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BETHEL UNIVERSITY
BETHEL SEMINARY ST. PAUL

REDISCOVERING THE URGENCY OF INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP
IN THE NAGA CHURCHES IN NAGALAND

A THESIS PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE
IN ORGANIC LEADERSHIP

BY
ORENVUNGO NGULLIE
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

MAY 2015

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DEFINITIONS

Khel: Sector¹ or one of the units of a Naga village comprising several clans²

Intentional Discipleship: The process of helping others become obedient followers of Christ by conforming to His likeness

Naga/Nagaland: A race of people with mongoloid features indigenous to the state of Nagaland, situated in the northeast region of India

Naga Churches: Protestant churches of Baptist, Pentecostal or Revival affinity/origins

Animism: The belief and worship attributed to spirits or spiritual beings in indigenous folklore

¹Kajen Mongro, *Naga Cultural Attires and Musical Instruments* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1999), 124. The author uses “Khel” and “Sector” interchangeably. The researcher agrees that “Sector” is a compact and appropriate reference.

²Nirmal Nibedon, glossary in *Nagaland: The Night of the Guerillas* (Atlanta, GA: Lancer Publishers, 2013). For more information about the meaning and usage of this word, see Joya Chakraborty, “Local Self Government as Democratic Participation: The unique case of the Nagas,” *Journal of Business Management and Social Science Research*, Vol. 1, no. 2 (November 2012): 4-5.

ABSTRACT

The problem this research addressed was the lack of intentional discipleship which has resulted in spiritual apathy and has hampered the development of leadership in the local churches in Nagaland, rendering Christians ineffective to impact the community. The study involved evangelical churches in Nagaland from various denominations, such as Baptist, Pentecostal, Revival and a couple of independent churches.

In response to this problem, the researcher drew important lessons from the Great Commission passage (Matt. 28:19-20) highlighting the importance of discipleship as an intentional pursuit instead of an accidental venture. The literature review dealt with the current and relevant issues that form the backdrop of this project. A mixed method of qualitative and quantitative research helped obtain important data by means of survey questionnaires and personal interviews. Grounded theory was employed due to inadequate or non-existent theories concerned with the research problem. Three categories were considered in order to move from data collection to data analysis: First, the respondents' experience of discipleship in the early stages of their faith journey. Second, the church's involvement in the respondents' growth by means of structured discipleship. Third, the role of discipleship in the respondents' current ministries.

The research findings revealed that discipleship, although deemed important was not happening in most churches in Nagaland. Naga Christians tend to misunderstand discipleship with regular church attendance. The research showed that the Naga church is failing to make disciples despite its many outreach and mission endeavors. Although

church leaders subscribe to the idea that discipleship is necessary, minimal efforts are made for these ideas to materialize. Underlying issues of pride, arrogance and power seems to hinder attempts for accountability and discipleship.

The research attempted to disentangle the church from its tepid approach to discipleship, to a new sphere of intentional life-on-life discipleship.

DEDICATION

To Wichit and Miriam Maneevone for living a life that spells discipleship.

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.”

-Proverbs 11: 30

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH OVERVIEW

The Problem and Its Context

Statement of the Problem

The problem this research addressed is the lack of intentional discipleship, which has resulted in spiritual apathy and has hampered the development of leadership in the local churches in Nagaland, rendering Christians ineffective to impact the community. In response to this problem, the researcher (a) examined the concept of discipleship and its importance as demonstrated in the Bible, (b) explored relevant literature that dealt with the Naga church and society, (c) identified key hindrances and challenges related to discipleship by interacting with churches and leaders, and based upon these studies, (d) challenged the Naga churches to engage in intentional discipleship with heightened urgency.

Delimitations of the Problem

The research will be limited to the Protestant churches in Nagaland.

The research will be limited to the area of discipleship and to gauge the presence or absence of discipleship methods/programs within the local churches in Nagaland.

Assumptions

The first assumption is that the Bible provides sufficient wisdom and guidance pertaining to the ministry of intentional discipleship.

The second assumption is that as the Naga church and the Naga people continue to seek God's leading in humility and trust, they can expect to effectively influence their culture and beyond for Christ.

The third assumption is that God uses the local church to develop leaders, and leaders must be developed within the context of the local church.

The fourth assumption is that most churches are passionate about winning souls, but they are unprepared to guide believers through the discipleship process.

The fifth assumption is that a changed or 'transformed' life of a disciple can impact positive change in all spheres of society.

Subproblems

The first subproblem was to examine the importance of discipleship as demonstrated in the Bible. Therefore, the researcher examined the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) passage. The second subproblem was to explore relevant literature that dealt with Nagaland and discipleship in the Naga church context. The third subproblem was to interact with churches and leaders to ascertain their experience of discipleship by means of survey questionnaires and personal interviews. The fourth subproblem was to collect, analyze and synthesize data in order to develop a crystallized view of discipleship that would be helpful to the Naga church.

