

# NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A MEGA CHURCH AND JESUS' FULLY DEVOTED FOLLOWERS Westlink Christian Church-

Viewing the Forest and Trees Together

A Project Submitted to the Seminary Faculty In Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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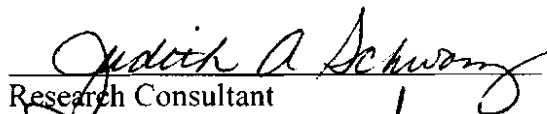
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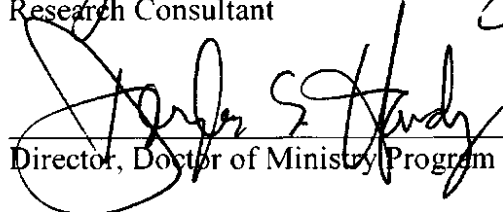
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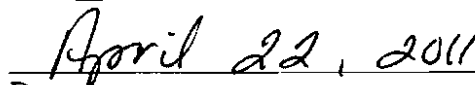
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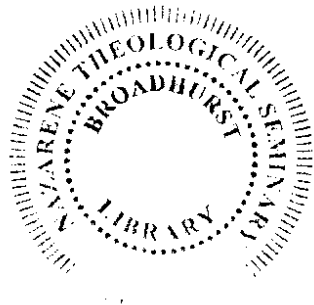
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## CHAPTER ONE Overview

### of the Study

How can a mega church best help Jesus' followers mature consistently in Christian discipleship? This crucial question must be answered for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century church to be effective in ministry.

By nature and definition, conversion to Christianity leads to continual growth toward Christ-likeness in personal, group, and congregational settings and beyond even to groups of churches and denominations. Noticeable, measurable, and life-changing Christian development and maturity is, in many respects, the future for God's Church headed by Jesus Christ. For if Christians remain decidedly infantile or juvenile at best, the world sees little difference between lives indwelt by God's Holy Spirit and those outside the church for whom God's Spirit still yearns. Personal and corporate discipleship, mission, and cultural transformation retain a vital link with one another. The world, to a large extent reminiscent of the first church and her surroundings in the book of Acts, waits to see if any portion of humanity has truly "been with Jesus."

This research project's contention is that mega churches have wrestled uniquely (and perhaps more in some cases) to define a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ and provide a church setting consistently encouraging and facilitating Christian maturity. Among independent Christian churches, at least, the growing number of mega churches heightens this concern and begs for better understanding and progress.

The leadership of Westlink Christian Church (WCC) has wrestled with this question since the church's inception and with increased intensity over the last five to ten

years. Adult Bible classes do a decent job providing consistent teaching and fellowship. Small group

attendance has increased in the past few years. However, less than one-half of all WCC members and regular participants take part in a Bible class, small group or ministry, service, or short-term mission team. In other words, more than half the church adults attend worship regularly but are otherwise unconnected to the life and ministry of the church body. Adults regularly present for worship services attend approximately 50% of the time. As the church has grown, the gap between members and active participants and those regularly involved in Christian growth and discipleship opportunities continues to widen. WCC, in recent years it seems, has accomplished the first half of her mission statement, "*Connecting people to Jesus Christ,*" more successfully than the second half of that same mission statement, "*and helping them become His fully devoted followers.*" Since the two halves of the mission statement are connected, both parts tend to suffer. WCC's mission and ministry to adults who regularly attend do not meet the needs of the congregation or the expectations of the leadership and must improve.

WCC provided a solid Christian environment for me during my growing up years and, in many respects, along with my parents, laid the foundation for my faith in Jesus Christ and the decision to seek Christian higher education, ordination for full-time pastoral service, and full-time Christian service for 20+ years. Along with my family, I have a strong desire to see the ministry and impact of WCC continue to improve, grow, and thrive as she trusts God for the impossible and continually testifies concerning the life-saving, changing power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I possess a personal affinity,

loyalty, dedication, and commitment to this particular local church because of her history, leadership, passion, people, and potential.

The purpose of this Pastoral Research Project (PRP) is to define a "fully devoted follower" in a solid, clear, practical manner, evaluate WCC's current discipleship ministry and programming, and develop

a plan for future improvement and evaluation. This PRP seeks to answer the question: *"What kind of adult education model and strategy best encourages a relatively new believer to grow in Christian discipleship through a larger church setting? "*

Here are several central terms to define and clarify for this study:

<sup>1</sup> Willow Creek Community Church's mission statement: "to turn irreligious people into fully devoted followers of Christ." For more information go to <http://www.willowcreek.com/aboutus/history.asp>.

- **Fully Devoted Follower (FDF)**-used repeatedly throughout the PRP to describe a mature disciple of Christ or a person growing toward maturity in Jesus. While the term has been difficult to trace clearly through WCC's written history, it became part of the church's mission statement and cultural language through the influence of Willow Creek Community Church.<sup>1</sup> More importantly, however, the term is recognized and used by the WCC church community and culture to refer to a growing or mature disciple of Jesus Christ.
- **Adult Education**-general term describing the ministries and programming of the local church (WCC in particular), where learning for adults is designed and carried out.
- **Maturity**-a term describing movement and growth in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior that more closely parallel and reflect the life of

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Jesus Christ. "Maturity," for this PRP, will describe ongoing life change and development with Jesus as the supreme model, path, and goal. Reaching full maturity (perfection) ultimately takes place in heaven after Jesus' return.

- **Relatively New Believer**-this term will be used to describe WCC's largest demographic group of members and regular attendees—primarily married couples 30 to 55 years old with children.

- **Adult Bible Classes**-specific program of WCC and many local churches traditionally called adult Sunday school. These classes have generally focused on Bible study. WCC currently has approximately 25 classes meeting weekly, with 250 to 300 people in attendance.
- **Home Teams/Small Groups**-WCC started group Bible studies meeting in homes in the 1960's. Today, because of a much larger congregation, small groups have become the connecting point for most adults for building relationships and connecting with other believers. WCC currently has approximately 100 small groups, with over 1000 adults involved. These groups have been named "Home Teams."
- **Discipleship**-a term used in this PRP to describe the life-long growth and learning process for Christians becoming Christ-followers and gradually learning and adopting the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of Jesus.
- **Megachurch**-used specifically to describe churches of more than 1,000 people in weekend attendance. WCC's current weekend attendance averages approximately 3,000. A large church context is the setting in

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which this PRP seeks relevance and impact with the understanding that larger churches provide specific challenges as well as benefits.

- **Stone/Campbell Movement**-a name describing the frontier "unity movement" of the mid to late 1800's, initiated by Barton Stone, Thomas Campbell, and Alexander Campbell. Westlink Christian Church is an independent Christian church from this heritage, with the specific goals of reestablishing simple New Testament Christianity and, being a "people of the book," learning and teaching the Bible well. WCC is not part of any denominational hierarchy but is governed locally by lay elders, professional staff, and lay volunteers.



Churches of Christ (non-instrumental) and Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) also are separate, distinct branches of this same historical movement.

- **Seekers**-this term has become popular over the last two to three decades, a result of the influence of Willow Creek Community Church. For this PRP the term will be used to describe those who have begun attending WCC in the last 5 to 7 years who have little church background or a church background different from WCC. Many who have recently started attending WCC come because of the church's location, reputation and community profile, plus what the church may offer to assist families and individuals in day-to-day living.

This study will include a survey of relevant literature, biblical study, interviews, site visits, surveys, and on-site research. In general the methods and instruments will seek to establish the following:

The literature review will highlight the foundation for the theological, psychological, sociological, developmental and educational framework for the entire project. This review will seek to establish the essential elements, theory, and principles for building a discipleship plan to develop "fully devoted followers" in and through the ministry of Westlink Christian Church. The review seeks to set out a reliable, reputable framework for the development and implementation of this plan.

The interviews, surveys, studies, questionnaires, and on-site visits will establish several primary and essential pieces of information for the study. These instruments will paint a picture of the WCC church culture, church leadership structure and environment, needs and a description of the congregation, effectiveness and liabilities of current programs and strategies. The PRP also seeks to offer indications regarding how other larger churches are developing "fully devoted followers" of Jesus Christ.

This study focuses on Westlink Christian Church, located on the northwest edge of Wichita, Kansas, approximately halfway between Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>2</sup> Wichita is a typical mid-sized American city of about 360,000 people, with that number expanding to around 500,000 in the entire metropolitan area.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *State and County QuickFacts*, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/20/2079000.html>. (accessed February 17, 2010).

Using a composite picture of the primary target audience of Westlink Christian Church we would find an age of 30 to 55 years, married with two children, combined income of \$75,000, 3 years of college education, white collar job, house cost of \$160,000 (have lived there 6 years), lives within a 5-mile radius of the church, uses the internet 4 to 19 hours per month, visits theme parks, plays golf, goes to the zoo, and has a frequent flyer account. WCC's target audience typically owns an SUV or a mini-van, cell phone,

video recorder, and eats fast food frequently. These same families usually listen to news/talk radio and contemporary radio and read *USA Today*, *Newsweek*, *Golf Digest*, and *Field and Stream*.

Spiritually, WCC's target audience grew up in church—primarily Catholic or Methodist, will go to an event before they will come to a worship service, prefer casual over formal, want a friendly church that does not pressure them for money, want to know how the Bible relates to current events and personal problems, and often don't attend church because they are too busy. Most are looking for a church that cares about the disadvantaged and a church with theological beliefs similar to their own.

To a large extent Westlink Christian Church as a congregation reflects this target audience and is a microcosm of the same. As a faith community, WCC would be less racially diverse than the community in a 5 to 7 mile radius—mostly Caucasian, more affluent, more highly educated with slightly more free time and expendable income than the community at large.

In the last 5 to 7 years Westlink Christian Church has navigated through a complete relocation, rapid growth, and the transition from a senior pastor of 42 years to a new lead pastor of 4 years. Westlink Christian Church regularly describes herself and her ministry using the phrase "The Family Place," strongly emphasizing ministry toward children, students, and families. Westlink also has a large private preschool with approximately 300 children.

<sup>3</sup> Lisa Roberts, Marketing Analyst, *Wichita Eagle Newspaper*, Wichita, KS, as interviewed by WCC's Lead Pastor, July 2002.

This study will be narrowed to effective adult education programs targeting relatively new believers in particular. Further narrowing also focuses the study toward

larger churches specifically. A secondary goal of this PRP, in fact, is assisting larger churches, especially those similar to WCC in size and culture, with ministries, initiatives, ongoing evaluation, and long-term programming that can more adequately develop devoted adult disciples of Jesus Christ. This study will focus on the biblical and theological basis for adult education in the church and attempt to establish an initial 3-year plan with the emphasis on implementing and evaluating the first year of the plan.

Chapter 2 contains the literature review for this PRP, seeking to survey and establish a basic theoretical framework for constructing and implementing an adult education plan for WCC. The chapter seeks to lay a solid foundation regarding the tried-and-true elements of adult education theory and educational ministries within and through the local church.

Chapter 3 contains a detailed description of the investigations carried on as part of this PRP. Following the literature review, the chapter details the goals for this study and establishes the starting point for WCC's culture, leadership, needs, strengths, and growth areas. Chapter 3 provides the "before" picture.

This chapter describes the tools and processes used to determine what kind of church WCC is and provides an overall church and church culture description for which an adult education and discipleship plan can be developed.

Chapter 4 provides the relevant results of the research, interviews, and use of instrumentation developed for this PRP. This chapter will directly describe WCC, her leadership, her culture and what that means for this study. It will also provide information gleaned from other churches and professional staff members. The results

will be limited to those specifically germane to the development of an adult education plan for WCC.

Chapter 5 provides the bottom line meaning and impact of the research results, the basics of the three-year education plan, initial actions steps, further recommendations, and summary statements and conclusions. This final chapter, while providing specifics of an adult discipleship plan, will also describe some other needs, future studies, initiatives, and programs likely critical to WCC's future but falling outside the scope and time limits of this study. Some of the final recommendations will relate closely to the goals of this PRP and impact its future success. Some will remain "bigger picture" recommendations for WCC and other similar megachurches to consider.

Now the journey begins. Let's look at some of the pertinent literature to lay a solid foundation for the rest of this study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Precedents in Literature

The second chapter fills the critical role of providing a solid literary foundation for the research project as a whole. The reviewed literature has been divided into four distinct categories. First, "Educational Theology" establishes the ultimate goals and methodology of a Fully Devoted Follower of Jesus Christ answering the question, "What and how does my life communicate about God through my knowledge, beliefs, behaviors, and activities?" The second category, entitled "Educational Theory," brings the essentials of Christian education alongside the goals established by theology, addressing the question, "What educational standards develop a route toward growing into Fully Devoted Followers of Jesus Christ?" The third section, "Educational Practice and Application," investigates what must be done and answers the question, "What deliberate steps must be taken to utilize effective educational practices—what do we do?" The fourth section, "Church Culture and Leadership," examines the local church community, answering the question, "What sort of church environment and leaders help faithful converts become Fully Devoted Followers of Jesus?"

In each section this chapter seeks to examine the relevant literature as well as the local church setting, paying particular attention to how each informs the other. Significant points arising from the literature carry through the rest of the project, informing the research methodologies, results, and conclusions and recommendations. Let's turn to the theological foundations and priorities.

## Educational Theology

### *Clarifying the Objective and Methodology of Fully Devoted Followers*

A sound theological basis for education within the church, leading toward becoming an FDF of Jesus, is essential to this research project. In a real sense, becoming an FDF is fundamentally God's work, not humanity's. God creates and recreates through His church and people, vessels He has made and chosen,

but people and churches remain unable to mature toward Christ-likeness apart from the Creator. Otherwise, the Christian community exists indistinct from other learning or growth organizations, groups, clubs, or classes. In other words, God could accomplish His purposes another way, in theory, but humanity stands incapable of becoming more Christ-like apart from God. Therefore, a basis in God's personhood is the cornerstone for any working foundation seeking to "construct" or better facilitate fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ through WCC's adult education.

In conversation with the literature review, one realizes that God's essence, character, and activity must govern the entire research project, including construction, application, evaluation, and renewal. In order for WCC's adult education to be firmly grounded and rooted in theology and the relevant theological literature, God's creativity, holiness, love, grace, salvation, desire for and establishment of community, and missional activity must comprise key building blocks for adult education seeking to develop Christlike followers. Specifically, with these core themes the theological literature provides ample data for viewing and utilizing Jesus' mission, teaching, and character as the

Christological foundation for adult education. According to Colossians, Jesus embodies and displays God:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.<sup>4</sup>

The Christ "enfleshes" God's essence, character, and activity entirely and completely.

Jesus stands as the sole model for His fully devoted followers as well as the only route toward becoming an FDF. The Son of God is both the fulfillment of and the means

toward becoming new creations living as new creatures.<sup>5</sup>

The literature review clarifies the need for essential theological components of adult education, including new life in Christ; the worship of God; the vitality of Christ's relational community—His church; the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit; the mission of Christ to the world inside, outside, and through the church; and the urgency of Christ's future return. These key theological components must be present in the church's adult education programming.

<sup>4</sup> Colossians 1:15-20. All scripture references are from the New International Version, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:16-21.

<sup>6</sup> Robert W. Pazmino, *God Our Teacher* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2001).

Robert Pazmino's work provides a solid, viable theological and Christological methodology for Christian Education—the latter being especially pertinent for growing up fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> Pazmino provides a broad, simple, familiar

theological framework for Christian education utilizing foundational theological components (God, sin and salvation, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the church, and the future). Prepositions serve as key components in Pazmino's language not only as chapter titles but also as differentiations between the essential elements of his theological basis for Christian education. "God *for* us" establishes the existence of the trinity along with the awe and mystery of God as the nonnegotiable genesis of Christian education. "God *despite* us" places God's reconciling work of forgiveness and salvation at the celebratory center of Christian community, worship, and education. "God *with* us" rightly installs the incarnate Christ as the all-time, eternal model and authority for Christian education and teachers—a succinct and awesome summary of Jesus as a teacher, by

and large unique in this review. "God *in* us," of course, includes the essential nature and role of the Holy Spirit as the empowered partner for Christian teaching and education. "God *through* us" links ecclesiology to missiology, describing the church as the central location of Christian education. "God *beyond* us" essentially places the church at the world's doorstep that Christian education's endeavor must include bringing hope to the world not yet included in Christ's church. Pazmino's theological framework provides a wonderful, comprehensive foundation for Christian education clearly rooted in the personhood, nature, work, desire and mission of God.

In view of WCC's particular mission statement of helping Christians become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ, Pazmino's rather extensive explanation of Jesus as the Master Teacher is penetrating and useful. In an obviously unique way, Jesus provides the model, method, means, content, priorities, and the ultimate goal of Christian education as no one else. As the Master Teacher, Jesus embodies, exemplifies,

accomplishes, and facilitates the entire theological framework laid out by Pazmino in the rest of this work.

This section pays particular attention to the content, context, and persons of Jesus' teaching ministry. Contextually, Jesus' teaching sought to challenge and transform His own Jewish culture and transcend national and cultural boundaries, reaching to the fringes and margins. With regard to content, Jesus addressed vital problems with authority without becoming authoritarian. He encouraged thinking through lovingly living out what He taught. Personally, Jesus embodied and defined Christian mentoring through love, time, and His mission which consistently embraced those for whom His own people and culture had little use. Pazmino summarizes,



God with us in the person and work of Jesus Christ provides a model for teaching that transcends time, Jesus is a model for all those called to teach, and the incarnation assures Christian teachers that God is with us in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ.<sup>7</sup>

Pazmino's work overall in this volume and within this one chapter provides an insightful

literary connection between theology, Jesus, and the specific WCC church setting.

Providing a Christology for church education is beneficial for the remainder of this

project and for progressing in developing an educational plan for this local church.

Through the study of Mark's gospel, paying special attention to Jesus' character, actions, attitudes, words, and activities, I compiled a list of over 50 "positive" (do's) characteristics of an FDF of Jesus Christ and more than 10 "negative" (don'ts) characteristics of an FDF of Jesus (See Appendix 1). I then took those 60+ characteristics and categorized them into 4 basic qualities of an FDF. Those 4 basic

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 86.  
categories include:

Loving God Loving Others

Growing Continuously

Producing Fruit

The broad categories and the specific traits fit well with Pazmino's Christological foundation from the literature review, and, though a different total number, the broad categories closely mirror WCC's current core values. The church's mission statement, the literature review, the WCC survey, and the larger church survey all intersect through Jesus Christ. Moving forward in the development of the PRP and overall WCC adult education plan necessitates clarity, consistency, and continuity in teaching about Jesus church wide and developing goals, language, and values reflecting the broad traits and the specific characteristics

mined from Mark's gospel. Jesus also provides an "organic" (albeit miraculous) portrait of faith in God and living the life devoted to God. One of the significant foundations and keys for this PRP and developing a lasting, transforming adult program will continue to be this focus on Jesus and maintaining His life and ministry as the core of the journey as well as the destination. Learning more about Jesus for everyone who is a part of WCC's culture is a great starting point, continual goal, and destination.

Richard Osmer, *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004).

Richard Osmer also provides a solid theological framework for Christian education which, in its specific design, differs significantly from Pazmino's.<sup>8</sup> Osmer provides a Pauline foundation for Christian education based on a number of specific

biblical texts.<sup>9</sup> Out of Romans he delineates three theological purposes for a congregation's teaching ministry. An understanding and participation in God's redemption lays the foundation, progression in a relationship with Jesus Christ means growth, and the Christian community's engagement with the world establishes the mission. All three purposes are integral for fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Osmer's depiction of the theological tasks in Paul's teaching ministry includes "catechesis,"<sup>10</sup> the formational teaching of scripture and tradition, "exhortation,"<sup>11</sup> through which he includes "moral formation and education"; and "discernment,"<sup>12</sup> moving forward as interpreting life eschatologically.

<sup>9</sup> Principally Romans 6; 1 Thessalonians 2-5; 1 Corinthians 3-4, 12-14.

<sup>10</sup> Osmer, *Teaching Ministry*, 27.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 43.

Osmer's exegesis comes in the use of specific texts that lay an overall foundation for congregational teaching and an essential theological framework for specific teaching practices. Typically the local church, in my experience, has concentrated nearly exclusively on what Osmer terms as "exhortation," at the expense, once again, of historical factors and content along with what lies ahead. In His useful discussion of discernment, Osmer includes the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in communal and individual life accompanied by individual conscience and the ongoing commitment to the common good of the community of faith. For Jesus' fully devoted followers, "catechesis," "exhortation," and "discernment" offer specific footholds for a sound educational theology.

Fittingly, Pazmino and Osmer work well together toward the goal of this research project. In a real sense Osmer, utilizing Paul and his literature, presents a living example of Jesus transforming and teaching through the life of one of His followers even as Paul himself grows more fully devoted to Christ. Osmer at once illustrates Pazmino, validates, and further specifies Pazmino's theological foundation with different yet complementary language. Pazmino and Osmer both offer a solid, comprehensive theological framework for Christian education in the church, specific explanations and examples of teaching, and application pointed enough to penetrate congregational education.

Charles Foster supplies an additional voice in this theological conversation. He explains the importance of a variety of congregational events, times, and gatherings including corporate worship that recall and celebrate the biblical narrative. Foster explains,

The function of memory is not to pull us into the past. It beckons us instead to embrace a future originating in events that called our communities into being. It fuels the efforts of communities to live with hope into the future. It gives impetus to community creativity and transformation, to freedom and new life. It builds on the dialogical yearning of children to know to whom they belong and on the passion of the community's elders to share the wisdom and values integral to that belonging.<sup>13</sup>

Theologically and historically the picture grows into a living, breathing organism of Christian faith and community where the story of the Christian faith is heard and shared; where the community provides a culture for the formation of healthy, beneficial relationships; and where the lifestyle of the Christian faith is nurtured and lived out. The life of the Christian faith community and the ongoing salvation story stand in stark contrast to an ever-changing mass media culture where, "Stories are told to make a point

life of the Christian faith community and the ongoing salvation story stand in stark

<sup>13</sup> Charles R. Foster, *Educating Congregations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 63.

rather than to open up a world.\*<sup>14</sup> God creates and objectively participates in missional, redemptive, caring congregational communities. Fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ will be active worshippers, participating in community practices and rituals that regularly encourage the living past to inform and change the present and the future. A lifestyle of worship must characterize Jesus' fully devoted follower. While this way of life and living is certainly present in Pazmino's and Osmer's discussion, Foster pointedly underscores its importance and necessity.

As was mentioned in chapter one, WCC recently changed her focus and direction, leading to significant numerical growth and relocation of the church's physical facilities. Not surprisingly this growth and change created a more diverse church culture both demographically and theologically with an increased

need for biblical literacy. Overall, <sup>14</sup> Ibid., 72.

Theologically, the culture of Westlink Christian Church has been substantially tied to Bible preaching, teaching, memory, and learning. This is in keeping with her history and heritage. To an extent the essence of God's character and activity relied upon Bible study and better Bible understanding. In many respects godly character, worship, Christian community, the Holy Spirit, and local and world mission flowed through Bible teaching and learning. The Bible was the heart of WCC's culture, surrounded by church programming and ministry. As a result, today there's an existing core group of several hundred people who are biblically literate and well-grounded in the Bible. At the same time, involvement in community, evangelism, worship, and the work of the Holy Spirit remain growth areas for this core constituency. Bible knowledge, at least for some WCC members and participants, tended toward an end in itself rather than a means toward life transformation, and ongoing development.

those new to WCC in the last 5-7 years appear more experientially driven and satisfied. Those newer to Westlink desire a worship experience, a work of the Holy Spirit, meaningful Christian community, and significant missional outreach. Without a frame of reference many have given little consideration or time to the importance or benefit of Bible learning. The overall picture, therefore, is of two different congregations within WCC characterized generally along the lines of modern versus postmodern distinctions. Some differences appear to fall along generational lines, as well.

<sup>15</sup> John M. Hull, *What Prevents Christian Adults from Learning?* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1991), 109-110.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 112.

John Hull's unique work provides some valuable perspective. Hull's volume is a hybrid theology, educational theory, and psychology, and he makes important points regarding learning obstacles. Through the lens of a process theologian, Hull describes God as the perfect learner and provides valuable insight

regarding Bible learning for adults. Hull comments, "It has been observed that religious people are difficult to indoctrinate, and personal construct theory would suggest that for this very reason they are also difficult to educate."<sup>15</sup> Hull concludes that adult learners have a strong desire to be "right" in their beliefs about God because they are ultimately important. Their desire to "learn correctly" oftentimes makes ongoing learning more difficult. Pertinently then, Hull also concludes, "From the strategic point of view, the experiential aspect of Christian education can never be neglected, especially with adults."<sup>16</sup> Balancing cognitive learning with experiential learning, exemplified in worship settings and the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit, provides a greater likelihood that adults will grow toward becoming FDFs of Jesus Christ.

The broader theological foundation laid out in this section helps insure that Bible learning and teaching along with experiencing and participating in community, worship, transformation and mission come together in a holistic, balanced program of adult education. As we look toward educational theory and practice, extending this approach becomes crucial.

A final word from Robert Pazmino provides a fitting transition from theology to theory:

Theological basics provide the bedrock on which to build Christian education. The choice is ours in the theory and practice of Christian education, whether to build upon these essentials or to opt for the shifting sands of educational fads in the wider culture. I do not equate my words and thoughts in this work as the only rock on which to build. That would be assuming the arrogance of a foolish man. Rather, I offer this work with the prayer that Jesus' words and exemplary model for Christian education might be discovered by those who follow after him in their teaching.<sup>17</sup>

May this solid foundation rooted in God stand firm as we examine educational theory. Educational Theory  
*Envisioning a Pathway Toward the Objective*

While a comprehensive approach to growing adults into fully devoted followers has yet to be developed, a more missionally-driven strategy is being effectively employed to reach out to students and children through Westlink Christian Church—an important element of WCC's growth over the last 7 years in becoming "The Family Place."  
<sup>17</sup> Pazmino, *God Our Teacher*, 160.

About the time of the facility relocation, the decision was made to specifically emphasize ministry among children and teens, from birth through high school. This

decision was based on the demographic area surrounding WCC and the opportunity to provide high quality children's and student ministry, programming, and events to reach out to families and involve them in the church's ministry, connecting them to Jesus Christ. The strategy means bringing students and children into the body of Christ at WCC, providing effective opportunities to reach parents and entire families. Logically, and not surprisingly then, this has resulted in increased staff, budget funds, programming, publicity and marketing, and physical plant facilities for children's ministry and student ministry. This fact is important from both an educational theory point of view and a church culture and environment perspective. Significant time, energy, and learning have been devoted to the discipleship of children and youth. This same effort lies in the future for WCC's adult population. What improved adult ministry looks like for WCC remains the central theme of this research project.

At the point where WCC's adult education ministry and the educational theory provided through the literature review intersect, a number of things are clear. Westlink Christian Church's adults, while not taught and led like children and students, must be educated. From WCC's viewpoint and the literature review, there remains a serious need for clear goals (desired outcomes) owned by the leadership, a chosen model or combination of models putting flesh on the bones provided by the goals, adequate leadership, and evaluation over an extended time period. These are key components in allowing the literature review to inform WCC's current strategies and future needs in developing an excellent adult education ministry.

One of the most glaring needs for WCC's adults is for clear, specific goals. Beginning with the second half of the church's mission statement, "helping them become

His fully devoted followers," well-written descriptors that can lead to a vision for FDFs through Westlink Christian Church should be adopted and made known. The goals and corresponding vision statements need to answer several questions. For example, what qualities are crucial for FDFs of Jesus (knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors)? It is crucial that these goals be exceedingly clear and easily grasped. The goals should involve asking other questions. What impact will be seen in the life of the church overall as adults mature in Jesus Christ? What difference will the Christian growth of WCC's adults have on worship, community, the Spirit's presence and power, and the church's mission both inside and outside the physical walls of the church building? As WCC's adults grow in Christian faith and maturity, how will that look different spiritually? In what ways will WCC's worship be enhanced and changed? How will the surrounding community in Wichita be affected through more devoted followers of Christ at Westlink Christian Church?

Bergevin and McKinley write frankly about goals for adult learners.



A major goal of religious education is simply to learn how better to relate ourselves to God so that we can serve Him better. One of the most serious causes of failure in programs of adult religious education lies in the inability (or hesitancy) of participants to identify this goal in specific terms and to develop programs that help them try to meet the goal in specific ways.<sup>18</sup>

Though not a new concern for adult education in the church, this observation highlights the need for clearly stated objectives in adult education. A workable plan necessitates at least minimally clear goals tailored to known needs and interests of adult learners while at the same time including these same learners in the development of the direction and

Paul Bergevin and John McKinley, *Design for Adult Education in the Church* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Seabury Press, 1958), xxii.

plan. This concern remains a major downfall of most church education ministries, including WCC's.

The "Indiana Plan" presents seven different segments of putting an effective adult education plan in place and setting it in motion.<sup>19</sup> It places emphasis on a leadership team, life application, relationship growth throughout the entire process, freedom, varied teaching and learning methods, self examination, and evaluation. The "Indiana Plan" requires the intersection of Christian community and corporate life with all aspects of culture and society, clearly taking into account the mission of Christian education. In contrast to children's education, then, the development of educational goals for adults needs to be accomplished *with* adults actively involved in the goal-setting and planning experience. In this process adults must invest in significant responsibility for learning.

A plan or combination of models for WCC's future adult education ministry must emphasize several important components. There remains a need for strong growth and maturity through Bible learning accompanied by experiential community, worship, service, and outreach. In other words, an effective adult

education model will holistically recognize and encourage Christian growth and maturity via numerous paths and methods. It will encourage the active participation of the adult learners throughout the process instead of utilizing a more passive or prescribed approach.

" Ibid., 3.

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<sup>20</sup> R.E.Y. Wickett, *Models of Adult Religious Education Practice* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1991).

Wickett lays out eleven different models with summaries, ratings, explanations and descriptions of each, explaining how various models will and will not function in

specific environments, and how they may function in combinations in specific settings.

His advice is clear and on target for success—*Do your homework?* Wickett emphatically presses for clear understanding of the adult learners and the congregation as a whole, the goals, and a thorough grasp of which approaches can accomplish which objectives, how implementation takes place *before* making a choice, and trying a model or combinations of several. Wickett strongly advises,

Choose the model which is right for the learner, the content, the context, and you. Recognize the needs, interests, and values of the learner in order to insure that the program will work. Determine the best way the content can be learned. Consider the context for both its possibilities and its limitations. Remember your own strengths and weaknesses and your reaction to models as you prepare to choose. Each model has its place in the spectrum of options, but

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each situation requires careful thought before the final choice is made. Taking time to look at the WCC landscape closely while involving the adult learners in the process is essential to developing and

building an effective adult education ministry. Choosing a model or, more likely, a combination of models that is as broad and inclusive as possible while remaining realistically workable constitutes a significant, important task.

<sup>21</sup> Wickett's models include andragogical, inter-generational, independent, covenant, nondirective, tip of iceberg, interdependent, study circle, "freirian" (justice learning in community groups), action, and distance. Wickett, *Models*. 43.

Wickett correctly admonishes religious educators to do the homework of knowing the congregation and individuals well previous to and in conjunction with choosing a model. He rightly concludes that some of the most important work a faith community can do is to assess current conditions regarding "faith development" and "stage of faith" both for the community overall and for individuals. This vital understanding increases the probability of utilizing an effective model.

As more is understood about WCC's adults, the model must encourage breadth that allows for individual pace and participation. Individual learning and study must be encouraged and facilitated in conjunction with group and community settings where both enhance and encourage the other. For busy families, in particular, easily accessible learning tools and resources are becoming more and more crucial as part of the church and culture in which we live. An effective plan must be holistic and intentional with a variety of entry points and ways to continue to grow and mature in Christ.

Recently "self-feeding" has become a popular phrase for WCC and a number of other Christian

communities. "Self-feeding" relates to individuals' responsibility to learn the Bible on their own, and in the WCC setting the concept has become more popular with numerical growth and the increased need for Bible learning. While appearing to address one legitimate concern, "self-feeding" tends to create others, including learning apart from community and the appearance, at least, of the church abdicating her teaching role (an important subject for WCC).

To this very point, Everist presses the case, however, that learning in a faith community must not create or lead to isolation, and individual learning benefits the community through enabling people to better facilitate one another's learning. Hull would agree, certainly, and press the point that the goal of individual study and learning cannot be "personal omniscience" or being "right," but continuing the journey of growing into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. In other words, "self-feeding" must never be viewed or portrayed as an end in itself; the most valuable learning takes place *only* in community with others. Everist concludes the section on this "individual facet" by stating, "In a culture that is frequently criticized by other cultures as being too

individualistic, the individual facet needs always to be kept in balance with the other facets of education." Individual learning, or "self-feeding," can benefit the individual, the group, and the community but cannot serve as a replacement. The community aspect is Everist's major contribution, and any pathway for a fully devoted follower will be cluttered with ongoing learning that is varied, often messy, and intensely communal. For Everist curriculum is never purchased. Curriculum is an ongoing experience in which we participate and through which we learn and grow.

The theoretical framework, then, must contain adults with clear, agreed upon goals and ongoing, intentional education in a variety of informal and formal communities both inside and outside the faith

community. The framework must encourage learners to learn at their own pace and in their own way yet never in isolation but always enriching their community which is constantly gaining self-understanding of faith stage and faith development.

To have quality adult education at Westlink Christian Church, adults need to participate in planning, developing, and improving the total adult education program. WCC's adults will "buy in" to the educational plan as leaders understand and respond to the faith development and faith stages of WCC's adults. The adults themselves, however, must also have significant input in developing a working plan of adult education for the church. Adult volunteer teams need to meet on a regular basis to oversee the <sup>23</sup> Norma Cook Everist, *The Church As Learning Community* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 130.

#### Educational Practice and Application *Placing*

##### *the Pieces of the Pathway*

development and implementation of the adult education plan and monitor its effectiveness. In short, from the outset the entire plan must value the adults in a way consistent with the goals of the plan itself.

Positive initiative that views adults as valuable resources with valid input greatly improves the effectiveness of WCC's educational strategy and ministry with adults. Through conversation with the literature review one realizes that encouraging adult input, combined with adapting the learning environment, growing leaders, and assessing current and new programs, provides the foundational challenge for sound educational practice at WCC. Each subject denotes a critical concern, both obstacles and opportunities, under the umbrella of adult Christian education for WCC.

In agreement with Halverson, Osmer states, "Whether we adapt these plans or come up with our own, one of the key ways of teaching others is by modeling the" <sup>24</sup> Delia Halverson, *Leading Adult Learners* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995).

Delia Halverson's volume provides an excellent resource for moving forward once overall educational goals are established.<sup>24</sup> She affirms the strong theoretical basis but remains adamantly concerned with communication, training, continued learning and education of everyone involved with adult learners, especially those in teaching and leadership positions. Halverson's point is well taken. Once a direction is established for the adult education program the same energy and excellence used to establish the theoretical direction must carry over to the application of implementing the program. Not communicating with leaders and teachers or not providing training and preparation cannot lead to an effective education ministry, even with the best overall goals in mind. Halverson provides a variety of practical tools and resources for communicating, training, and preparing.

teaching that we would like them to learn." Osmer has provided a useful teaching and training guide utilizing an adaptation of James Fowler's work in faith development. As we might expect, Osmer's work is slightly more theological in nature while underscoring a similar point. Communicating with, developing, leading, and training the adults working with the adult education ministry is essential. The communication, leading, and training development must be conducted in a manner and with content in keeping with the overall educational goals—furthering adult education through the leaders and teachers in the process. The practical work of launching an adult education plan must be consistent with the program's overall goals and objectives, thus encouraging the leaders' and teachers' growth and ownership simultaneously. Osmer's "training manual" utilizes a solid basis in faith understanding, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the nature of

God in his plan for leadership training.

<sup>25</sup> Richard Robert Osmer, *Teaching for Faith: A Guide for Teachers of Adult Classes* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 215.

