics and references.

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Assurance of Salvation	1 John 5:11-12
Assurance of Answered Prayer	John 16:24
Assurance of Victory	1 Corinthians 10:13
Assurance of Forgiveness	1 John 1:9
Assurance of Guidance	Proverbs 3:5-6

↔  
Consider also memorizing John 5:24. It is a very helpful verse for you to use when you are explaining your faith to someone. It can actually become a one-verse gospel explanation.

### CHOOSING A TRANSLATION FOR SCRIPTURE MEMORY

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<sup>10</sup>Be  
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Sometimes a paraphrase or expanded version of the Bible presents a particular verse or passage in a dynamic way. <sup>for ex,</sup> Many people have memorized 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 in the Phillips paraphrase for that reason. Numbers of women have been

blessed by memorizing Proverbs 31 in the Amplified Bible. (The usual guideline is to do your memory work using a translation of the Bible rather than a paraphrase.)

Your group will discuss translations from which you can choose to do your memory work (see pages 109-113 in the appendix). Often people choose the translation used by their pastor or the one most used in their church. Think about it. Talk to others and decide.

### CHOOSING SCRIPTURE MEMORY CARDS

At [www.2-7series.org](http://www.2-7series.org), you can download the memory verses for this course and print them on cards, or you may choose to write your verses on blank cards. Blank business cards are available at office supply stores and at print shops. Some Christian bookstores carry them. Another option that some people prefer is to use 3x5 index cards.

If you choose to use blank cards, on the front of the card, write the topic, the reference, the verse, and the reference at the bottom. You will find that having the memory verses on cards makes memorizing and reviewing easier.

We suggest that you write the topic and reference on the back of the card. In this way, you can review your learned verses by first looking at the topic and reference on the back of the card and then flipping the card over to check your accuracy.

Start out by using the guidelines this course suggests for memorizing and reviewing. By the end of this training, you will have established a pattern that works well for you.

By carrying your verses in a verse pack, you can use spare moments to memorize and review. At [www.2-7series.org](http://www.2-7series.org) you can find information about verse cards, verse packs, and other Scripture memory tools.

For the next class, you will be memorizing "Assurance of Salvation," 1 John 5:11-12. The following section, "*Beginning with Christ* (BWC) Explanation," describes the purpose for memorizing these five BWC passages: first for your own assurance, and then for giving assurance to others.

### BEGINNING WITH CHRIST EXPLANATION

The Bible says that "if you confess your mouth that you confess and are with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and saved" (Romans 10:9-10). Coupled with this wonderful truth is the statement in His Word that "to all who believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with in his name, he gave the right to

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become children of God" (John 1:12).

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According to these Scriptures, if you have ~~to the best of your knowl-~~<sup>edge</sup> received Jesus Christ (trusted Him as your own Savior), you have become a child of God in whom Jesus Christ dwells.

Many people make the mistake of measuring the <sup>certainty</sup> of their salvation by their feelings. Don't make this tragic mistake. Believe God. Take Him at His Word: "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).

It is impossible in these few pages to <sup>do an</sup> ~~go into~~ <sup>change</sup> all the wonderful results of the ~~transaction~~ that took place when you received Christ. Children may be born into a wealthy home <sup>with</sup> and become the possessor of good parents, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, ~~but~~ <sup>however</sup> at the time of their birth it is not necessary that they be informed of all these wonderful things. There are more important matters to take care of first. They must be protected, for they have been born into a world with many enemies. In the hospital room, they are handled with sterilized gloves and kept from outsiders to <sup>protect</sup> prevent them from falling victim to the myriad germs and viruses <sup>waiting to</sup> ~~attack~~. It is the awareness of such enemies that enables the doctors and nurses to take measures to <sup>keep</sup> ~~protect~~ the precious new life. <sup>safe</sup>

*protect them from ~~the~~ various*

You have become a child of God;

you have been born into His family as a spiritual babe. This is a ~~strategic~~ <sup>crucial</sup> moment in your life. The following basic truths will strengthen you for the battle ahead and keep you safe from the <sup>attacks</sup> onslaugths of Satan.