Setting of the Project

The setting for this project is Nagaland, a small Christian state in northeast India. Nagaland is known for its Baptist majority believers¹ and is often referred to as “the most Baptist state in the world.”² A Naga writer, Mazie Nakhro, observes, “Nagaland is strategically located in the midst of the most populous nations: Indian Hindus on the west, Burmese Buddhists on the east, Chinese Communists on the north, and Bangladeshi Muslims on the south.”³ As a Christian state, Nagaland glows in the midst of immense spiritual darkness.

The research involved evangelical churches in Nagaland from various denominations, such as Baptist, Pentecostal, Revival and a couple of independent churches. The researcher’s affiliation with the Assemblies of God denomination was also considered. The Naga churches are similar in many ways in their style of worship but are mostly differentiated along tribal lines. About sixteen different tribes⁴ live in Nagaland, each with their own dialect and customs, but they are bound together by a common history.

The Nagas encountered Christianity through American Baptist missionaries who were drawn by the desire to evangelize the head hunting natives living in the Naga hills. The first encounter happened in the 1830s⁵ during the time of the British occupation in

¹Jonathan Glancey, *Nagaland: A Journey to India's Forgotten Frontier* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 2011), 34.

²C. P. Anto, "Peace Channel: A Channel for Human Rights Education and Peace in Nagaland," *In Factis Pax Journal*, Vol. 3, no 1 (2009): 140.

³Mazie Nakhro, *To the Top in Two Generations*, (Bangalore: Brilliant Printers, 2010), 146.

⁴Jonathan Glancey, *Nagaland: A Journey*, 1.

⁵Joshua Lorin, “Naga Christianity: The Baptists in the Formative Years, 1838-1915” (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2014), 17, 28, 322.

India. However, the first church on Naga soil was established in 1872.⁶ Although it took a while for the gospel to reach every tribe in Nagaland, the revival movements in the 1950s to 1970s⁷ changed the history of Christianity in Nagaland. It is no surprise that today ninety percent of Nagas in Nagaland are Christians.⁸

The Naga church experienced rapid growth and transformation following the revival movements, but things have taken a downturn in these modern times. The lack of ongoing discipleship has left believers defenseless against false teachings and practices that do not align with biblical truth. In many ways Christianity has become an identity rather than a commitment to faith in Christ. The piety that once characterized the Naga church has been replaced by a sense of nominalism.⁹ As a result, attending church on Sundays has simply become a religious duty or obligation for many. The Naga society is beset with internal conflicts, disunity, hatred and the like. Despite being a Christian state, Nagaland is also known for corruption.¹⁰ Unabated corruption continues to significantly hamper progress and development in the state. Because the Nagas are generally considered Christian, their every conduct reflects back on Christianity and the church. The Nagas are in need of deep transformation in their approach to living and behaving as Christians in daily life. As hope in the government wanes, people look to the church to

⁶Joshua Lorin, 18.

⁷Paul Hattaway, *From Head-Hunters to Church Planters: An Amazing Spiritual Awakening in Nagaland* (USA: Authentic Publishing, 2006), 63.

⁸Jonathan Glancey, *Nagaland: A Journey*, 34.

⁹Ken Johnson, "All the Trappings of Victorious Headhunters: Naga Peoples Made Beauty From the Ugly in Northeastern India," *The New York Times*, June 27, 2013, accessed November 30, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/28/arts/design/naga-peoples-made-beauty-from-the-ugly-in-northeastern-india.html?_r=0

¹⁰Zarenthung T. Ezung, "Corruption and its Impact on Development: A Case Study of Nagaland," *International Journal of Rural Studies*, Vol.19, no. 1 (April 2012): 1, accessed January 10, 2015.

influence change and renewal. Despite the often justified criticism levied at the church, it still has a pivotal and urgent role. The time is ripe for the church to make true disciples and not just Sunday Christians. The Naga society needs people who hate wickedness and model Christlikeness both in word and deed.