Westlink Christian Church faces challenges with overall building space and with classroom space in particular. Primarily because of increased building costs, limited classroom space is available for adults. This, to some extent, has led to the establishment and growth of WCC's small group ministry. Because of the church's growth, WCC has been intentional about building community but not nearly as intentional about building learning communities. It is absolutely crucial for WCC to carefully evaluate the use of classroom space and the type of classroom space that will best facilitate adult education for Westlink Christian Church. It is also critical for the church to clearly identify the role and evaluate the effectiveness of small groups meeting in homes. Adult space needs to provide variety and flexibility, accommodating groups of various sizes to be able to

facilitate different types of groups with varying purposes in teaching and learning. When overall goals are established, consideration must be directed toward existing adult classes, new adult classes, and the short- and long-term role of Home Teams. We also have not scratched the surface of what tools and resources are available technologically for adults in teaching and learning, both individually and in groups of various sizes. Online learning holds potential we have not yet tapped into.

Both Paschal and Henderson address these two primary concerns. As you might expect from a local church pastor, Paschal gives significant space to nuts-and-bolts issues. Adult education, if valued, must tackle the difficult, costly questions about classroom space, equipment, furnishings, and spaces that facilitate and encourage education, and community. WCC will have to make some priority decisions

regarding current classroom space, finishing additional space, and providing for additional learning-and-teaching tools, thus moving WCC closer to an adult learning center including up-to-date technology and also facilitating individual and small group online learning. In PaschaTs words churches and leaders must, "Provide a context where people have value and identity."<sup>26</sup> This is a significant growth area for WCC.  
<sup>26</sup> R. Wade Paschal, *Vital Adult Learning: Choices to fit Your Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 31.

John Wesley, the tireless Methodist founder, pastor, and circuit-rider, provides a wonderful foundation through Henderson, providing the information and impetus to examine WCC's Home Teams and support recovery groups. Wesley's "class meeting" model (what we would call small groups) depicted living New Testament communities where learning, service, accountability, discipleship, mission, and delegation all took place. Not surprisingly, Wesley's "blueprint" for class meetings is challenging and

beneficial, constantly communicating that Jesus' followers engage in hard work and evangelism with honesty, humility, generosity, and integrity. Of special appeal are Henderson's strong statements reminiscent of the Christian Church's movement toward restoration of the New Testament church on the American frontier. He states,

Whatever Wesley's motivations in staking his authority on a quest for biblical simplicity, it had a profound effect in the mind of his adherents. The belief that this movement had its origin in authentic New Testament norms rather than in human expedience gave it tremendous credibility in their eyes. It also increased the hostility of its critics; which, in turn, further strengthened and enhanced its significance to the faithful. Every comparison Wesley made between Methodism and the early church (and there were many), heightened the

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sacredness of the movement and strengthened its normative power. More than any other volume in this review, Henderson's message points this project's final version toward a bottom line of service,



ministry, and community where growth and development are both apparent and effective and the picture of the Acts church is duplicated repeatedly through Jesus' disciples. Wesley's legacy, even in these narrow respects, carries over to today's fully devoted followers with a living realness, simplicity, vitality, and day-to-day impact impossible to describe in print alone. True today as 200 or 2,000 years ago, fully devoted followers of Jesus depict the living Christ daily through word, deed, thought, and attitude. Through applied practice, WCC's adults must be challenged to grow in this manner and for these reasons.

<sup>27</sup> D. Michael Henderson, *A Model for Making Disciples: John Wesley's Class Meeting* (Nappanee, Indiana: Francis Asbury Press, 1997), 134.

Solid leadership development and training are also imperative. Overall WCC has a current need for leadership development, a need extending to adult ministry areas. A significant portion of the developed plan for leading WCC's adults toward becoming fully devoted followers necessarily means identifying, recruiting, training, and releasing teachers and other leaders in all adult education ministries. It is important that the

leadership and teacher training, including continued learning and communication, take place as an essential portion of the overall plan and application of this PRP.

Ongoing, substantive evaluation surfaces as a significant growth area also. Westlink's history and recent growth have resulted in the establishment of multiple ministries and programming across the board. There has been a tendency toward starting new ministries as growth has occurred and needs develop rather than evaluating, adapting or ending existing ministries. Built into any comprehensive effort toward helping adults grow in faith and maturity is the need for evaluation and continual adaptation and improvement.

From a standpoint of, "OK, where and how do we get started with this," a couple of the literary works intersect quite well with WCC presently. Ralph Tyler, in his classic, *Basic Principles of Curriculum*

*and Instruction*, describes four straightforward, simple questions, providing a great starting point. We can apply these questions to the church rather than a "school." Tyler asks,

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What education experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?"

These questions, or versions of them, provide a great starting point for current and soon-to-be recruited leaders and teachers in setting goals, developing a model or a working combination of models, an organizational plan, and ongoing evaluation.

**Ralph W. Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 1.**

In addition to Tyler's four basic questions, McKenzie and Harton provide a series of 12 propositional steps to prosperous adult education ministries and programming in the

church. The authors contend, "Until a sound theory of adult religious education is developed, much of the activity that goes by the name of adult religious education will continue to be marginal." Tyler's initial 4 questions serve as the "tip of the spear," in a sense, starting the journey well while McKenzie and Harton's propositions<sup>30</sup> help to flesh out and provide parameters and context for Tyler's direct and effective questions, encouraging the "next steps" in the process.

In "practice and application" a well-produced product is always in process. Goals and objectives, faith assessment, teaching and learning, spatial and physical considerations, and creating honest, productive, learning, relational and missional communities in Jesus Christ remain paramount as we turn to examine the

church's overall culture and leadership.

## Church Culture and Leadership

### *Growing the Pathway's Surrounding Landscape*

<sup>29</sup> Leon McKenzie and R. Michael Harton, *The Religious Education of Adults* (Macon Georgia: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2002), 89.

<sup>30</sup> Summary of the propositions: 1. research specific adult learners, 2. invite adult help with the plan, 3. invite adult help with implementation/administration, 4. invite adult help with evaluation, 5. respect adults as adults, 6. facilitate proactivity instead of reactivity, 7. utilize adults as resources, 8. work to transform worldviews, 9. provide learning choices, 10. view education as service, 11. encourage education toward broader community, 12. include the larger learning setting (church, mission, community).

Westlink Christian Church's overall church and leadership culture, again, intersect well with the literature review. WCC's culture and leadership present great possibilities, along with potential challenges, and the literature provides an excellent analytical grid for both. The literary sources make it abundantly clear that several components of church culture and leadership are crucial: learning, healthy leaders who

are part of the church culture while remaining leaders; a leadership supporting WCC's adult education ministry and insuring its excellence; leaders modeling the importance of becoming fully devoted followers making progress on that journey; healthy, growing open systems and subsystems; leaders who are team-oriented and led by the Holy Spirit; leadership and cultural understanding; and continued cultural growth.

"Learning leaders" is a key for Hawkins. Beginning with leaders learning individually in a congregational setting, Hawkins then envisions individual learning carrying over to team learning, resulting in congregational learning. First, however, learning must begin with the leaders. He affirms, "Since leaders are one of the most important parts of an organizational system, the whole system changes when the leader

changes. Becoming a learner, therefore, is the first and most important step leaders can take if they wish to cultivate a learning congregation."<sup>31</sup>

This is a key for WCC in not only becoming a learning congregation but promoting a church culture encouraging adult learning, community, and life change. In much the same manner of assessing faith stage and development, WCC's leadership needs to be examined and challenged regarding learning and the willingness to participate in and promote congregational learning. Hawkins cites six action steps borrowed from Watkins and Marsick that lead an organization or faith community toward continuous,

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transformative learning. Hawkins' initial point, however, must not be missed— *learning leaders lead learning congregations.*

<sup>31</sup> Thomas R. Hawkins, *The Learning Congregation* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 70.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

Like Hawkins, Bill Easum presses for leaders to ask and answer some difficult questions. Several of Easum's specific "clues" serve this research project well. Easum

inquires regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in congregational leadership, leaders modeling evangelism, leaders leading through giving permission and working in teams, leaders leading as fellow congregants following Christ, and leaders as "humans" functioning and informing culture, leadership, and discipleship. Easum declares, "The role of the leader is to provide opportunities for people to grow and blossom in their faith

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so that they can help others do the same." Hawkins and Easum press for a strong analysis of the leaders and leadership culture with the goal of encouraging a leadership

environment where growing toward becoming Jesus' folly devoted follower is genuinely taking place within the leadership as well as in the larger congregation.

Friedman's classic work, *Generation to Generation*, provides background for Hawkins as well as Cosgrove and Hatfield. Friedman's term "self-differentiation" has become classic vocabulary for describing healthy leaders establishing and growing positive systems and sub systems in various settings. Friedman writes,

If a leader will take primary responsibility for his or her own position as "head" and work to define his or her own goals and self, while *staying in touch* with the rest of the organism, there is a more than reasonable chance that the body will follow. There may be initial resistance but, if the leader can stay in touch with the resisters, the body will usually go along.<sup>34</sup>

Personal and emotional health complement learning leaders, constituting a portion of what leaders must display and distribute. WCC's teams, groups, subsystems, and overall culture will grow healthier as learning leaders grow into "self-differentiated" leaders.

Cultivating a leadership culture that is both a learning culture and an emotionally healthy

Bill Easum, *Leadership on the Other Side* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 92. Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation* (New York: Guilford Press, 1985), 229.

culture will go far in facilitating solid adult education.

Ultimately the church leadership and culture of Westlink Christian Church must be and become an intimate source and participant in the entire ongoing learning process. At a minimum, time for introspection, understanding, assessment, planning, growth, and development at every level of church culture remains critical to the project's viability and to creating a church culture that is fertile soil for developing FDFs of

Christ.

This important second chapter has assisted in laying the theological, theoretical, practical, and cultural groundwork for the remainder of the research project. As we move forward to look at research methodologies, results, and then conclusions and recommendations, the overall content of this chapter will remain vitally important.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Research Design

The well-known metaphor of the forest and the trees serves well to introduce this chapter. Because of the sheer size of WCC as a community, along with the fact that the literature review identified multiple key factors, there is a need to examine WCC as a whole faith community, the forest, by examining a number of elements of WCC as a faith community, different trees, "tree streams," and groupings of trees. This work and perspective is essential to the project because of the unique context a mega church provides as an environment for developing FDFs. Even to describe WCC in this manner underscores the fact that the community must be seen as a large forest with a particular culture composed of many different varieties of trees. As a large forest WCC possesses specific similarities as well as uniqueness when compared to other large forests. Therefore the research design seeks to paint a clearer picture of the entire WCC forest through the examination of a number of trees and tree groups within this specific forest.

The foundational research survey for the project was designed specifically for this PRP by the author with the advice of the first reader. The survey was initially developed as the WCC congregational survey and then adapted to survey other large churches and to conduct the WCC leadership interviews. Two

main points stand out in this regard. Adapted survey questions branching out from one central survey provide greater consistency and continuity as individual trees and groups of trees are better identified, understood, and viewed alongside one another in the larger context. A survey unique to this PRP provides specific data most useful and relevant for WCC and the project

compared to utilizing a purchased survey, other standardized survey or borrowing a survey used in another setting. Due, in part, to its unique design, nature, and administration, survey responses were large for the survey especially when compared to other surveys recently conducted at WCC.

The purpose, goals, and rationale for the research have been clearly stated. Significant literature has been reviewed in light of the goals for the project. Now, as we turn to the designed surveys, interviews, research, training, and on-site visits, the specific goals for the project and the sharpening provided through the literature calls for the research methods. First, let's look briefly at the mission statement and WCC's history in more depth.

The focus of this Pastoral Research Project (PRP) is the second phrase of Westlink Christian Church's mission statement: "helping them become His fully devoted followers."<sup>35</sup> The essential focus, therefore, of this PRP is defining "fully devoted follower"; surveying pertinent literature; assessing the current culture, ministry, and programming of Westlink Christian Church; and outlining a three-year plan for improving the church's efforts in developing "fully devoted followers."

<sup>35</sup> The entire WCC mission statement reads: "Connecting People to Jesus Christ and helping them become His fully devoted followers."

Westlink Christian Church is located on the northwest edge of Wichita, Kansas. Wichita is located in the south central portion of the state, in the middle of the United States of America. According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2003, Wichita as a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) had a population of 540,000

people, with 51% female and 49% male, a median age of 34, 28% of the population under the age of 18, and 11 % 65 years and older. For people reporting one race only, 86% were White, 9%

African American, 1% American Indian and Alaska Native, 3 percent Asian; fewer than 0.5% Native Hawaiian, and 1% another race. In 2003 there were 211,000 households in Wichita, with an average household size of 2.56 people. Families made up 69% of the households and 31% were non-family households. Sixty-two percent of households were occupied by homeowners; the median household income was approximately \$40,000 per year. Eighty-four percent of Wichita residents were high school graduates, and 25% had earned a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>36</sup> Certainly, as noted in chapter one, WCC is a microcosm of these same demographics. A suburban congregation, Westlink Christian Church has the general appearance of less racial diversity (predominantly white), higher household income, and a higher level of education than the average of the surrounding MSA.

In 1964 WCC hired its second senior pastor. The church grew steadily through the 1960's, 70's, and 80's. His ministry of forty-two years, particularly in the early and <sup>36</sup> *U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts*.

Westlink Christian Church is an independent (nondenominational) church planted by Westside Christian Church in Wichita, Kansas, in 1959. In 1950 Westside Christian Church was interested in starting a church farther west, where significant growth was taking place. That same westward population growth in Sedgwick County continues today. Both churches, historically, grew out of the Stone/Campbell movement of churches which began as a restoration and unity movement on the United States' western frontier in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The movement's original intent was to promote a simple, biblical form of New Testament Christianity. WCC is led primarily by professional paid staff pastors and lay elders and is not



tied to any overseeing or governance body beyond the local church.

middle years, was characterized by expository preaching, home Bible study groups, strategic staff hires, cross-cultural missions, and strong pastoral leadership. Programmatically, the church's emphasis through the beginning of the 1980's was weighted toward Bible teaching and learning, scripture memory, personal spiritual growth, and Christian living.

After continued numerical growth and WCC's third building program, pastoral and lay leaders together began to consider ways the church could make a stronger impact upon the local community of Wichita and more effectively reach non-believers with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Willow Creek Community Church's<sup>37</sup> methods of reaching out with the gospel to people seeking life answers influenced the WCC leadership, and WCC became more and more invested in local missions.

Willow Creek Community Church, located in South Barrington, Illinois, has been led from its inception by Pastor Bill Hybels. WCCC is a large, influential, independent, evangelical church with significant, often controversial, impact on American evangelical churches-especially for the past 20 years or more. Westlink Christian Church's staff has attended numerous conferences at WCCC over the years.

Building and property space for parking, especially, became serious obstacles of numerical growth throughout the late 1980's and 1990's. WCC began to evaluate options for church planting in Wichita or for a complete relocation of the church building. After a great deal of prayer and study, a plan was undertaken to raise funds, purchase property, and begin the process of moving WCC to a new location. Monies were raised over an extended time, and WCC purchased 40+ acres of land approximately one mile west and one mile north of the previous 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Tyler Road location, a 2 acre property. In

2003 WCC sold the Tyler Road property to Country Acres Baptist Church and moved into the new facility at 2001 N. Maize Road.<sup>38</sup>

Westlink Christian Church has more than doubled in size for weekend attendance since relocating seven years ago. WCC possesses a core group of individuals and families who have been part of the church twenty to thirty-plus years, but today WCC is a vastly different church compared to the congregation of just ten years ago. WCC's members and regular participants now come from a broader range of church backgrounds and affiliations, and WCC is more often viewed as "the church to attend" in west and northwest Wichita, with more visibility and a higher profile than before.

In this context, then, Westlink Christian Church has expanded in outreach and numerical growth, goals of the church's leadership from the beginning to this day. At the same time, rapid expansion and growth present new, unique challenges for adult education and discipleship at WCC. This PRP seeks to utilize the instruments and methods included in this chapter to evaluate WCC's present circumstance more completely as part of creating a solid plan for future adult education.

Incidentally, the sale of the original property included a loan from WCC to a third church, Crossroads Community Church, enabling them to purchase the property belonging to Country Acres Baptist Church, therefore, moving all three churches forward.

*WCC Congregational Survey* (See Appendix 2)—The WCC congregational survey was administered to adults eighteen years old and older during weekend worship services. The two-page form was filled out near the middle of the worship services. The survey was conducted in actual "pencil and

paper" format to get as many responses as possible in a short period of time. To this point on-line surveys have not yielded significant numbers of responses.

The survey covered two areas: (1) basic demographic information and (2) specific information regarding individuals' understanding of a "fully devoted follower," including their view of their own specific needs for Christian growth and maturity, and factors relating to their discipleship and expectations of WCC.

The demographic information sharpens and affirms the target audience of this study-WCC members and regular attendees. The PRP is targeting relatively new married couples with children as WCC's significant constituency. Is that, in fact, the case? The hope would be that the survey would also yield some additional and possibly unexpected information regarding WCC's members and participants, making the total project more valuable and effective in its understanding and implementation.

The survey questions regarding "fully devoted followers" elicit valuable information for a place to begin with the target audience—what current efforts are working, which ones need to change, what obstacles need to be overcome, and what the target audience views as benefits of becoming "fully devoted followers."

**Hull's book, *What Prevents Christian Adults from Learning?*, makes a strong case for the importance of the individual and corporate view of God and Jesus.**

The literature review (Chapter 2) provides a solid basis for the survey. The WCC Congregational Survey was designed specifically to deliver information about what a "fully devoted follower" looks like and means to individual respondents. This provides clues as to how persons view God and Jesus and even

more specifically, how that relates to day-to-day living. Since the theological foundations are significant, this survey provides an indication of how WCC views God corporately.<sup>39</sup> Identifying the "most important trait" of a "fully devoted follower" gives more specific insight. The questions also give insight into the congregation's faith stage and development. Educational theory

is clear about the critical nature on both the individual and corporate level, of gaining understanding about the church's faith. The question regarding obstacles to growth and the question about what more can WCC can do, help clarify how individuals and the church view personal responsibility and the church's role in Christian maturity and growth—a critical point regarding congregational Bible teaching versus "self-feeding." The congregational survey is essentially designed to provide insight into the theology as understood by the members and participants, some indication of faith development, and the respondents' views of the relationship between themselves, the church, and growth toward becoming fully devoted followers of Christ.

***Other Large Churches Survey*** (See Appendix 3)-The "other large church survey" was modeled after the WCC congregational survey to provide significant comparison. The survey was sent via email to 26 larger churches (2000+ in weekend attendance) in different regions of the United States. After a predictably low response rate, the initial email was followed up with a second email and then phone calls to pastors and administrative assistants. In time, over 50% of the surveys were returned.

Demographic information was requested from each of the larger congregations. This included weekend attendance average; adult age range demographics, adult formal education level; and social, economic, and race indicators.

The second half of the larger church survey provided opportunity to describe and briefly explain WCC's mission statement, ask what statement(s) the other large churches use, and ask several specific questions about fulfilling their mission statement and what successes or obstacles they encountered in helping adults move toward becoming "fully devoted followers" of Jesus Christ. In particular the survey sought to understand from

those churches the benefits and liabilities "megachurches" present, programs, plans, or ministries that have worked effectively and ones that have not, and one specific thing they would like to know or be able to do now or in hindsight would have tried before.

Again, growing out of the literature review, the "other larger churches survey" seeks a broader understanding of larger churches similar to WCC in certain respects and different in other ways. In terms of church culture and the benefits and drawbacks of mega churches, how those items are viewed church by church and what impact they have on adult education and developing a program for fully devoted followers of Jesus.

Other questions growing out of the literature review also shaped this survey for larger churches. Have any of the other larger churches developed a plan for adult education that is clear, comprehensive, organized, and/or effective?<sup>40</sup> What are the biggest barriers they experience in their church culture in trying to develop fully devoted followers? What information relevant for adult education would they like to know about their own church setting that they don't know? Have they found terminology that serves effectively as goals and objectives for educating adults? What kind of cultural and communal aspects of larger churches are shared by all larger churches in different parts of the country, and which ones might be unique to Westlink Christian Church? Again, as in the WCC congregational survey, some responses in the larger

church survey give clues about faith development and faith stages in other large churches, as well, and can serve as fruitful comparisons.

<sup>40</sup> Bergevin and McKinley make a strong case regarding the importance of overall goals, sub goals, and developing plans and programs to meet those stated goals in *Design for Adult Education in the Church*.

***On-Site Visits***—I have made two visits to other churches. One was to Saddleback church in southern California for Saddleback's small group and leadership conference,

and the second was to Willow Creek Community Church for the "Reveal Conference." Saddleback organizes every aspect of its ministry around adults in small groups—almost nothing happens outside small groups. Contact with both churches continues in an ongoing relationship, providing further benefit.

The Saddleback visit presented a great opportunity for team building with most of our adult ministry staff team and members of the volunteer small group leadership team. We were exposed to the overall ministry of a very large church in a completely different cultural setting and received a great deal of information regarding how Saddleback utilizes small groups to accomplish the church's mission and ministry. Their phrase is, "Everything goes through small groups." The majority of what they accomplish in adult education and discipleship ministry takes place through focused, aligned efforts between sermon series and in-home small group studies. Saddleback's mission, philosophy, and organization have provided great information for WCC in viewing Home Teams as not only communities where connection takes place but also gatherings where education and experiential learning take place. Saddleback's efforts have resulted in more people actively participating in a small group experience than the church currently has attending weekend services. Saddleback provided some great resources for our small group team regarding specific study materials, overall ministry structure, and utilizing aligned studies in significant ways. As a resource,

then, Saddleback has provided great help to WCC in forming, expanding, and growing Home Teams over the last three years.

The Saddleback visit also provided occasion to learn more about the changing structure and focus within their professional adult ministry staff. I had the opportunity to speak with the adult team staff leader, gaining great perspective regarding the focus and

alignment of adult ministries. They have worked through some obstacles related to helping ministries work toward common goals and effectively aligning and streamlining programming rather than duplicating ministry "silos." I have had occasion for continued dialogue with several Saddleback staff members—especially in the areas of small groups, men's ministry, and women's ministry since the conference.

Many of the issues that Saddleback has dealt with over time are current and future issues for WCC as well. Saddleback had seen significant struggles in becoming more intentional and focused in ministry. Aligning adult ministries with clearer objectives and goals has come with both a cost and reward—loss of staff and church members but more effective and fruit-bearing adult ministry programming. Ongoing dialogue with Saddleback has proven very valuable and will continue so, particularly in the areas of small group growth and development and ministry programming alignment.

Willow Creek Community Church (WCCC) began a new huge church initiative called "REVEAL" about two years ago. Along the same lines of this PRP, WCCC leaders believed they needed to improve the education, discipleship, and spiritual growth of adults in the church. They have launched a nationwide study and survey with many churches in order to determine the goals, needs, and current issues and concerns. WCC signed on with Willow Creek to be involved in the initial survey, and as a church we will continue to utilize their surveys for the next few years.

During the REVEAL conference held in Chicago in 2008, several things became apparent. Many of the speakers and other churches involved in the conference have significantly upgraded their involvement ministries to require more of people who are new to the church and are interested in becoming members. The goal for most churches

featured during REVEAL was to lay a more solid foundation in the lives of new Christians and those who had been Christians for years and were transferring their church membership. This was an extremely beneficial site visit for the executive pastor and me. WCC's involvement ministry will need to be thoroughly examined so that the process is not only about "checking a membership box" but clarifying expectations and laying a solid base and framework for becoming an FDF of Jesus Christ.

Frankly, WCC's adult education ministry begins the minute a person comes into contact with the church. Programmatically, the Involvement Ministry, the first education step, can undoubtedly be improved to provide more discipleship and basic Christian foundations and experience than simply taking a "required class" in order to become members. The rationale is that a stronger, more comprehensive start to WCC's adult education ministry through the Involvement Ministry will eventually help produce more fully devoted followers of Jesus.

The benefit of the relationship with Willow Creek is that it will be ongoing for Westlink Christian Church. As a church we will be taking three additional REVEAL surveys over the next five years. The surveys will be useful in evaluating the ongoing effectiveness of changes in the adult education and discipleship ministry resulting from this PRP.

**Home Team Training**—I conducted a Sunday training session (See Appendix 6) with Home Team leaders at 10:45 a.m. (second worship service time) in the gymnasium. The training took place during



one of the regular quarterly HT leaders' breakfasts conducted by the small groups team. The training was advertised, primarily via email, to all the leaders 4-6 weeks in advance, a catered breakfast buffet was provided, and all

small groups (including men's groups and women's Bible studies) were invited. The event was promoted as an opportunity to hear important information regarding the future direction of WCC's adult ministry. To this end, an overview of the most important information gleaned from the WCC congregational survey and the biblical characteristics of an **FDF** from Mark's gospel were highlighted. It was clearly explained and emphasized that the need and goal for WCC's leadership (staff and elders) was to clarify in biblical and personal language the definition of a fully devoted follower and begin the process of improving WCC's adult education and discipleship ministry. The improvement of current ministry programming, the adoption of new initiatives, and the possible redirecting or elimination of current ministry programs were given as upcoming tasks and decisions yet to be determined. The training session lasted seventy-five to ninety minutes.

A learning activity was conducted as a part of the training. Groups of Home Team leaders were given a biblical narrative text of Jesus and His teaching. Each group had the opportunity to answer questions regarding that text and what that text might indicate about Jesus and FDFs embodying the life and ministry of Christ. After the general introduction to the training session, the group leaders were provided a section of scripture at their tables, and leaders at each table were randomly selected. The groups were to read the Bible texts and answer the accompanying questions, inviting discussion as to how the activity could apply to their HTs in terms of teaching and focusing on the life of Jesus and more closely aligning their lives with His. There was a second opportunity for questions and discussion with the larger group.

The Home Team training was conducted after the initial WCC congregational survey. General results of the survey and the larger goals of the research project in developing WCC's adult education program were shared. A key point of the training was focusing on the life and ministry of Jesus in narrative scripture texts that could serve as part of the ongoing teaching at Home Team gatherings. Again, the literature makes it clear that our view of God and Jesus Christ are very important. A simple goal, really, was to view how well equipped the small group leaders were to study biblical texts and interact with what they had learned about Jesus from those texts, and thus lead discussions. Good communication and training with leaders is a key, and this intervention sought to provide some training for the group leaders and emphasize the importance of better understanding the ministry and person of Jesus. Can WCC's Home Teams be viewed as a viable avenue to learning more about Jesus and the person of God, clarifying the objective of becoming a "fully devoted follower?"<sup>41</sup> More specifically, with WCC's adult classroom limitations in mind, what kind of role might WCC's Home Teams fill regarding substantive, ongoing Bible teaching for the congregation at large? This information is essential in adult education planning and programming.

<sup>41</sup> Osmer and Paschal make strong cases for substantive, ongoing teacher and group leader training and the need for continual communication and knowledge concerning the people leading and participating in the faith community in *Teaching for Faith* and *Vital Adult Learning* (respectively).

**Home Team** Surveys—Home Team leaders were each given a survey (See Appendix 5). The survey included basic questions about how each small group utilizes its time together. The surveys were given near the beginning of the training session, after time for food and visiting, and before the training-and-learning activity. One set of questions broke out the basic parts of a small group meeting (prayer, fellowship, Bible study, discussion, etc.) and asked what percentage of group time is typically spent with

each of those elements. A second set of questions asked them to rank the same grouping of components on a scale rating each part's effectiveness. The first survey was given in November of 2008, and an identical survey was given in November 2009. Attendance was significantly lower for the survey in 2009. Approximately 50-60% of the attendees took both surveys. The number of HT leaders increased significantly during 2008-09. The training and surveys provide opportunities for better understanding of several things. The information gives the small group leaders understanding of how groups spend their meeting time, which elements are most effective, and which ones are not useful. The surveys also provide the church leadership information regarding the nature of the small groups and their effectiveness. The training provided an opportunity to uncover initial themes central to this PRP and WCC's adult education program; and involve the leaders in training specific to the PRP and small groups.

The second survey provides an opportunity to view any change that has taken place resulting from the intervention and the ongoing training provided to Home Team leaders on a quarterly basis. What change has taken place over the last year in our Home Teams? What challenges are the groups and leaders experiencing? Are the changes moving participants closer to becoming FDFs of Christ?

Quarterly training with Home Team leaders has been taking place for the last few years, and WCC has attempted several congregation-wide Home Team studies coinciding with weekend sermon series (a regular Saddleback practice). Some of the studies have been more topically driven, some more intentional Bible study. It's very beneficial for this PRP, then, to discover more about the leaders' perspective on the effectiveness of the

small group Bible studies. Is Bible study something that can be expanded, encouraged, and carried out more productively through WCC's small groups in the future?

*WCC Leadership Interviews* (See Appendix 4)—I conducted face-to-face interviews with the retired senior pastor, lead pastor, and the other three members of WCC's senior staff management team (executive pastor, student and children's ministry pastor, and operations pastor). Thirteen interview questions were asked, and the questions and answers were recorded and transcribed word for word. Again, the questions were written and organized in a manner reflecting the rationale of the other surveys. Each participant was asked to describe an FDF in his own words; what is a needed quality of an FDF at WCC; point out WCC's strengths, weaknesses, and obstacles in developing FDFs; tell how they see their specific ministry role relating to the development of FDFs; and what they might envision for WCC adults over the next five to ten years regarding discipleship and Christian maturity.

The leadership questions and interviews were written and conducted for two specific reasons. First, there's a need to understand better WCC's professional staff leadership and leadership culture, providing insight into the health of the leadership team and establishing a baseline for the type of effort needed to move the PRP forward successfully. Secondly, the survey gives significant information about the leadership's individual and group understanding of the PRP's core concerns—what is an FDF, how important is developing FDFs, and what is the significant future impact? The interviews prove useful in understanding WCC's culture, history, leadership, and leadership culture. They provide perspective and direction. Differences in individual personalities, passions, and positions become obvious in the interviews.

Stemming from the literature review directly, the leadership interviews are designed to help answer specific questions. What are WCC's important and specific defining events, stories, or rituals that surface through these leadership interviews? Are specific and significant areas and subjects of disagreement becoming clear through these interviews? Do the leadership interviews give an indication of the individual

and group health of the leaders? What do the leadership interviews communicate about the leader's level of emotional health and wholeness as well as that of WCC, the leadership, and leadership culture? Do the leadership interviews indicate a group of learning leaders and a learning culture within the leadership willing to invest in serious adult education? What "clues," to use Easum's terminology, are seen?<sup>42</sup>

*Biblical characteristics of an FDF* (See Appendix 1)—At the beginning of Chapter 2, I chose to review Mark's gospel and list straightforward characteristics of the life of Christ that can be easily transferred to general and specific traits of a fully devoted follower of Jesus. Mark's gospel was chosen because of its shortness and its early authorship. The list of about sixty traits (both broad and specific) has been narrowed to four essentials of an FDF: love God, love others, produce fruit, and grow continuously. These essentials have been used in Home Team training sessions to describe a fully devoted follower. These essentials serve as the starting point for specific learning goals and objectives, mirroring WCC's core values, and providing some basic terms to describe life as an FDF of Jesus Christ.

" Easum and Friedman make a strong case for a learning, self-aware leadership and leadership culture through emotionally, mentally, and spiritually healthy leaders individually, corporately, and communally.

Based on the literature review there is a strong need for clear goals and clear language about what an FDF is, looks like, and does. The biblical characteristics gleaned

from the gospel of Mark serve as a starting point for a definition, description, and pathway from which to learn, teach, and live more like Jesus Christ in a community and congregational setting. Also, WCC's specific mission statement, "...helping them become His fully devoted followers," denotes a critical connection between the church's mission statement and better understanding of Jesus' life and ministry. The literature's strong Christology (Pazmino) and the consistent need for crystal clear goals and objectives are

important indicators that some basic congregational language and easily accessible terminology describing Jesus is essential. If WCC is to grow into a church of adults more fully devoted to Jesus, then quite obviously learning more about Jesus will be a central task, and the vocabulary for moving a large number of people on the journey will be especially important.

As we move forward to look at Chapter 4, it is imperative to process the results and data of the research through the lens of the PRP's stated purpose, the most important contributions of the literature review, and the rationale and analysis provided through the instruments, processes, and experiences described in this chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR Research

### Data and Results

With the research design and methodology clarified, we now begin to look at some specific data describing specific trees and tree groupings within the forest. While a clear understanding of some specific results of the research offers a somewhat micro view of the forest, the smaller sections remain essential to a broader understanding and an accurate portrait of the forest as a whole. It is important to see the whole forest, but the forest is still composed of individual trees. This chapter presents accurate portrayals of some trees and even groups of trees so that the forest, on the whole, can be properly viewed and understood.

The following compilation and summary of the results and data from the research are critical to this research project. The goal for presenting this data is to provide an accurate sketch of Westlink Christian Church in light of the stated goal for this PRP, the literature, and the intent and rationale of the research methods in order to move toward an effective plan and proposal in Chapter 5. Let us start by looking at the

WCC congregational survey results.

### Westlink Christian Church Congregational Survey

Over the weekend of September 15-16, 2007, the WCC Congregational Survey was conducted as part of the four weekend services. The survey was intended to provide basic demographic information along with additional specific responses regarding

various aspects of being and becoming a "fully devoted follower" of Jesus Christ. The survey also included three open-ended writing questions.

Two thousand surveys were inserted into the weekend service bulletins, completed during a 10-15 minute time slot in the worship services, and then returned into receptacles near the exits as worshippers left the auditorium. The total attendance in the four services was 1,902 including approximately 100 children and students under age 18. Figure 4.1 below displays 45% of all surveys were completed and returned.

The following results are those germane to this study, providing the clearest indications regarding demographics, understanding an FDF, and growing in Christian discipleship.

#### Demographic Information

Figure 4.2 graphically demonstrates a break-down of age ranges from the largest age groups on the left to smaller age groups on the right.

Figure 4.2. Congregational age distribution from WCC survey

Figure 4.3. Gender distribution percentages from WCC congregational survey Figure 4.4 shows that 80% of all responses indicated they were married.

A large number of respondents acknowledged no children under age 18 living at home (47%). Figure 4.5 illustrates a total percentage on the left of 53% of the respondents with at least one child under the age of 18 at home.

A significant number, (57%) of the adults surveyed, have been members of WCC five years or less. Figure 4.6 displays the majority of adults as members of WCC five years or less.

The largest number of female respondents falls between ages 36-45 (16%), with an additional 14% between ages 46-55. At the same time 11% of the males surveyed fall in the 36-45 age range, and also 11% in the 46-55 year range. Not surprisingly, there is a significant spike with families having two children in the 36-45 year age range.

Respondents between ages of 36-45 represent the largest percentage of adults who have been Christians for 31-40 years (10%). An additional 8% in this same group have been Christians between 21 and 30 years. The 46-55 year age range is next in relation to number of years as a Christian.

The demographic information verifies the direction for the PRP with more than 50% of the respondents between ages 36-55 and more than 50% indicating at least one child under age 18 living at home. Additionally, a significant number of families between the ages of 36-45 appear to have a second child. Again, it is significant that 57% of those responding have been members of WCC five years or less. This, as we know, indicates a significant change in the church population in a short amount of time and underscores the question regarding the involvement ministry and helping new people get started well, not



only in becoming Christians and church members, but also in growing in their relationship with Christ and others with a solid foundation—also a concern overall for WCC adult education ministry and the goals of this PRP.

It is interesting, as well, that these same two age groups (36-45, 46-55) appear to be the two groups who have been Christians the longest. This information seems to validate the idea that in these age groups, people who are part of WCC have some sort of church background and (for some, at least) church is not brand new. Overall, even in these two specific age ranges, the percentages of people who have been Christians a long time are relatively low. It is possible that these two age groups ranked higher in years as a Christian simply because there are more people in these age ranges. One unavailable piece of information in this regard is more precisely what their initial conversion experience was and what it means to "be a Christian." The survey did not qualify this

information more specifically but gives a definite impression that some filling out a survey view themselves as having been a Christian for a number of years, along with quite a few people who have been Christians for significantly shorter periods of time, indicating a broad cross-section.