In 1 Peter 2:2 we read, "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation." In Acts 20:32 we read, "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up." The Bible serves as our spiritual food and will build us up in the faith. In this course, you are given suggestions for how to read your Bible. It is important that you have time set aside, preferably in the morning, to read the Word of God and pray.

Now let's be more specific with regard to <sup>take in</sup> ~~your intake~~ of the Word of God. In Psalm 119, it says, "How can a young man keep his way pure?" (verse 9), and then the psalmist speaks to the Lord, saying, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (verse 11). So we hide His Word in our heart by memorizing key passages. This course offers five useful Scripture passages with which you may begin.

*how you receive*

Let us consider for a moment the spiritual Enemy you face. Before you <sup>with</sup> ~~trusted~~ Christ, Satan may not have bothered you ~~particularly~~, but now he has seen you make the step that angers him more than any ~~one~~ thing in all the world: You have left his crowd and joined the ranks of those who believe

*with*

and trust in the Son of God. You are no longer in Satan's domain; you now belong to the One who has bought and paid for you with a price, the price of His own blood, shed on the cross. You may be sure that Satan will attempt to trouble you. His attacks <sup>come up</sup> assume many forms. These memory verses will help you deal with some of the most common satanic attacks and give you help on how to resist him successfully.

→ You can overcome him only as you use the weapons God has provided. Paul said, "Take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). The Bible, then, is the primary weapon against these attacks.

Consider that Jesus Christ was tempted by Satan in three specific ways, and He defeated him each time with Scripture, saying, "It is written" (see Matthew 4). If Christ (deemed) <sup>confront</sup> it necessary to <sup>confront</sup> meet Satan this way, how much more do we need this mighty weapon, the Word of God? How much more do we need to be prepared to say to Satan, "It is written" or "Thus said the Lord"?

**1. Assurance of Salvation**

The memory verses of Scripture in this course have been chosen to give you a defense against some of the most common attacks from the Enemy. Often Satan's first approach is to <sup>face</sup> cast doubt upon the work God has done in your heart. You may find yourself thinking, *How can I be saved and my sins*

*forgiven just by believing and receiving Christ? Surely that is not enough!*

Your only hope to withstand such an attack is to resort to God's Word. What does God say about the matter? That is the important thing. And so the first memory passage, 1 John 5:11-12 (Assurance of Salvation), says, "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

When this passage has been <sup>placed deeply in</sup> written on the table of your heart, you will be able to use it every time a doubt arises. <sup>When you have based your response on God's written Word, you will have overcome one of the first tests.</sup> On the basis of God's written Word, you will have overcome one of the first tests. This attack <sup>comes on more than once</sup> may recur, but now you can use the Word of God in your heart to <sup>confront</sup> meet it.

**2. Assurance of Answered Prayer**

Another attack of Satan may be to cause you to doubt the effectiveness of prayer. You may <sup>find</sup> catch yourself thinking, *How can God really be personally interested in me? He seems far away and is probably concerned about more important things. When I pray, does He hear me, (much less) answer my prayers?* <sup>bet alone</sup>

With Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, you have the unique privilege of speaking directly with your heavenly Father through Him. God wants you to come confidently into His presence. "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence"

*placed deeply in*  
*When you have based your response on God's written Word, you will have overcome one of the first tests.*

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(Hebrews 4:16) and to talk to Him about everything. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (Philippians 4:6). He is **intensely** interested in you and your needs.

deeply

In the second passage, **John 16:24**, Jesus gives us His assurance of answered prayer: “Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.”

Jesus did not say that His disciples had never asked before. You yourself have probably asked many times, especially when in trouble. But now you can ask in Jesus’ name because you belong to Him. To ask in His name means to ask in His authority and on His <sup>worth</sup> ~~merit~~. Just as the Father answered Jesus’ every prayer, so will He answer your call and meet your needs. Memorize this wonderful promise. Apply its truth and experience the joy of answered prayer.