Importance of the Project

Importance of the Project to the Researcher

The project arose from a critical need that the researcher perceives in the church today. For too long the gospel has been preached repeatedly in Nagaland, but modeling the gospel in practical ways in life is missing. Although many initially respond to the gospel message, unless the gospel is adequately modeled it will not be applied in everyday life. Typically, the new converts remain comfortable with the nametag of “Christian,” but they miss out on the grand adventure that God is calling them to. Sadly, for many so-called Christians “talk” and “walk” do not match. This causes people to turn away from the gospel instead of turning to Christ; hence, there is an urgent need for Spirit-filled disciplers, who will model and prayerfully lead new believers to a deeper walk with Jesus through wise instruction and careful counsel. S. E. Fowl writes:

New converts cannot be expected to have mastered the demands of their new faith and the practices needed to live in accord with these demands in their day-to-day lives. Such converts will need both instruction in their new faith and concrete examples of how to embody that faith in the various contexts in which they find themselves...No amount of abstract verbal instruction can bring about mastery of a craft without the concrete example of a master to imitate.¹¹

In the researcher’s context, most people have grown accustomed to Christian vocabulary and rituals, but their unchanged behavior and lifestyle indicates that the faith

¹¹S. E. Fowl, “Imitation,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 430.

has not gone deeper. The researcher grew up in a Christian home and faithfully attended church throughout his youth. Nevertheless, he was unprepared for the challenges of the world. Scriptures, books and other media that were fortunately available to him fueled his spiritual pursuit. He has come to increasingly realize that there is a dearth of leaders that are committed to investing in the lives of people in an intentional way.

God's continued shaping activity in his life led him to pastoral ministry, something that he had never considered in the past. Investing in the lives of people gave him immense joy and pleasure, yet he struggled with the fact that the church was not doing enough in the area of discipleship. This important ministry seems to be absent in most churches. As a result, even when a soul is won to Christ, because of the lack of a long-term discipleship strategy, very little change is evidenced in the life of the new believer.

Such is also the spiritual condition of most believers that have been Christians for a number of years in Nagaland. Hardly any hint of spiritual maturity looks compellingly Christlike. When churches see beyond their programs and agendas and look at their members with discipleship development eyes and employ strategies toward this process, the researcher is confident that the Nagas' disintegrating society can change and their Christian witness would be more compelling amongst the unbelievers.

The Importance of the Project to the Immediate Ministry Context

When Naga churches understand the importance of discipleship and take appropriate steps to implement it, the power struggles and politics prevalent in churches will significantly diminish. There would be a tremendous zeal for missions because of obedience to the biblical imperative given in Matthew 28: 18-20. The concept of

leadership development must also emerge as a result of active discipleship within the church. It is not merely enough for the church to lead someone through the sinner's prayer. A system must be in place that will help guide the new believer towards maturity in Christ. This is the discipleship process.

The researcher also envisions believing communities that are rooted in the true gospel of Jesus Christ and are not easily persuaded by falsehood and lies. The presence of a diluted gospel has greatly affected the spiritual growth and hampered the work of the Lord in Nagaland. When believers are helped to become followers of Christ in every aspect of their lives, they will be well equipped to stand against ungodly cultural patterns and be more apt to discern truth and lies.

The Importance of the Project to the Church at Large

Although churches acknowledge the lack of discipleship a problem, they feel impotent because of limited resources and manpower. The research aspires to inspire and accentuate the need for discipleship so that churches will more seriously embrace a discipleship ministry.

Because the researcher's city church has good relationships with different denominations and churches within Nagaland, the researcher is confident that if changes were affected within the city church, the positive effects would be persuasive because other churches would emulate their compelling example. The study expects to ignite an enhanced perspective of discipleship and its urgent need in Nagaland and beyond its borders. The researcher anticipates that this study will help churches be more intentional about discipleship so they can develop 'organic' leaders that are trained and built up in their local settings. Most importantly, this research strives to inspire Christians to

participate in God's plan for the redemption of all people

CHAPTER TWO: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

The goal of this chapter is to study discipleship as found in the Bible and establish a mandate for the Naga church to develop disciple making as an integral ministry component and integral to its very existence. The research will be limited to the concept and rationale for discipleship.

Defining Discipleship

Discipleship has become a buzzword in today's church. The vast number of books and resources published each year evidence the urgency and importance of discipleship. The disciples began to understand the Lord's instruction in Matthew 28:18-20 because He had modeled it for them. Discipleship was no easy feat; it encompassed life itself. He was asking the disciples, then and now, to participate in His grand plan for all creation. No believer in Christ should minimize the privilege of engaging in His divine plan, the Great Commission, His final command on earth.

The words "disciple" or "discipleship" are present in almost every church website, church bulletin and advertisement. It depicts a prominent component of a church. David Platt writes, "From the start, God's simple design has been for every single disciple of Jesus to make disciples who make disciples who make disciples until the gospel spreads to all peoples on the planet."¹ God desires to extend His blessings to the ends of the earth. His commission was for all believers to bear witness to Him. The

¹David Platt, foreword to *Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples*, by Robby Gallaty (Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks: 2013), Kindle Edition.

uniformity of purpose bonds the church worldwide as it strives to remain faithful to the command of Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20. Charles Bing writes, “Our understanding of biblical discipleship shapes our practice of evangelism, church growth, missions, and personal lifestyle.”² In other words, a poor understanding of biblical discipleship will bring no lasting benefit to the Kingdom work of God.