#### Understanding a Fully Devoted Follower

This section provides a summary of the multiple choice and open-ended questions regarding the meaning of an FDF, the FDF's growth in Christian discipleship, and level of satisfaction with WCC as a faith community.

When asked, "What trait of an FDF do you consider most important?" "Faith" was the most

common response. Figure 4.7 groups the responses that came in definable categories.

"Faith\*" in Christ would be the way WCC would typically characterize becoming and continuing in a relationship with God because of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. This is a solid, positive answer for our culture in that regard and certainly fitting with the assessment of faith and faith development even though none of these terms are further defined in the survey. In a sense, both "love" and "serving" get at the question's intent more closely as life and lifestyle characteristics demonstrating Jesus through love for others and serving others.

When asked, "What do you consider your greatest area of personal need/growth that would help you become a more FDF," "sharing my faith" had the highest percentage. Figure 4.8 groups the responses that fell in definable categories.

On the whole, I think the church leadership would agree that the congregation owning the value of evangelism and the sharing of our faith with others is a significant growth area along with Bible reading. These would need to be subjects and topics specifically addressed in any programmatic approach WCC adopts for adult education and indicate the need for clear goals in the areas of evangelism, Bible study, and fellowship.

Figure 4.9 charts the greatest obstacles to becoming an FDF into significant categories.

The word "commitment" is not more specifically defined here but, in my opinion, indicates a significant number of respondents believing that they have to take more personal responsibility for their own development as an FDF. This may also indicate some success with WCC's recently encouraging "self-feeding" and providing some church-wide tools and encouragement toward daily Bible reading. For most people "commitment" and "time" are related and are major factors in our church and culture today reflective of busyness. Certainly it is true that growing into an FDF of Christ requires both time and commitment, and the recommendations of this PRP will have to take the cultural "busyness" factor into account.

Figure 4.10. Frequently given descriptions of an FDF in their own words

Over 60% of those surveyed tied being a fully devoted follower directly to God and Jesus, indicating some understanding and openness to Him and potentially learning more about Jesus and God and what it means to follow. The answers also indicate an understanding that "following" goes beyond internal faith to life decisions, actions, and obedience to God and Christ. The connection to the Bible is an obvious, important tie, as well, since Bible teaching will remain important. A suggested plan that even more clearly focuses on better understanding and embodying Christ appears to be a direction in which the majority of people are already moving.

When respondents were asked what sort of difference would take place in their lives as they grow into FDFs, the responses were more varied and more difficult to effectively categorize. Seventy respondents (9%), the largest group, said they would be more devoted to Christ and His Word, 24 respondents (3%) said they would reach out to others more (evangelism), and 24 respondents also said they would enjoy more peace in their lives. Other double-digit answers included "happier," "loving others more," and being "less

selfish." These responses are consistent with the previous answers and indicate at least an understanding that there are numerous personal benefits to following Jesus and living for Him but also significantly affect the lives of others.

When asked, "What one thing can WCC do to help you become a fully devoted follower?" respondents, again, offered a huge variety of answers, but the largest response (84 responses = 10%) acknowledged that they were "satisfied" with what WCC provides, offers, and encourages. Several noted that "everything is great" and progress in becoming an FDF is "up to them." Other significant responses in this category included

"improved teaching of scripture" (51 responses = 6%) and offering specific classes (21 responses = 3%). More than anything, possibly, these responses indicate a wide variety in needs, stages, development, and personhood. *Interestingly, only 19% of the total responses could truly be grouped into any meaningful or significant category.* Most of the other responses were for very specific items and were all over the board. The data does indicate, however, that some of what WCC is currently providing is making a difference in the right direction and there is a need, among some at least, for greater biblical understanding and for a specific, accessible vehicle allowing that to take place. As was already noted in Chapter 2, classroom space is limited and will continue to be limited, so "Bible classes" per se will need to come through this PRP in different ways and with a variety of different opportunities for access.

#### Other Large Churches Survey

This section includes a summary (See Appendix 8<sup>45</sup>) of the other larger churches surveyed

including attendance, education, social and economic standing, and racial diversity. Surveys for 20 of the 26 larger churches were returned, for a 77% return rate.

Appendix 8 provides additional detailed information about the survey of other larger churches not specifically provided in this chapter.

Figure 4.11 displays a balanced cross-section of average attendance for the other larger churches surveyed.

Figure 4.12. Age range distributions of other larger churches surveyed

No responding congregation reported their largest age group over 55 years of age.

This makes for a favorable comparison with WCC with the two largest age groups being

36-45 and 46-55 years of age.

Regarding formal education, social status, economic standing, and racial diversity the churches for the most part compared similarly with WCC. Figure 4.13 characterizes

these significant descriptions of the other larger churches.

Figure 4.13. Economic, social, educational and racial status of other large churches

The largest groups consisted of those who had completed a college degree, "professional-'white collar,'" "middle class," and "not racially diverse" with Caucasian representing the dominant race. Overall, the other larger churches compare similarly with Westlink Christian Church as middle to upper-middle-class, educated, predominantly white, and suburban.

### Open-ended Questions

As part of the larger church survey, seven open/fill-in-the-blank questions were asked on the following subjects:

The first question was, *"Have you stated or defined a fully devoted follower' in different or more specific language in your setting? If yes, how? Has this description proven sound and useful? Why or why not?"*

Figure 4:14 shows the vast majority of the other larger churches have included something like an FDF in their own language and setting.

The answers to the rest of the question were quite varied. Most had some similar phrases or wording used to describe and accomplish the same objective. The answers included: "loving God," and "loving people," "Win, Train, Send," the five purposes of Saddleback's "purpose-driven" model, "worship, serve, grow," "discover, develop, deploy," "gather, group, give, go," and "follower of Jesus" combined with six core beliefs and six core practices.

One respondent described the work in developing FDFs, stating,

Someone who is surrendered to the level of truth God has revealed to him or her. In other words, a

new Christian can be fully devoted knowing that deep truths of God's Word have not been revealed at this point.

This could be taken to mean that everyone is truly an FDF at his or her given level of

knowledge and understanding.

Another respondent countered,

Think about it—it is impossible to be a FDF this side of eternity. You are trying to do and asking people to do the impossible. You cannot succeed.

This seems to mean no one can actually be or become a fully devoted follower so why

try.

Two churches expressed concern that a clearer definition led toward too much of a "checklist" mentality and became increasingly more about programming and moved farther away from being "personal" and "organic."

There has been an attempt by most of these larger churches to provide some direction or verbiage of a pathway for adults. Not surprisingly, most of what I received from the larger churches reads like a slogan or a mission statement for adults in the church, tending to affirm the church's core values or clarifying direction for adults once they come into the church and begin to be part of the church. Most of the wording is also common and similar and does not appear to have originated in each church. The phrasing lends itself toward plugging adults into ministry programming that fits a specific purpose. *While this is not necessarily the wrong direction in and of itself, none of the churches described anything that looks like more specific goals, objectives, or outcomes for adults seeking to grow in their devoted following of Christ.* One could argue, as I am sure many would, that the programming involvement itself produces devotion and Christ-like following, but no specific goals or objectives are stated. That is an abundantly clear need highlighted by this PRP, appearing to be a shortcoming of the other larger churches also.

Question number two was, *"What unique challenges (obstacles) do you believe larger churches face in developing fully devoted followers?"*

One rather obvious yet very real answer to this question was the challenges and consequences of the sheer numbers of people. Figure 4.15 illustrates the significant obstacles other larger churches face in developing FDFs.

Figure 4.15. Greatest obstacles faced by other larger churches

Three responses included the struggle of too many different programs, opportunities, and activities offered both inside and outside the church. For these churches this led to confusion, overcrowded schedules, and lack of time to grow and develop FDFs.

Several answers also included the caution of emphasizing numerical growth in larger churches and the pressure to "attract a crowd."\* This can lead to measuring the wrong things.

One answer included the need for "redefining what Jesus looks like in today's culture." Interestingly, one answer added "appearance of excellence" as an obstacle that attracts many people to a larger church with the risk of people believing they are becoming FDFs simply by being part of the "excellence" around them. Again, one challenge issued was for larger churches to become programmatic in approaching discipleship while remaining organic and individual at the same time.

Most of the concern voiced as obstacles centers on the fact that larger churches are dealing with so many people and larger churches have so many things happening programmatically. From our experience at WCC, these are very real, related obstacles that are not going away. There are more people to lead, help, direct, and develop, and the



number of options and operating programs within the church tends to confuse and dilute the effectiveness of establishing and following specific goals and initiatives to reach those goals—a very real concern. The solutions suggested in Chapter 5 will need to take into account this fact in developing future plans for FDFs. The comment regarding "appearance of excellence" is also on target. On an external and surface level, at least, larger churches with more professional staff, good physical facilities, and well-run programming provide a sense of success or accomplishment in being a part of a larger church or even associated with a larger church. In some senses this "appearance of excellence" attracts new people and takes on momentum and a life of its own, highlighting the need for discovering where individuals and the congregation are in relation to faith stage and development. In short, people are attracted to WCC and other larger churches simply by what appears to be happening inside and out. Regarding outreach, this fact can be viewed as a plus, but it consistently adds extra layers to navigate when it comes to identifying people's needs and desires. Undoubtedly, the sheer number of people in larger churches complicates numerous factors, including the ones mentioned above, which are crucial for developing FDFs. The findings of the literature review regarding the need for community and significant transformation internally and externally must be reflected in the goals and outcomes of the research project.

The third question was, *"What advantages does a larger church have in developing fully devoted followers?"*

Every responding church except one chose "resources" as the top advantage larger churches possess. One answer included this,

There is a synergy that naturally happens in larger churches that causes new believers to think we have our act together. They give us more credit than we deserve. As a result we are able to package classes and programs for them that they are usually willing to try if their schedules allow.

While larger churches do face some unique challenges, larger churches are also equipped

with advantages. (I can hear the voices of folks in smaller churches where I have served.)

Within the resources mentioned above, once again, there's a specific need for those resources to be used wisely and directed toward goals, programs, activities, events, and staffing that will, in fact, lead toward developing FDFs of Jesus Christ. In other words, the aforementioned obstacles can be minimized and the resources can be maximized for developing a significant, life-changing adult education ministry.

Question number four was, ***"What is the most lacking single trait of a fully devoted follower in the congregation where you serve?"***

A few answers were given several times on this question, including serving in ministry in and through the church (volunteers), basic Bible knowledge, financial stewardship, evangelism, love for others, personal growth, and living out the life of faith consistently. A couple of answers seemed to be qualities that, when applied, would help produce FDFs, such as "accountability" and "commitment." One response rightly mentioned the significant need for personal "emotional health" as part of discipleship and the significant disadvantage in leaving it out.

Not surprisingly, these are similar answers to what we would typically give at WCC. There's a tendency to view the "needed traits" of an FDF the same as a church's ongoing programming and budgetary needs and deficiency. We might typically say, "We have a shortage of volunteers or a budgetary shortfall because people are not living for Jesus." Certainly the two are and should be related, but that's only the case when the

traits and characteristics of an FDF fit with what Jesus embodied and lived out and when the ministry programming of the church follows the pattern Jesus intended for His Church. There certainly can be other

reasons for a shortage of volunteers or budget needs such as too much programming, the wrong type of programming, and financial overspending. Words like "accountability" and "commitment" surface regularly and are important concepts. It will be crucial in the WCC setting to define "accountability" and "commitment" clearly in relation to Jesus and fully following Him.

Emotional health, surfaced through one of the above surveys, is a critical, growing concern. We regularly encounter leaders at the staff, elder, and volunteer level who are capable and qualified to lead and teach in any number of different ways (knowledge, experience, abilities, and talent) yet appear to lack personal health and wholeness, which eventually disqualifies them from serving and often harms others in the process. This, of course, is part of the "self-differentiation" described by Friedman and carried through Cosgrove and Hatfield's church scenarios. This is a lacking trait and an obstacle to developing FDFs in general and leaders in particular that must be taken seriously. Once again, it will prove useful to define, as much as possible, emotional health and wholeness in keeping with living the life of an FDF of Jesus.

The fifth question read, *"What program, initiative, or emphasis have you attempted that has worked well in developing and encouraging fully devoted followers?"*

Figure 4.17 graphs the most effective programs and initiatives of the other larger churches.

Figure 4.17. Effective programs and initiatives in the other larger churches

Five answers highlighted the use and importance of specific classes for adults, addressing specific topics geared toward Christian growth. For some this also included the initial "involvement" classes that established and laid the foundation for Christian growth and maturity.

Three answers had to do with clarity and simplicity. One respondent said they

had been successful in developing everything they were doing through "4 Key Ways."

A third respondent stated,

When we first started the church we had a bunch of different Ministries, but people were so busy at church they could not build authentic community, reach out, and serve in the community. So the most effective thing for us has been simplicity. No programs or other ministries.

These answers and concerns definitely affirm WCC's journey and the questions currently asked.

Almost 50% of the other larger churches believe they have effectively used small groups for "connection," establishing and creating Christian community. Teaching through small group settings has also been successful for some. At the same time, only 25% have found similar success through adult classes including the "starter" involvement classes. This is similar to WCC's journey to date and highlights, again, some important questions to be answered in Chapter 5 and beyond. How well are our small groups doing in developing genuine Christian community? How are we doing in

encouraging our small community groups to grow toward becoming learning communities as well instead of solely or mostly relational? If small groups cannot carry the majority of the load for Bible learning/teaching, where and how will those needs be addressed? How do individual and independent learning opportunities blend with communal interaction, and how can both best be encouraged and facilitated?

Without a doubt churches in general and perhaps larger churches in particular must address the issues of clarity, busyness, chaos, and "over-programming." Especially for larger churches growing gradually over longer periods of time (like WCC), the number of different programs, ministries, and events have multiplied exponentially with time and continued growth in numbers and interests. The longer quote above expresses the fact quite accurately—*active, busy, and exhausted church environments may prove to be among the worst enemies of a clear path and actual growth and movement toward becoming FDFs of*

*Jesus Christ*. Simplicity, focus of programming, and clear decisions regarding priorities need to be an ongoing concern for the recommendations of this PRP. Otherwise, conclusions and suggestions emanating from the research are quickly lost in an ocean of wonderful ministries, events, and opportunities. This is an ever present danger for a church of any size.

Question six was, ***"What program, initiative, or emphasis have you attempted that has NOT worked well in developing and encouraging fully devoted followers?"***

Figure 4.18 charts the lack of effectiveness of adult classes and small groups.

Figure 4.18. Ineffective programs and initiatives in the other larger churches

One person noted that small groups had not worked well in the church and another specifically mentioned that the recruitment of small group "coaches"\* had not gone well in developing the small group ministry. Several others mentioned specific programs that had not worked well for them. Another response included that, "relying solely on staff for leadership and development had not worked well. One simply said, "Everything works and doesn't work to some degree."

Showing a mirror image of the previous question and answer, nearly 50% of the churches listed adult classes as ineffective. A couple of these responses clearly highlight the need for recruitment, leadership training, and volunteer mobilization. WCC has experienced some struggles with the oversight of Home Team leaders and has certainly experienced the difficulty of relying exclusively on professional ministry staff for the leadership of programming and events. Again a major emphasis of the practice and application of adult education will be to adequately train staff, volunteers, teachers, and leaders.

Question seven was, ***"If you were undertaking a project to develop a plan for improved***

*discipleship of adults in the congregation you serve, what is one critical question you would seek to answer?"*

These answers, of course, were quite varied, intriguing, and affirming of the direction and purpose of this PRP. Many of the questions asked for information which is difficult or nearly impossible to obtain. A paraphrase and summary of the questions includes: How can we best increase discipleship and growth once a decision for Christ has been made? How do people really connect and belong? What are the best ways to get people excited and involved? Where are people, really, in their Christian growth and maturity? How can we accomplish more simplicity without diluting everything? What time works best for people's schedules? Is true transformation, from the inside out, truly taking place? What sort of environment(s) works best for long-term change? Do people actually get it? What is one thing God is doing in your life? How much time do you spend with God on a daily/regular basis?

Most of those answers and responses ring true at WCC! The above statements underscore the need for the development of a holistic approach to adult education and discipleship seeking to develop FDFs. The development of the adult education ministry is *never* finished. There will continue to be a need for improved, increased understanding of the congregation's adults with regard to faith stage and development, and there will be a critical need for evaluation of the programming and measurements of progress and success that can lead to midstream course corrections. Several of the above questions could be answered through simply tracking people in and through the church ministries and systems. Once again, the larger church size and the tyranny of needs, programs,

events, and activities often lethally legislate against careful and thorough planning, evaluation, adjustment making, and ongoing learning and understanding in order to continue the learning cycle, improvement, and

success.

### On-site Visits

The Saddleback on-site visit produced great results regarding our Home Teams (small groups). Over the last two years we have made significant progress in increasing the numbers in small groups and becoming more intentional with aligned studies twice a year that coincide with a sermon series. We have also become much more intentional and regular about group leader training, support, help, and coaching. We have added two staff people and a volunteer team, and have nearly quadrupled the number of small groups and the number of people meeting in small groups over the past two years. More and more we have viewed small groups as a main pathway for teaching, connection, instruction, communication, and service. The Saddleback visit also spurred us on to look at ministry alignment versus silos and simplify what we are doing across the board. This huge task is a work in progress and a relevant part of the PRP. The Saddleback visit has produced a network of ongoing, helpful relationships and resources.

The Willow Creek on-site visit for the REVEAL conference was confirming of much of the impetus and direction of the PRP and the church's mission. Not unlike Saddleback, it has produced some help and resources, including congregational surveys, which are ongoing at the time of this writing. The church staff is currently working to understand better the results of WCC's REVEAL surveys. More than anything, I believe,

the REVEAL conference caused us to examine WCC's involvement ministry, hire a staff person over involvement, and begin the process of completely revamping WCC's involvement process. This, too, is in

the works at the time of this writing.

The additional on-site visits to Central Christian Church, Central Christian Church of the East Valley, and Christ's Church of the Valley (all located in the Phoenix metropolitan area) also afforded opportunities to network with small group and involvement pastors from larger churches. Those relationships have furnished ongoing benefits, help, and information. The specific on-site visits provided helpful insight into small group space within church facilities, different options regarding the involvement process, and various questions and answers regarding staffing, ministry alignment and simplifying and aligning church programming. Not surprisingly, in all these church settings, clearer objectives, goals, and pathways communicated consistently and effectively lead to better, more measurable results. It also becomes increasingly apparent that mega churches struggle with a culture of busyness and multiple growths of overlapping, often competing ministries. Several churches have had significant success simplifying their church culture and aligning purposes, ministries, budgets, and total programming. Though painful and costly in some respects, these changes have provided clear progress for the churches in the specific areas where they have chosen to focus their time, energy, and resources. Now let's examine the smaller communities within the mega church context.

#### Home Team Training and Surveys

Surveys of Home Team leaders took place in November 2008; then an identical survey was taken in November 2009. Specific training related to the PRP was carried out 2008, quarterly training more specifically related to Home Team ministry programming took place in the months preceding November 2009, and then the second survey was conducted (See Appendix 10).

The November 2008 survey realized 48 responses; the November 2009 survey, 33 responses.



Currently nearly 1500 people meet regularly in well over 120 Home Teams. Figure 4.19 provides the percentage of time Home Teams spent during group meetings in Bible study and discussion and the percentage change 2008-2009.

<b>Small Group Time Spent</b>	2008	2009
Bible Study	45%	47%
Discussion	17%	16%

Figure 4.19. Percentage of group time spent in Bible study and discussion 2008-2009

<sup>46</sup> "Refreshments" (fellowship time) scored third at 16.6% and "prayer" was fourth at 13%.

<sup>47</sup> "Prayer" ranked third in effectiveness (7.4), "service" ranked fourth (6.3), and "refreshments" (fellowship) came in fifth (6.1).

From the 2008 survey, "Bible Study" consistently consumed the largest percentage of small group time, with 45%, and "Discussion" was the second largest percentage, with 17%.<sup>46</sup> Also from the same 2008 survey, "Bible Study" consistently scored as most effective in helping people become more like Christ (8 out of 10), and discussion rated second in effectiveness (7.6 out of 10).<sup>47</sup> Figure 4.20 displays the Home

Team Leaders' rating, on a scale of 1-10, of the effectiveness of Bible study and discussion in their small group contexts.

<b>Most effective in helping people become more like Christ</b>	2008	2009
Bible Study	8	8.5
Discussion	7.6	8

Figure 4.20. Rating (1-10) the effectiveness of group Bible study and discussion 2008-2009

From the 2009 survey, "Bible Study" again scored consistently as the largest portion of small group time, with 47% and "Discussion" and "Refreshments" (fellowship time) tied for second, at 16%.<sup>48</sup>

Also from the 2009 survey, "Bible Study" again scored as "most effective in helping people become more like Jesus Christ," (8.5 out of 10) and "Discussion" was second (8).<sup>49</sup> "Prayer" came next in line with 14%

"Prayer" was third (7.8) then "Refreshments" (fellowship time-6.7), and service (6.3).

Based on these results it appears that slightly more time was being spent with Bible study in 2009 than in 2008. It also seems that "Refreshments" (fellowship time) increased slightly in importance in 2009 compared to 2008. Interestingly, "Refreshments" (fellowship time) consistently scored as "less effective" both years than either "Prayer" or "Service" in helping people become more like Christ, yet "Refreshments" regularly consumed more time than either "Prayer" or "Service." On an encouraging note, it appears that "Prayer" consumed more group time in the 2009 survey than in 2008. These differences may indicate the effectiveness and emphasis placed on

effective Bible study and community building through the ongoing small group

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training.

It is quite clear given recent numbers and progress that small groups must remain a central portion of this PRP and WCC's ministry. The combined survey and training results underscore several facts. Recent HT leader training has been among the most successful, significant training we have given to any leadership group over the last several years. It's also abundantly apparent that small groups provide an environment where several different foundations for FDFs can be emphasized, nurtured, and developed, including, but

not limited to Bible study, fellowship or community, service, and prayer. Attention must be paid to assessing individuals and groups regarding faith stage and development and then intentional definition, development, training, and education directed toward leaders and members, moving them toward the developed goals for FDFs and the adult education ministry. Importantly, small groups provide an environment where both measurable goals and "organic" objectives come together in relationship with God and others.

### WCC Leadership Interviews

The following section summarizes and highlights the interview responses.

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<sup>50</sup> Hard conclusions are impossible to draw from these results due to the low number of responses, the differences between the two years in the number of responses, and different groups in 2009 than 2008.

<sup>51</sup> Lead pastor will be referred to as "Pastor A" from this point forward.

Interviews were conducted with the lead pastor , executive pastor ; operations pastor ; student ministries pastor<sup>54</sup>; the retired senior pastor<sup>55</sup> (See Appendix 9).

#### ***How would you describe an FDF in your own words?***

Responses included denying ourselves and allowing Christ to be seen living His life through us, having the attitude of a learner and reproducing my life in the lives of others and a channel of God's love and grace, dying to ourselves and living for Christ, transforming our behavior and biblically literate. Pastor E specifically commented that "a definition without specific criteria isn't measurable."

***If you could choose ONE needed quality of an FDF at WCC, which one would it be? Why?***

Summarized answers were: learning to feed themselves and taking personal responsibility for their growth and development, being a self-starter but also being interdependent with others, more intentional Bible teaching and Bible study, missionally serving people both inside and outside the church, leading and living a Spirit-filled and dependent life—life we live through dependence on Jesus Christ.

Even though there is no agreement as to one particular quality, several do fit with core characteristics of Jesus' life. Not surprisingly, some of the others read more like church programmatic and ministry needs necessary to developing FDFs instead of a specific trait of an FDF. In moving forward to develop a plan, it will be important for the leadership to agree on the basic, core traits of a fully devoted follower, and for those core traits to eventuate into clear goals and objectives for the entire church.

Executive pastor will be referred to as "Pastor B" from this point forward. Operations pastor will be referred to as "Pastor C" from this point forward. Student ministries pastor will be referred to as "Pastor D" from this point forward. Retired senior pastor will be referred to as "Pastor E" from this point forward.

***What are WCC's strengths in developing FDFs?***

Important responses included that today we have more people serving, learning, and experiencing community in small groups; we see Bible knowledge and serving as going together; a pretty healthy spirit and overall church and leadership culture; building relationships; and getting people involved in ministry and not sitting back.

These answers indicate church leaders ready to move forward with seriousness regarding

developing adult FDFs. Small groups have been successful in connecting people with others along with encouraging the groups to become active in serving in various ministries both inside and outside the church. As was previously mentioned, people have definitely become more connected in community with one another, but growing into learning communities viewing interaction and community as learning remain growth areas. Progress has been made in seeing growth in Christ more broadly than increased Bible knowledge alone.

***What are WCC's weaknesses in developing FDFs?***

Responses included that we've not excelled at coaching people toward personal responsibility; no good plan, process, or system in place; lack of intentional Bible study; assessing where people are and then developing a strategy to move them toward becoming FDFs; and large numbers of people is a consistent challenge.

All in all these responses affirm the findings of the literature review and the larger church survey. Providing and encouraging individual learning, a model or models and organization, need for Bible learning, learning about faith development and faith stages, and the large number of people bring their own specific difficulties. All of these factors are significant needs and concerns for this PRP.

***What are WCC's obstacles in developing FDFs?***

Significant responses included: disagreement on how development should happen; the perceived tension between Bible knowledge and Bible life-application; people's time is very valuable; we've moved too far toward a seeker model as a church; being seeker sensitive and biblically based aren't mutually exclusive; people are tremendously busy in our culture, and we'll need a lot of volunteer "manpower" to move people along a pathway; and not everyone is going to become an FDF—Jesus faced this problem as

well, and no church rises above the level of its FDFs.

Once again, the discussion involving Bible knowledge and learning and practical life application rises to the surface. Clearly the leadership needs to decide a direction for adult education which holds this balance, and perhaps a healthy tension, between Bible knowledge and life application. In the past, WCC had perhaps emphasized Bible knowledge to the exclusion of life application, more recently emphasizing just the opposite. The leadership opinions reflect this healthy tension and the need for both to take place simultaneously. The leaders, of course, are aware of how busy people are in our culture and how difficult it can be to recruit volunteers and accommodate significant commitments. This, too, was reflected in the larger church survey. Interestingly and accurately the above comments not only reflect the need to identify faith stages and development but also desire, willingness, and availability/commitment through the process of growing in devotion to Christ. The plan growing out of the PRP will need to deal with as many of these needs and concerns as possible.

***What is one important change that needs to be made to address these obstacles and/or weaknesses?***

Responses included: completion of your research project and moving forward with a plan, a plan to tie all the pieces together—like an ocean out there right now.

Pastor D commented,

One of the biggest changes we need to make as a church is to allow someone the devotion that it will take to see a strategy through in the church. We have to be committed to giving someone the time to dream about it, build a team around it, implement it, and evaluate it in the process. At some point we have to say we are going to narrow our focus.

Pastor E also added,

I'm not sure we've ever been intentional with those who want to grow and lead because we've

focused on the larger group. Jesus was actually living together with His disciples!

The above comments are on target and, at the same time, reveal some inherent tension. There is a sense of urgency to install a plan and tie together existing pieces— move forward. On the other hand, there is the reality that a well-constructed plan, implemented, evaluated, and adapted effectively will take a significant amount of time initially and throughout. Pastor D's comment above acknowledges WCC's past tendency to continue as the "mall church" and offer everything for everyone at all times and keep adding more.

***What major factors, developments, and decisions in WCC's history have led to this point in developing FDFs and the need to develop FDFs?***

Some of the answers included transitioning from being a "Bible church" in the 1980's and refocusing on reaching out to non-believers; major factors over the years have related to Pastor E's life cycle and growth to some extent; our fears about becoming what

we've been in the past have prevented us at times from moving in a healthier direction; strong Bible teaching history, sometimes we've missed the point that continually maturing in Christ means more involvement with non-believers and not less.

Some of the same topics rise to the surface again with the added perspective of maturity in Christ leading toward more outreach, evangelism, and involvement with non-believers. Evangelism was listed as one of the top "weaknesses" of WCC in the WCC survey. The interviews also underscore the fact that the personality and direction of the church tend to take on the appearance of the leadership in general and of the senior pastor or lead pastor in particular. This has been true for WCC in the past and will no doubt be true for WCC in the future. Pastor A's passion, gifts, and "ministry personality" will continue to be growing

factors in the construction and implementation of this project.

***What other aspects of WCC's church culture are important in developing***

***FDFs?***

Significant responses here included the systemic nature of the church—how do we link everything together; we have a very forgiving, welcoming, and graceful culture generally open to change; we need some core values for an FDF and a common language that transcends different age groups, and church size causes difficulties in making changes and we haven't made any major changes in a while, so it's a good time to look at where we are as a church.

WCC's church culture does tend to be forgiving, welcoming, full of grace, and open to change. This certainly is a plus in moving forward with adult education. There is a growing sense among the leadership that upcoming changes are both warranted and timely. There has been a significant effort over the past 3-5 years to work toward better

alignment of WCC programs and ministries. This work can help lay a healthier foundation for the future of adult education and putting together an effective ministry with, to, and for adults.

***How do you see your specific leadership role relating to the development of***

***FDFs?***

The essence of the responses: I need to continue to articulate needs for mature believers and new believers and figure out how to lead; developing new leaders and figuring out how to help the staff apply becoming an FDF; helping to lay a foundation for relatively new believers so they will engage in the church for the rest of their lives; we must start deciding what we're going to do well and not try and do too many things; and we need to ask how intentional we are being about developing FDFs.



Pastor A articulates an important need and reality here. As this project continues to take shape and move toward implementation the plan, expectation, and goals will need to be clearly articulated in a number of different ways and on various occasions. It takes time to communicate anything new and to change the church cultural expectations and make progress. Pastor B mentions the importance of continuing staff development toward becoming FDFs which truly highlights the entire aspect of leaders continuing to learn and lead through the example of ongoing growth and development—a key factor and component. The need for a narrower focus is voiced once again as is the plea for intentionality.

*What would you like to see accomplished in the next 5 years through WCC in the development of FDFs? The next 10 years?*

Summary of responses includes: 5 years to have a system and plan in place for helping people become FDFs, a holistic and intentional plan that strikes a balance between too many rules and no rules at all; and strong solid support from the church in growing and maturing in Christ. Other answers also listed: a specific strategy and plan with help from others to pass along the baton of devotion and leadership; the need to become more intentional again about developing disciples, and making sure the church isn't simply a religious version of our culture—true change.

This question resulted in some affirming responses from the leadership. The five-year time frame appears realistic, and a balance between a plan that contains clear rules, parameters, and steps while at the same time "organic," personal, and individual remains important. This was a need also mentioned by the other larger churches and certainly alluded to in the literature review. If progress is going to be measurable then there will have to be some "boxes to check," but if transformation is to be lasting and real there will also be the need for programming to be flexible, personal, and individual whenever possible. Pastor D

raises a good question regarding the benefit of adopting core goals, outcomes, strategies and languages that could eventually be adopted and applied to all age groups across the board, from children through adults. That suggestion, of course, in one sense goes beyond the scope of this project but is definitely a worthy consideration that would benefit the whole church.

***What will be the most significant/important impact as WCC does a better job of creating FDFs?***

A summary of the responses to this question includes the following: the church begins to look more like the Acts 2 church; we would have more seekers, more believers,

and more people who are mature—right now we have more in the middle, and more people with a foundation to help carry the load; more unique ministries that impact the church and community and more impact on families and the life of the church.

Perhaps more unity exists on this answer than any other. Growing in and into Christian maturity and devoted following of Jesus Christ will most certainly lead WCC toward becoming more of the church God intends and desires. The impact and benefit of those changes and developments are too numerous and important to describe—God's work! What an awesome prospect to anticipate!

***What is one question you would like to ask on a WCC congregational survey for this PRP?***

Summarized responses were: to know how people view their responsibility for spiritual growth, to know what others think is important about becoming an FDF and what it looks like beyond that for them, and would like to ask people what is standing in their way of growing spiritually?

In summary, there remain a couple of interesting and significant differences. First, there is some disagreement regarding the "how" of Bible teaching and learning and maturing into a fully devoted follower of Jesus. Some sentiment among the leadership team expresses concern based on past experience

that Bible teaching can become an end in itself and lead only to "head knowledge." Other opinions on the leadership team express concern regarding the lack of in-depth Bible teaching along with serious life-application. This is a basic difference, with validity on each side. Another discussion related to this issue is the ongoing question about personal responsibility or "self-feeding." WCC wrestles with what is individual responsibility and what is church

responsibility. A second difference in the interviews is more subtle. There is, on one hand, the opinion that what is needed is a plan for developing fully devoted followers, and that plan needs to be designed and implemented as soon as possible. At the same time, there's concern expressed in the interviews that WCC is simply always trying to do too many things, and a new plan or program for developing fully devoted followers would simply be one more program in an ocean of church events, activities, and programs. There is some inherent tension imbedded in this discussion regarding the need for something to be planned and implemented and the desire for something to be given the time, processing, energy, and resources in order to be accomplished well. Another underlying subject is simply how large this concern to develop fully devoted followers is, and whether WCC is close and on the right track right now or whether a great deal of evaluation, time, energy, and help is necessary. These are subjects with which the leaders must grapple and to which we will return in Chapter 5.

### Comparative Findings

After looking into specific trees and tree groupings in this chapter it is important, at this juncture, to trace several threads. Not surprisingly, the ideas of "busyness," "time," and commitment surfaced

throughout the data. WCC individuals cited "commitment" and "time" as major obstacles; the other larger churches consistently mentioned the time constraints of parishioners and the over-programming and busyness of the church culture as major contributing factors. The leadership interviews rightly acknowledged the significant value of volunteers' time. During the Home Team training

and survey meetings a number of leaders mentioned that one of the biggest struggles they face is consistent group member attendance. Even as "resources" were given as a major advantage for larger churches resources are also viewed negatively in the sense that more activities are consistently expected and provided. Resources and attractive facilities and programming were given as pluses and traits attracting people to larger churches and, at the same time, these same pluses were listed as obstacles that both increase busyness and even promoting the appearance of becoming an FDF without the substance, genuine benefit, and life transformation.

Another consistent thread throughout the data is the presence of broad and general mission statements for nearly all the churches with few specific objectives underneath the mission statements. At WCC and in the larger church survey, no specific learning goals or more detailed descriptions of growing to become an FDF are currently in place. At the same time, on the other end of the spectrum, the data showed many specific ministries and programs for adults. From the data and interviews many if not most of the churches appear over-programmed to the point of adding more and more busyness to the culture both inside and outside the church. This, too, was a trend and factor noted in the WCC leadership interviews and the on-site visits, especially as seen in Saddleback's ongoing work of ministry simplification and alignment.

Another result of the WCC survey is worth noting. When respondents were asked what more WCC could do to facilitate FDFs, the responses were incredibly varied with the only real grouping being those

who believed WCC is doing everything possible and the rest is "up to them." On one hand this information is encouraging because some see the need for personal responsibility and at least indicate some level of satisfaction with

WCC's current programming. On the other hand, the responses underscore the huge variety of adult needs, learning styles, and approaches and may also reflect the lack of definition for overall programming. Without clear goals, objectives, and a defined strategy and pathway, it's virtually impossible to identify met or unmet expectations. It's difficult to find specific dissatisfaction when much is offered and many positive opportunities are available without specific goals, destinations, priorities or objectives. These are all important, serious considerations for Westlink Christian Church to take into account in the future and have a significant impact on the results, reflections, and recommendations of this study as we move toward Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER FIVE Summary and

### Conclusions

Mega churches do many things well and provide valuable programming and ministries in their growing numbers. For Westlink Christian Church, however, and a number of other larger churches, excellent programming for encouraging and facilitating adult discipleship remains a significant growth area. Large churches possess certain unique challenges to adult Christian education. Greater numbers of people, the number of activities, the pace of the church culture, the ability and desire to retain anonymity, excellence, focusing on other church ministries and the busyness of the culture both inside and outside the

church legislate against effective ministries for becoming a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ.