3. Assurance of Victory *sound like*

Still another attack may be ~~along~~ this line: *I know I have spiritual life, all right, but in my following God, I feel that I am a weakling; I have always been weak.*

*You will remember some sin that has gripped you <sup>controlled</sup> throughout the past years of your life. You will think, I am weak; I will not be able to stand against this particular temptation. Perhaps I am able to stand against others, but not this one.*

How will you answer this doubt? Will you rely on what this person or that one says, or will you <sup>rely on</sup> (resort to) the (invincible) Word? The third passage, **1 Corinthians 10:13**, is chosen especially to meet this attack of Satan: “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

←  
supreme

This verse gives assurance of victory. Our faithful God promises victory over temptation. It belongs to you as a child of His. He will always give you an “exit” to avoid sin. Believe what God has said and you will see that things impossible with men are possible with God. It will <sup>excite</sup> (thrill) you to see that chains of lifetime habits can be broken by His mighty power. Memorize this verse; *(write it on the table of your heart)* and then trust the Holy Spirit to help you live victoriously over sin.

place it  
deeply  
inside you

4. Assurance of Forgiveness

This brings us to the next attack of Satan. Although victory over temptation is rightfully yours, you may fail. When you sin, you may think, *Now I’ve done it. I’m supposed to be a Christian, but Christians don’t do those things, do they?*

Nevertheless, God makes provision in His Word for the failures of His children, and so the fourth passage, **1 John 1:9**, speaks of the

If to sin we have will  
 If we're confessing our sin then we will be willing to stop it as well.

assurance of forgiveness: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

To confess a sin means to uncover it by calling it exactly what God calls it: sin. You "tell it like it is" to God. (Implicit in honest confession is the willingness to forsake the sin.) "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). God promises to not only forgive us but also cleanse us. What a gracious provision! You can thank God for His forgiveness. When we are honest and repent, God gives us a fresh start!

#### 5. Assurance of Guidance

The four preceding assurances have been given to help you meet the principal attacks of Satan. However, the

fifth passage for you to memorize is for a different purpose.

You may have questions about the future, wondering how this new life of yours is all going to work out. *What about God's will for my life? Will He really lead me?* This verse (Proverbs 3:5-6) comes to give you assurance of guidance: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

God promises to lead you and direct your path when you rely on Him completely. Memorize and apply this Scripture as a reminder to trust God for His guidance in your life.

After you have memorized these verses and learned to apply them, you will be aware of the strength and blessings that come from hiding God's Word in your heart.

### How to (PROVEN WAYS TO) MEMORIZE A VERSE EFFECTIVELY

1. Before you start to memorize the verse, read it aloud several times.
2. Learn the topic, reference, and first phrase (as a unit.) *together*
3. After you have reviewed the topic, reference, and first phrase a few times, add the second phrase. Gradually add phrases until you know the whole verse. (It is best to do this over a period of several hours.)
4. *Say the verses out loud* (Work on the verses audibly) whenever possible.
5. As you memorize and review the verse, think about how it applies to your own life.
6. Always review the verse in this *order* (sequence):
  - a. TOPIC: "Assurance of Salvation"
  - b. REFERENCE: "First John five, eleven and twelve"
  - c. VERSE(S): "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not

*important thing to do*

have the Son of God does not have life.”

d. REFERENCE: “First John five, eleven and twelve”

7. The most (critical element) in Scripture memory is review, review, review!

The most important time to review a verse repeatedly is right after you can quote the whole verse (topic, reference, verse, reference) without making a mistake. Review the verse (preferably) many times a day for several days. After that, plan to review the verses once a day during this course. The more you review, the greater your retention.

*It is better to*

8. An important concept is the principle of over-learning. We can recall names, phone numbers, web addresses, and routes to certain stores or homes because we have “over-learned” them—the information is deeply planted in our memory. So in doing Scripture memory, we don’t consider a verse memorized simply at the point when we can quote it accurately.

(Only after having reviewed it frequently enough for it to become ingrained in our memory can we say with certainty that a verse has been memorized.)

*We can only say w/certainty that a v has been memorized when we have*

ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 2

1. Scripture Memory: Carefully read “Beginning with Christ Explanation” (pages 20–24). Memorize the passage on “Assurance of Salvation,” 1 John 5:11-12.
2. Bible Reading: Obtain a contemporary translation or paraphrase of the Bible. Plan to read and mark in it each day. Much of session 2 is given to having group members share things they have read and marked.
3. Bible Study: Complete “Beginning with Christ Bible Study” (pages 28–32).

*reviewed it enough for it to be planted in our memory.*

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