The word “disciple” is derived from the Greek *mathetes* which refers to a pupil, learner or follower. It can also refer to the intellectual exchange that takes place between teacher and learner. The discipleship activity between Jesus and His disciples, clearly indicates much more than a mere dispersion of information transpired. Jesus not only shared information, but He shared His very life with His disciples. Jonathan Dodson writes, “While *mathetes* certainly includes the rational meaning implied in the student-teacher relationship, the biblical definition of disciple cannot be determined by classical Greek usage alone. Rather, the whole of biblical theology and Jesus’ way of making disciples in particular, should shape our definition.”³ The discipleship relationship between Jesus and His disciples was certainly more than just the exchange of ideas; Jesus poured His life into the twelve disciples.

Although the New Testament does not attempt to explain the word “disciple”, it is likely that “early readers understood it in relation to contemporary rabbinic or Greek practice.”⁴ The word *mathetes* was also used of learners who associated with a teacher,

²Charles C. Bing, “Coming to Terms With Discipleship” in *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 05: 1 (Spring 1992): 35.

³Jonathan K Dodson, *Gospel Centered Discipleship*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), Kindle Edition: Chapter 1, 29.

⁴Charles C. Bing, “Coming to Terms With Discipleship,” 38.

philosopher or rabbi with the hope of becoming like one (Matt. 10: 25, Luke 6: 40).⁵

Again, the word “disciple” is used in a variety of ways in the New Testament in reference to the Pharisees (John 1:7, 9:28, Matt. 22:16, Mark 2:18), John’s disciples (Matt. 9:14; 14:12; Mark 2:18; Luke 11:1; John 3:25), those who followed or learned from Jesus (Matt. 5:1; John 4:1; 8:31; 9:27–28), and the twelve (Matt. 10:1; 11:1; 20:17; Luke 9:1).⁶ In light of all these variations, it is important to understand its meaning in context. Put simply, “a disciple is one who puts himself in the position of a learner.”⁷

The word “disciple” is commonly found throughout the gospels as well as in the Book of Acts. It is used “at least 230 times in the gospels and 28 times in Acts.”⁸ The frequency with which it is mentioned cannot be ignored; rather, its significance is reinforced. Chris Shirley writes, “Disciples think and learn, but they also move beyond learning to doing—the endeavor. Even in Jesus’ time, disciples were those who were more than pupils in school, they were apprentices in the work of their master.”⁹ This concept of being apprentices in the master’s business emphasizes a progressive and continuing aspect. Its bountiful mention in the New Testament indicates a substantial amount of teaching and learning was happening.

The Great Commission

The significance of the Great Commission is evident in the fact that Jesus

⁵Bing, 38.

⁶Bing, 39.

⁷Bing, 39.

⁸Chris Shirley, “It Takes a Church to Make a Disciple: An Integrative Model of Discipleship for the Local Church,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, Vol 50 No 2, (Spring 2008), 208-209. See also Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2006) Kindle Edition: Locations 260-264.

⁹Shirley, *It Takes A Church*, 209.

mentioned it several times (Matt. 28:16-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:45-49; John 20:19-23).¹⁰ Boyd Luter writes, “Five passages in the gospels and Acts team up to provide the overall shape of Christ’s Commission: Matt 28:19–20; Luke 24:46–49; John 20:21–23; Acts 1:8; and, traditionally, Mark 16:15ff.”¹¹ The Great Commission contains four key verbs: “go,” “teach” (actually disciple), “baptizing” and “teaching.”¹² Of the four verbs only one is an imperative where as the other three are participles.¹³ An imperative is a grammatical mood, which expresses a command. The participles are not in themselves commands but accompany or are involved in the one command.¹⁴ Edmond Hiebert writes, “Only the second term “make disciples” is an imperative, second person plural verb; the other three terms are nominative plural participles, all directly related to the plural subject of the main verb.”¹⁵ The imperative form is ‘matheteuo’ which is insufficiently rendered “teach” in some translations.¹⁶ The word for “teach” is “didasko” and is used later in the Commission.¹⁷ The Greek word ‘matheteuo’ involves teaching as an initial action but also conviction, conversion and continuance.¹⁸ Taken literally, it

¹⁰Chuck Lawless, “To All The Nations”: The Great Commission Passages In The Gospels And Acts, *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, 15:2 (Summer 2011): 17.

¹¹Boyd A. Luter, Jr., “Women Disciples and the Great Commission,” *Trinity Journal*, 16:2 (Fall 1995): 172.

¹²Wallace Arthur Alcorn, “The Great Commission: Disciple,” *Central Bible Quarterly*, 02:4 (Winter 1959): 31.

¹³Wallace Arthur Alcorn, 32.

¹⁴Wallace Arthur Alcorn, 32.