This project has specifically sought to answer the question, *"How do we develop an adult education model and strategy that encourages a relatively new adult believer to grow in discipleship through a larger church setting?"* It is the conclusion and conviction of this author that we must do so by providing a clear view of an FDF that is anchored in a deeply grounded Christology. This view comes through an adult education strategy anchored in worship, vital community, learning and mission—all of which comes through a strong leadership and broader church culture dedicated to the same goal and practice.

Certainly WCC's history as a church, as is true in all churches, affects where she is today in developing FDFs. WCC retains past tendencies relating to Bible learning as head knowledge alone. Also WCC, along with every other large church surveyed,

presently struggles with clearly defining an FDF so that it is biblically based, specific and measurable while not being reduced to programmatic "rule following" but remaining natural and organic. A consistent theme was a healthy tension between Bible learning and Bible application as well as measurable goals and outcomes for fully devoted followers on one hand, and cultural organic growth and development of FDFs on the other hand.

### A Fully Devoted Follower

Many different words, perspectives, and descriptions of a fully devoted follower of Jesus accompany this study. A fully devoted follower of Jesus is a person whose life is becoming more like the

life of Jesus Christ—a Christ follower. God's Holy Spirit leads this person's life. This individual's conversion to Christianity and ongoing growth and maturity evidences itself through a deep, growing love for God, a consistent and selfless love for other people, fruit-bearing that continually grows personal faith evidenced in attitudes, actions, and behaviors, and impacts the world missionally through service and introducing others to Jesus. Individual fully devoted followers of Jesus do not all look the same and do not grow, learn, and mature at the same rate. Becoming a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ is a work of God to which we surrender our lives continuously—something not undertaken but someone overtaking us. The life of Jesus' fully devoted follower closely resembles the heart and life Jesus described in the Sermon on the Mount. If Westlink Christian Church successfully encourages Christians to follow Jesus and grow up in Him, then it must be this Jesus and this sort of follower.

#### View of God

Through an overall biblical foundation, the teaching and education Christology laid out by Pazmino, and the Pauline pattern depicted by Osmer a strong theological foundation has been established. The entire personhood, being, and mission of God remain the ultimate goal of an FDF. Jesus, God's Son, is the paramount embodiment of a mature God-follower and through Jesus the Apostle Paul lived as a dedicated follower and example of a fully devoted life. Becoming a fully devoted follower of Jesus is only an option because of God. This view of God must inform WCC's entire culture and ministry. Living as a fully devoted follower of Christ and participating in the life of the church body must not amount to attendance, activities, programs, and events, but must find meaning and sustenance in the living God. Regular time must be invested learning and better understanding what this means for Westlink Christian Church as a faith community. This view of God must become a consuming passion for the professional and

volunteer leaders, staff ministry teams, volunteers, and the church as a whole.

## Worship

Weekly worship gatherings constitute the closest time when "everyone is in the same room." Certainly the God of mystery and majesty is encountered in regular weekly worship for the fully devoted follower. Foster's beautiful picture of an FDF in the midst

of a Christian community at worship is a crucial one.<sup>56</sup> Christian worship must be about the past, present, and future; however, it is Foster's point that for humanity it is in God's saving past with the world that we find life and hope in the present and for the future. How often we actually hear the story of God's relationship with humanity, holiness, love, and grace when we attend church every week is a crucial question. Worship must be a unifying, celebrative weekly event centered on God and Jesus and their relationship with the world. It is critical for Westlink to spend time examining our corporate worship. What view or picture of God do we offer in weekly worship services? What do people experience about becoming Jesus' fully devoted follower? How do the weekend worship services lay and reinforce the irreplaceable foundation of becoming a Christian and continually growing in Christ? In a large church, with people, ministries, events and activities going 150 different directions constantly, the corporate worship experience is of paramount importance. Worship must be, become, and remain the essential, corporate, life-changing encounter with the living God.

## Community and Learning

Foster, *Educating Congregations*.



The subject of Christian community and relationships has also been a recurring theme in this study. Given WCC's history and present ministry within the culture she resides, it's expected. The literature review offered great insight to this end. The two—community and learning—are inseparable! Christian community is not intended to be an ignorance society, and serious Bible knowledge should never lead to isolation. It is true,

of course, that Bible learning appears an almost innate passion for some, while others seem easily to build, enjoy, and benefit from Christian community. Both are essential.

While the literature review made it crystal clear that community and learning must be joined in the church, the Home Team surveys and training also provided insight into WCC's small group culture. The Home Team survey data provided the first WCC information of its kind, at least in any significant measure, and gives solid leads about how group leaders view their groups and how the groups themselves utilize group time. The Home Team training provides the perspective that the leaders and groups are open to direction and the group time (Bible study, discussion, refreshments, prayer, service, etc.) can be influenced and tailored, through training and specific emphases, to accomplish specific goals and objectives. Church and adult ministry leaders will need to develop clearer and more specific goals for small groups and for small group leaders. The recent small group growth and the leaders' responsiveness are encouraging signs for continued growing, teaching, serving, and developing relationships through small groups. WCC's small groups offer the opportunity to educate, train, influence, lead, and utilize large numbers of adults while, at

the same time, connecting adults in community with other adults. More specific training and education for small group leaders as well as the development of clear learning goals for adults will greatly increase the ability to develop FDFs through WCC's small groups. Undoubtedly, small groups are, and will remain, a mainstay of WCC's adult ministry for years to come

In some manner it is important for Westlink to provide opportunities for people to learn about their own "faith stage" and "faith development" in order to learn more about

individuals and the congregation as a whole.<sup>57</sup> The leadership needs the information to be more intentionally effective in developing a culture for FDFs. The entire church culture needs to be viewed as a learning community—every meeting, group, program, event, relationship, and conversation. In all aspects of WCC community life establishing, facilitating, and encouraging *learning communities* is especially important. This, once again, is an ongoing discussion for the church leadership and the entire faith community.

#### Mission

The development of an online "faith" assessment inventory would be ideal.

Henderson and others were explicitly clear that learning, community, and mission must go hand in hand. To truly be in community breeds mission, care for the poor, service, and discipleship. The life of Jesus' fully devoted follower is not designed for ongoing solitude but outreach and community inclusion for those for whom God still seeks. The New Testament church was a living, life-giving, contagious fellowship of Jesus' fully devoted followers. The God depicted through the lives of Jesus' fully devoted followers is irresistible. Short-term mission trips and at-home mission and service projects should likewise be viewed as

learning opportunities and, rather than another task to do, a natural result of growth toward becoming an FDF of Jesus. Mission, service, and outreach events, programs, and ministries that maximize both community and learning should take priority. This is another foundation with which WCC must continually wrestle.

#### Church Leadership and Culture

The picture of a fully devoted follower along with the theological foundation, worship, community and learning, and missional service and outreach all function in the midst of Westlink's leadership and culture. The leadership, in a narrow and broad sense, must be on board with the basis, direction, and plan for developing FDFs if the PRP is to move forward to make a significant impact. While there is a significant level of health, trust, and unity amongst the leaders, several key points remain.

In a real sense the past, present, and future must come together for WCC—in relation to her past as a strong congregation "of the book" strongly emphasizing biblical authority, teaching, and learning; and her present culture with a focused emphasis on ministering to families in general and children and students in particular in a culturally-relevant and largely seeker-oriented fashion. The core church leadership must focus on and endorse an adult discipleship plan and ministry, charting a new course that brings these two important emphases together into a holistic desire for learning, growth, worship, community, and missional

outreach that looks like the life and ministry of Jesus.

The need for clarity, simplicity, and focus was abundantly clear through the literature review, church surveys, and the leadership interviews. Gradually numerical growth has been accompanied by programmatic expansion that is broad and inclusive. While beneficial in some respects, the culture has tended to lack clear focus in important areas such as adult discipleship and through the chaos and busyness of various ministry functions and events has consistently fallen short in the areas of self-study, evaluation, and continual improvement. Some recent steps toward a clearer overall vision and

leadership process are welcomed and beneficial. However, regarding the importance and priority of developing FDFs, WCC will need to make some challenging decisions in the months and years ahead regarding the specific focus and direction for her ministry if time and productive energy are to be given to developing FDFs. Gaining a clearer "faith picture" of WCC as a congregation, along with clear, concise goals for becoming fully devoted followers will help to navigate future steps and changes.

A stated focus for this PRP remains targeted ministry toward married couples with children.

Certainly the survey data revealed a significant number of 35-55 year-old

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married couples with children still living at home. Specific ministry and programming direction must be viewed, designed, and directed in light of this data. Providing excellent care, adult supervision, and programming for teens and children of all ages will remain a necessity if WCC is to have the opportunity to grow up adult FDFs. Offering meaningful education, community, worship, and service opportunities for 35-55 year-old adults in view of family schedules and specific marriage and family needs is essential. Without clarity and great intentionality the church's relevance becomes minimized amidst a cultural sea of activities and attractions. Developing a solid overall plan and ministry programming, as suggested by this

PRP, will help ensure that adults of all ages and life stages grow toward Christian maturity. This basic step is most essential in ministering to married couples with children. Additionally, the church must do her best to encourage parents and grandparents to view their family roles as part of *being* a fully devoted follower and necessary in order for their children and grandchildren to grow up to become FDFs as well.

<sup>58</sup> This demographic information, of course, is subject to change in the future as the church's current population ages and the church continues to grow numerically. This group is significant now but may or may not be in the future.

Along the same lines, the church must continue to emphasize and build learning leaders amidst this busy church culture. Self health and the importance of continually growing in maturity must be a trait of the entire leadership if the church body is to grow and follow the lead of the leaders. Likewise, developing devoted, growing leaders requires time, planning, clear goals, and focused energy, which will also necessitate deemphasizing other aspects of ministry and leadership life.

### Three-Year Plan

*Year one: preparation and learning.* This process of praying as a leadership and as a congregation and fervently looking to God for direction for one year is critical. The leadership needs to pray for understanding of God, ourselves, and the congregation. Church leaders must also pray for direction and wait on the Holy Spirit for guidance in our view of God, worship, learning, and community. The year should be spent learning from the congregation about the faith of the people in the congregation. Where are we as a church in terms of Fowler's "stages of faith," and what are the greatest needs and obstacles individuals experience? What are their greatest frustrations, needs, and challenges? How do they view the church? The information will need to be gained through a variety of means and opportunities (online, town

hall, focus groups, surveys, etc.), prayer services, groups, and vigils. The WCC congregational survey provided some initial general information, but more specific data is needed. Significant time must be spent learning about Jesus and what it means and looks like to live as His fully devoted followers. Again, this should come through small groups, intentional fellowship,

preaching and teaching, and worship—the entire community life. The time spent learning and listening will replace some current events and plans. Covering this first step well likely requires more than twelve months, but is the best way to begin the three-year plan.

***Year two: setting goals and planning.*** With significant involvement and leadership from the church as a whole, the second year serves as the year to consider what was learned from year one and begin to dream and clarify what future goals and objectives arise out of year one. For adults in particular, year two becomes the opportunity to consider the meaning of being a fully devoted follower and the faith, needs, and stage of the congregation and begin making plans to move forward with changes that will begin creating a church culture more ready to develop fully devoted followers of Jesus. Some specific goals describing the life of a fully devoted follower, combining the developed traits of Jesus' life with the core church elements (worship, community, learning, mission, culture) will be essential to understanding the status quo adequately and envisioning and planning for future direction, plans, and programming. Undoubtedly, additional staff, leadership, and congregational time will need to be devoted to these efforts.

***Year three: initial implementation and evaluation.*** Not all the changes or additions from year two should be implemented at once. A leadership team composed of professional staff and volunteer leaders will need to be recruited and developed. This team, working under the direction of the church leadership, will need to take the initial self-study, goal setting, and planning information and strategies and begin to make

initial trial implementations accompanied by evaluation and further implementation. This, of course, will be an ongoing process. For example, can better alignment with the purposes and direction for the worship and arts ministry develop worship services and experiences becoming foundational to growing into FDFs? Can Home Teams be utilized congregation-wide to meld learning, relationship building, outreach, service, and mission together into maturing communities? Can current adult classes be realigned toward greater impact? Can specific adult classes be added to address particular areas of need and concern? Will these classes be successful in making an impact? Is the new involvement process improved and making a difference? Can other small groups, communities, and ministries within the church move toward maturing communities where learning, service, mission, and relationship take place? Does the congregation overall display growth and understanding of Jesus as the source and model for becoming His fully devoted followers? Observing and measuring progress, evaluating, persevering, and adapting are essential for Westlink to see maturing adults continue to follow Jesus.

A strong word of caution is warranted at this point. Even before the completion of the final copy of this project, I have been asked more than once, "Doesn't your PRP actually cover the first year of the three year plan?" In other words, "Can't we just skip the first year of the plan?" The answer is a strong and resounding "no" for several reasons. This project does not provide learning and prayer for other faith communities other than WCC. In fact, this project does not provide learning and prayer for WCC as a faith community. The research provides the rationale and the described need to begin the first year of the three-year plan for WCC and possibly for other churches. The second and third years of the three-year plan are dependent on the first year being conducted well and within each individual faith community seeking to develop FDFs. The prayer and

learning processes for the leadership and the community as a whole are absolutely crucial for ownership of the plan and process and for the eventual success and effectiveness of the developed strategy. Year one establishes the need and specific content and direction for years two and three. By definition, one faith community cannot accomplish the first year of the three-year plan, or any part of the plan, for another faith community. Frankly, "Can't we just skip the first year of the three-year plan?" underscores a greater weakness and danger. There's a persistent sense, frequently, that one "magic tree," if discovered and planted, will transform the entire forest. Searching for just the right program and implementing the latest strategy is part of the reason the forest has become busy, chaotic, and overcrowded in the first place. There is no "magic tree." That's why the three-year plan, beginning with year one, is essential.

This PRP has been specifically designed to address the needs of WCC and other larger churches, in fact, mostly larger churches that look quite a bit like WCC. This study seeks to impact relatively new believers, most of whom are made up of married couples with children. If this study were to be duplicated in another setting, the demographic of that setting would have to be taken into consideration and examined. Some of the questions asked in another setting would undoubtedly be different from the ones asked in this study based on the stated mission of WCC and the simple, evolving definition of an FDF.

The number of WCC people in the survey who understood an FDF as simply living out the life Jesus lived, and who expressed a desire for that life was a pleasant surprise. That is a very encouraging start!

In the larger church surveys I was not surprised overall by the similarities of the churches and the issues being wrestled with and the remaining questions. However, I was surprised by the degree and extent



that nearly every church wrestled with some of the same basic issues relating to maturity and discipleship, and nearly every church expressed some frustration or bewilderment in knowing whether or not their direction or efforts were, in fact, bearing fruit in the long run.

The leadership interviews with WCC's staff management team (NAV Team) remain intriguing to me. In some areas I was surprised at how many similarities there were in the responses, and in other areas I was struck by the differences. There seems to be a consistent desire among the leadership to improve in the area of developing FDFs, but there are certain and distinct differences as to how that should be accomplished. Moving toward agreement on some of the fundamental items mentioned will be crucial.

Clearly this PRP is going to provide a foundation and plan for moving forward at WCC and developing FDFs of Jesus Christ. This was a broad and comprehensive topic. At this point, if I were to start over again, I would probably attempt to narrow the topic somewhat to one aspect of this PRP or one vital area of programming. At the same time, this PRP is designed to help determine what the forest looks like and exactly where to begin, and that is a clear need.

If others want to begin at this point, there are some clear directions. The church's mission statement must be clear and clearly owned by the leadership. The overall pace and complexity of life, church life, and programming has to be taken into consideration. Clarity, simplicity, and an obvious, consistent goal will be critical to any project of this nature and magnitude. In a large church setting, big change will not happen quickly or

easily if it is to be well-accomplished and long lasting. It would be of benefit to take the information, data, and recommendations from this PRP as a starting point and apply them directly to the most strategic starting point in another setting.

Large churches have a huge responsibility in the world's landscape. They have been blessed in tremendous ways with resources, and great things should be expected. Over the long haul, the Church in America and around the world belonging to Jesus Christ will only be effective to the degree that the life of Jesus Christ is seen in and through the lives of His followers. The Church, and larger churches in particular, has a significant burden, opportunity, and responsibility to impact lives around the world for the cause of Christ. No local church will be able to do that without placing a priority on developing fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ and encouraging them to live for Him through the church and in the world. The Church, headed by Jesus Christ, remains the hope of the world.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF AN FDF FROM MARK'S GOSPEL**

### **Positive Characteristics:**

- Confesses sin; repents (Mark 1:5; 1:15)
- Shows humility (Mark 1:7)
- Obeys God (Mark 1:12)
- Is a "Fisher of Men" (evangelism; concern for the lost - Mark 1:17)
- Is victorious over evil/sin (Mark 1:25)
- Prays (various passages)
- Has compassion (Mark 1:41)
- Heals (various passages)
- Hangs out with "sinners" (Mark 2:16)
- Experiences newness and openness to God (Mark 2:22)
- Uses intent of God's law profitably (Mark 2:27-28)
- Resists evil and sin (various passages)
- Hears God's Word, accepts/receives it, and is fruitful/reproduces (Mark 4:20)
- Is light to the world (Mark 4:21)
- Consistently grows and produces a harvest (Mark 4:26)
- Speaks of what God has done (Mark 5:19)
- Has faith/trust in God/Jesus (Mark 5:34)
- Goes where Jesus is welcome; does not go where He's not (Mark 6:11)
- Takes time for solitude, quiet, and rest (Mark 6:31)
- Feeds the hungry (6:37)

- Trusts God to do the impossible (6:30ff; 8:1; 9:23; 10:27)
- Recognizes the priority of internal over external (7:14)
- Avoids sin and its consequences (7:20 ff.)
- Denies self (8:34)
- Takes up cross (8:34)
- Follows Jesus (8:34)
- Gives/loses life to Jesus (8:35)
- Is a servant (9:35)
- Cares for children/the innocent/the helpless (9:37)
- Possesses a childlike faith (9:37; 10:15)
- Embraces/encourages others who follow Jesus (9:38 ff.)
- Lives as salt and light (9:50)
- Upholds marriage (10:1 ff.)
- 
- Gives up material possessions (10:21)
- Sacrifices (10:29 ff.)
- Loves Jesus (10:29 ff.)
- Serves and gives life to others (10:35 ff.)
- Bears fruit (11:12 ff.)
- Focuses on holiness, worship, purity (11:12 ff.)
- Forgives and receives forgiveness.
- Prefers God over man (12)
- Loves God and neighbor (12:29-31)
- Gives all—trusts (12:44)
- Remains faithful/endures persecution (13:1 ff.)
- Guards against false teachers (13:14 ff.)
- Is ready and watching for Jesus' return (13:32 ff.)
- Loves and worships Jesus (14:1 ff.)
- Remembers the Lord's Supper (14:13 ff.)
- Carries out "Great Commission" (16:15 ff.)

### Negative Characteristics

- Does not impede God's work (Mark 2:11)
- Does not fear (4:40; 5:37; 6:50)
- Does not replace God's commands with human traditions (7:8)
- Does not cause someone else to sin (9:42 ff.)
- Does not divorce/cause to commit adultery (10:1 ff.)
- Does not have a hard heart (10:1 ff.)

- Does not strive to gain earthly wealth (10:23 ff.)
- Does not seek the world's status (10:35 ff.)
- Does not take advantage of others, put on a human show, have long prayers, seek worldly status (12:38 ff.)
- 

## Appendix 2 WCC CONGREGATIONAL

### SURVEY

I. Please provide the following information:

Age: 18-25 \_\_\_\_\_ 26-35 \_\_\_\_\_ 36-45 \_\_\_\_\_ 46-55 \_\_\_\_\_ 56-65 \_\_\_\_\_ 66-75 \_\_\_\_\_

76+ \_\_\_\_\_ .

Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: Not married \_\_\_\_\_ Married \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children under age 18 living at home: 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
6 \_\_\_\_\_ 7+ \_\_\_\_\_

Years you've been a Christian: 0-5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 \_\_\_\_\_ 11-20 \_\_\_\_\_ 21-30 \_\_\_\_\_  
31-40 \_\_\_\_\_ 41+ \_\_\_\_\_

Years you've been a member of WCC: 0-5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 \_\_\_\_\_ 11-20 \_\_\_\_\_ 21-30 \_\_\_\_\_  
31-40 \_\_\_\_\_ 41+ \_\_\_\_\_

II. Westlink Christian Church's mission statement is, "Connecting people to Jesus Christ and helping them become His fully devoted followers." Please answer the following questions as WCC seeks to do a better job of developing "fully devoted followers."

1. How would you describe a "fully devoted follower" in a few words?

2. Circle 1-2 traits of a "fully devoted follower" that you consider most important.

- |              |           |           |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| Humility     | Obedience | Prayer    |
| Compassion   | Serving   | Kindness  |
| Purity       | Giving    | Love      |
| Reaching Out | Trust     | Sacrifice |
| Faith        | Other     |           |

3. Circle 1 -2 items below that you consider your greatest area of personal need/growth that would help you become a more "fully devoted follower."

- |                  |                     |            |
|------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Prayer           | Bible Reading/Study | Rest       |
| Giving           | Serving             | Solitude   |
| Worship          | Confession          | Fellowship |
| Sharing my faith | Other _____         |            |

4. Circle 1-2 items below that describe your greatest obstacle in becoming a "fully devoted follower."

- |               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| Not sure how  | Struggling with sin Time |
| Past failures | Loneliness/Fear Family   |
| Relationships |                          |
| Commitment    | Other                    |

5. Circle 1-2 items below that WCC does/provides that most help you become a more "fully devoted follower."

- |            |                |              |
|------------|----------------|--------------|
| Missions   | Giving Serving |              |
| Counseling | Worship        | Small Groups |
| Classes    | Seminars Other |              |

6. What's one thing WCC needs to do/provide, that we're not currently, to help you become a more "fully devoted follower"?

7. As you become a more "fully devoted follower," how do you see your life changing?

Additional Comments

## LARGER CHURCH SURVEY

I. To the best of your ability, please provide the following information regarding the congregation where you serve:

- Average weekend worship attendance: 1500-2000 \_\_\_\_\_ 2001-2500 \_\_\_\_\_ 2501 -

3000    3001-3500 \*    3501-4000    4001 +

- Which age-group of adults represents the largest group of adults in the congregation? (select one)  
18-25 \_\_\_\_\_ 26-35 \_\_\_\_\_ 36-45 \_\_\_\_\_ 46-55 \_\_\_\_\_ 56-65 \_\_\_\_\_ 66-75 \_\_\_\_\_  
76+
  
- Which category best represents the formal educational level of most adults in the congregation? (select one)  
Did not complete high school \_\_\_\_\_ High school/GED \_\_\_\_\_  
Attended college \_\_\_\_\_ College degree \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate degree \_\_\_\_\_.
  
- Which category best describes the congregation socially (choose 1)?  
Non-professional—"blue collar" \_\_\_\_\_ Professional—"white collar" \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Which category best describes the congregation economically (choose 1)?  
Lower class \_\_\_\_\_ Middle class \_\_\_\_\_ Upper class \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Which category best describes the racial composition of the congregation?  
Racially diverse \_\_\_\_\_ Not racially diverse \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - o If not racially diverse, which race dominates \_\_\_\_\_ (Caucasian, African-American, Asian, Hispanic, etc.)?

II. Westlink Christian Church's mission statement is, "Connecting people to Jesus Christ and helping them become His fully devoted followers." Your answers to the following will help us as we strive to do a better job developing "fully devoted followers."

1. Have you stated or defined a "fully devoted follower" in different or more specific language in your setting? If yes, how? Has this description proven sound and useful? Why or why not?
2. In your opinion, what unique challenges (specific obstacles) face larger churches in developing "fully devoted followers"?
3. What advantages does a larger church have in developing "fully devoted followers"?
4. In your opinion, what single trait of a "fully devoted follower" is most lacking in the congregation where you serve?
- 5.
5. What program, initiative, or emphasis have you attempted that has worked well in developing/encouraging "fully devoted followers"?
6. What program, initiative, or emphasis have you attempted that has NOT worked well in developing/encouraging "fully devoted followers"?
7. If you were undertaking a project to develop a plan for improved discipleship of adults in the congregation you serve, what is one critical question you would seek to answer?

Additional Comments:

## NAV TEAM INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Westlink Christian Church mission statement: "Connecting people to Jesus Christ and helping them become His fully devoted followers."

1. How would you describe a "fully devoted follower" in your own words?
2. If you could choose ONE needed quality of a "fully devoted follower" at WCC, which one would it be? Why?
3. What are WCC's strengths in developing "fully devoted followers"?
4. What are WCC's weaknesses in developing "fully devoted followers"?
5. What are obstacles for WCC in developing "fully devoted followers"?
6. What is one important change that needs to be made to address these obstacles and/or weaknesses?
7. What major factors, developments, and decisions in WCC's history have led to this point in developing "fully devoted followers" and the need to develop "fully devoted followers"?
8. What other aspects of WCC's church culture are important in developing "fully devoted followers"?
9. How do you see your specific leadership role relating to the development of "fully devoted followers"?
10. What would you like to see accomplished in the next five years through WCC in the development of "fully devoted followers"? The next ten years?
11. What will be the most significant/important impact as WCC does a better job of creating "fully devoted followers"?
12. What is one question you would like to ask on a WCC congregational survey for this research project?
13. What is one question you would like to ask other large churches on a survey as a part of this research project?
- 14.

## **Appendix 5 HOME TEAM**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

Provide a percentage next to each element below for your group/class/study representing how much time you give to each item during a typical meeting. Total should equal 100%

Prayer request/prayer time = \_\_\_\_\_ %

Refreshments/fellowship = \_\_\_\_\_ %

Bible Study (teaching/content) = \_\_\_\_\_ %

Discussion/life-sharing = \_\_\_\_\_ %

Announcements/"group business" = \_\_\_\_\_ %

Worship = \_\_\_\_\_ %

Other = \_\_\_\_\_ % specify \_\_\_\_\_

\* Service/outreach = \_\_\_\_\_ %

\*If service/outreach does not occur weekly,  
list number of times yearly \_\_\_\_\_.

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Rate the elements below on a scale of 1-10 based on the effectiveness of helping people become more like Jesus Christ.

1 =not effective, 5=somewhat effective, and 10=very effective. Circle one

Prayer request/prayer time

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Refreshments/fellowship \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Bible Study (teaching/content) \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Discussion/life-sharing \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Announcements/group "business" \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Worship \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Other \_\_\_\_\_ (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Service/outreach \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

## HOME TEAM TEACHING & TRAINING

WCC Survey Data: (800+ surveys returned)

What is an FDF to you?

- Living for Jesus daily
- Showing Jesus in and through my life
- Living in obedience to Jesus/God's word
- Knowing and reading God's word

What can WCC do to help you become a more FDF?

- WCC is doing everything necessary. It is up to me (#1)
- More Bible teaching
- Offering specific classes

What difference will it make in your life to become a more FDF?

- Stronger commitment to Christ and His word
- Reaching out to others with Christ
- Peace
- Happiness
- Love for others
- Less selfish

Other Larger Churches Survey Data: (26 other churches)

What are obstacles faced by large churches?

- Large numbers/anonymity
- Busyness/schedules
- Lack of accountability
- A blurry process
- Church bureaucracy
- Appearance of "success"
- Too many different activities and opportunities

What advantages do large churches enjoy?

- Quality of staff
- Resources—facilities, budget, tools
- Church possesses attractiveness of its own
- 

What single trait of an FDF is most lacking in your opinion?

- Serving in a ministry
- Financial stewardship
- Commitment
- Accountability
- Emotional health
- Spiritual disciplines
- Self-feeding
- Living out the life of an FDF

What has worked well in developing FDF's in your setting?

- Basic involvement classes (belonging, growing, serving, sharing)
- Small groups
- Short-term missions
- Simplifying the process and goals - not too many different things or directions
- Establishing relationships through groups

What has not worked well in developing FDF's in your setting?

- Any program that is only staff driven
- Programs of classes offered
- Too much emphasis on knowledge only
- Weekday night and weekend classes
- Classic adult education models
- Taking small groups to the next level

What is one question you would like to be able to ask/answer?

- Are people getting it?

- How can we better involve and connect more people?
- Where are you in your FDF growth and development?
- What is the best way to develop FDFs?
- Are people actually living it?

#### Definition of a Fully Devoted Follower

An FDF: (based on the gospel of Mark)

- Loves God.
- Loves others.
- Grows continually.
- Produces fruit.
- 

WCC Plan for developing FDFs: Focus:

- Understanding Jesus, who He is, how He lived, what He did, etc.
- Bible learning
- Transformed living
- Broader content: marriage/family, stewardship, spiritual gifts, evangelism, theology/doctrine, church history, apologetics, support/recovery, etc.

Essential Components:

- Simple and clear process
- Programmed but containing options
- Educational and experiential
- Regularly evaluated and ongoing
- Multi-faceted and integrated

Goal: To facilitate measurable growth in living life like and for Jesus Christ through integrated life-changing experiences and education. Bible passage questions

- What is Jesus doing?
- What is Jesus saying?
- What do these verses tell us about who Jesus is and what is important to Him?
- What life principle can we apply from these verses?
- How would you apply this life principle to one area or element of your group/class/study?
- Closing prayer time
- 

## **Appendix 7 CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY**

### **RESULTS**

## Westlink Christian Church

The following is an analysis of the survey submitted by Westlink Christian Church. This survey was not submitted with any other data to use as a base line for analysis. The data does not reflect the composition of members. It is only a subjective response of attendees at the time the survey was given.

### Part I—Basic Demographics of Population

Part I of the survey allows for only one answer per respondent, and it contains general demographic data. This analysis reflects the percentage of the total based on 805 surveys returned.

#### Single Question Analysis AGE

##### RANGE

The largest age range is the 36-45 (27%) group with 46-55 following close behind (25%). GENDER

The larger gender group is females at 59% versus males at 41%. MARITAL

##### STATUS

Married couples (80%) are a significantly larger group than singles (20%). CHILDREN

##### <18 YEARS OF AGE LIVING AT HOME

There is a significantly larger group with no children under the age of 18 living at home (47%). Because this can mean there are no children at all or that the children are living outside the home, this really is not of any significance without comparing it with other questions. See the next section for more details.

Two children living at home ranks second with 21%; and one child living at home ranks third with 14%.

##### YEARS AS A CHRISTIAN

The group who has been a Christian the longest is the 31-40 age group (26%) followed closely by the 41+ age group (25%) and 21-30 (22%).

If you assume that most people become Christians at a younger age then this follows that assumption, but this in no way makes that statistic a reality, because there is no baseline group to follow.

##### YEARS A MEMBER OF WCC

57% of the people surveyed have been members for 0-5 years. 11-20 years ranks second with 16% and then 6-10 years with 14%.

#### Multiple Question Analysis

##### GENDER COMPARED TO AGE RANGE

Most of the female population is in the 36-45 year range (16%) followed closely by the 46-55 year range (14%).

The male population ties at 11% for both 36-45 and the 46-55 year ranges followed closely by another tie at 6% for the 26-35 and 56-65 year ranges.

Male Female

#### GENDER COMPARED TO YEARS A CHRISTIAN

When comparing gender and years a Christian, an interesting trend occurs at the 31 -40 years mark. The female population starts to decline while the male population continues a gradual increase. At this mark, the female population peaks with 17% (males 9%). The male population peaks at 41+ years with 11% (females 15%).

#### AGE RANGE COMPARED TO NUMBER OF CHILDREN AT HOME

As stated previously, 0 children at home is the largest group, with 2 children at home the second largest group. When compared to age range, we find that the 0 children families are highest with the 46-55 age range (15%), and the 2 children families spike at the 36-45 age range (10%). See Figure 8.

In the 18-25 age range 3% have been Christians 11 -22 years, 26-35 age range 7% have been Christians 21-30 years, 36-45 age range 10% have been Christians 31-40 years and 8% 21-30 years. In the 46-55 age range 8% have been Christians 31-41+ years (this spans two categories), 56-65 age range 8% have been Christians 31-40 years, 66-75 age range 5% have been Christians 41+ years, and 76+ age range 3% have been Christians for more than 41+ years.

#### AGE RANGE COMPARED TO YEARS A MEMBER

Of the 57% who have been members for fewer than 5 years (figure 5, page 3), 18% are 36-45 years of age, and the age ranges of 26-35 and 46-55 are tied at 13%. Of the 16% who have been members 11-20 years, the 46-55 age range is at 6%, the 36-45 age range is at 4% and the 56-65 age range is at 2%. Of the 14% who have been members 6-10 years, the 36-45 and the 46-55 age ranges tied at 4%, and the 26-35 age range is at 3%.

Part II Aggregate Data for Multiple Answer Questions and Comments Part II of the survey allows for comments and more than one answer per respondent. Therefore, it contains only aggregate data showing the percentage of the total based on the total number of answers. This means that the total per question could exceed the total number of surveys.