¹⁵D. Edmond Hiebert, “An Expository Study of Matthew 28:16-20,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 149:595 (July 1992): 348.

¹⁶Wallace Arthur Alcorn, 31.

¹⁷Wallace Arthur Alcorn, 31.

¹⁸Wallace Arthur Alcorn, 31.

means “to disciple” or “to make disciples.”¹⁹ The main command or the main verb is “to disciple” and this is done by means of witnessing, baptizing and teaching. Wallace Alcorn explains, “The complimentary participles supplement what the main verb (the imperative ‘disciple’) has already predicated. ... The participles ‘baptizing’ and ‘teaching,’ then, complete the meaning of the imperative ‘disciple.’”²⁰ The verb “going” (Greek ‘poreuthentes’) is a circumstantial participle, which means that it accompanies and is incidental to the main verb.²¹ Alcorn continues, “The fact that this Great Commission does not command us to “go” (in the sense of necessarily leaving the place where we now are and going to another), can hardly mean that everyone is to stay just where he is to do his discipling.”²² But rather, the going indicates our going in the activities of daily life.

The Great Commission was given to the first disciples and to succeeding generations of disciples for all time. This command wraps up Christ’s earthly ministry; He desires the church to obey. The church cannot waver or lose sight of this important principle. LeRoy Eims writes:

Jesus Christ began His mission with a personal ministry of a little more than three years. One of the key aspects of that time was His training of the twelve disciples, whom He named apostles. That training was the foundation of His whole ministry. Much of His time during those three-plus years was concentrated in these men. He knew that in order for His mission to succeed, much would depend on the dedication, loyalty, courage, and faith of the men whom he had chosen and trained.²³

¹⁹Wallace Arthur Alcorn, 31.

²⁰Wallace Arthur Alcorn, 32.

²¹Wallace Arthur Alcorn, 32.

²²Wallace Arthur Alcorn, 32.

²³LeRoy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 33-34.

The church today is not exempt from this mandate. Christ expects the church to obey. Transformation is evident wherever the church has gone. Jesus was intentional with his disciples. Over time, the disciples began to understand His message and were instrumental in spreading the good news far and wide.

Matthew 28:18-20 includes the spiritual promise of Christ's authority, His provision and His presence. The directive to "go" is based in His authority over all things. "The Son becomes the one through whom all God's authority is mediated. He is, as it were, the mediatorial King."²⁴ It is in the "going" where significant relationships develop and bridges for communication are built. If believers do not take the initiative to step out, many souls will remain in darkness (Rom. 10:14). "Going" will be accompanied by Christ's presence. As the believer engages in the kingdom work, he is not to rely on his own strength but to draw strength from God who will be with him. The believer does not function out of his human authority but under the authority of the Creator of the universe. The challenge to "go" in God's name makes all the difference. To go with God-given resources, to accomplish God-given purposes is, indeed, a privilege believers take part in. It is toilsome work, but it pays better dividends. Michael Horton writes:

The Great Commission actually begins with the declaration: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18). This is the rationale for everything that the church is called to do and to be. The church's commission is indeed directed by a purpose ("making disciples of all nations"), but it is driven by a promise.²⁵

Christ in the Great Commission is what makes the commission great. When believers live in the love and power of the resurrected Christ, non-believers will sense the

²⁴Commentary on Matthew 28: 18, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan), Bible Study Olive Tree app.

²⁵Michael Horton, *The Gospel Commission: Recovering God's Strategy for Making Disciples* (Grand Rapids: MI, Baker Publishing Group, 2011): 29, Kindle Edition.

difference. This in turn will draw their attention to Christ who inhabits the good news.

Jesus' Model of Discipleship

Because Christ modeled discipleship for three years, Christians can follow His command. His model for discipleship works best and is one that Christ followers must be replicating. How He called, taught and dwelt with His disciples is clear throughout the gospels. He called His disciples unto Himself (Mark 1:17) and established them, which included long hours of teaching and training. He also engaged them in the ministry (Luke 6) by letting them come alongside and see firsthand all that He was doing. He gave them the authority to carry out His work in the nations. He entrusted to them the continuation of the work of the kingdom in proclaiming the good news to all creation (Mark 16:15-16). Robby Gallaty writes, “Additionally, we who choose to pursue discipleship need something else: an example to follow— a living, walking, talking disciple of Jesus Christ. We must have someone to guide us along the way, someone to set some footprints in the sand of the Christian life for us to follow, someone to hold us to those footprints.”²⁶ Discipleship works best when disciples see the quality of the leader in the mundane, best and worst of times. Jesus lived a hard life (Matt 8:20), but the way he conducted himself in all circumstances elicited admiration and respect.