Free Form Answers and Comments

**How would you describe a "fully devoted follower" in a few words?**

1. Attending church—being involved in church activities, leading others to Christ
2. One who believes in Jesus as the Son of God and puts Him first in his/her life— worships Him each day!
3. Show in their everyday life WWJD
4. One who reads God's word actively lives the Christian life
5. A person who believes in absolute truth, and shows it in their words, actions, and involvement
6. Someone who walks the talk
7. Obedient in faith, giving and worship
8. Not only in words but in actions as well
9. A fully devoted follower is one who tries to live his life with Jesus as the center of his life
10. In the word, serving in church body and at secular world. The hands and feet of Christ
11. Belief, faith
12. One who puts time, effort and service into their relationship with God
13. In love with Christ. A person who spends time with Christ and his word. A person who obeys Christ
14. Living life with Christ every minute. Offering life as a living sacrifice
15. Love God, Love people
16. One who participates regularly in worship—both personally & corporately, as well as regular prayer & Bible study with 24/7 application!
17. Living, loving, doing the work of Jesus Christ, regular giving and attending Westlink Christian Church
18. To obey the word, worship, support the word by action & giving
19. Living a Christ centered life
20. Living daily life as a Christian reading Bible attending church—small groups
- 21.
21. Follow all of God's commandments and what God requires of his followers— service, giving of money, study of his word, fellowship, helping others learn what God's word says
22. One who is involved in the church, its activities; & in the community is recognizable as a Christian
23. Someone who lives what they believe about Jesus Christ every day
24. In all I do-say-act-strive to be like Jesus loving all.
25. Believes in Jesus and sets an example in everyday life.
26. Someone who tries to live life as Christ would desire them to
27. Someone who places their growing relationships with Christ above all else! They are actively practicing disciplines to deepen that relationship
28. One who follows God's/Jesus' laws and examples to the best of their ability.
29. Someone who understands the mission statement and can live by that statement
30. Someone who devotes their life to Christ
31. Committed
32. Someone who puts Christ first in everything they do
33. One who daily seeks God's will & endeavors to live in it
34. Someone who loves Christ & wants to lead a life pleasing to Him
35. Loves Jesus—Talks with people concerning Jesus
36. Listening to God speak to us he teaches me
37. Sensitive to God's voice & obedient
38. Not living for self, letting the light of Jesus show through my actions.
39. One who lives to model the behavior of Christ. One who seeks to serve family & friends and all. Work

- in a way that is pleasing to Christ. One who serves in & out of the church—even when no one is watching
40. Still growing & learning & helping others
  41. Someone who has a relationship with Jesus. Someone who is studying the Bible & involved with other Christian people fellowshiping.
  42. Proper heart attitude & love of Jesus, tithes—shows change in life and growth, loves others but is not judgmental of others. Bible is word of God—all the Bible is for us.
  43. Someone who obediently serves the Lord through everything they do
  44. A fully devoted follower tries to be a light for others.
  45. Helping others! Being sincere!
  46. Making God first in everything you do and being a good person and teacher.
  47. Someone who is best friends with Christ. Someone who is always seeking him, someone who walks daily with our maker, someone who turns to God in everything.
  48. One who lives a life that is Christ-centered.
  49. Knowing God's word & Being obedient; striving to accept God's decisions
  50. Living each day in such a way it honors God.
  51. Christ is paramount at any moment. His presence & direction are constantly sought or present day by day.
  52. Someone living a life that is an example to others of Jesus
  53. Love of God & Sharing Concern (love) to people around them
  54. Being in step with God and has the courage to faithfully follow
  55. Living & breathing God's word obeying His commandments, reading & studying the Bible
  - 56.
  56. One who puts Christ first in their life; active quiet time; active in work of the church; always seeking to grow as a Christian
  57. Actively worshipping & growing Christian who seeks his will
  58. A person who commits their entire life to the Lord and forsakes worldly things
  59. Living as a devoted Christian at all times in your life, easy & hard times
  60. A person who has a relationship with Jesus and lives their lives as the Bible commands
  61. Someone who worship the Lord with their whole heart, mind & soul and demonstrates their devotion to others
  62. Believing in God Churchgoer
  63. One that has the call of God on their life
  64. Doing God's will
  65. Committed to God and His mission
  66. A fully devoted follower knows and believes faith. This person shares their faith to all.
  67. One who loves the Lord
  68. Devoted to the Bible complete faith in God and obeying the commandments the Bible and Jesus outline.
  69. One who mirrors Jesus in their thoughts and actions
  70. One who loves the Lord heart and soul
  71. Christ before self
  72. A person who is involved in small group and ministry
  73. One who is devoted & committed to Christ
  74. Someone who tries to follow Jesus' teachings, faithful to the word through daily life
  75. One who lives out her faith in every aspect of her life, who engages in regular prayer, Bible study

- & fellowship with fellow believers
76. Like Christ in our thought, word & deed
  77. Not just a weekend pew warmer—involved in other ministries
  78. Willingness to be more like Christ no matter what. Take to word of God completely.
  79. Someone who seeks to put their lives in line with God's will
  80. Complete faith & love, accepting
  81. One who is willing to reach out to others to bring them to Christ.
  82. Following God where He leads, doing his will
  83. Sold out
  84. Following, obeying & praising Jesus Christ in every aspect of my life.
  85. A person being transformed into the image/likeness of Christ who also wants others to know the richness of knowing Jesus
  86. An obedient, giving, compassionate, biblical studying, believer of Jesus Christ. Believers that share your faith & watch for others in our life to witness & fellowship with.
  87. Someone whose life reflects Christ—24 hrs a day, 7 days a week no matter what you're doing—someone who pursues God—who serves in ministry, who is actively sharing Christ with others as they go about their daily business
  88. Someone living the principle of Jesus and, when sin occurs, correcting and getting back on track.
  89. Jesus is the focus of all actions, thoughts and desires
  - 90.
  90. Someone who allows every thought, decision and action to be directed by God
  91. One who eats, sleeps and breathes the word of God. Hungry to learn more, and bring others closer to God.
  92. Someone who is there for you always
  93. Giving of one's self to Christ in every way
  94. One who follows the Bible as God has written for us. And one who goes to church all the time.
  95. Live for Christ
  96. A follower of Christ is willing to lay down their life for him. Just like those in Africa right now.
  97. God in every part of your life
  98. Trusting & obedient
  99. A follower of Jesus Christ—sanctified & living as Christ is in me
  100. One who seeks to know God intimately and follows Him in Christian service to others
  101. Letting God become the center of all aspects of life.
  102. Reads word daily—Prays daily—applies word to life to conform to the image of Christ
  103. Opening your heart and mind to the Lord and his word and by living it and sharing it with others
  104. Living the way Christ tells us to putting God first in our lives
  105. WWJD
  106. Dedicated Christians who devote themselves to the study & obedience of God's work & find their ministry with the church
  107. Believing in God and letting him guide you
  108. Change in life and wanting to be fully devoted
  109. A person who has fully & wholeheartedly given their heart to Christ Jesus to love and serve him!
  110. One who lives and passes on the word of Jesus
  111. Someone sold out who serves in a mission field for the supreme cause of saving souls



112. Someone who believes in Jesus and what he has done for them. Someone who lets Jesus work through them.
113. Doing God's will and anything that glorifies Him!
114. Someone who tries to live the life Jesus wants us to live. Not judging but helping others
115. Someone who devotes every aspect of their life to God and knowing Him better.
116. One who believes Christ died for us
117. Someone who lives obedient to Christ & does God's will
118. Your everyday life is striving to mirror the teachings of Christ
119. Christian with the dust of his teacher upon him.
120. A fully devoted follower has Christ as the center of his/her life & obeys & follows Him.
121. Worship & love Jesus and accept Him as your savior
122. One who lives like Jesus knows the word & lives likewise & goes out to bring others to Christ
- 123.
123. Someone who follows Christ in their everyday life and someone who speaks God's words to others
124. A believer who uses his/her whole heart and soul to answer the calling when Jesus speaks
125. To singularly focus on Christ and do his works here on earth with spreading his word in the mission field.
126. One who has made Jesus Christ his Lord and Savior
127. Someone who has their priorities right—God, family and others
128. Someone who is in constant thought and action of what God would want them to do.
129. One who brings others to Christ and follows in Jesus' teachings
130. One who shares Christ's message of salvation & seeks to build His kingdom.
131. Daily Bible reading, constant prayer, sharing Jesus with others often.
132. Someone who has trusted Jesus as their Lord and Savior and is now committed to pursuing a life of holiness and becoming like Jesus.
133. Someone who lives their life in a way that the Gospel of Christ is shown through their actions.
134. Doing the very best you can following the word of God
135. Daily walking & talking with the Lord
136. One seeking to follow & obey in all aspects of his/her life at all times.
137. Wanting & doing what Christ would have me do.
138. Obedient continually growing in the Holy Spirit, prayerful
139. A close walk with the Lord & desire to know Him.
140. Someone who has a relationship with Jesus.
141. Love Jesus
142. Doing God's work in every part of my life.
143. One who knows Jesus as Lord of their life as well as Savior
144. Staying in the word, reading the word, praying, trusting & faithful & obedient
145. To know Christ and to make disciples & laborers at all times
146. One who walks with the Lord and looks for His guidance in everyday living and devotes their life to Him.
147. Surrender to God's perfect purpose
148. One who truly lets Christ lead your life.
149. Spiritually connected through the Holy Spirit to my Lord that I may be used as He leads me.
150. Fully devoted to being Jesus' eyes, ears and loving compassionate example to all we meet. Treating others as Christ would and sharing our testimony of His great gift of salvation.

151. Disciple of Christ practicing the spiritual disciplines necessary for a deeper relationship with Christ. A life that is supernatural not superficial.
152. A person who believes, seeks God each day, in every way.
153. One who reads and needs God's word on everything
154. A person "sold out" to Jesus. Willing to step out in faith.
155. To understanding God & Jesus and follow them too.
156. Someone who sacrifices his own life including fleshy desires to live a life directed by the Holy-Spirit. Someone who seeks to please God. Someone who wants to bring people to Christ. Someone who spends time with God.
- 157.
157. Following Jesus in every area of life including introducing unbelievers to Him
158. A person who truly puts God through Jesus Christ above ALL things, fellowships with others of same devotion, and shares the Message (the Gospel) to ALL
159. Fully aware of what this phrase means according to Christ
160. Working/connected in the church/regular attender
161. Pray daily and do God's will
162. One who every waking moment is dedicated to serving God in Christ's name wherever God may have put us at that moment.
163. One who seeks Jesus first and foremost
164. Willing to do God's will no matter what the cost
165. God like
166. Someone who thinks about God in all they do.
167. Having accepted Jesus, The Christ, not only as Savior, but as Lord, committed to following His teachings, and looking to Him to enable in everything
168. Someone who strives to be more Christ-like
169. One who uses the Bible as a guideline for life, who prays and has an active relationship with Christ, who shares their faith
170. A person who knows Christ as savior and walks with Christ as Lord surrendering his/her life
171. One who follows Christ with all they have
172. Someone who looks to Christ for everything they do
173. One who looks to Christ, not the world, in all that we do.
174. A person who is gentle and compassionate not overpowering or judgmental.
175. One who speaks freely of God & Jesus
176. Devoted
177. Puts Christ first in everything
178. Seeking to live out Jesus' character
179. One who gives their full life, work & gifts/abilities to the Lord
180. Someone who strives to be like & follow the teachings of Jesus everyday & maintains an attitude of worship in daily doings
181. Living daily for Christ and helping where talents allow.
182. 100% committed
183. Someone who daily seeks the will of God and acts upon that in word, thought & behavior.
184. Obedient person willing to make God our first priority each moment of every day.
185. Constant
186. Not only talks the talk, they walk the walk!

187. She places God first and goes to Him first. She trusts & relies on Him and confesses her sins to Him and rest assured that He hears her every need & prayer. There is no other god in her life.
188. A Christian who has fully accepted his/her faith & destiny
189. Follow Christ's teachings and help serve others
190. Worshiping Jesus every day, love for all
191. Someone whose lifestyle reflects Jesus as their #1 priority
192. One who knows Christ and is serving Him at home, work & church
- 193.
193. Someone who puts Christ first in every aspect of his life including marriage, family, workplace, finances, etc. Worships regularly, tithes, is in a small group, and spends time in prayer & in God's word daily.
194. One who is a student of God's word so that he/she can know who to follow, how to live, how to be a living sacrifice daily. One who is fully submitted to the Lord, truly allowing Jesus Lordship over life. One who loves others with God's love because of knowing how precious lives are to the Shepherd.
195. One who has accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord & Savior—always seeking to know God
196. Live the word
197. One who is passionately in love with Christ
198. Fully motivated by God
199. To include God in every decision of life.
200. Church attender/In the word regularly and living according to the word
201. Living your life differently than the world views right & wrong
202. Someone who wants to be like Jesus, and his/her time and priorities reflect that.
203. Seek Lord's guidance & following his will
204. Someone who has committed to living a life for Christ. Those who have humbled themselves for him.
205. Caring for local community and supporting missionary activities
206. One who has not only accepted Jesus as their savior, but who has also chosen him to be their Lord. One who seeks to obey God, and who considers him in everything that they say and do.
207. Someone who seeks God's will and tries to devote their life to him in every aspect.
208. Involved more than once a week
209. Helping people in need
210. Making the effort daily to be more like Christ
211. Someone who lives what they believe
212. One that is a friend in Christ
213. One who believes in Christ, worships the father and lives a Christian life to the fullest.
214. Trust, work, faith
215. Someone who in every aspect of their lives at all times shows Christ & his love.
216. One who commits their life to Christ
217. Committed to a relationship with Christ & through Him, helping others to come to know Christ & helping them with their walk.
218. One who shows his devotion by Christian attitude, not just words
219. One who loves and serves our Lord Jesus Christ
220. Someone you can tell is a Christian out of church
221. Someone who loves the Lord with all their being
222. Faith
223. Consistent, faithful, obedient, God #1 priority

224. Believing, acting & living in God's way
225. Main focus in life is to live a Christian life and use what we know and learn to teach others so they too can follow God.
- 226.
226. A person that focuses their energy and time on God's kingdom and less on their expectations
227. One who daily reads God's word, serves in the local church, missions & daily seeks God's direction.
228. One who is seeking God's calling for their life and is striving to serve in the area according to his or her spiritual gifts. One who is also seeking to grow in relationship with and knowledge of God.
229. Someone who lets God into all parts of their lives and follows all his teachings.
230. One who shows in every aspect of their life that Jesus is Lord.
231. Serving God with time and making Christ the center of your life. Living in God's will. Being obedient. Knowing & loving God through His word.
232. Christ is 1 st in all things—time, relationships, motives, money, and priorities.
233. Living, teaching, learning and sharing God's truth always
234. Actively involved in spreading God's word and involved in some form of ministry
235. One who puts Christ first as much as possible.
236. Devoted & committed
237. Passionately devoted to what Jesus teaches.
238. A follower who is fully devoted
239. Doing what God wants and praying about how you can do more for him.
240. Self-less, obedient, getting out of your comfort zone no matter what.
241. A person who has a regular and consistent relationship with Christ and is willing to trust God's direction for their life.
242. Someone who mirrors Christ in all their dealing in life.
243. A person who shows Christ through their life.
244. Someone who focuses on God's direction in every aspect. Lives the Christian lifestyle as a core value of who they are.
245. Living a life with Christ as first priority.
246. A strong Christian striving to lead a righteous life.
247. Someone who is "willing" to listen & to be available for what the Lord wants them to do.
248. A person who walks the walk in all ways
249. A Christian who takes time for prayer and Bible study—reaching out to those in need—active in discipling.
250. Someone who follows Christ's ways in every part of their life.
251. Being obedient to the calling of God
252. Living what they believe
253. Person who takes the time to study the word, sacrifices for others & consistently demonstrates an effective prayer life.
254. A Christian who has put Christ first in their life, who is led by the spirit, devoted to service of God with the gifts He has blessed them with and knowing their purpose and following through.
255. One who loves as Christ would love & lives his life to the glory of Christ in all areas.
256. That Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit guide your life.
257. Living Jesus' word in your everyday life. Not just living for Him sometimes.
258. Loving God with whole heart even when things don't go right.
- 259.

259. One committed to Jesus in having accepted Him as Savior and seeking to be a servant unto Him.
260. A person who believes Jesus came to save him/her as a result they/I learn to know Him better through teaching from my church, worship, daily reading His word, time in prayer and living out and sharing with unbelievers who Christ is.
261. One living daily their life for God
262. One who incorporates His teachings into their daily lives.
263. A person who has Jesus as their Lord & Savior and who uses their gifts to serve Him.
264. One who accepts Jesus and follows His words
265. A person who follows Christ in every portion of their life and leads others to Christ.
266. An obedient follower of Christ
267. Christ centered focus in all aspects of your life.
268. Reaching out to others with confidence and genuine concern
269. A fully devoted follower is one who shares his/her faith with others.
270. Patience, obey, trust—I believe that to be a follower sometimes you have to step outside of your comfort zone to serve God.
271. Someone who puts Christ first in every aspect of their life. Someone who seeks out ways to learn more about Christ and encourages others to do the same.
272. Faithful, committed to help others see the Jesus we have experienced
273. Living selflessly as Jesus taught us. Sharing Jesus with others. Giving
274. Using his or her spiritual gifts
275. Relying on Christ daily and participating in his commission
276. Someone who strives daily to be like Christ and is obedient to Him
277. One who uses his time, money and talents to benefit our Lord
278. One who keeps giving even thru changes
279. Lives his/her life in the eyes of Jesus Christ
280. Someone that acts on their convictions. It is one thing to hear them, feel them, it is another to take action.
281. One who is willing to walk the walk He guides us on day by day.
282. Totally committed to Christ daily in prayer, words, actions, deeds
283. Someone who is confident in their faith, willing and able to share it with others.
284. A serious disciple for Jesus Christ committed to studying & sharing God's word.
285. Someone who has given Christ Lordship of their lives and surrendered in obedience their heart, mind and soul.
286. One who studies the word and truly tries to do as Jesus guides her
287. Whole life devoted to God
288. Love God—Attend church & being a part of a small group/Bible study. Just being around group of Christians
289. Someone who can share their faith with others and not be afraid of what others will say or think.
290. He is serving, giving, regular Bible study & prayer
291. One who tries to follow biblical teachings and demonstrates this to God & fellow man both believers & non-believers. Strive not to be a stumbling block.
292. One who is an obedient follower 24/7. One who walks the talk in all of his life
293. One who practices Jesus commands everyday
- 294.
294. Heartfelt relationship with Christ that is then free to serve him with all my heart.
295. Dedicated, consistent, faithful, serving

296. Someone willing to give as much as they can (\$, service, talents) at any given time in life.
297. Disciple of Christ. Living a life that shows the top priority in everything is following Him.
298. Do what the Lord asks of us
299. A person who loves Christ and wants everyone else to know Jesus Christ
300. Committed to God and his church first
301. Continually becoming more Christ-like
302. Living life for Christ in all areas of life
303. Jesus is Lord period
304. Loving the Lord above all others & listening, obeying His leading daily.
305. One who has given her life to honor the Lord
306. Walking with Him daily. Following His word. Seeking His will.
307. A fully devoted follower is one who regardless of personal or outside circumstances, says "Forsaking all, I trust Him!"
308. Someone who does what they can to follow God's plan for them and try to help others become followers of God.
309. Sharing the word with others. Do what Jesus would do.
310. One that lets Christ lead their life.
311. Being disciplined in daily life to pattern your life after Christ.
312. Someone who is living life as Jesus did, looking externally from oneself caring about others more than self. Willing to give time and resources to help others find the joy of the Christian life.
313. Someone who takes the words of God and visibly lives that life. Someone active in his/her church and one that is committed to helping lead others to God.
314. Always seeking to glorify God
315. Willing to go where He leads
316. One who has accepted God the Father & believes in Jesus Christ as Lord of their life.
317. A willing spirit who is obedient to follow the teachings and expectations as found in the Bible.
318. One who constantly seeks to live a life like Jesus.
319. Constant in belief and actions
320. Seeking after the heart of God in every aspect of life and living out the way of Christ.
321. Be Christ like in your actions/words. Be forgiving & nonjudgmental of others. Spread & teach God's word.
322. Walking with God
323. Someone who looks at life, bases decisions & actions on what God wants for their life. They would need to spend daily time seeking His direction in order to do this.
324. Faithful
325. Someone passionate, obedient and willing, loves God
326. All aspects of life focused around Jesus Christ
327. One who God has welcomed into heaven after they died.
- 328.
328. A person who serves the Lord with all his heart, all his soul and all his mind.
329. Active Christian life
330. Puts Christ first
331. One who in all things seeks God's purpose and guidance then follows it.
332. A person who volunteers to do Christ's work, wherever it may be, who has Christ in and on his mind & heart at all times & puts Christ first in all aspects of his/her life.

333. Do what Jesus asks of me
334. A person that is humble, loves God & His son Jesus & is committed to following His word & his commands. Committed to being a follower of Jesus in the world.
335. Humble believers committed to the truth of God's word: more concerned with truth than the appearance of piety.
336. One who is involved with other followers in small groups as well as having a personal relationship with God. Active in service & mission activities.
337. Prays, disciples, follows the Bible
338. Life follows Christ
339. Believing in Jesus Christ and trusting that God and Jesus will provide. The discipline to pray, attend church and have faith that you will be taken care of.
340. Applying scripture & what I learn in church, Bible study, camps, etc. to my daily life in hopes that others will see Christ in me!
341. An example of actions and words seen by all in you.
342. Trusting in Jesus in our daily lives. Living a life with Him as our leader. Giving our gifts to Him.
343. A person that has accepted Jesus Christ as his/her savior and strives to mirror his/her life after Christ.
344. Christ-like—compassionate—loving others as God loves us!
345. One who follows Jesus and walks as He walked.
346. Devoted to family and God
347. Someone whose life reflects the condition of their heart with love from Christ affecting everything they do.
348. Obedient, prayerful, servant
349. An individual who trusts and follows God
350. II Corinthians 5:17
351. believer
352. Using God given gifts to help others
353. Worship only one God
354. One that has Christ in their hearts & has their own personal walk with the savior lives and breathes with their savior.
355. A person of God that follows the Bible and lives as He should.
356. Jesus Christ is the son of God and he's my Lord and savior and I will lead my life to glorify him.
357. One who is in the word daily, living according to the teachings of Jesus and His word and sharing Him with others in words and deeds.
358. One who has made a commitment in prayers, serving and following Christ with all their heart.
359. Believe in the Lord, with all your heart & soul.
360. One who follows the word and works for the Lord
- 361.
361. One who believes Christ will guide everyday
362. Constantly aware of God's leading to serve Him and then to do the actions required for a servant of God.
363. One who fulfills the mission work of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ where I am planted
364. Living a life with Christ
365. Giving everything to him & show in your reflection of your body & spirit the image of God
366. Service with your entire body. Each part of your life committed to Jesus Christ our savior
367. Everything you do; you do for Him.

368. Someone who puts the Lord first in their life who stays in the word & shares the word with others
369. Compassionate, loving, obedient, giving
370. Involved in evangelizing the lost and furthering God's Kingdom
371. One studies scriptures!! Being involved in serving believers & Christ. Prepared to share the gospel.
372. Seeking God's will and doing His will
373. Regularly worships God, involved in the Christian community—works in the "world" to spread God's word. Devotes life to God.
374. One who is faithful, obedient, prays and studies God's word
375. One who might go out of their way to help others become more Christ-like and can live the way of the Lord as opposed to just preaching.
376. Someone who tries to live like Christ. They are involved in the church and participate.
377. One who willingly does the work of the Lord
378. Someone who strives to make an impact in people's lives through Jesus
379. Committed to my "first love" and translating it to all others around me
380. Follow God's word in everything you do.
381. A prayerful, spirit-filled follower who trusts God in every aspect of your life. You are a giving, serving person.
382. Someone who offers everything they do to God.
383. Someone who looks toward the Lord to lead and guide them in life, through choices, acts, thoughts and sacrifice.
384. One who knows God's word & lives by it!
385. Dedicated his/her life to God fully and completely and striving to be what God had planned for all of us.
386. One who makes life decisions on her faith
387. Someone who is humble and whose heart is moldable to God's direction that changes our lives.
388. Someone who lives a life as demonstrated by Christ. Serving others in need, a living praise
389. Kind, loving, happy person who spreads God's word and isn't ashamed or afraid of doing so.
390. A "fully devoted follower" would follow the biblical examples Jesus gave. Humility, obedience, prayer, compassion are essential traits of a fully devoted follower
- 391.
391. Putting God's word to application. Studying the Bible and being involved in the areas God wants to use me as an instrument for expanding his kingdom.
392. Submitting your life & decisions to pleasing Christ and pursuing a relationship with Him
393. One that follows God's word
394. A fully devoted follower is someone who shows love to others, thru Christ, in their everyday life.
395. Doing all that God Commands in the Bible
396. Someone who chooses to spend time with God in prayer and His word each morning. Then chooses to make the daily choices and decisions based on what God's will is. Choosing to see and help others as Christ does.
397. Someone who listens and obeys the Lord's commands. Shares faith as opportunities arise. Uses all resources and steps out.
398. Someone who truly desires to follow Christ and is continually seeking to be more like Him.
399. Where God is in the center of our lives
400. Recognizing that Christ is the living son of God, whose resurrection and defeat of Satan proves salvation from eternal death for each of us.
401. Trying to live like Jesus every day and in every situation.



402. Someone whose primary purpose in life is to share Christ with as many people as possible.
403. Sold out to God. Top priority. Study to learn God's expectations.
404. Committed to Jesus' leading in our life.
405. Regular church attendees that are somehow connected to a small group either a Sunday School group or a Small Group. This is the tool needed to grow our relationship with Christ.
406. Working in the capacity of their gifts, Bible Study, meditation in quiet time & memory of scripture
407. In everything I do, I honor and glorify God.
408. Making Jesus the focus of your life
409. One who walks daily with God while sharing His word.
410. Understand and live God's plan for our lives.
411. Serving others and God because of our faith in Jesus
412. Put God in first place; trusting Him, Relationship with Christ above relationships with people. Only He can change hearts, not other people
413. Keeping your heart open for God
414. Someone devoted to Christ and God's message
415. Loves Jesus and has a relationship, hates sin, seeks to be humble
416. Committed to living out in practical, daily ways Christ's message.
417. Someone who is not afraid to show their faith anytime any place. Who is also willing to actually share it on a regular basis.
418. Committed to a cause.
419. Spreading word of God & Jesus faithfully, continuously to others, especially in need. Attend church as regularly as possible. Become more and more involved.
420. Believing with all your heart and soul
421. One who strives to be like Christ and is committed to doing so
- 422.
422. Someone who follows the path God has for them whatever it may be and wherever it may lead despite our own personal desires
423. Living my life for the Lord
424. To serve the Lord in all areas of our life—our families, our finances, workplace, our church
425. Striving to deepen our relationship with Christ through study, sharing our faith— what does day to day living as a Christian look like?
426. Someone who lives their life for Christ and reflects their commitment to Him through words, deeds & daily practice
427. Every day, every action done in the light of God.
428. Someone who studies learns and lives God word; letting God lead in all areas of our life so others can see Jesus in us.
429. A Christian who follows the teachings of Jesus Christ and has a daily personal relationship with Him
430. A person who places Jesus first—above family, self and worldly interests.
431. Someone who believes in Jesus Christ, believes in His word, follows His word and shares His word with those they come in contact with.
432. Living with Jesus in your heart and reflecting it to others
433. I've always been a follower of Christ since 9 yrs. old, but love this church, small group Bible Study, Women's BLT on Tues Morning and singles class and activities to be my "family" so to speak. Faithful attendance & tithing.

434. Someone that seeks to please Jesus in all they do.
435. Devoted in every way to God.
436. Living your life for Christ and honoring Him in all that you do.
437. One who knows God and wants to please Him.
438. Christ centered in all actions and thoughts
439. All aspects of life wholly given over to God and His will
440. Living a Christ centered life. Helping others to have a relationship with God and become followers themselves.
441. Living out the word of God in all aspects of life
442. Someone that regularly commits time and energy to the growing knowledge and service of Jesus Christ.
443. Committed to Christ and living the word of God continually learning from God's word
444. Involved in the local and greater church body.
445. Someone who understands the sacrifice Christ made on the cross and is dedicated to personal growth and a deep relationship with Christ.
446. God and Jesus first in everything. Worship only Him not NFL or Golf
447. Loving, compassed, kindness
448. Someone who understands the word of God—why Jesus came—truth! To serve the Kingdom in all they do!
449. A person that is obedient to the word of God and will listen and act immediately.
450. Someone who puts Christ first in their life who follows God's lead in their life.
451. A person who has a faith and love for the Lord willing to follow and sacrifice. \* But they need to know the word in order to do this, but they need to be willing to have that relationship with the Lord on their own.
- 452.
452. Being in His word. Using your spiritual gifts in and out of the church. Telling others of Jesus that He loves them.
453. Living daily as a child of God
454. Living in the faith, professing Christ, sharing Christ, giving, serving person.
455. Giving every aspect of my life to God
456. Putting God first in all that I do based on the gift that God has given me in the sacrifice of his son Jesus to bring others to that knowledge.
457. Someone who is obedient to God's word.
458. Christ is first in thought and action in all aspects of life; father, husband, son, employee, friend, etc.
459. Following God in every aspect of your life.
460. Every aspect of your life seeks a closer relationship with God from all of your decision making to the way you are at home behind closed doors
461. Eagerly growing in his knowledge, a faith in the Lord.
462. Following God completely relying on Him totally
463. Someone who seeks to live as Christ
464. One who seeks in everyday life to live in a way pleasing to God.
465. A believer in Christ who is committed to be obedient to God and His word with the help of God.
466. Devoted to God, His Son and His work
467. Sacrificing Time to serve others
468. Time with our Lord and his word everyday always willing to have open mind to his speaking.

## Obedience

469. Someone who has a personal relationship with the Lord and willingly and faithfully follows Him—serving others
470. Someone who not only attends church but is active within the church and community promoting/evangelizing for God
471. One who following hard after God obedient to the commands and has a desire to share this hope with others.
472. Striving to be like Jesus following His example!
473. A person dedicated to understanding and following God's will for you.
474. One who puts Jesus' message of Good News into daily practice. One who stands for Jesus and His followers. Stand for the weak. One who works for Jesus in everyday life & through politics.
475. Living by the word
476. Serves God, prays & studies the word daily
477. One who worships Christ, God the Father and His Holy Spirit. One who strives to give to the Lord with time, money and life purpose and one who shares the Good News
478. Someone who loves the lord, studies His word, and desires to share His love with the world.
479. Connected in ways other than just morning worship (i.e. small group, helper in other area, etc.)
480. Seeking God's word, living by action more like Jesus every day, every second.
481. Growing and actively seeking God
- 482.
482. A person who has turned his life over to Christ on a daily basis; committed to following the Lord and His teachings.
483. Christ-like on every aspect of life—church, work, personal lifestyle
484. Someone who embraces and lives the idea that the vision of Jesus Christ is the best way to live.
485. To put Christ first in your life.
486. Faithful
487. One who has recognized his/her sinful nature, accepted Christ's redeeming sacrifice and now is growing in their love for Christ, their knowledge of God and their love and care for others
488. Connecting with others, serving others
489. Saved and in a relationship with Christ. Mindful of Christ and seeking Christ's will in his life.
490. Living your life in a way pleasing to God—following biblical principles
491. Every day's focus is on Jesus
492. Devoted to Jesus and willing to do whatever he wants me to do.
493. One who is dedicated to doing God's will and to sharing that dedication with others.
494. One who allows God to lead all aspects of life—learn God's word to know Him better and listen to Him—Trust Him in everything.
495. A person who tries to make their every act honor God
496. Someone who devotes their life to Christ and lives each day for the Lord as He wants me to do.
497. One who is obedient and continually thirsts for God's word and that He will guide you to do to serve Him
498. Someone who gives Christ everything.
499. Complete and total commitment to Jesus Christ
500. Whose heart follows hard after God
501. Someone who devotes their life to God and strives to be Christ-like
502. Loyal, obedient, faithful

- 503. One who has a deep personal relationship with Christ
- 504. Someone who shows Christ in their lives 24/7 to all people in all places.
- 505. Christ first
- 506. Fully devoted. Willing to shun the empty promises and shallow attractions this temporary earth offers and choose to live as if Jesus REALLY is the Lord of my life—and to follow what He modeled and asked me to do in scripture.
- 507. Totally committed to following Jesus above all else, letting Him permeate everything we do and think.
- 508. Someone who is involved in private study and social Bible Study and puts what they learn into action.
- 509. Trust God for sustenance, service, significance
- 510. Your plan is always a God.
- 511. Living God's word and serving others
- 512. Worship at church and at home. Sharing and seeking others. Faith, love and believe in Christ
- 513. Making Jesus #1 in my life and living accordingly.
- 514. Humble servant
- 515.
- 515. Someone who centers the rest of their life around their relationship with Christ.
- 516. Relationship with Christ, and armed to wholeheartedly do His work and follow the Lord's will.
- 517. Someone who goes to God daily through His word. A follower of Christ that follows His commands and seeks His guidance and this is daily.
- 518. Believes the Bible, has a true heart for Jesus
- 519. Lives, breathes and reflects Jesus every day in their life
- 520. One who follows the word of Jesus Christ
- 521. A Christian always striving to become closer to God. Kind, compassionate, loving person
- 522. One who worships in spirit and truth—one who is a committed disciple of Jesus
- 523. One who puts the desire to please Christ above everything else.
- 524. Lives a life that is pleasing to God
- 525. Letting God lead you and you follow
- 526. Daily walk with God whether at a church service or not. Studying His word, praying, fellowshiping, obeying, serving daily
- 527. Someone whose life, in its entirety, emulates that of Jesus Christ
- 528. A believer in all situations
- 529. Living each day to do God's will, not mine.
- 530. Someone who has committed his life completely to Christ and lives this commitment in all areas of life.
- 531. Someone who has accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior who puts their relationship with Jesus first priority in their life and demonstrates their commitment through their love and service to others, worship, study of God's word and witness to others
- 532. Person baptized who follows the word of God
- 533. Baptized and obedient to the word of God
- 534. Living by God's word
- 535. Someone who accepts Christ, grows in faith daily and spreads the word
- 536. A person who desires to follow all of God's commands. Who desires to serve His people and all people who set an example to others with a life full of Love, Joy and kindness and all of the fruits of the spirit!

537. Compassionate, loving, willing to listen and be open to others differences
538. Having a relationship with God
539. Committed to Jesus. Helping others to be committed to Jesus
540. Someone who is a picture of Christ on a daily basis
541. Following Christ's teachings in all aspects of your life teaching, serving, giving
542. Participate in corporate worship, develop and nurture a personal relationship with the Lord, be obedient to God's Holy word entirely.
543. Living each day devoted to Christ and His will for my life.
544. Following Christ in every aspect of my life and every decision I make.
545. Believe who and what Jesus did on the cross to bring our relationship back with God and to share and do those for others that God has created and love
546. Somebody who represents Christ-like behavior in all areas of life. Living by example.
547. Life, energy, actions, focus is on our God and Savior
- 548.
548. Making your relationship with Christ your #1 priority and sharing Christ's love with a lost world.
549. Someone who believes Jesus died for their sin. Trust and faith in Jesus, and live their life following God's word and maintaining a relationship with Him. Being obedient and serving the Lord.
550. Being open to God's leading and following that
551. One who understands and applies the diction. The main thing is to keep the main thing—the main thing. By that I mean my Christian faith must direct and affect all aspects of my life.
552. One who seeks the lord's will in each step, each word—one who seeks to pull on other people's heartstrings to the Lord.
553. One who serves and sacrifices in obedience to the One he has fellowship with in following
554. Someone who feels love, acceptance in their church
555. Study the word daily and live a life worthy of Christ
556. A believer who is obedient to the Lord's desire for their life.
557. Setting aside daily quiet time with God
558. Faithful church goers, tither, involved in outside ministries connected in prayer and devotion with the Lord on a daily basis
559. Committed to the reason of Jesus Christ and serving as he leads me.
560. Being aligned to God's will and purpose for my life. Being willing and obedient
561. Someone looking to learn, give and receive while doing that through God's leading
562. Equipped with an understanding of God's word. Having a heart that has God as #1
563. Lives a Christ-like life every day.
564. Seeks Christ Jesus first with prayer then action, a person who loves others and can love their selves; depends on the lord to do His will
565. Being devoted to Christ every day not just Sunday.
566. One who lives his life with being a Christian as a guide
567. Living and worshipping in God's image
568. Someone who trusts Jesus daily by living as Jesus would have. He/she lives relying on the Holy Spirit to give strength to do so.
569. Committed to serving God as taught through His word
570. A Christian in every aspect of your life: spouse, parent, co-worker, friend, etc. Not simply when it's convenient and/or we need something.
571. One who lives every day to please the Lord!
572. Someone that lives like and for Christ every day and in everything they do.

573. Does all He or She can for our Lord
574. Committed to be like Jesus
575. A person involved in a love relationship with Christ endeavoring to use his gifts in building the Kingdom of God and to become increasingly Christ-like.
576. Someone living completely in and through Christ in every aspect of their daily life.
577. A person who has accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and seeks to live every day in getting to know God better, love Him more and obey Him more completely/consistently.
578. A person who has accepted Jesus as his/her savior, lives for Him and serves Him daily at their job—their home with family-friends-all people.
- 579.
579. Someone who dedicates their life to following Jesus
580. Someone who puts Christ into every aspect of his/her life. Someone who is actively involved in church and serves.
581. Continuing always to learn and share His hope, faith and love
582. A person Lives a life devoted to Jesus and His ways!
583. Living by His word and sharing the word with non-believers
584. Walks the walk greater or equal to talking the talk.
585. Committed with flaws, still seeking Christ daily
586. Loving God with your whole heart and loving others. Seeking God with everything you've got.
587. Thanking God each morning for His blessings for my life and others. For God opening my eyes to His way of life.
588. Someone who goes to church regularly, worships, tells others about Jesus, prays regularly, gives and serves to their church
589. To obey the Lord and His direction
590. Living your whole life for Jesus—not just parts of it.
591. Someone who involves Jesus in their everyday routine, prayer, love and kindness
592. Focused on the right goal
593. Trusting God and seeking His will in life.
594. Living God's word in and out of church
595. One who truly lives as much like Jesus Christ as they can.
596. Someone trying to live like Christ.
597. Spending time in prayer and God's word on a daily basis. Seeking Him first in all I do. Showing God's love to all.
598. Embraces truth of God's word, puts it into practice daily and lives life of obedience and worship
599. Being faithful in word, action, deed every day of the week. Sharing the word with others.
600. Share faith, serve church
601. Becoming a disciple of Jesus in the public arena. Standing and speaking out against the flesh, the world and Satan on life and death issues.
602. Living my life as an example.. "I may be the only glimpse of Christ others may see..."
603. One who has died to self and living for Jesus Christ!
604. I would describe it as a follower seeking God's will in everything they do. I also think this involves the small things, not just the big things that go on in a person's life.
605. Christian who is continually growing in Christ
606. A person that lets God lead them in all areas of their life. Tries their best to listen when God talks and does what he desires. Trust in God and has faith that God will take care of us.

- 607. Christian in word, deed and thought
- 608. Loves God and follows His Son and His truth
- 609. Accepted Christ as personal Savior, baptized, serving in some capacity in the church; with a strong desire to reach out to people who do not attend church
- 610. Living in the word not the world
- 611.
- 611. One who understands the truth of God's word and lets it transform their lives
- 612. Worship in and outside of the church
- 613. To give your heart in what you do.
- 614. Trusting God and obeying Him. If we trust Him and do what He asks of us, we will be fully devoted followers
- 615. A person that "devotes" their life to becoming "Christ-like" in all that they do. Living to glorify God.
- 616. A person who does their best to be like Jesus
- 617. Committed to understanding God's love and grace
- 618. Walk the walk and talk the talk
- 619. One whose trust in Christ cuts across all dimensions of his/her life
- 620. Someone who loves the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength and lives their life based on the principals of the Bible so as to glorify God.
- 621. To really have a strong or vibrant personal relationship with the Lord Jesus and to be growing in His word
- 622. To really have a strong or vibrant personal relationship with the Lord Jesus and to be growing in His word
- 623. One who has confessed Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior who died for the forgiveness of our sins. Fully devoted follower then means surrendering their lives to Him entirely and having a personal relationship with Him, to guide and follow His will in their lives.

**What's one thing WCC needs to do/provide, that we're not currently, to help you become a more "fully devoted follower" ?**

- 1. "Doing better" with teaching the scriptures (in all areas)
- 2. 25th hour of the day :) Offer frequent and ongoing Christian Finance Counseling or classes
- 3. A mentor program
- 4. A mentoring program for new Christians. An opportunity to hook up with a mature, willing, devoted Christian.
- 5. A midweek service. A class on the Bible
- 6. A more "lively" worship (song service) that mirrors the excitement we have about God. Alter call service to be prayed for/with about salvation, healing, needs in life.
- 7. A series on marriage (young/new & old)
- 8. A service for older worshippers where the music isn't so "intense"—we older members would love to sing some old hymns accompanied only by piano or organ.
- 9. A shepherd (leader)
- 10. A worship time with more traditional hymns (no drums). Emphasis on vocal praise—perhaps try a hymn service trial basis other than usual church time.
- 11. Accountability?
- 12. Activities that include parents & children together at times that work for working parents

13. All church Bible studies in fall too. Congregation more involved in praise
14. All the tools are here. It's my choice
- 15.
15. Allow the worship service to have a more penetrating conviction focus than an encouraging feel-good message.
16. Alternative worship services
17. An opportunity to form a friendly relationship with the pastors! Don't know them, they don't know my family and we've been attending/serving at WCC for 3 years.
18. At this time in my life I have a lot on my plate.
19. Awareness of things going on.
20. Awesome church!
21. Be less rule driven—more love & forgiveness directed.
22. Be more concerned and serving to those that are Christians, helping us grow—this would be during service. Everything is concerned in being the church that is "cool" to reach out. We should be serving our already members too. Preach more from the bible instead of telling so many stories!!!
23. Be more consistent
24. Becoming more obedient.
25. Better fellowship—seems click
26. Better leader
27. Bible studies
28. Bring everyone together—do not always feel "part of"
29. C
30. Calling people to be a witness of their turn from sin in a public confession. I think we lose the moment of acceptance when we ask them to go to the connection center. I believe many walk on out the door without stopping. The scripture to acknowledge me in public. There isn't enough space for my opinion.
31. Can't comment, have only been attending WCC for a short period
32. Can't think of a thing
33. Can't think of anything
34. Can't think of anything except perhaps more in-depth explanations of Bible scriptures
35. Can't think of anything right now
36. Can't think of anything, but if there is faith provides that God will provide.
37. Caring Leadership
38. Challenge all of us to share the good news of Jesus—Witness
39. Challenging us to reach out to the lost—need Evangelism Explosion Classes
40. Christian school
41. Class on sharing faith. Class on finances
42. Classes geared to study of books of the Bible with good, qualified teachers
43. Classes of deep exegetical Bible Study. Studying our Lord's message to His followers—stirs and convicts.
44. College Age, Young adult leadership
45. Compassion. Jesus saw the multitude & had great compassion. He showed compassion when others judged.
46. Contact members who have stopped coming
47. Contemporary music—need to relate with the youth more in music—this opens doors
48. Continue to grow college age ministry



- 49.
49. Continue to promote small groups—key to growth/fellowship
50. Corporate prayer
51. Couples studies at the church for marriage and parenting in the evenings. Those would naturally birth more small groups.
52. Deeper study & application
53. Depth—Teaching that focuses on developing intimacy with God
54. Discerning the meaning behind Bible Quotes and Phrases
55. Discipleship
56. Discipling new believers
57. Do more old time hymns
58. Do not know at this time.
59. Doing a great job—I don't know
60. Don't be afraid to talk about the "hard stuff that most people think is wrong/gross to talk about in church. I'm not trying to trash WCC or anything but you tend to "beat around the bush" when you talk about stuff like that.
61. Don't know
62. Don't know at this time.
63. Emphasize to members of congregation to take genuine interest in others. Many people are struggling, but when they come here they feel more isolated and alone.
64. Encourage women to dress more modestly at church. Coming to church should be a safe haven from the battle against lust.
65. Encouragement, "easy steps"
66. Evangelism (sharing) class (on going)
67. Evangelistic messages and prayer meetings
68. Evening women's group/study
69. Everything is great
70. Expository message with emphasis on application
71. Fellowship with other Christians
72. Follow up more on volunteer questions even if the answer is no.
73. Follow up on requests. Twice we have called and no one responded
74. Follow up team—personal contact with people as they seek to "plug in"—the "Connection Team"
75. For the women's ministry I feel mature women that have kids that are grown should be more involved in leading studies.
76. Good job, don't know
77. Groups seem to include singles, long established families and newlyweds without kids. But newlyweds (less than a year) with young kids (less than a year old) seems to be missing
78. Guidance, direction & teaching us to become fully devoted follower.
79. Have a college age Bible study or small group.
80. Have more evening opportunities with women's Bible study that do not conflict with other activities
81. Have more fellowship opportunities for new people in the church to get to know each other.
82. Have sermons devoted to family/family issues and ways as a family we can guide our children and also ourselves to become more devoted.
- 83.
83. Have women's classes after work times. Get back in contact with people about groups and such.

84. Having regular guest Christian writers/lecturers
85. Help me to search & find accountability/mentor partner & how to utilize that relationship to grow in Christ.
86. Help those who accept Christ ways to become more knowledgeable.
87. Honestly cannot think of anything
88. Host BSF on the West Side in the evening
89. How about adequate lighting during the service so I can read the Bible etc. This is not a theatre, but a church; we need to be able to read.
90. How to help others in practical ways
91. How to operate in Faith
92. How-to classes for Intermediate Christians
93. I am extremely satisfied with what the church currently provides. Please continue to challenge me through the messages and opportunities to become increasingly involved.
94. I can only think of one thing that would be to have a stop light out by the road as we get ready to leave.
95. I cannot come and truly worship when the music is so loud that it causes severe pain.
- 96.1 can't handle myself, how would I know what the church should do.
97. I can't think of anything right now.
98. I don't know what that would be
99. I feel like WCC is doing a good job through Homebuilders and Women's Ministry, especially MAPS, to help me grow in becoming a fully devoted follower.
- 100.1 feel that WCC is doing a wonderful job. It is up to me to make the choices.
- 101.1 feel we need to keep groups together. More direct teaching out of the Bible. I love when the adult pastor preaches, takes it right out of scripture. 102.1 feel we are doing it
103. I filled out a card to be contacted about a small group but I haven't been contacted yet.
104. I have come a long way in 15 years to be closer to Christ-like but still far away
- 105.1 honestly think WCC gives a lot of opportunity. Additional small groups perhaps.
106. I love what we are doing now. Can't add anything
107. I loved the testimony of the gambler. It encouraged me to be more vulnerable— These are great ways to penetrate the heart and make us reliant and need for Jesus. Real people are here, with real problems and we are at the right place.
108. I miss alter calls
- 109.1 need to do the changing, WCC is fine 110.1 need to participate more in WCC
- 111.1 respect that I am able to grow at a pace I am comfortable with. It is important to me not to be pushed. 112.1 see it is more related to what I need to do
113. I think as a woman, WCC does a great job but my concern is for the men. I think different things/variety would help. Not just sports, fixing things themes. Not all men are into that sort of thing.
114. I think I need to do it myself
115. I think my problem is me. The opportunities are there.
- 116.1 think that is up to each individual to step out. Keep doing what you have been to get more people to step out one by one. 117.1 think that part of worship is singing. When we have songs that no one knows or the

- people up front are doing their own private concert, we don't get to worship God in that way. When Hearts Journey is up front everyone joins in. Worship is about Jesus, God, that is why all should be able to participate. More Bible based studies. 118. I think the fault lies far more with me than you. I don't trust easily, and I don't like long-term commitments 119. I think the sermons could include an opportunity for personal response more often.
- If we've heard God's word preached, it can help us grow in areas if we have an "altar call" or some type of movement. 120. I think this church is just too big. We are currently looking at smaller churches to attend
121. I think we need to address more issues like sexuality, money & relationships.  
Encourage from the Sunday morning services more one-on-one time with the Lord every day.
122. I think you should supply most needs—each one needs to use what's available.
123. I would like carry in dinners for great fellowship (not everybody in the church would come so the numbers wouldn't be a problem.)
124. I would like to see more groups offered in the evening that are offered only during the day.
125. I would like to see teaching through books of the Bible—expository teaching.
126. If you have classes scheduled i.e. Belonging class—that follows up. So that we can get into another class or sign up
127. I'm very happy with things
128. Improve administration to minimize impediments to ministries. Bureaucracy chokes efforts to serve.
129. In-depth Bible Study—teaching people how to study God's word.
130. Increased emphasis on praise and worship
131. In-depth teaching and accountability groups
132. Individual attention
133. Inspire and push men's ministries. The father, I believe, is the key to the whole equation.
134. It is not you, it is me? Also you need a bus
135. It is nothing you can do. It is me and being willing to listen to God.
136. It really is my responsibility to use what WCC has put in place
137. It still seems hard to get "plugged in". This may be mostly my problem though.
138. It would be nice to see more plays about God or Jesus or both
139. It's here
140. It's not feasible, but more child care...more hours...
141. It's wonderful right now—I love it.
142. Just keep on doing what it is doing
143. K-8 school for our children and family to be involved in.
144. Keep focusing on Home Teams!
- 145.
145. Keep going strong in God's word (stay on track)
146. Keep on doing what you are doing
147. Keep Small Groups together
148. Keep us centered on the word of God, Christ Himself
149. Last week, I would have said there was a need to request input & feedback from the congregation, but this survey has dealt with this issue.
150. Later Sunday School classes for those of us who do shift work and are on the night shift.

151. Learn how to evangelize better/more effectively
152. Less audio & visual stimulation, over stimulates my senses in worship time. Leaves a phony feeling. I can feel God's presence without the "eye candy".
153. Less dependence on the purpose-driven tools.
154. Less of room of good intentions, more of room of grace.
155. Less worries as I hand everything over to God
156. Linking us up with mentors, offering mentors
157. Make more small groups for early 20's
158. Maybe more accountability, but I'm very happy with the direction of this church. I love it here.
159. Meeting needs
160. Men's Bible Study
161. Men's Evening Groups
162. Midweek worship opportunity
163. More sincere worship time, more passionate worship time.
164. More 40 days of community/small group activities facilitated through weekly church services
165. More activities for middle aged parents and families
166. More activities/speakers/seminars during the week for adults
167. More basic how to's. What does a Christian do from the time they get up to going to bed. How to live the life
168. More Bible based Sunday school classes not on video or books. Adult middle age
169. More Bible classes, more community
170. More Bible teaching from the pulpit—less self help
171. More care for elderly members
172. More challenging or in-depth class offerings. Challenging study not directed at the seekers. We sometimes seem to be doing "church lite".
173. More classes for our age group
174. More emphasis on Bible study, holiness and helping people understand what the Bible teaches so they can hear God directly in their life through scripture
175. More emphasis on prayer & its development in believers
176. More evening Bible studies—more variety
177. More for 45-50's and up. Outside speaker seminars that are affordable
178. More hours in the day!
179. More in-depth Bible teaching classes
180. More in-depth scripture study in service.
181. More information on Adult Sunday School opportunities
- 182.
182. More information on current opportunities such as Bible Study, service areas, available on line or in print—schedule of events.
183. More information on ministries offered. It is hard to find a place that would meet your needs. I have signed up for several things and never received phone calls. Opportunities to join a group or event aren't advertised enough in the bulletin and Family Life
184. More involvement of women equally in the worship service
185. More later evening classes
186. More me, my lack of involvement at WCC
187. More of a sense of community

188. More of God's word, the convicting power of Gods word preached
189. More opportunities to serve in our Wichita community. Adult Mission trips during the summer.
190. More opportunity for training in leadership—not just small groups
191. More personal with attenders—faster response time to individual needs
192. More pizza on Saturdays
193. More prayer groups
194. More preaching from Bible, less topic
195. More pressure to do it.
196. More selection of young single adult activities
197. More sincere service less entertainment
198. More singles and college development
199. More small group programs
200. More spontaneity in worship (less performance-mode) —More authentic times (e.g. prayer with partners, small groups, etc. in services.)
201. More studies with application to follow
202. More teaching and preaching straight from the word. Unabandoned worship!
203. More time for family in church (more on church members)
204. More traditional service
205. More women's events
206. More worship, less club atmosphere. We look like a nightclub
207. Music is too loud and not-traditional
208. Music played softer. (But this is just what I prefer)
209. Must be more Christ focused. Don't push dependence on each other so much. Accountability should be to the Lord, not each other.
210. My children need a different curriculum—I feel this is a huge area Westlink needs to improve on. My kids watch Disney movies in Sunday School—they need Jesus! I was also VERY bothered by using clips from TV shows that are ANTI-Christian (e.g. Desperate Housewives). I feel that was very inappropriate—and unwise. What does that say about this church and what it stands for. I know leadership doesn't support the lifestyles betrayed on Desperate Housewives!
211. Need more margin in my life—not sure how Westlink can help in this except maybe limiting service for each individual & prayer
212. Need Revival in our pastors, church, church members in their hearts. God is judging us and we don't know it or care.
213. New to your organization
- 214.
214. No follow up when card filled out—several comments about falling short.
215. None that I can think of
216. None that I can think of. It is our responsibility
217. Not so much "How to" as actual direction from God's word—That I might utilize His word in seeking his direction.
218. Not splitting up small groups for the 40 day study.
219. Not sure
220. Not sure since I'm a visitor
221. Nothing
222. Nothing comes to mind—it's up to me!

223. Nothing I can think of, love it here
224. Nothing more, it's my commitment to Christ
225. Nothing, all the resources are here for me.
226. Nothing, I just need to make the effort and connect. When I am connected, I am close to God. I need to make a change.
227. Nothing, I'm the one
228. Nothing. I am very happy at WCC
229. Offer more for college aged people
230. Offer support for people in turn/our church who have no family here for support and or help—time away from kids. Parents Night Out—great concept—too expensive now
231. One-to-one disciple program
232. Open a Derby Branch!!
233. Opportunities to connect
234. Opportunity for extended Promise/worship Family focused services
235. Opportunity to share
236. Our church is full of gifts & blessings
237. Pastor visitation & hospital calls by our pastors—not other staff
238. People out front speaking on experience on real life struggles.
239. People who don't have time to join a small group may need some more "meat" in the sermon.
240. Personal follow-up
241. Pray for more time
242. Prayer meetings. Address the issues facing our everyday lives and political issues so we know where the church stands on them.
243. Preach more about the difference between truth and the world view
244. Preach more word—less drama
245. Preach the word—hold us accountable. Preach scripture based lessons, teach us, challenge us to apply the word and allow its power to change lives—give us maps, history, Greek, names of God, cultural background. Tell us the relevance of scripture.
246. Preaching on spiritual disciplines
247. Present more examples of brokenness among our church body. Acceptance for all as they are.
248. Pretty much everything is provided
249. Provide mother/kid (i.e. maps) in the pm for working moms
- 250.
250. Provide short mission in the community
251. Pursue individuals for small groups until they are attending one.
252. Reach out to teens who did not grow up in this church. It's so painful to hear stories of cliques & kids who remain outsiders after years of trying to belong and get in step.
253. Recognize needs
254. Restart Sharing Class
255. Satisfied
256. Seminars to assist people to live, adjust in this fast moving world.
257. Senior pastor appearance & more dedication to his congregation. Personal response to those that reach out & ask for help with no response from church management.
258. Serve without meetings
259. Services on Wed. nights

260. Set up booths in the Atrium similar to what you just did for small groups, but setup the booths for various outreach programs/missions/etc.
261. Sing more hymns. I wish I didn't come until the music is over!
262. Singles meet and greet
263. Small group isn't satisfying this need. Seems reader doesn't know how to connect deeply with other believers through the Word. Word isn't the core—just people's ideas of what's truth.
264. Solid Sunday School Classes
265. Someone to visit my son at Sedgwick Co Detention Facility
266. Speak out against the evils of our dark and dying culture
267. Stand firm on the word of God and don't "water down" our faith message in an effort to be attractive to "seekers". "Stepping on toes" with the truth is not something we should fear. The "seekers" need the truth. Don't allow society to push us into a corner. Numbers through the door on the weekend does not indicate success.
268. Standing firm on the word of God and not wavering from it no matter what society says. Teach more from the Bible during service, not watering it down to get more members for the church. I believe we are more "seeker" focused and not "Bible teaching" focused. My heart is not tainted. I worship God no matter what our church decides to do.
269. Start sharing my faith with my peers at school
270. Stay with Bible based sermons
271. Stronger messages, less Rick Warren style of worship
272. Stress the brokenness in families and provide strong programs to help people stressing that it is alright to admit brokenness and seek help.
273. Study of Scripture/Book of the Bible. More Good deep studies of the scriptures with others. Not topical.
274. Sunday am groups
275. Sunday School at 10:45
276. Sunday School classes for adults
277. Systematic yearly study of the Bible—Small classes. Like discipleship classed that Methodist Churches have. Homiletics on whole books of the Bible, not just bits and pieces of books. Less topical sermon series for seekers, more in-depth study of the Bible for believers
- 278.
278. Teach a series on holiness or obedience
279. Teach me to surrender
280. Teach our children, through a class, singing & praying through the hymns.
281. Teach the Bible from the pulpit. The worship service is too fluffy, feel-good, bubble gummy. You have to join a class outside of the worship service to get any meat.
282. The opportunities are here at WCC; I just need to set priorities and find the time for what's really important.
283. The sermons are great!
284. This is the best church led by Godly staff!
285. This moment! Turn Down the Music Noise level is the only problem!! Choruses are great, also.
286. Time management and limiting activities
287. To teach older Christians how to mature in the word
288. Tough question. The church does so much. I think more "hellfire & brimstone" message might remind me that I serve a Righteous God, not just a loving One.
289. Try harder to not let people fall through the cracks. Follow through better to make sure people get

- connected, offer more marriage classes
290. Unapologetic preaching the Bible
  291. Unknown
  292. Use seniors to help others grow
  293. Use the Bible more
  294. Very new to WCC—hard to say
  295. Visit hospitals
  296. Volunteers are spread too thin, we need committed volunteers
  297. WCC does a great job of providing resources and opportunities for everyone to be involved.
  298. WCC does everything to help
  299. WCC has many opportunities
  300. WCC is doing excellent leading in this community
  301. WCC is doing great
  302. WCC is great—there comes a point when it's up to the individual to take the next step. You provide all the resources to engage people.
  303. WCC's style of worship does not match what I feel is worship in the traditional sense. I am not brought closer by the distractions of fabric draping, musical instruments as the visual focus, not the rock concert format of music.
  304. We need more time (activities?) to get to know others—so we can better meet their needs in a time of crisis.
  305. Weekend classes of in-depth study, maybe topical, led by some of our gifted adult teachers—not meant to be a support group, but a learning group.
  306. What doesn't WCC provide? If a person doesn't grow, it's on them—our church helps in many ways.
  307. When you ask for volunteers & people do follow up with them. This is not being done. Also, need to do a better job of communicating & advertising above classes offered, needs, etc. ALL of the staff needs to be open to ideas and a willingness to work with volunteers; especially when the volunteers are willing to take the ball & run with it. Also, make it easier for volunteers to get what they need,
  308. i.e. rooms for classes, etc. If staff members are not willing to bend, then maybe that needs to be corrected. \*Let the Pastors—pastor the church; operationally the office & the day-to-day activities should be run like a business.
  308. With a big church it's hard to feel connected without a small group
  309. Women's mentoring relationships. Small group accountability organization
  310. Women's ministry always on Monday—How about another night? How about a Family Sunday School—parents & kids
  311. Would be interested in occasional social activities for men
  312. Would like my HS & MS children to have more local opportunities for mission & serving real people in need. Opportunities for face-to-face contact with the needy.
  313. You are doing it. I live in Hutch.; you have all things accessible to people; I just can't fully commit myself.
  314. You have plenty. It's hard to take care/spend time with family and commit to groups.
  315. You provide more than any other church I've been to!
  316. Young Adult Classes
  317. You're doing a great job
  318. You're doing an awesome job!
  319. You're doing great. I'd like a little more Bible Study training.



320. You're doing it! And thanks for turning lights down during worship.  
321. You're doing lots—it's up to me now

**As you become a more "fully devoted follower," how do you see your life changing?**

1. More giving and reaching out
2. Growing more devoted to Christ & the word. More involved with unsaved in my apt. complex for prayer needs.
3. More giving of time, money, talent
4. I will become more loving and outward focused
5. Focus is less on me and more on others.
6. Bringing my family together to pray together
7. I love our small group! It has made a great positive impact on my life.
8. Peace
9. Leisure time more consumed by church activities
10. Spending more time studying the Bible.
11. Less of me, more of others
12. More time spent as a family at home focused on Christ.
13. Less stress, more peace
14. A better understanding of God's word & reflecting that in my life and my kids' lives.
15. Giving of my time.
16. What I desire to do will change.
17. More focused/less thoughts on me and more on Him. I will be freer to love and be loved.
19. Following Jesus every day and including Him in all I do, say & think.
20. I won't be the focus, God will be.
21. Stronger in my relationships more willing to share
22. Place more focus on the lord during the week.
- 23.
23. More caring towards all people
24. More opportunities for men's groups. Pray for men to be led to seek accountability partners and fellowship.
25. Others will be coming to Christ through me—others will be strengthened.
26. Developing a more intimate personal relationship with Christ.
27. Being more fulfilled, positive & happy
28. Joy in fulfilling the purpose God created me.
29. More committed to God and more fulfilled.
30. Becoming more enriching & satisfying.
31. Being more other minded, less self centered
32. Life perspective on everything becomes more Christ-focused.
33. Eager to share
34. Loving the lost more than believers
35. More awareness of reaching out to others
36. Peace, spreading the gospel, wisdom, better witness
37. Change in focus & commitment—more

38. Daily 1 hope. More of Him, less of me
39. More peace & serving
40. Blessed every day
41. Letting Christ always have control of all.
42. More happiness/contentment
43. In ways I can't imagine
44. More peace
45. Be more like Christ—not judge others
- 46.1 become more Christ-like
47. In my consistency and staying on track
48. More peaceful, less anxious about life.
49. Priorities changing, attitude changing
50. Being more humble and kind.
51. Learning the true "purpose" of my life through Christ
52. Making more friends which I continually do here in SS & BLT—Like so many programs or opportunities for everyone, I moved here one year ago and came to you as soon as I got moved in.
- 53.1 have become more on fire for God. It is just amazing.
54. Less of me, more of Christ
55. Sharing my faith through loving, giving and talking about it.
56. Be able to share God's message with others
57. Less selfish, serving others, serving God
58. All focus of my life and my family's life will be to glorify God forever.
59. It becomes more settled and certain of the future
60. More forgiving, less judgmental
61. Yes
62. Obedience without having to ask "What Would Jesus Do?"
63. A more committed Christian
64. Helping others more
65. Sharing with others and bringing those closer to our Father
- 66.
66. Purpose, priorities and plans all realign with Christ at the center
- 67.1 see myself
68. Change of priorities
- 69.1 will be in a closer relationship with God.
70. I will become free to serve God more in the gifts that he's given me.
71. Just seeing God working in different aspects of my life.
72. Changing at home because of my Christ-like love I can share with my husband and child and at work because I can share with those I come in contact with.
73. Becoming more at peace with life.
74. Greater peace, comfort, inner joy that helps me to sustain with hope daily life's struggles.
75. Better... guided and full of love
76. More joy, less fear, more courage
77. Become more fulfilled—be content to allow God to be the 1 st—not try to lead—let him
78. His grace overflowing.
79. Loving others more like God loves them.
80. Walking in the power of the Holy Spirit

81. Becoming closer to God's will for my life
82. My life becomes more at peace, I can use my own life as an instrument of God's word and I become stronger.
83. Deeper sense of knowing God
84. Making worship every minute of the day
- 85.1 hope to become more at peace with myself & God & others
86. Relying more on power of the Holy Spirit
87. I'm praying more, I become more involved in loving other people and I see God teaching me more about Him.
- 88.1 want more direct words and learning God's word. 89.1 would share Christ more openly.
90. Become a better example to my family and therefore have a better/closer relationship with them.
91. Becoming more faithful in God's plan for me
92. Definitely moving from being knowledge based to intimacy with God and God dependency. One sermon touched on that.
93. Greater obedience
94. Slow down & become more tolerant
95. Obtaining peace of mind
96. I would be a better prayer warrior
97. This is my first experience with BLT. But, I am enjoying it.
98. More prayerful
99. Focus on God's plan and learning to look for His plan and know it is the best decision in my life.
100. Being more content in my everyday life.
101. Happier and more emotionally able to share faith.
102. Less anger issues, more love
103. Becoming more spiritual inside and out
- 104.
104. Becoming more like Christ, sacrifice becomes easier, obedience becomes easier because it's an act of worship and unity with my Lord.
105. Listen to God—He will use me for what He wants of me.
- 106.1 always desire to continually be more like the Lord Jesus
107. I always desire to continually be more like the Lord Jesus
108. More happy
- 109.1 see my faith become more solid and unshakeable. Able to weather the trials of life and shine for the Lord.
110. Strength, peace, love and friendship
111. Sharing God's word with others more freely. More time spent in God's word and able to recall it easier from memory.
112. Minor disappointments, challenges become less important.
113. More peace, share faith with others, a more Holy life.
114. Become more like Christ.
115. Sense of belonging—purpose—whole heart service
116. Not only more in line with God but more fulfilling.
117. Less stress for a Christian house and no more fighting and yelling. Happier
118. It is not about me, there is more to life than myself. There are so many people that need help and I

- have nothing to complain about.
119. More balanced & focused
  120. I see my relationships improving as well as my overall happiness in life.
  121. I'm coming to church a lot more and praying too.
  122. More love for others/peace in my heart & calmness
  123. More peace, more joy
  124. Having more strength and a deeper faith in God
  125. More service to others
  126. I see myself more concerned with others and their needs and not myself. I see my faith growing with confidence knowing that Christ is there for me no matter what the trial or challenge.
  127. More aligned with God—less following the world and its desires.
  128. More peace less confusion & able to stay on track with God as my focus.
  129. Deeper devotional life
  130. Spending more time praying for the church staff and missionaries, etc. etc., plus praising God with my whole heart.
  131. I see myself being a better father, husband and friend 132. Reaching out to others more to share the word.
  133. I mature as God walks me through trials of "life." I know God is real without a doubt.
  134. I'm less tolerant of loud music—it is not worship of the Lord but instead is listening to a man who does not seem to believe the whole Bible. I need quietness.
  135. Enjoying more time with Lord and others
  136. Leaving a legacy of Christ for my children. Living life "right" by God's rules.
  137. Putting Jesus first in every part of my life
  138. Devoting more of my time and talent to God.
  139. Growing
  140. Becoming a better servant
  - 141.
  141. More encouraged and fulfilled
  142. More contentment and joy
  143. I will care more for others in God than myself.
  144. For the better—concerned more for others than myself. I need help becoming a servant.
  145. Having a fulfilled heart and soul
  146. Better able to connect to non-believers and take advantage of opportunities/create opportunities to lead others to Christ.
  147. A better prayer life
  148. Being filled with more joy and peace
  149. Less me, more God
  150. Less me centered
  151. More caring & more patience
  152. Open communication with God all the time—not just when a "need" comes up. Desires to learn more & more of the Bible to share and defend our faith.
  153. I feel more committed to serving the less fortunate
  154. Jesus has matured me, transformed my inner self, which directs my outer self
  155. More peace & kindness within. Excess joy
  156. Putting Christ first in everything—especially in how I prioritize daily tasks
  157. More fulfilled, happier

- 158.1 see me becoming more like Christ—when I'm less connected I know how I fall away from being more like Him & more like the world.
159. The peace of Christ in everyday life, a sense of greater purpose in life.
160. More community focused less self-centered. Willing to do and share more with others.
161. More time spent on the eternal
162. More confidence in life's decisions
163. By being involved in service women will believe they are important. Pastor E knew my husband and doesn't even know who I am. Since women live longer than men, it is time to secure that legacy of giving by meeting and seeing women as equals.
- 164.1 would become closer to the Lord and be a better wife and mother
165. Closer to God, better example to my fellow man
166. More in line with what God is doing in my life.
167. More on target—love for God and Man
168. More involved—less lonely—connected more to my community and church
169. Hoping to be more confident in sharing God with others
170. My life has changed but continue to be satisfied & blessed with life
171. Very well
172. Becoming more like Christ, less of me.
173. Less focus on me, fully focusing on God
174. More at ease with things. Better family life.
175. Helping more in youth somewhere
176. More positive outlook on life
177. Becoming more on fire for the Lord—"Dynamite!"
178. Even in the dry and weary places I trust Him unconditionally
179. More peace & contentment
- 180.
180. A more positive attitude
181. Care about others. Deeper love for God & desire to follow His word.
182. Dependence on Christ—brings peace & comfort.
183. Trusting God more—more prayerful.
184. I hope so—I want to share with others what Christ has done for me especially those not connected with God at all.
185. Become dependent on God instead of myself or our country.
186. Growing as a person and sharing that with others
187. Better witness everywhere
188. Growing in wisdom & happiness, knowing Jesus is my focus
189. Being able to be an example for my daughter and wife.
190. One more deeply committed to Christ and His direction for me.
191. More peace
192. I'll be happier, more confident, and less worried about the future
193. More willing to serve
194. Am more content/at peace
195. I don't
196. I'm understanding the Lord better in my everyday life.
197. Becoming better

198. Sharing Jesus more actively and verbally.
199. God's blessings, seeing evil better, desire to obey God no matter how afraid I am.
200. Being more committed to serving Jesus.
201. Contentment and compassion for others
202. Just being a better person and loving Jesus
203. Dwell on Christ consistently
204. More focused on God
205. Sharing the word with others.
206. Positively
207. Trying to be more like Jesus—serving, giving & showing compassion to others.
208. I will be happier, more satisfied Christian. People will be able to see God in my life.
209. More positive, uplifted by my fellow friends at church.
210. More committed to Christ plan
211. God continues to refine and redeem me each day as I grow closer to the Lord.
212. More fulfilled
213. More obedient to the leading of the Spirit.
214. More trust, less fear
215. I feel less important
216. Great improvement
217. Learning to let go and trust my Lord
218. I'm sad to say, I'm here for my children—I don't feel like I'm growing.
219. Less fear
220. Better relationship with God, better family
221. More at peace
222. I am more willing to be used by God
223. Wanting to read from the Bible more
- 224.
224. Actually care more about the lost. Fruits of the spirit manifested. Joyful living in God's presence each day. Priorities of time/money change—used better
225. Living the abundant life more & more
226. More areas of sin are removed as I am convicted in areas of my life. I become more interwoven with my church family.
227. Becoming more faithful, growing in a Christ like attitude to others.
228. Making my life full
229. Becoming more fulfilled and complete with God
230. Closer to Christ/confident in spreading the good word
231. Strength of faith, better example.
232. Wait & See!
233. Becoming Christ-like
234. I would be beaming!
235. Trusting Jesus, love of others
236. More committed and time to do so.
237. Significant service not just successful service
238. Being able to witness more to others
239. Doing more for others without thinking of myself and coming closer to God.