According to Robby Gallaty, Jesus’ four-step progression of disciple making still applies today: First, Jesus ministered while the disciples watched (Matt. 5-7, Mark 1). Second, Jesus progressed to allowing the disciples to assist him in ministry (John 6: 1-13). Third, the disciples ministered, and Jesus assisted them (Mark 9). The final step of the

²⁶Robby Gallaty, introduction in *Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples* (CrossBooks, 2013) Kindle Edition.

disciples' training was Jesus observing as the disciples served others (Luke 10: 1-17).²⁷

Ordinary People, Extraordinary Task

Jesus chose ordinary men to be His followers. He prayed before He called them out to join in His mission (Luke 6: 12-16). The disciples were common men who lacked the education and dignity that the world might expect of a disciple. God viewed them as significant because they were willing to obey, not because they did anything impressive. These unlikely team of village folk were responsible for the spread of the gospel throughout the known world. They impacted the world for Christ and left a rich legacy of faith for all generations.

Following Jesus is difficult. Christ requires: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16: 24). Nevertheless believers are given instructions (Matt 7:13) on how to successfully live victoriously despite the difficulties of this life. However, even believers fall prey to the vanities of this world, and miss out on the great purpose that God has for them. A huge gallery of faithful Christ followers from ages past remind believers of the abundant life that Christ promises (John 10:10) if they obey.

The call to discipleship is also a life of suffering. Christ clearly stated that it would cost the disciple everything (Luke 9: 23). Because believers understand that the King of Glory left His heavenly throne and humbled Himself for the sake of mankind (Phil 2:5), many sign up voluntarily, and even joyfully (Ac 5: 41). Suffering can take many forms, including persecution. Believers who experience persecution gain perspective and faith in ways that bring credibility to the gospel message.

²⁷Gallaty, 11-12.

Aneel Yousaf, a pastor in Pakistan, identified four benefits of the persecution his church experienced as a minority Christian community: it takes our eyes off earthly comforts, it weeds out superficial believers, it strengthens the faith of those who endure, and it serves as an example to others who follow us. Aneel continues, “When we suffer for our faith, it does not mean that we have done something wrong. In fact, the opposite is often true—it verifies that we have been faithful.”²⁸

This attitude is similar to that of the believers in New Testament times who endured suffering because their Lord Himself suffered (Acts 4:2, 12). Discipleship is not easy. Discipling work is quiet, slow, and often thankless labor.²⁹ For Bonhoeffer, discipleship meant following Christ with absolute certainty; the ultimate result was joy. He writes, “Only Jesus Christ, who bids us follow him, knows the journey’s end. But we do know that it will be a road of boundless mercy. Discipleship means joy.”³⁰

Discipleship: A Replicating Process

In writing to his protégé, Timothy, the Apostle Paul said, “And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). Paul told Timothy to continue in the work that Christ designed for His followers to do. The process of discipleship continued on throughout the early church. Faithful men of God must reproduce followers who resemble Christ in word and deed. David Detwiler writes:

²⁸Aneel Yousaf, “Discipleship of Inadequately Trained Christian Workers in a Persecuted Society in Lahore, Pakistan,” ThM thesis, (South African Theological Seminary, 2006), 58.

²⁹Dennis McCallum and Jessica Lowery, *Organic Discipleship: Mentoring Others Into Spiritual Maturity and Leadership* (Revised Edition) (USA: Paradigm Publishing, 2006), Kindle Edition: Location 1077.

³⁰Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (Touchstone, 2012): 38, Kindle Edition.

Following the example of Paul, older (i.e., more spiritually mature) disciples should be committed to strengthening and encouraging those who have begun the life of discipleship. It is not enough to rejoice in the decision people make to trust in Christ; older disciples must do all they can to help new disciples along in this commitment (and they should seek ongoing help for themselves as well).³¹

Believers must not lose their call to make disciples in the busy realities of today. Churches today must also be vigilant about keeping first things first. The church must not be bogged down with programs that divert from biblically mandated ministries. God has entrusted leaders to care for His sheep. He entreats leaders to follow His example and make disciples who will also make disciples. The ministry of disciple building must be envisioned with fresh lens so that many more will come to the saving knowledge of God and grow in His likeness.

Discipleship encompasses more than a conversion experience. Unfortunately, after being won to Christ new believers are typically left on their own. Without access to other Christians and consistent encouragement along the way, new believers tend to fall away. Chuck Lawless issues a caution:

The goal is that those who follow Christ will live like Christ and lead others to do the same. Hence, a process of making disciples that ends with only the conversion of the evangelized is incomplete at best, disobedient at worst. In fact, the results of this omission can be disastrous. Untaught believers are ill equipped to face trials, untrained to recognize false teachings, and unprepared to teach others. They quickly become easy prey for an enemy who seeks to devour them (1 Pet 5:8).³²

Discipleship takes time and energy, yet the steady process yields much over time. Utmost care must be given to ‘baby’ Christians so that they will mature and guide other believers through steps to maturity in Christ.

³¹David F. Detwiler, “Paul’s Approach to the Great Commission in Acts 14:21-23,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 152: 605 (January 1995): 40-41.

³²Chuck Lawless, “To All The Nations,” 19.

Believers and Discipleship

Every Christ follower is called to be a soul winner. As the disciples left their jobs to follow Jesus, they experienced great and marvelous things (Matt. 14:13-23, John 11). Jesus' style of discipleship embraced all of life. He called His disciples to be "fishers of men" (Matt. 4:18-22), with the message that the "kingdom of God is at hand" (Matt. 10:7, Mark 4:11). People were attracted to Him because of His superior wisdom and authority (Mark 1:22). The disciples found life and purpose in Him (Acts 5:41, 1 Pet. 4:16). Believers today are also given the joy of knowing God and partnering with Him as He calls the world out of darkness into His light (1 Pet. 2:9).

The charge to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:18-20) is a command that believers are expected to obey by relying on God's power and authority. As churches get bigger and activities increase, they need to be mindful of the importance of discipleship. Ironically, some churches replace discipleship with a set of programs that do not produce trained followers of Christ. The church must be careful not to encourage a consumer culture where people fail to take responsibility for their personal growth.

It is also important for followers of Christ to constantly practice the spiritual disciplines of prayer, studying, mediating on the Word, fasting, giving, etc. The idea is not to encourage a works-righteousness mentality but to gauge one's affections (Luke 12:34). A follower of Christ must be intentional about his/her personal growth in Christ.

Even with the best of intentions, programs must never replace life-on-life discipleship. A few years ago, Willow Creek Community Church openly confessed that they were not making disciples, based on research findings that evaluated their ministry.³³

³³"Willow Creek Repents?" *Christianity Today*, October 18, 2007, accessed November 10, 2014, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/parse/2007/october/willow-creek-repents.html?paging=off>

Robby Gallaty writes, “After investing thirty years of ministry and tens of millions of dollars in facilities, programs, and promotions, Willow Creek was admittedly unsuccessful in producing disciples. Resources were prioritized on attracting visitors, but a step-by-step plan for personal growth was ignored.”³⁴ If a discipling ministry is not embedded in the DNA of the church the members will see no reason to be passionate about reaching out to the lost.

As believers’ lives are touched and transformed by the risen Christ, they are called to impact the world around them. Pablo Deirus explains:

We have to go into the world and serve, as Jesus went into the world and served. It is not our institutions or our human programs that are of primary importance. We are the means. We are the instruments. It is not so much a matter of making a list of the things that we have to do, but of discovering what we have to be. What we do has to be the natural outcome of what we are. The Bible always demands us to ‘be righteous,’ ‘be merciful,’ ‘be blameless,’ ‘be peacemakers,’ ‘be holy.’ The emphasis is on being a kind of person and not so much ‘doing this’ or ‘doing that.’ Christian ethics is a manifestation of what we are in Jesus Christ. Behavior and action are the result of what we are.³⁵

When Christians insulate themselves from the world, they forfeit the impact they could have among unbelievers. Mike Breen and Steve Cockram explain, “No one accidentally creates disciples. Discipleship is an intentional pursuit.”³⁶ Christians need to be intentional about their effective witness to cultivate maturity in Christ. Believers who live in obedience to the Great Commission will encounter and impact unbelievers outside the church. Christians who live among them are the best models to reflect Christ’s love

³⁴Robby Gallaty, *Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples* (CrossBooks, 2013): 9, Kindle Edition.

³⁵Pablo A. Deiros, “Evangelism and The Third World: The Great Commission And The Great Commandment,” *Faith and Mission*, 02:2 (Spring 1985): 48.

³⁶Mike Breen and Steve Cockram, *Building A Discipling Culture: How To Release A Missional Movement By Discipling People Like Jesus Did* (Pawleys Island, SC: Dimension Ministries, 2011), 21.

and goodness to those who have nothing to do with the church.

Jesus likened His followers to “salt” and “light” (Matt.5:13-16).” Pablo Deiros explains:

In the light of what has been said, the mission of the Church today in any part of the world is to make Christ real to every person in the world. This is the mission which Jesus has commissioned each one of us to fulfill in his name. This mission consists of being in the world what Jesus Christ commanded us to be: salt and light.³⁷

Christ followers are to be outstanding citizens in the places they inhabit and bring glory to God by their lifestyles. A disciple is characterized by a purposeful life. Edmund Chan writes:

Discipleship is a passionate following after Jesus. It is not merely a training course to take in church. Rather, it is a life to be lived. It involves the faithful living out of the implications of the Gospel in our life. It is being transformed by the Holy Spirit to live out the redemptive purpose of the kingdom of God in all arenas of our life.³⁸