- 240. Less stress & more trust
- 241. Becoming able to forgive myself
- 242. Becoming a contagious Christian and multiplying
- 243. Making decisions based on faith & what I have learned in daily study.
- 244. Spend more time doing things for others
- 245. Making obedience and not victory the most important thing
- 246. All areas of life are positively impacted (marriage, parenthood, career, service).
- 247. I see myself serving others more and being more intimate in my relationship with Christ and sharing God's word with others.
- 248. I will become a more compassionate person sharing love to everyone.
- 249. Getting better
- 250. Only for the better
- 251. A richer life rather than just existence.
- 252. Serving/Joyful
- 253. Sharing faith more & more fellowship
- 254. It is wonderful to see the things he does in my life.
- 255. Become more like Jesus. Be holy because I am holy.
- 256. Blessed in every way
- 257. Letting God direct me to where he needs me.
- 258. God becomes more of a priority, I serve more joyfully, effectively. My heart is more loving and compassionate.
- 259. Trying to take focus off of myself and family to the needs of those who do not know Christ.
- 260. More mission involvement
- 261. More in love with God (Jesus)
- 262. Spending more time with Christ
- 263. Spending more time in word & witness
- 264. More genuine, less hypocritical, more consistent.
- 265.
- 265. You start walking the talk
- 266. Simpler
- 267. My trust in Christ is increasing, enabling me to launch out into bolder adventures in ministry.
- 268. Spending more time in study of God's word
- 269. It will continue to grow and become more like Jesus
- 270. More inner peace
- 271. Closer to God
- 272. Each person must be sensitive to the Lord's calling in each season of life.
- 273. More love & joy & contentment
- 274. More fulfilled in what I feel is my purpose in life.
- 275. More conscious of the Lord's presence in all things, places & times.
- 276. Feeling more secure in my faith & more committed in my giving, service & prayer/study of the word
- 277. I need to be a seed planted in good soil to bear fruit.
- 278. By getting involved in other people's lives so we can help them.
- 279. More parts of my life are being controlled by the Spirit and actions follow.
- 280. Share the word more regularly with others.
- 281. Giving & Everything back to God & Having a stronger faith
- 282. Being able to trust God more

- 283. More peace, confidence in God
- 284. More involvement
- 285. Becoming a better father, husband, friend and all around man.
- 286. Less prideful, more peace
- 287. Know I belong to a larger Family of God.
- 288. Being blessed daily
- 289. More focus on God as I make decisions in my daily life.
- 290. Maturing/more & understanding faith needs
- 291. Getting better
- 292. More involvement within the church
- 293. Trusting God for/in everything—not just parts. Refocusing on Him—our most precious treasure
- 294. Fulfilled
- 295. More committed to serve others in need
- 296. Comfort—understanding—personal growth
- 297. More of God's word flowing from my speech.
- 298. Those around me, wherever I go and at all times, will see Jesus in me. I'm the things I say and do.
- 299. Recognizing the "divine appointments" God gives me daily & joyfully living a life overflowing with purpose and meaning.
- 300. The Lord's gifts increase
- 301. I'm trusting God with my life—I desire to have a relationship with Him.
- 302. More content & More intentional about sharing Christ
- 303. Priorities become more God-centered
- 304. More joy and peace
- 305. I become less introverted
  
- 306. A close walk with Jesus
- 307. Being more attuned to God's desire for my life
- 308. Living more like God would want (pleasing to him)
- 309. My heart will open to his will
- 310. More peaceful
- 311. Becoming closer to God and living as He would like me to. 312. I become more at peace, when I serve the Lord.
- 313. Turn to Jesus every day; try to follow Jesus' teachings in my daily life.
- 314. As I grow with Christ I see myself becoming more complete and happier
- 315. Being in a closer relationship with God.
- 316. Growing
- 317. Becoming more involved in small groups and serving inside and outside of the church.
- 318. Each thought, decision and action will be directed by God.
- 319. Closer to God
- 320. I live for God & Jesus—#1 priority 321. I will feel closer to Christ
- 322. I feel more fulfilled & light hearted
- 323. Less stress of failure in personal family life and professional life.
- 324. The joy I have! Faith!
- 325. Less fear—more acceptance



- 326. More like Christ
- 327. Spiritual Strength
- 328. God blesses those that seek Him & his will!
- 329. I am finding more peace now that I have committed to study God's word, pray more and give my life completely to Him.
- 330. Being a better overall person
- 331. More peaceful, happier
- 332. Growing closer to God
- 333. Less influenced by the world
- 334. Becoming more Christ-like has a direct impact on my children—my husband—my community
- 335. Only for the better
- 336. Becoming more Christ-like
- 337. Peace of heart & mind
- 338. Not so self-centered, thinking more of others
- 339. Peace
- 340. I feel like I'm becoming the person God wants me to be.
- 341. Open sharing
- 342. See Christ at work in my life
- 343. Becoming a light that others want to be like
- 344. Able to reach others for Christ
- 345. Being more mindful of needs of others & ministering to them.
- 346. Better relationships, happier
- 347. Very
- 348.
- 348. Deeper & stronger faith—manifestation of the fruits of the spirit especially joy. Life will be much more fulfilling.
- 349. I will be a doer of the word and not just a hearer. My prayer life will be a constant communication with My Lord.
- 350. Becoming a better person
- 351. Becoming more involved with the church, kid's ministry
- 352. Being more devoted to God and controlled by Him.
- 353. Lord opening new doors and showing/explaining me more of his creation.
- 354. Perspective!
- 355. More service for God, more prayer, study, and giving
- 356. Life is becoming more fulfilled.
- 357. More sympathetic
- 358. Just giving it up to God and as a result having peace of mind.
- 359. Becoming more as one with Christ
- 360. Contentment, overall peace, ability to handle situations better.
- 361. Growing closer to God
- 362. Becoming more like Jesus and more obedient.
- 363. More faith and less reliance on self.
- 364. Less me, more God
- 365. More reliant on God, in prayer more, hearing God more.
- 366. A more calm and relaxed life.
- 367. Paybacks are wonderful

- 368. Slowing down & taking time.
- 369. Happier
- 370. Spending more time in prayer and in studying the Bible.
- 371. Fulfillment, contentment, Joy in serving steadfast assurance—confidence in Christ
- 372. I've become more forgiving
- 373. Positive influence for anyone I came in contact with
- 374. I see myself getting more involved and sharing my faith with others.
- 375. Christ is becoming more real to me and I am seeing that He cares about my life.
- 376. More fulfilling, less about me
- 377. Fulfill
- 378. It is wonderful to know more believers of CDD more personally.
- 379. Less stress about non important issues
- 380. Feeling deep contentment & love
- 381. Reach out more
- 382. More happiness in my life, positive changes occurring
- 383. Becoming more balanced
- 384. More focused on others
- 385. More joy
- 386. More peace & trust in God even in times of adversity.
- 387. Seeking God's will over my own.
- 388. I see a more peaceful, humble, tender, others-focused heart.
- 389. A greater joy for helping others worshiping the Lord.
- 390. Becomes more of a servant
- 391. Trusting more in Him and not trying to control my life as much.
- 392.
- 392. Greatly. A life with Jesus will change you from the inside out. Romans 12:2
- 393. Life more focused on Jesus Love people more.
- 394. Becoming more like Christ
- 395. We moved to the area 2 years ago. We have found our church! The middle school program & Cody have been great for our Middle schooler.
- 396. Happier, more God minded, content with circumstances, while still improving.
- 397. Let's not focus so much on multi-media and more on the fact that not everyone in this church is saved. It's been a long time since the Gospel was presented and an alter call made.
- 398. I experience more peace & contentment.
- 399. Trusting and having faith that God's plan for my life is perfect and have comfort that my daily struggles should not define me. They are only there to build me as a Christian.
- 400. My attitude toward suffering; tribulation & trials (daily)
- 401. Become closer to God & help others to find God.
- 402. Living to glorify Christ
- 403. Being more of a leader for the Lord
- 404. More concern for others
- 405. Growing in the word, become closer to Jesus
- 406. More emphasis on daily prayer
- 407. Taking up the ways of Christ more & more instead of my ways.
- 408. Become more purpose driven for God
- 409. I get less stressed and I feel more at peace

- 410. More of a fire for God
- 411. I would be more at peace, knowing I was serving God, pleasing Him and sharing His love with others.
- 412. Becoming more involved with the church and growing spiritually.
- 413. Being happy and secure in life
- 414. More peace—growth
- 415. Better
- 416. My desire for Him and His word grow deeper
- 417. More focused on a God centered life
- 418. Developing my gifts/strengths to their full potential.
- 419. Better balance, personal peace.
- 420. For the better
- 421. Becoming more involved with various ministries—Prayer life increases
- 422. Being happier
- 423. More peace—easier to prioritize
- 424. Life will be easier in some aspects. Fulfilled by love of God and not earthly materials.
- 425. For the better
- 426. More peace & being more bold about sharing my faith—looking for those opportunities
- 427. More God like
- 428. My focus is on the Lord and less on this world. I will be transformed into a more Christ-like person.
- 429.
- 429. Easier for me to share God's word and love.
- 430. Consistent in all areas of my life
- 431. Less stressful, happy
- 432. Closer to my family
- 433. I can see how home life will improve.
- 434. More understanding of others short-comings
- 435. God's reality manifesting to change my life to be more like Him.
- 436. Feeling of peace
- 437. Happier, more content
- 438. More and more in love with Jesus—more peaceful—full of joy
- 439. Becoming more like Jesus
- 440. More joyful—happier—more connected to others!
- 441. Prioritizing and humbling myself in becoming obedient to His word
- 442. Being more involved at WCC
- 443. Becoming a more devoted follower
- 444. I find myself reading the Bible daily—listening to Christian radio
- 445. Increased serving—Being more fruitful
- 446. My attitude
- 447. Things I considered important are changing.
- 448. Having Christ work through me to do His will.
- 449. Greater understanding of God's will for my life
- 450. Less time in personal recreation, more time in service and Bible study
- 451. Our kids more connected to God and us, more involved in the church.
- 452. Priorities change
- 453. Aiming to be more like Christ
- 454. Patience, Sharing my faith, priorities changing

- 455. My love for Him becomes more obvious at work and home.
- 456. More understanding of God's will
- 457. Joyful
- 458. Faith—Family
- 459. Fulfilling my reason for being
- 460. Spending more time with my small group helping them be fully devoted to Jesus
- 461. Acceptance of others and their circumstances
- 462. If I knew that, I would have started doing it sooner.
- 463. Being a more effective follower for Christ
- 464. Always increasing joy and grace
- 465. Becoming more of a giver in all areas
- 466. Trusting the lord will be there for us
- 467. More committed to obedience to Christ
- 468. More fulfilled
- 469. Happier and more understanding of others
- 470. Only for the better
- 471. Comfort in knowing Christ is in me!
- 472. Becoming less stressful as I hand my worries to Him—and helping lead my friends, family, acquaintances to Him.
- 473. More peace that passes understanding and more desire to Love and share with others
- 474.
- 474. Growing closer to God, life becomes more tolerable
- 475. Loving God more—focus on Him allowing Him to lead as I love Him I want to follow Him and others.
- 476. A deeper peace within knowing I'm living for Jesus
- 477. I believe I would be a better Christian through prayer
- 478. Simplified life
- 479. Being a brighter light for Christ.
- 480. Drawing closer to my Lord and Savior—look at lives problems in a different way— God is in control of everything in my life. Good and bad times.
- 481. Drawing closer to my Lord and Savior—look at lives problems in a different way— God is in control of everything in my life. Good and bad times.
- 482. More time spent exercising spiritual gifts
- 483. Secure in where I am in life
  
- 484. Realizing you must stay active and participate in the programs.

**Additional Comments**

- 1. More reference & teaching the work of the Holy Spirit not only in the pulpit, but in many of our classes, etc. Thanks so much for all of the preaching staff! God bless you all!!
- 2. Really wish that the middle school service was offered in 2nd service too. Family focus is really great here.
- 3. I know WCC is reaching out to youth—but often the loudness and repetition of the music seems almost sacrilegious—we need to sing some old hymns—prayerfully— so our hearts can hear the words

4. I have attended Westlink for 3 months and have not heard I Cor. 25-29 mentioned concerning communion.
5. I've recently become aware that Jesus considers my relationship to him—service.
6. It's not about consumer oriented worship. Its meeting people where they are so they can worship better. My Grandmother & I don't worship the same way, so why would you try to force it?
7. God's will is done in my life, and I am patient enough to wait.
8. For more on #6, give me a call 722-1289 or cell 619-5436
9. I am truly blessed by being a member of WCC
10. Would love to see some Christian artists come to WCC 2 or 3 times a year. Know that they have been gravitating toward larger seating like Central Christian and Central Community, but it would be neat to have them come here, too.
11. Encourage all believers to take personal responsibility to grow in Christ
12. I am so glad to see this being explored!
13. Would appreciate leadership in clothing respective to the Lord's house—we're not going shopping or out to eat—believe we need to recognize this in our dress as well as attitude & time. It's the Lord's Day—we need to honor Him in a different way than when we dress to mow the lawn or out to eat! I miss the majesty and beauty of four part harmony in singing. Let's not replace Gold with Bronze.
14. We had stopped coming to Westlink for almost 2 years & not one person even called to see what had happened. I am not bitter just would like to see an improvement in this area.
15. Jesus is my savior
16. We need to stop focusing so much on kids only & shift to families. Sometimes as a family I feel lost here.
17. First time visitor interested in learning what is the church about. Finding a church "home" to reconnect with God. Ask not what God can do for you—But what can you do for God
18. Impressed with the way church keeps growing—lots of young people & couples with babies—good
19. When asking for offering, try not to make it so much of a guilt trip
20. I feel isolated and alone. I can stand in the entry way after church and people walk past me like I'm not there.
21. Forgiving God for loss of son and forgiving dad for loss of son
22. I thank God for what He has been and is doing for me through WCC.
23. I really would enjoy an evening women's group for those who work during the day with child care. Do not always feel a part of things even when I try to get involved.
24. The people at WCC have always been warm and friendly. I don't see a problem with "superior attitudes". I like that, since we are the same in God's eyes.
25. I like the sermons and my kids LOVE your children's programs, but I feel lost in the church. I am an only parent and most of your adult programs I can't attend because of work and kids. Please make them accessible to those like me. During your sermon today you said people accept each other and their actions. They don't. I have been shunned out of a church and classes for that reason. People as a general don't accept it.
26. I feel blessed to belong to a church that has such great leadership. No church is going to be perfect. God Bless!
27. In completing this, I have to think about myself as a follower and how I can become stronger. Thanks for that! This church is a place where my family feels spiritually fed. Thank you also for the recent series on reconciliation and forgiveness.
28. This church has lots of love and compassion here
28. This is the best I've ever had it! The staff (ministries) all have much to offer. God Bless.

29. I would recommend the children's programming be careful not to go too far "making it fun." It's a balance keeping God's word relevant to daily life is one of Westlink's strengths—keep that up. (And keep that a focus for the children's program also.) The teaching during worship services is excellent—is relevant and beneficial to everyone (at all stages of spiritual development—seekers to mature.)
30. I feel small groups are great but I feel we need to let them stay together, they are willing to open, and trust. Building friendships just as Jesus does in the Bible. I think numbers shouldn't be the issue but if you bring one more to Christ isn't that the reason we're here?
31. Not convinced that all of the dramas help much.
32. I think you all do great! I'm shocked to find I'm something of a Pharisee.
33. As a man I grow tired of seeing women in church dressing provocatively. I would really like for church to be a sanctuary.
34. I do think WCC is doing a great job in reaching our community.
35. Other than what I mentioned everything else is great about this church.
36. I hope I've heard for the real last time that a small group is "closed". That was shortly after we finish the Rick Warren study in the spring. Something to ponder— God has called many of us into "full-time service". We just don't serve within the walls of a church. He has sent us out into the world to serve because the lost & hurting are out there.
37. Example was when we put sticky notes up with a sin on it we've struggled with. That physical, personal response makes it so much more real. It doesn't have to be that complex, but more often gives greater accountability.
38. Great Middle School program.
39. Sometimes the music during worship is so loud I can't hear the people around me singing—and I think it is important to hear the voices of the worshipers—not just the worship team.
40. I know I am in a good church if I am convicted with the messages.
41. This is a good church as it is. We love you!
42. Love my pastor's perseverance!
43. I like the redundancy of opportunities that ensure we do get involved.
44. Overall, WCC is a wonderful church, one that God has richly blessed this church. I love that WCC preaches straight from the Word and prepares and expects us to not be merely readers of the Word, but doers of the Word. 45. I have been regularly attending WCC for the last 17 years and pray the pulpit will continue to preach the word of God and not be watered down. God has blessed WCC through so many "Fully Devoted Followers."
46. Keep preaching the Bible! Keep holding us accountable and challenging us.
47. Thank you for all that you do.
48. A whole lot less drama on Sunday and a lot more Bible teaching.
49. If we teach/preach to a higher level the newer Christians will learn & challenge to learn more—same philosophy used in school to not lose those at a higher level rather than preaching/teaching to the new attendees.
50. Love WCC!
51. I enjoy the use of the screen for visuals that helps me focus on God during music, offering, communion, etc.
52. Special needs ministry for kids
53. Keep our standards high in God's word. Don't go the way of worldly churches. Numbers aren't as important as quality believers. We need to hear instruction from God's word at church. That sets us apart

- from playing church. God's word is supposed to offend those who need to change.
54. Where is Pastor E?
  55. Thank you, Pastor A, for having such a large devotion for small group.
  56. Let the spirit lead you as ministers—Does He ever try to lead you in directions other than the written sermon?
  57. We need more for the working women. Most of the things are in the day time.
  58. Would like to hear the words of songs, softer music (but that's just my preference)
  - 59.
  59. Small groups are becoming the focus—is the church a social club? We need sermons about sin? We need alter calls and opportunities for people to feel conviction and see the need to truly accept Christ! Be careful this church doesn't just give "feel good" message as Rick Warren preaches. Example: Cancelled Ash Wednesday Service because too busy with small groups.
  - 60.1 am concerned with people leaving Westlink to attend churches that provide more "meat"—if all mature Christians choose to leave after a certain point—then no one will be here to connect people to Jesus. The children's programming needs to be revisited! Kids need more Bible and less entertainment!
  - 61.1 can't be more explicit in insisting that we need revival in our church everywhere. God is judging us and we don't care. Our nation needs to listen to Henry Blackaby and his words of truth.
  - 62.1 would like to see our youth (MS and HS) involved with worship services to help them become a fully devoted follower.
  - 63.1 enjoy your worship—a little loud—distorts the words especially for elderly members. Tone down instruments a little.
  64. God led me to this church in 1991. WCC has provided everything I need to follow my Jesus. I love the sanctuary artistry, the music, the cafe, and the people. I feel God in each service. I am so thankful to be a part of God's family here at WCC. Thank you, thank you & God is here.
  - 65.1 loved the video with just music & we read each slide. I love to see appropriate movie clips used to tie in the sermon as well.
  66. The older you get the more you think about your past actions and thoughts
  67. You (the church) are there when I need you and there for everyone who needs you. What more can a church do?
  68. I was worried when Pastor E left, but Pastor A is doing an awesome job! The teaching team is a great team!
  69. This week I was turned away from a BLT class I really needed at this time of my life. A Church should never refuse someone in need! If class too large, split it and open your arms to all! Never turn people away! Very disappointed. Begin a sermon "Rental" program. To rent tapes/CD's of missed sermons vs. having to buy them. Include music so we get the whole worship experience!
  70. Better follow-up with request for information about small groups.
  71. Thank you Lord for this church! I pray for the staff and leadership to be Holy Spirit lead.
  72. I feel that my life is getting a lot shorter.
  73. Thank you for caring.
  74. Great sermon—my soul was fed. That was a sermon with "meat". Speak the truth, don't ever water down the word.
  75. Great church. Thank you for being home for me & my family and educating us in Christ.
  76. Westlink is SO large—I feel lost here. Even though WCC tries to have the small groups. I still feel so small when I come to church. My husband wants to stay but at times I'd like to find a little church.
  77. After we live our daily lives, seeking after temporary goals—Matt 6:33 Seek His kingdom and

- righteousness and ALL THESE (other, less important) things shall be
78. added unto you. FULLY, DEVOTED, FOLLOWER—3 powerful words with deep meaning. A large commitment.
  78. Thank you!
  79. Thank you for all you do for our church and for reaching out to our community.
  80. Enjoy all the activities, programs which Westlink provides. Also the way the church is involved in the community.
  81. I think your Sr. pastor should preach every Sunday and not just twice a month. The worship is great. I come for the church worship services only!! Just feel the pastoral leaders do not care about their individual congregation especially when they repeatedly ask for help in the Sunday attendance record & call & meet with a church employee for help but still do not receive attention from pastoral care.
  82. Good idea
  83. Change the music!
  84. I'm glad you're asking these questions. The greatest impact for me in becoming fully devoted to Christ is my own encounter with God through His word and relationship with Him. But I feel all alone in this at WCC and get little help and encouragement in this area...and I need it.
  85. I love that all of these new people are coming to WCC. My prayer is that they are truly challenged in their faith here and grow deeper in their knowledge of God.
  86. WCC is a grace church, could we be more truthful?
  87. God commands men to be leaders—where is our commitment at WCC for men? Women's ministries—strong; Children's ministries—strong, Youth Ministries—strong, men's ministries—ABSENT. Very significant missed opportunity. CAUTION: We are not Saddleback, we are not Willow Creek, and we are WCC. Thanks for asking God bless!
  88. I wonder if today's service is a way of defending what WCC does and how they do it? Does WCC welcome questions on what and why they do things, or does WCC just want people to follow along without questioning?
  89. Be conservative in spending.
  90. Less singing, more message
  91. To all staff—Thank you for your commitment to Christ and being obedient to Him as you lead us at WCC
  92. At this time in my life I am enjoying the music worship even though I don't sing well. We could sing more—I also enjoy the times when the whole service was music and singing.
  93. I love my church! I have been feeling a bit weary in service lately and just know that as we continue to look for ways to open our doors for those who don't know Jesus, we also need to teach and build up those who would serve those who come.
  94. Praise God and be blessed
  95. To be fully devoted followers, we need to be used to help bring others alongside our walk. Training is always needed.
  96. I have always felt that this church and its leadership are centered on worshipping Christ and understanding the heart of God. I pray that we will never lose the focus, and not worry that everything must be perfect. God knows we are not perfect. He is interested in our hearts! It is ok for a service to not go exactly right. It is ok if the  
  
singers or speakers are not always the best. What is important is the hearts of the people, because then God can speak through us.



97. Thanks be to God for the Worship, Bible study, Prayer, Missions preaching at this place—He is Here!
98. What a lovely church family! This worshiper series has been wonderful! God bless each one of you!  
Excellent message! What a blessing!
99. I wish we had a more traditional worship service
100. This services communion did not go well at all
101. WCC has truly helped us grow in our faith and we look forward to continuing the journey with your guidance and support. Thank you & God's blessings.
102. I feel a longing to come away from the Sunday worship service with the feeling of having worshiped instead of being part of an audience for some performance.
103. I appreciate the staffs efforts to be responsive to the expressed needs of the congregation as well as the unexpressed needs.
104. We love our church
105. I come to church without my husband and bring my children—I don't feel like I fit in.
106. I thank you for all you provide. Worship service is very God-focused. 107. Thanks for all everyone does—what a wonderful place to come and worship and spread the word.
108. I love the "up to date" services—youth programs are excellent, music is inspiring— Thank you.
109. Is there a directory that lists various ministries & the Elders? At times it would be great to go to the one that can help with a problem.
110. We appreciate the practical application of God's word that challenges us to become more fully devoted followers! Thanks for being a part of equipping us—our family—for a life of purpose & meaning!
111. I've been attending WCC since June '07 and the opportunities are available, I just need to step up and make use of them. "It's me, not you!"
112. I love you
113. We would love to join a small group, but we always get hung up on childcare issues.
114. This church has brought me a long way on my journey home. I am continuing to grow through this Christian Family called church.
115. Great survey
116. Awesome Church!
117. Great Church!
118. I have been coming here for 4 yrs. and I can say I have learned something through the message & worship and I feel you don't need to change anything.
119. Like the children's belonging class being offered!
120. Should have turned up the lights so we could see the surveys to fill them out.
121. Easy to feel lost in a church this size. I was on a waiting list to join one small group for a year because they didn't have room due to childcare issues.
122. Sharpened pencils in the pews, please :)
123. We have been members of three other churches here in Wichita. Pastor A and his family have welcomed us as part of the church.
124. Too many cows in the corn
- 125.
125. Thank you for asking.
126. 3rd Sunday to visit. WCC has a lot for everyone to choose from.
127. There was not enough time provided to give thoughtful responses to this survey. 128. I think that WCC does an excellent job of reaching out if the people are willing to reach back.

129. We have a great program K-12. I think we need a better program for our college students that stay in Wichita.
130. You are doing a fantastic job as a church to encourage me. I have grown so much since coming to Westlink.
131. I think you guys are doing a good job. I would be more devoted if I took advantage of your programs.
132. I so enjoy being a member at WCC & all that I have received spiritually & personally from participation in serving & small groups.
133. Please pray for me concerning these things.
134. More focus on Kids/teens
135. I believe this church is doing a really good job to reach those that are already following Christ and to those that are still searching. Thank you.
136. Small Groups Emphasis is a great addition to our church's efforts to help the congregation be fully devoted followers.
137. Our family has truly enjoyed attending WCC the past few years.
138. Music is great—Just teach from the word—it all falls together
139. We love it here!! Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. That alone shows how wonderful and meek this church is.
140. From day 1, this church feels like home.
141. Love WCC Continue Love Understanding Non-Condensing. WCC is Great. Music is great. Thank you for focusing on the Bible!
142. First time
143. Idea: Testimonial times of sharing during services to allow others to see God's working in people's lives.
144. The worship at WCC is great
145. Thank you for your incredible worship. Have you ever considered a praise and worship dance team? Liturgical dance is beautiful
146. Love WCC
147. Really, really want the above!
148. I am struggling with which church to follow—I have been a catholic my whole life—but see and read things in the Bible—that Catholics don't practice. I am a born again Christian.
149. In a church this large I find it difficult to get to know the Pastors on a one-to-one basis. I've been attending WCC for 15 years and the only time I have talked to a pastor is when I arranged my best friend's funeral. I miss that one-on-one relationship.
150. Wonderful church! Helped so many ways—prayers answered so many times. Thank you for a God driven church.
151. Worship service music is too loud. The volume is uncomfortable and thus distracting. I say this not from preference, but because sometimes the volume is physically painful and I can't devote myself to worshipping our wonderful Lord.
- 152.
152. Would they consider using the new Sunday School kiosks for adults too? In a church this size, name tags would be very beneficial.
153. Love this church. Love the people God placed here
154. As a physician I've noted that we attract the kind of patients we get well. Occasionally, I look around in the church to see who we're getting well.
155. Not to excuse myself, but I find it hard to go to functions. It's a lot for me to just bring grandchildren to

church. Thanks for the teachers who smile and welcome the children.

156. I LOVE this church. WCC has allowed God to save my marriage—it has helped strengthen my relationship with God as well as my husband's and children's relationship with God. We love coming here to worship God. We love our church leaders and are so thankful for WCC!!
157. The most effective way that makes me a follower is the time I spend alone with Him and inviting the Holy Spirit to work deep in my life. I have developed a deep love for God and that has caused me to follow Him even when it isn't easy.
158. Great church—keep the small church feel.
159. I've been in BSF for 7+ years so this has truly drawn me closer to my Lord and Savior and realize a daily time with God is of utmost importance.
160. Don't understand what you're talking about
161. The blessings I receive in return for serving others far outweigh the extra time or difficulties I may have preparing to serve others.

### **What traits of a "fully devoted follower" do you consider most important?**

Faith has the highest percentage with 27%, followed by Love with 16% and Serving with 11%.

Figure 11: Traits of a fully devoted follower

Humility  
Obedience  
Prayer  
Compassion  
Serving  
Kindness  
Purity  
Giving  
Love  
Reaching Out Trust  
Sacrifice Faith

Additional answers were given:

- Sharing the Message
- Student of the word
- Surrender
- all
- Biblical Knowledge
- Discipline
- dying to self
- Grace
- Mercy for others
- Surrender
- Tolerance

**What do you consider your greatest area of personal need/growth that would help you become a more "fully devoted follower"?**

Sharing my Faith has the highest percentage with 28%, Bible reading/study comes in next with 18% & Fellowship third with 14%.

Figure 12: Greatest need for personal growth

Prayer  
Bible reading/study  
Rest  
Giving  
Serving  
Solitude  
Worship  
Confession  
Fellowship  
Sharing my Faith

Additional answers were given:

- Surrender
- Accountability
- Baptism
- Develop who I am in Christ vs. what I do for Christ and who I trust with who I am.
- discipleship
- Forgiveness
- Generosity
- Holding Accountable
- hospitality
- hospitality
- 
- More Prayer
- More time with God
- Obedience
- Obedient
- Patience
- Pay more attention to MS
- restoration
- Revival
- Support from WCC in the ministry God has called me to.
- Trust
- Trust
- Understanding God's ways

### What best describes your greatest obstacle in becoming a more 'fully devoted follower'?

Commitment has the highest percentage with 41%, Time comes in second with 26% and Past failure and Family relationships are tied with 10%. Loneliness/Fear follows close behind with 9%.

Figure 13: Greatest obstacle

Not sure how Struggling  
with sin Time  
Past failures  
Loneliness/Fear Family  
relationships  
Commitment

Additional answers were given: •Me

- Choices
- Grief
- Age
- Don't feel like our service is really needed
- Forgiving easily
- Health issues
- Need mentor
- Ruts
- We have found a balance
- accountability
- Anger
- Being disciplined in my quiet time.
- 
- Busyness
- Busyness & getting off track
- Choosing where to be and where not to be and not neglect people at home.
- church members
- Connecting more deeply with other believers—through the Word.
- Consistency
- Desire
- focus
- Following the world
- Getting Started
- Grief
- Job demands
- Looking for a church I am comfortable in.
- Making it a priority
- More understanding of God's will
- My heart

- Obedience
- Opportunity
- Outside distractions/demands
- Physical
- Plugging in somewhere I would feel I belong. Acceptance of me.
- Pride
- Prioritizing
- Priorities
- Rejection
- Relying on own strength
- Responsibilities
- Self
  - Self centeredness
  - Self doubt
  - self-control
  - Selfishness
  - Spiritual
  - Stubbornness
  - Time Constraint
  - Understanding more about Jesus/Bible
  - World distractions
  - Faith
  - Physical limits
  - Apathy & complacency

What does WCC do/provide that most helps you become a more "fully devoted follower"?

Worship comes in the highest with 35%, and Small groups come in second with 29%. Classes and Serving tie at third with 12%.

Figure 14: Greatest help WCC provides

Missions  
 Giving  
 Serving  
 Counseling  
 Worship  
 Small Groups  
 Classes  
 Seminars

**Additional answers were given:**

- Community
- Great Sermon messages for real people
- Opportunities for kids

- Bible Study
- Awana
- Better Messages
- Bible Study
- BLT (Bible Led Teaching)
- BSF (Bible Study Fellowship)
- Children's Ministry
- Fellowship
- Friendships
- Haven't attended WCC long enough to identify anything
- In depth Bible Studies
- Kindness
- Mentoring
- Music
- Pastoral support
- Pastors' sermon
- Phenomenal sermons—these last few themes!
- Sermons
- Teaching
- Vital Relationships
- Women's Ministry
- Prayer
- Teaching
- 

## **Appendix 8 LARGE CHURCH SURVEY**

### **RESULTS**

#### **Average weekend worship attendance:**

1500-2000	53%
2001-2500	10%
2501-3000	0%
3001-3500	7%
3501 -4000	13%
4001 +	17%

#### **Which age group of adults represents the largest group of adults in the congregation?**

18-25	0%
26-35	15%
36-45	70%
46-55	15%
56-65	0%
66-75	0%
76 +	0%

**Which category best represents the formal educational level of most adults in the congregation?**

Did not complete high school 5% High school/GED 5% Attended college 30% College degree 60% Graduate degree 0%

**Which category best describes the congregation socially?**

Non-professional— "blue collar" 11 % Professional— "white collar" 89%

**Which category best describes the congregation economically?**

Lower class 0% Middle class 95% Upper class 5%

**Which category best describes the racial composition of the congregation?**

Racially diverse 20% Not racially diverse 80%

**If not racially diverse, which race dominates?**

80% responded with Caucasian. 20% no response.

**Have you stated or defined a "fully devoted follower" in different or more specific language in your setting? If yes, how? Has this description proven sound and useful? Why or why not?**

- We have not made a formal statement in our literature anywhere. But we have taught in some classes (membership class) that our purpose is to lift up Christ so that all might believe. We do that by fulfilling the following objectives: reaching the multitudes one by one, developing them to Christ like maturity, involving them in meaningful ministry and encouraging a life of missions throughout the world.
- We define a believer as one who is active in loving God and loving people. This is exhibited by abiding in Christ and in producing the fruit of the spirit. We do not use "fully devoted" as we believe the fully devoted words are unnecessary. At present we are working with our definition.
- Our Mission statement is Win Train Send. Win People to Christ, Train them to be Disciples and Send them to impact the world. In each of those areas we are intentional to fulfill the mission that Christ has called us to. This statement is easy to remember and describes with clarity what CCV is all about and how we will get there.
- We are a purpose-driven church...so a fully-devoted follower would be a person who puts all five purposes into practice on a consistent basis. In many ways, it is useful in terms of definition of what to do. It is not useful in terms of compartmentalizing things.
- Our dominant language is the language of discipleship. Our mission statement is to "make disciples, more and better disciples." We define a disciple as one who is growing in the areas of Connecting, Growing, Reaching, Giving and Serving. We call the fivefold description "The Mountain Walk" and use this walk metaphor pretty consistently in ways such as, "Are you



ready to take your next step?" or "What has God put in front of you in the Mountain walk?" or "Remember, discipleship is a process not a destination." This definitional strategy has proved useful in many ways. It has created a climate where growth and change is expected. It has created ways to talk about growth in many areas, and people expect to be challenged in these areas. Its biggest downside is that it lends itself to a checklist mentality and because it is outlined via principles one can easily lose track of the personal dimension of discipleship.

- Worship, Serve, Grow
- Essentially the same language
- See website at [acfellowship.org](http://acfellowship.org)
- We have defined a "fully devoted follower" as one who has discovered Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and is developing their faith in Him, and deployed for Him. We believe a mature believer is 1-involved in personal devotional, 2-involved in corporate worship, 3-a part of a small group, 4-sacrificially giving of their time, influence, leadership, giftedness, and resources to God.
- We say that a "fully devoted follower" is someone who: helps those around them connect to Jesus, has a strong personal devotion, attends weekend worship, is in a small group and invests sacrificially with their time, energy, resources, leadership, influence and giftedness. It has been very useful, because it has clarified our process and expectations.  
<http://www.aatewavchurch.com/site/about/valuesAndBeliefs.asp>
- 
- A fully devoted follower is someone who is surrendered to the level of truth God has revealed to him or her. In other words, a new Christian can be fully devoted knowing that deep truths of God's Word have not been revealed at this point.
- Think about it—it is impossible to be a fully devoted follower this side of eternity. You are trying to do and you are asking people to do the impossible. You cannot succeed.
- We do not use the word Christian at our Church due to the negative connotations it has in our society. We say "Follower of Jesus" We define a fully devoted follower of Jesus as someone who believes our six core beliefs and practices our six core practices.
- Not directly. We use 4 G's—Gather, Group, Give, Go—as markers on the journey.
- We are in the process of looking at this. Currently, a fully devoted follower commits to GATHER every week for worship, attends a small GROUP, where he or she can live out their faith alongside others, GIVE generously of their talents and resources, and commits to sharing their faith with others (GO). This has helped our people know what they need to do and where they may be falling short. It doesn't encase, however, the importance of personal, spiritual disciplines. We hope to address this soon.
- We define a fully devoted follower of Christ as someone who is maturing towards Christ-likeness. We have identified character traits of someone like this being: holy, worshipful, accountable, servant, student, generous, loving.
- We use the same description as "fully-devoted follower"; this has been helpful but we also use other phrases like Christ-follower, "loving God and Loving People"

- Our strategy to become & develop fully devoted followers of Christ is Gather Grow Give & Go. We break that down by, Worship attendance, participation in small groups.

**In your opinion, what unique challenges (specific obstacles) face larger churches in developing "fully devoted followers"?**

People's hectic, crowded and overcommitted schedule is the primary hindrance in developing "fully devoted followers". We are in the process of developing an online self-study that would allow people to take advantage of discipleship tools on their own because so few take advantage of our Discipleship Classes.

Helping people find the next best step for them is not readily evident in some larger congregations, thus making connections is difficult. Not everyone who attends a large church seeks connection/belonging, and so helping them grow in Christ is more difficult.

- Large churches are places where people can hide out and don't have to get involved or have accountability. Holding people accountable or at least having a process in place that helps believers hold themselves accountable is essential to fulfilling the mission.

Anonymity naturally leads to lack of accountability. Bigger programs (the weekends, conferences, guest speaker) naturally create a gravity that consumes resources and energy; however these bigger programs are not the main catalysts to spiritual growth. Abundance of potential volunteers creates the illusion that the individual's gifts are not needed. Opportunity to achieve worldly excellence and worldly success creates the desire to achieve these things.

Too many offerings—people aren't sure where to go or where they are needed. The press of time schedules and outside activities

- Measurement, Willow's Reveal study and book begin to explore this
- I believe the biggest obstacle facing bigger churches when it comes to developing disciples is the fact that it is easier for people to "hide out" in a large church congregation. They can blend into the crowd and never develop relationships with others or be held accountable for their growth. Another challenge that larger churches face is that it is really easy to say the church is doing its job, just by an increase in attendance. This could cause larger churches to measure the wrong things for success, and not address the issue of how they are doing at truly developing disciples.
- I think the only unique challenge is the sheer number of people, and it is too easy to fall through the cracks.
- Leaders willing to lead others spiritually—giving people a clear path of discipleship with inspiration and execution—a competing world that entices us away from spiritual formation
- Assimilation—getting people plugged into the church in some form of community where they can belong and be cared for.
- Clearly defining what a win looks like. As stated above you cannot "win" at trying to make fully devoted followers. What you can describe is what the process looks like.
- The challenge is to redefine what following Jesus looks like. For the "Church" person and for the "unchurched" person. Both come to the church with ideas and we work very hard to clearly

define what that looks like at Real Life Church. At a larger church you have a lot of different ideas and you need to work hard to keep the vision clear and in front of the people. Another challenge is to help people see that outreach (evangelism) starts with being kind to others and not inviting them to church, at Real Life we say "don't invite your neighbor to church, invite them to dinner"

- The ability to be anonymous and avoid accountability
- We believe that one size does not fit all, meaning, each person needs their own spiritual growth plan that addresses their particular needs, and it depends on where each person is in their walk with Christ. We try to make an individual connection, but those that we miss, only have the benefit of our corporate announcements, rather than personalized attention.
- Creating process for people to go through (assimilate) but at the same time realizing that growing people in Christ is organic and subjective. Each person needs to be treated as an individual with individual needs. Challenging because in a mega church we are assimilating 100's of people at a time not just a few. However, we believe that our small groups remain the best environment to get this done.
- I think the obvious is that a person can conceal themselves much easier—get lost in the crowd. If a person is not connected to a small group or area of service—we the church have no way to hold them accountable or disciple them.

**What advantages does a larger church have in developing "fully devoted followers"?**

- There is a synergy that naturally happens in larger churches that causes new believers to think we have our act together. They give us more credit than we deserve. As a result we are able to package classes and programs for them that they are usually willing to try if their schedule will allow. Another advantage of a larger church is that you can hire staff to focus on this particular area whereas a smaller church staff would be required to wear multiple hats that limit a focus on just discipleship.
- Resources, including staff and money.
- We have resources whether it be money or facilities but our biggest asset are the people and those sheer numbers of people willing to walk alongside and help fulfill the mission.
- Resources...quality...Christians who want good preaching and quality music are attracted to the larger church.
- Adult converts have a reality of growth that is contagious.
- We have the tools and the resources
- More resources—opportunities for service—more varied educational tools—more opportunities for small group support in areas of like interest etc.
- Larger churches have an advantage in developing disciples because they have more resources (staff & budget) to devote to the cause, and a bigger front door to attract more people to the process.
- A larger church can provide more opportunity for people to serve in their giftedness but by the same token, still tends to rely on the 80/20 rule
- Teachers Materials systems best practices from trial and error
- More resources and can offer more opportunities for growth

- Resources; Options
- We test our congregation every year on our six core practices and six core beliefs. Then we teach in the areas that are low. So it changes every year depending on how effective our teaching is in getting people to change. This year the lowest practice was worship (noticing and responding to God) so we are doing many things to help them understand what it is and how to grow in that area.
- Higher quality teaching, more opportunities to grow, more disciple makers in the church family to help mentor others, etc.
- Resources! We have amazing givers at West Side. Their faithfulness in this area allows us to produce tools and classes that aid them in their walk with the Lord. We are also able to hire a great staff that keeps ministry moving forward, and we have lots of support staff that free up the ministry staff who then can spend more time helping people become more fully devoted.
- None. I would say it is more difficult because people need individual attention. However, mega churches tend to attract more people and are reaching more unchurched people. So we are doing a better job reaching people but face the challenge of developing those we reach.
- From the churches I am familiar with—larger churches seem to be more evangelistic—but I'm not sure about the fully devoted part. Small groups is our method to help people grow closer to Christ. Authentic community builds fully devoted followers.

**In your opinion, what single trait of a "fully devoted follower" is most lacking in the congregation where you serve?**

- In our New Believers Program we have structured a curriculum around getting them Saved in Christ, Strong in Christ, Serving Christ and Sharing Christ. It's hard for me to pick which area is most lacking but I would guess it is serving Christ. The typical 20% or less do 80% of the work of the church. I would also suggest that a small percentage of these believers are faithful at their spiritual disciplines and at sharing their faith.
- Loving people who are not like the majority of those who attend.
- 
- Accountability
- Devoted...we have a lack of commitment
- Personal participation in the scripture.
- The desire to self-feed
- Needs of more basic Bible education—and understanding of stewardship
- Evangelism and service
- I would say the trait most lacking in our congregation is people living out their faith wherever they are. I feel like a lot of our people are different when they are at home or work, than when they are at church.
- We have a ton of people who are not serving
- multiplying themselves being missional as individuals 'as we go' in life (especially in the context of having our first permanent building facilities 2 years ago. Previously we were doing much better at this)

- Emotional health—it is not integrated into our picture of discipleship
- We keep things simple at Real Life and that has worked well. We have weekends and neighborhood based small groups. We also offer something called Deeper Life from time to time for those in small groups which are retreats and growth seminars about our six core beliefs and six core practices. So the most effective thing for us has been simplicity. No programs of other ministries.
- Reading God's Word and Growing personally outside of the church
- A passionate LOVE of Jesus... a thirst and hunger for Him.
- Holiness, worshipful, accountable, student
- 1. Daily Devotionals                      2. Giving sacrificially
- The people that complete our involvement/membership classes but never get connected into a small group.

**What program, initiative, or emphasis have you attempted that has worked well in developing/encouraging "fully devoted followers"?**

- Our New Believers Program has worked well for the few that have taken advantage of it. Also, our small group ministry team has held some Encounter Retreats with a follow up program designed to raise up new small group leaders. It has worked well for the few that have taken advantage of it.
- We now allow our Life Groups to determine for themselves what spiritual formation looks like for their group. This frees them to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and follow as He leads.
- We are still looking for that single most effective way of doing that but our neighborhood ministry is getting closer to that.
- The BASE CLASS system that Saddleback has made popular.
- Short-term Missions and Service groups
- Discovery Seminar
- 
- Small groups—managing your money God's way—core connections to enroll new people in small groups—strong short term missions opportunities from teens to senior citizens
- Small group curriculum recommendations this year are focused on spiritual disciplines, we will survey or measure our congregation this year.
- Adult Sunday School Classes
- Taking the mystery out of being an "FDF"
- Developed the Way of Christ. Everything done is seen through influencing people in one of these four areas. 1. Loving God—heart, soul, strength and mind 2. Loving People—mutual care 3. Building Character—fruits of the spirit to be all God wants us to be. 4. Being Christ's Body—serving with our spiritual gifts as a body inside and outside of the church.
- Community and relationships through small groups have become the primary way we care for

people and where people grow.

- When we first started the church we had a bunch of different ministries but people were so busy at church they could not build authentic community with each other, reach out and serve in the community.
- Small Groups, Take-home tools in our worship services (Bible reading tool, exploring baptism tool, books we read as a church family, etc.)
- Our CORE Classes (Bible Basics, Becoming a Contagious Christian, etc.) have helped people, as have small groups.
- Beginnings class for new believers, small group context for growth opportunities, all church studies/series, 1-on-1 discipleship
- Our assimilation process called "e-steps" Its three easy steps to begin your journey at Eastview. Guest reception after each service in the auditorium (by the cross). Small Groups remain a very strong way in which we get this done. Many leaders are developed many are using their gifts etc. in their groups. Our kids' ministry does an excellent job.
- Our small group is the best method we have to develop disciples.

**What program, initiative, or emphasis have you attempted that has NOT worked well in developing/encouraging "fully devoted followers"?**

- The only program that has not worked well was one that relied solely on one staff person (namely myself) for its success. We have got to recruit volunteers to help in this process. If we don't, we cannot keep up with the number of people making decisions for Christ. My motto has become, "We must learn to minister through people instead of to people."
- We tried a program of "classes" to move people through various areas of knowledge and disciplines we thought people needed on their spiritual journey. While we had good attendance it was "programmed" and not natural so we did not see growth, just a completion of classes' mentality.
- Small groups have done some good but overall they have not carried us to the next level.
- Wednesday night classes
- Small Groups and classes
- Adult Education
  
- Sunday morning Bible classes mostly due to lack of class room space
- Our "Finding your Niche" class to help people find places to serve has not worked well.
- Everything works and doesn't work to some degree
- Offering classes during the week to meet specific needs
- What does a follower of Jesus look like? There is an idea in many peoples mind that discipleship is all head knowledge so I would not talk about serving with those in training. I would get their hands dirty so they understand what discipleship really looks like.
- We tried the WHY campaign from Pursuit. It's a great program but it's not what our people needed at that time in our congregation.

- Sunday School, 1 time shots on teaching, uncoordinated efforts of discipleship among age levels.
- "Coaching" small group leaders. Since it did not work well we stopped recruiting that role. However, we have kept that function through other means like peer coaching etc.
- The few "Sunday School" classes we have that have not given up—I feel are the groups that are most stagnant in their faith. They are holding on to something that does not produce fruit. (This is the Reveal crisis—we've not taught our people how to grow themselves.)

**If you were undertaking a project to develop a plan for improved discipleship of adults in the congregation you serve, what is one critical question you would seek to answer?**

- How can we increase the percentage of people that actually get involved in our discipleship program from those who are making decision for Christ?
- How do people connect/belong to Christ and His church?
- How is the best way to get excited about it and then get them involved.
- You might check out the Reveal Study that Willow Creek recently published. It asks many good questions, starting with "Where are you?" to the people you are trying to help grow.
- Are people reading scripture, praying and confessing sin?
- How to achieve simplicity without watering down discipleship.
- I would need to know where they are in their walk—when would be the best time/day/night to begin to meet their needs to encourage their continued growth.
- Is it simple, measured, repeatable, and is the result truly life transformational from the inside out.
- What does a fully-devoted disciple look like?
- What does the process look like to move a person outside of faith in Christ to someone who is helping others walk with God.
- What relationships and environments help people grow the most and result in long-lasting results? What efforts encourage families to grow together? What efforts encourage personal responsibility for faith development?
- Do they "get it"? (Are people adopting this philosophy and are they seeing the fruit from it?)
- How has God worked in your life in the past (when did you feel closest to God)? What steps were you taking at that time to pursue God and are you still taking those same steps?
- 
- Are you having a regular, spirit filled, daily, time with Jesus through prayer and the Bible?
- If I knew this—I would implement this! When you find out—please let me know. Actually, one thing we've done is to offer some "elective" courses (2-4 weeks) that deal with questions that we're hearing from our people.

**Additional comments:**

- Belonging is natural as is growth, but we have tried to program it too often and our results, as shown in Reveal from Willow Creek, are less than stellar. Only as we learn to think about spiritual growth as natural will we seriously begin to think about the environments we need to provide in which growth can occur.

## **Appendix 9 NAV TEAM INTERVIEW**

### **RESULTS**

#### **Interview with Pastor B**

1. How would you describe a "fully devoted follower" in your own words?

A fully devoted follower would be one that is reproducing themselves spiritually in another person. Someone that has an attitude of being a learner, the idea that as Christians, we never finish learning or growing or maturing. At the same time they see their purpose in life as being God's channels of His love and being His ambassadors of His grace to other people. So that they're beginning to not only share the love of Christ with others so that they come to know Christ, but also to help them grow. That they realize that there is a cycle. That they see themselves making a difference influencing others in the body as well as in the world or community for the kingdom.

2. If you could choose ONE needed quality of a "fully devoted follower" at WCC, which one would it be? Why?

Somebody that feeds themselves and sees their lives as not being lived for themselves but for the benefit of others. Part of being an FDF is realizing that I'm not dependent on other people for my ability to grow and to serve. So there is a self-motivation of self-management under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I think when a person has that quality, then they're going to be able to lead out, they're going to be able to make a difference. They're not always going to be looking to the church or someone else to feed them or give them direction or tell them where to go. This doesn't mean that they're not interdependent with other people. I think that's a key quality. Part of being a learner is you need other people. You also want to be a self-starter; you want to have a motivation that's internal, intrinsic motivation.

3. What are WCC's strengths in developing "fully devoted followers?"

I think we see ministry and personal spiritual growth going hand in hand. There was a time in our history when we saw spiritual growth and growing going deeper, knowing with our heads, the Bible, we need to do that first with the idea that once we knew that we'd be able to serve or we'd serve better. I think we see those two as not being one before the other but they happen concurrently and they help each other. I'm a better Bible student, I'm growing more personal in my relationship with Christ because I'm serving, and through the experience of serving and



ministering, then I give and that helps me learn and grow and the same thing is true of course as I study the Bible and as my relationship with Christ

grows, I want to serve more, I want to minister. I think that's the strength, the marriage of those two. We have in general a pretty healthy spirit here or culture that's healthy spiritually that focuses on restoring relationships and not allowing relationship problems to fester and become divisive. We've modeled that well from the staff and elders not that we don't have those issues at different times but I think we're more and more creating a culture that says spiritual development, becoming an FDF is not about keeping a bunch of rules. I think we have some really good pieces in terms of growing and in terms of being involved in ministry. Our involvement process.

4. What are WCC's weaknesses in developing "fully devoted followers"?

I don't think we have a good plan or good process for what that looks like for someone who's really trying to do that. The danger in that is we've at different times had more of a plan, but it was so rigid it didn't allow enough options. Somewhere, particularly with adult learners, the thing I learned a number of years ago when I took a Master's class at K-State when I was on sabbatical on Adult education and adult learning, the thing that came back is that we need to offer options, we need to be able to help people develop a personal plan for growth. I still think there's some good to that, but the challenge is if you have too many options, adults don't know what to do. If you don't provide enough, people in our culture like different ways to gain materials. All in all, I don't think we have a very good plan or system to tie together a lot of really good things we have going.

5. What are WCC's obstacles in developing "fully devoted followers"?

Time. People's time is very valuable. I think without a plan, because we don't have a really good plan that people can tie into. I don't think we've had strong leadership at the staff level and at the lay level that we've raised up, and been able to have the time and energy to give to developing this more. To a certain extent, it's true, we've been so focused on getting into the building, and creating a climate where we welcome a lot of new people, I think we've done that well. I think it's time to kick this up a notch in terms of this aspect.

6. What is one important change that needs to be made to address these obstacles and/or weaknesses?

We need a plan, we need to tie all the pieces together in some kind of a plan. Right now it's like we've got an ocean out here, we've got some really good things, we've got short-term missions, we've got growing class, belonging class, we've got memorize the word. We've got an interpretation class, we've got maybe BSF. We've got Sunday school, home team. How do we connect those together and how do we make some of those things more intentional toward moving people? We may need to get a better idea of what the goal is. We may need to have a profile. The other problem is you may have a plan, but not have a

clear goal in mind and end up with a plan moving in a direction you don't want to go.

7. What major factors, developments, and decisions in WCC's history have led to this point in developing "fully devoted followers" and the need to develop "fully devoted followers"?

I think the life cycle of whatever it means to be an FDF or member of the church has somewhat been related to Pastor E's life cycle and growth. The 70's were full of a more knowledge-based Navigator, Campus Crusade approach to growth and ministry, and there were some really good things in that because in our previous life as a church, there wasn't much of that. It was more about the church and being a church member, and then it became growing spiritually and growing personally.

By the time I came on staff, that was still a major focus, but Pastor E's journey had led him to a lot of depression, and I think he'd gone so high on the knowledge base and realized that, in and of itself, that wasn't the end. He'd memorized tons of scripture, he'd had a lot of quiet time, he had done all of the spiritual discipline but I think they had been more about pleasing God than trusting God. We'd had a culture here that was about the Navigators and a program called 2 7, which they still have. We had people taking that. It's a two—year course. The Navigators said you need to get out of all ministry before you take 2 7 because it is so intense. While we had been pushing and promoting this, we were finding that when people were getting out of ministry for two years, they weren't getting back in it.

Pastor E went through some burnout. He took his year of sabbatical, and he came back with a much more holistic approach. That's when we started. I remember he preached a sermon on the twelve steps, and that was very controversial. It began to kind of open up, ministry had a stronger focus, and we went with a Frank Tillapaugh approach if you remember *The Church Unleashed*, which was all about getting people out into the ministry. It's a ready, fire, aim. Once you get it going, come back, and we'll see if we might give you some money to do that. It was a real entrepreneurial approach.

We still continued some of the traditional discipleship, and we wrote the purpose statement. There was a guy out of California that came and helped us do that. He kept a discipleship notebook for us which was, again, kind of the Navigator approach, but a little more open. It wasn't quite so regimented. The approach to maturing people was one one-one-discipleship. That's what you did. Every elder or most elders did that. Then in the 90's we really started moving away from that. I really don't know why. I think because in terms of "bang for the buck" you couldn't keep as many of those going and disciple everybody, and there was a greater focus on small groups. We'd had a focus on small groups all those years, but I think it got a little more intense. Pastor E wasn't doing as much of that.

We had a class in the 70's and early 80's. The big class was the Christian basics. We kind of moved away from that in the late 80's to something that was a little more intense. We talked about people who were new coming to that class, why everybody was turning pages in the Bible and new people didn't know how to get to those pages. It wasn't very new-person friendly, and I would say in terms of Bible knowledge we probably weren't as intense. We kind of focused more on the middle. We wouldn't have said it quite that way. Then we got into seeing the new people. We saw some growth, and then it was kind of like we aren't providing any basics for these people, so that was when the *Purpose Driven Church* came out and we kind of got into that.

When we moved away from the knowledge based approach to maturing people, we really started to

grow, and we reached a lot of people that didn't have as much Bible knowledge and probably backed off it too much. People were so knowledge based they weren't living what they were studying, It was all about head knowledge—it wasn't life changing; it wasn't transformation. I was growing in my knowledge, but I wasn't growing in my character being transformed into Christ likeness. We have always had a burning gut checking kind of feeling like we're really not reaching lost people. I don't know that we've made great strides. Again I go back to "We seem to do best in the middle here," but I think we've not been as intentional about helping people grow in their Bible knowledge toward life application. Again, I think some of our fears about becoming what we've been in the past has kept us from moving in a direction that would have been a little healthier.

8. What other aspects of WCC's church culture are important in developing "fully devoted followers"?

I think we have a very forgiving culture. I think we have a very welcoming culture. I think we have a more graceful culture than a lot of places. Not that everybody experiences that. I think that for the most part people are open to change.

9. How do you see your specific leadership role relating to the development of "fully devoted followers"?

One thing that I haven't done much with—I feel part of the piece that I can help with but have not—in terms of the system is the whole leadership development piece. I think part of the reason we haven't done more is that we haven't developed leaders for this area who are passionate about it, and we don't have a team that's focused on that and understands it. We've had some people interested in that, but, frankly, their interest hasn't manifested itself in any mobilization. I think that would be my part or at least the part that I would be most interested in. Probably my role in terms of trying to set the pace keeps the staff focusing on the mission. A level of maturity that it's pushing us towards, that is uncomfortable and it's not just about knowing more. It's about applying more and understanding

who I am in Christ. That's a real critical thing.

10. What would you like to see accomplished in the next five years through WCC in the development of "fully devoted followers"? The next ten years?

I would love to see a more intentional holistic systematic plan that moves people. A tracking system that tracks people; and then even in that I struggle, because spiritual growth, becoming an FDF is not about checking a bunch of boxes and taking a bunch of classes and reading a bunch of books. There is an element there that helps us move. Quantifying and the danger of quantifying if we make it too succinct, then it becomes legalistic and ritualistic. I think we've been too far on the other side and just assuming that it's happening. I think finding a balance will be your greatest challenge. I'd love to see an easily identifiable plan or maybe it's a personal development plan where people can go through, or maybe it's the next step or it's a different way, we help plot out a growth plan that involves ministry, it involves Bible knowledge, it involves life application, and it involves character growth. I'd love to see a team of lay leaders committed to helping that happen. Maybe it's even to have one or two staff members devoted to this process. I'd love to see a growing percentage of our body understand their responsibility: they are an FDF. They are responsible for

studying the Bible on their own, for growing in their character quality to take initiative to get into a group, for taking the initiative for their own growth and not waiting for someone to call them or tell them.

11. What will be the most significant/important impact as WCC does a better job of creating "fully devoted followers"?

A more mature body. I think we'll actually attract more seekers. More and more people will understand that it's their responsibility to reach out. I think we'll have more workers—to have a third who are seekers, a third who are new believers, and a third who are mature. I think that's a good percentage. Right now 70% of our folks are in the middle. They are still in that group that is not fully developed or fully devoted. Maybe it's always going to be that way, but maybe we can move that way.

12. What is one question you would like to ask on a WCC congregational survey for this research project?

I would love to ask, "Whose responsibility is it to help you grow spiritually or help you become an FDF"? I'd love to know where people see that.

13. What is one question you would like to ask other large churches on a survey as a part of this research project?

I have a fear that nobody else is doing a much better job of this than we are. Is anybody out there who has a balanced approach?

#### **Interview with Pastor D**

1. How would you describe a "fully devoted follower" in your own words?

One of the ways to follow through with who an FDF is, is to talk about someone who has taken God's word and has let it transform their lives and the way they behave. In order to have the transformation, you have to have the biblical knowledge that plays an important role in that and understand the different things that God calls us to as a follower. Like love and grace, the spiritual disciplines that He calls us to as a follower, but at some point in order for it to be fully devoted, I think that is someone who has taken what they've learned and transformed it in their lives and are allowing it to be played out in the world they live in and the church in some type of service or ministry.

2. If you could choose *one* needed quality of a "fully devoted follower" at WCC, which one would it be? Why?

We would have people at WCC be fully devoted followers of Christ and it's shown in the way they serve people. There are two places to do that, one is externally—outside the church, and the other is internally—within the church. People are looking to leverage their giftedness after they've found out what Christ has led them to do—being able to serve in those ways whether that be in a helping

hands ministry or benevolence ministry or teaching ministry or wherever they are powerful and they can help people move into spiritual maturity. The FDF is someone who has developed a maturity about what Christ wants them to do. They live a transformed life, and that life reflects Christ.

3. What are WCC's strengths in developing "fully devoted followers"?

One of the real strengths at Westlink that I appreciate is that when we describe what an FDF is, we're actually talking about people being involved in ministry. I think one of the things I appreciate so much about Westlink is it is not a church to sit in the grandstands. I've had people tell me they were amazed that we had asked them so quickly to engage in service. I really value that because that brings out once again this component of making sure that we're not just a church that's building biblical knowledge in people's lives for the sake of their own benefit but we're building biblical knowledge in people's lives for the sake of them using that to allow their lives to form from that for acts of service. I just appreciate the fact that Westlink just wants to get people in the game. I think that's one of the strengths we have in helping people become FDFs.

4. What are WCC's weaknesses in developing "fully devoted followers"?

Trying to develop a level of maturity in a person. One, assessing who those people are that we can move through devotion, and second, the training that's

required therefore to do that well. We have to continue to strive to become an FDF of Christ. We as a church have an opportunity to seek out and access people for the different levels of devotedness and place them in roles that they can be successful being an FDF, trying to figure out whether they have a gift that would leverage them more this way or more that way. Then the whole aspect of training, how do we implement the knowledge that it takes for people to understand what God is really calling them to? How do we help them understand what love and grace are and how to live out the spiritual disciplines? What does it mean to bestow love on someone? What does it mean to help them understand the truth in our modern day? Developing a specific strategy and then determining which things are important to teach. Having some priority in that, which things are we going to teach first?

5. What are WCC's obstacles in developing "fully devoted followers"?

One obstacle would be time. We live in a culture today where people are so tremendously busy and trying to find the right formats of time to help them do that. Is that just on Sunday morning, is that during the week, and how do you offer multiple venues so people can work that within their differing schedules? Explore how we can develop FDFs outside the traditional model of the classroom. The first thing we think of many times in the church if we're going to develop followers of Christ, well we need to sit down and have a Bible study about it. We need to train them in that regard. We need to think of new ways to do that so there's more of allowing the mind and the hands to work together and trying to figure out how to get people involved and actually that transformed living of an FDF. Another obstacle for us is as your opportunity increases in a large church and you have so many different people that you're trying to move along the path of being an FDF it requires a lot of man power. It calls for mentors and teachers, and it requires a lot of manpower, and that's

an obstacle in a large church.

6. What is one important change that needs to be made to address these obstacles and/or weaknesses?

One of the biggest changes we need to make as a church is we need to allow someone the devotion that it takes to see a strategy through in our church. We value this in our church. To really develop a strategy that is holistic in the life of a believer that you know will cover all the different people that will come in the different stages of Christianity just in terms of knowledge and background as well as someone who would develop a path for them to run for each of those different people. It's a real challenge because it's so broad. We have to be committed to give someone time to dream about it, to build a team around it and implement it and to evaluate it in the process. If we don't get really intentional about that, and how well it will be done... There are so many people, and there are so many things to chase, we at some point as a leadership have to say we are going to narrow our focus, which is common terminology now to the point where we say, "This is part of our mission, and we are going to staff specifically for that"; otherwise, it falls

under the adult ministry umbrella or the student ministry umbrella. And everyone is creating their own silo approach and it's not holistic through the church. I'm not necessarily even suggesting that families should study the same thing together. That's not the road or avenue that I'm trying to travel down, but someone who can really spearhead the effort and say, "You give me enough time. I'm not carrying the small groups and pastoral care and benevolence, but here's what I'm really focusing on, because we feel as a church this is really important, and so I'm going to be able to give my time and energy and focus to it."

7. What major factors, developments, and decisions in WCC's history have led to this point in developing "fully devoted followers" and the need to develop "fully devoted followers"?

WCC has had a strong teaching component. I think that's been really important for the history and the heritage of our church. It has been a church that has faithfully in the mid-70's to the mid-80's really spent a lot of time with organizations like the Navigators and other organizations, feeding the people and helping them grow in the spiritual disciplines. Having a pastor like Pastor E, who had been here for forty years, there was a real consistency of teaching and a consistency of vision in the church. I think Pastor E adapted himself to grow the church; his heartbeat was his heartbeat. That has had a huge impact on who we are as a church today. Another thing in the church's development is the whole concept of participation. WCC is going to be a church that you're going to be challenged to get involved with to the point where we create the tension. Just trying to speak to people just as directly as we could and helping them understand that we don't believe that you're going to grow into an FDF unless you're involved in a small group.

8. What other aspects of WCC's church culture are important in developing "fully devoted followers"?

I'd love to see us continue to develop something that would transcend through age groups and that being from the 60-70 year old at our church through the 16-18 year old. What are the core things that we're looking at? What are the core values that we would use to describe someone who's an FDF? We would say these are the five or six pegs on the wall that we're going to aim for hanging things on so that we can see the student, no matter the age. These are the things that we think

would be consistent toward them aspiring to in their life and trying to attain. Developing a common language, a common direction and then anyone who is trying to implement the process of helping them become an FDF, they have something to aim at. Then the requirement for them is to develop a strategy that would accomplish that for the age that they are targeting.

9. How do you see your specific leadership role relating to the development of "fully devoted followers"?

Student Ministry—Involving kids in the ministry. To be devoted to something it's not a lip service issue it's a life issue. We've really tried to help our kids engage in our student ministry where they are owning it, where they develop a real identity in ownership in it. We have a number of kids who meet on Sunday morning before our services even start here at the church. We have different areas of value if you will from outreach to community service to worship. They are trying to experience how to use their devotion. When we run a student through the ministry, we are in essence laying a foundation for them as a twenty- and thirty-year-old individual. If we don't help them engage in the church at some level, from just gaining knowledge to living the knowledge out, then we are just sitting people in the pews in the next ten to fifteen years, and they're not really going to engage in the church. We need to try to identify the things that we need to be teaching, especially in the student ministry.

Preaching Team—Continuing to create tension in the lives of our believers. I think that creating tension is in our mission statement, how we can have people connect and we can help our people understand that once you come to know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, life is not about you anymore. As adults we get very comfortable, and it's a lot easier to say to kids because at some level they understand that. We need to keep creating tension for the adults between feeling like today's service made me uncomfortable and maybe even the teaching because I wanted it to be about me and it was about someone else. Sometimes that's about the believer making exceptions for the person that's trying to connect to understand the message. Sometimes the exception may be that some people coming to our church may feel uncomfortable because we're pressing them in ways they're not ready to go yet. When we have that tension in the church and we explain it and help our people understand it, it is valuable. It's valuable for our people who are the FDFs to allow themselves the ability to serve others before serving themselves.

Teaching Team—trying to find the balance between the message and the calendar, finding the balance between the person who's come for the first time and the person who's been there for forty years. Trying to be able to speak to both of them.

NAV Team—Continuing to talk about the process. To be creative, to be relevant, to give someone the time to work at this. We've got to start deciding what things are going to be our marks in our history in this stage of our history. What are we going to be known for? If you do too many things you don't do very many well. We've got to decide if this is something we want to do well, we're going to have to give it attention and make the sacrifices to make it happen.

10. What would you like to see accomplished in the next five years through WCC in the development of "fully devoted followers"? The next ten years?

Five years—We need to have a specific strategy. We need to have plan, we need to develop a strategy to accomplish the plan, and then we need to evaluate the plan through that process.

Ten years—the people that are coming out of the five-year strategy and implementation to give themselves to passing that leadership baton or devotion to others as they were devoted to. Allowing them to give back to this strategy that fed them so that they can keep that baton of faith being passed on. We are going to have to have those leaders coming back to help us accomplish that purpose. We've got to get over that desire to be fed and then waiting for the next thing that is going to be done for us.

11. What will be the most significant/important impact as WCC does a better job of creating "fully devoted followers"?

When someone dies to themselves, and then they start dreaming about "How as a unique individual do I use that devotion to advance His kingdom and glorify his name?" I think we will see more people develop unique ministries, unique ways of reaching out, unique ways of serving the community around them. It will inspire others to use their unique gifts to be Christ in the marketplace.

12. What is one question you would like to ask on a WCC congregational survey for this research project?

What things do you think are important to learn about being an FDF of Christ?

13. What is one question you would like to ask other large churches on a survey as a part of this research project?

What are you willing to be devoted to?

How would you best demonstrate yourself as an FDF? What is being demonstrated in that relationship? Tell me what that looks like beyond that.

### **Interview with Pastor C**

1. How would you describe a "fully devoted follower" in your own words?

In my own words I will move to Paul's words; a fully devoted follower is one who could say as Paul said, "To live is Christ, and to die is gain." That's a pretty high bar to take our people to, but I think that's where we ought to be heading them.

2. If you could choose ONE needed quality of a "fully devoted follower" at WCC, which one would it be? Why?

I think we need more opportunities for leadership-driven or conducted Bible teaching and study. And when I say leadership-driven or given or delivered, that's to distinguish it from just this idea



that when a Sunday school class wants to have an in-depth study, they ask somebody to do it and they do it. I think that's one of the reasons we have the seeming polarization to some extent. More Bible teaching but in a more intentional way. I think we can do that without falling into the trap that leadership seems to be concerned with: not academic or knowledge-only model only. We can't expect people to become "fully devoted followers" without equipping them with scripture.

3. What are WCC's strengths in developing "fully devoted followers"?

I think our strengths in developing a "fully devoted follower" are on the relationship side. Clearly that's the model we're stressing or pushing for. It doesn't mean we've done everything we can do in that area, but I think we're doing well in that we address it in our plan, it's part of our planning, it's part of what leadership wants to do, and, therefore, any deficiencies we have there will be dealt with, and so I have no concerns that we are going to end up falling short there.

4. What are WCC's weaknesses in developing "fully devoted followers"?

Revert back to what I was saying before, in question 2.

5. What are WCC's obstacles in developing "fully devoted followers"?

I think questions 5, 6, 7, and 8 all go together.

As I've been reminded, I've only been in the church since we moved into the new building, and on staff roughly a year after that. I've been on staff 3 V\*years now, and attended roughly 4% years. And however I'm told that the church went through an evolution from the time when, as explained to me, that we were very much like a Bible church for a while—very highly focused on Bible teaching and such. And it was out of a sense of frustration or disappointment or a sense that we weren't getting where we needed to go with that. I think it was a conscious move made toward a more relational and reaching out outreach approach to ministry that would involve more of the support recovery groups and some of these things and more of an emphasis on kind of a move toward seeker friendly kinds of groups. And I think that in that process there continues to be a sense of "We've been there, it didn't work; we're doing something different."

I feel like not that we've gone too far on the seeker model or necessarily too far to see this continuum of seeker on one side and Bible study on the other. Which just

frustrates me when I hear it presented that way, because I don't agree that they are mutually exclusive? I think you can be very seeker sensitive, even seeker oriented, and still have strong Bible teaching. Because I don't think Bible teaching puts people off by itself. It can, but it doesn't have to. I think you can be very seeker friendly in form and methodology and your image and music and decorations—all kinds of things and actively avoid that churchy language that is kind of in-home, insider language that puts people off when they come in and they don't know it. A lot of the things that we as the body of Christians have done—I don't mean the Christian Church Christians, the church in general, not just our church—have done, we've made some real errors in time in that regard that have tended to put people off. So at any rate, I feel like we've allowed ourselves to fall into a trap of polarization of false pole description of Bible teaching on one side

and outreach on the other. Of course this is coming from someone who my sense of call in Christian service and missions is basically an open Bible.

It was through Bible study and spending time in the word that I sensed the importance of evangelism and importance of missions and importance of outreach. And so, without that why would I, I wouldn't have a sense of that. That's why I think if we do it carefully we could institute a lot stronger emphasis on Bible teaching that would support our goal, the other side of our mission statement. I think that developing fully devoted followers allows you to connect with Jesus. And I really think one of the reasons the church has been successful since it kind of made the turn, is that it built this foundation of people who were trained and who worked. Now we're at a point where we have a lot of people who are not trained and equipped—except for some that the Lord in his Sovereignty has developed anyway. And I think it's something we need to address if we're going to take that next big step forward: is we need to undergird our people with the wherewithal to be involved in that outreach. So I think that's an important change that needs to be made, to somehow in our outreach strategy incorporate some strong scriptural teaching. I don't mean just from the pulpit.

My own view, and this hasn't been shared by others on the NAV team, and that is I feel like an effective way to do that would be another large group meeting or service of some kind. Whether that's the best way for it or not I'm not sure, and it's only one way we can do it. That just strikes me as a way we could quickly take a step forward. To do that would be to have a service where people knew they could come and get some more in-depth teaching.

There may be some other ways. One way that to me it addresses the need to be leadership driven, it could involve elders. It doesn't mean the teaching team would have to do it. Do more Bible teaching; not necessarily have homework, but more Bible teaching. I would like us to have a program where people could self-select a series of classes or training where they'll deal with things. It would be strongly undergirded with scripture. Where they will have to go through it, where they will have to get into scripture themselves and spend some time maybe in the

areas that will be drawn on. Some foundational stuff, making sure they have a clear understanding of grace. It's one thing to have enough understanding to put your faith in it for salvation. It's another thing to really understand the implications there's God's grace for sanctification for out working on our own lives. How God's grace should come through and how we should relate to other people on. With the idea that if you take that training, it's not just so that you have a better understanding of scripture. The idea is that you're being outfitted with tools or equipment much as you'd load somebody up with a toolbox to be a mechanic. If we're going to give someone a fancy red toolbox on wheels, we expect him to fix cars. They're not supposed to sit in his garage and look pretty. As long as that's a part of the study all the time, part of the deal would be, we don't just expect you to use those tools, and we expect you to take on two or three apprentices that you're going to teach as well. That can be integrated into the small group thing pretty well.

6. What is one important change that needs to be made to address these obstacles and/or weaknesses?
7. What major factors, developments, and decisions in WCC's history have led to this point in developing "fully devoted followers" and the need to develop "fully devoted followers"?

8. What other aspects of WCC's church culture are important in developing "fully devoted followers"?
9. How do you see your specific leadership role relating to the development of "fully devoted followers"?

I'm working with my small group that I'm trying to help move that way. My guest ministries I probably haven't explored all the options for ministry to them other than relational. My ministry, guest ministries people, is very much just a relational thing, not an attempt to have a verse of the day or anything like that. In my small group we've been doing Bible study, I've taken them through John and Galatians, and we're going to do Colossians next. I feel like at least for these three or four guys, I've really helped to get them moved along. My leadership role in that regard beyond that is to try to carefully express what I think is the case, the reason that I'm careful is not so much for fear that I'll be misunderstood that somehow it will have an undermining effect rather than a positive effect. Not in the sense that I'm here to fix things, but in a sense that I'm here to be part of the team moving forward and I want everything I do to be positive. I do think that God's brought us together in a unique way in that each of us has something to contribute and I think that my thinking is worth considering.

10. What would you like to see accomplished in the next five years through WCC in the development of "fully devoted followers"? The next ten years?

I can't say specifically. I would like to think that someone who's attending here that's interested in growing can get some strong solid support from the church in that process.

11. What will be the most significant/important impact as WCC does a better job of creating "fully devoted followers"?

I think it is part of what I was saying before about being a foundation of strong Christians who can carry the load on some as the church grows. We assume—I think there's a real chance—that we could have significant growth in the next couple years. Unless that growth is attracting Christians from another church—I think there will be some and I think it's good if there are some—there will be a lot that are unchurched or inadequately churched who will need some foundation. If we don't already have some people strong in there that can provide that so when they relate as we develop these relational things and in small groups. If when the small group meets and someone has a problem and wants to find the answer in scripture but nobody in that group has any understanding of scripture or any sense of where to turn to help find the help, I'm afraid that we're not going to get where we need to be.

12. What is one question you would like to ask on a WCC congregational survey for this research project?
13. What is one question you would like to ask other large churches on a survey as a part of this research project?

I'd like to know how they address the question of building their believers while not setting up some kind of a "we and they" or "in and out," "elite or non-elite."

## Appendix 10 HOME TEAM SURVEY RESULTS

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