Without an intentional pursuit of Christ in every aspect of one’s being, the benefits of discipleship will remain meager and monotonous. Discipleship is for all of life. Bill Hull explains:

Discipleship isn’t a program or an event; it’s a way of life. It’s not for a limited time, but for our whole life. Discipleship isn’t for beginners alone; it’s for all believers for every day of their life. Discipleship isn’t just one of the things the church does; it is what the church does. It’s not just part of the advancement of God’s kingdom; the existence of serious disciples is the most important evidence of God’s work on earth. Without enough of these workers, the task languishes and the work remains incomplete (see Matt 9:35-38).³⁹

³⁷Pablo A. Deiros, “Evangelism,” 48.

³⁸Edmund Chan, *Mentoring Paradigms: Reflections on Mentoring, Leadership and Discipleship* (Oklahoma City, OK: Lifestyle Impact Ministries, 2008), 118.

³⁹Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2006), Kindle Edition: Locations 260-264.

To get people to embrace discipleship as a way of life, the church must faithfully communicate God’s vision and plans. The level of excitement for impacting the world for Christ can best be transferred through consistent teaching and modeling of the truth through discipleship.

Theological Definition of Discipleship

Church and Discipleship Today

In her desire to help and equip fellow Catholics to engage in discipleship, Sherry Weddell in *Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus*, reveals that she encountered some alarming facts during her research. At the outset, she claims that, although the focus of her book is limited to the Catholic churches in the United States, “This religious fluidity is a global phenomenon and certainly not limited to Catholics”⁴⁰ In her perspective, religious identity is no longer “stable but remarkably fluid.”⁴¹ After listening to and counseling Catholic leaders for eighteen years⁴² she realized what they were missing. She writes, “We discovered, to our surprise and dismay, that many pastoral leaders do not even possess a conceptual category for discipleship. As long as this holds true, the theology of the laity and the Church’s teaching on social justice and evangelization will remain beautiful ideals that are, practically speaking, dead letters for the vast majority of Catholics.”⁴³ This propelled her to think deeply about intentional discipleship. She writes, “The good news is that we have met many amazing, creative pastoral leaders who are deliberately calling Catholic men and women to make

⁴⁰Sherry Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus* (Our Sunday Visitor, 2012), Kindle Edition: 16-17.

⁴¹Weddell, 16.

⁴²Weddell, 12.

⁴³Weddell, 11.

the journey to intentional discipleship, and are beginning to see the extraordinary fruit and cultural changes that follow.”⁴⁴

The realization of the need for discipleship is the first step towards experiencing significant changes. It is never too late to engage in discipleship ministry.

Greg Wayne Yagel, in his Doctor of Ministry dissertation for Reformed Theological Seminary, writes that churches are failing to engage the hearts of men in America. He writes, “Perhaps the condition of men inside the church is linked to the fact that so few men are engaged in any kind of a discipleship process.”⁴⁵

The need for discipleship cannot be overstated. Christianity will continue to suffer decline unless churches attend to this vital need. The problem of non-discipleship is a systemic problem that threatens churches everywhere. The reasons vary: either the church is not doing enough to hold people spiritually accountable, or people are just not interested. Despite the fact that the church struggles to keep its members, the Barna group recently reported that those engaged in a church environment had a more positive outlook on life.⁴⁶ In their book *Churchless*, Goerge Barna and David Kinnaman detail a marked difference in the lives of those who are church-ed compared to the unchurched. They describe:

Comparing the life experiences of the unchurched with those of the actively church-ed reveals that churchgoers are less likely to be stressed out and to feel lonely. They are more likely to say they are happy, are making a positive difference in the world, have deep connections with their friends, and are

⁴⁴Weddell, 12.

⁴⁵Greg Wayne Yagel, “Discipling Men’s Hearts Through Kingdom Theology,” DMin diss., Reformed Theological Seminary, 2012, 12.

⁴⁶George Barna and David Kinnaman, eds., *Churchless: Understanding Today's Unchurched and How to Connect with Them* (Austin, TX: Tyndale Momentum, 2014) Kindle Edition.

fulfilling their calling in life.⁴⁷

Clearly, the church is in the world, not only to make a positive impact in the lives of the people, but also to bring transformation. If research can produce such positive results despite the many criticisms surrounding the church, it empowers Christians to be intentional in their pursuit to reach out to the lost around them.

Discipleship and Multiplication

In *Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples*, Robby Gallaty advocates for multiplication over addition. The biblical precedence is seen in God's command to Adam and Eve to "multiply."⁴⁸ This concept is clear and needs to be embedded into the ministry DNA in any setting. Gallaty writes, "The goal of every D-Group is for the mentee, the one being discipled, to become a mentor; to multiply—make other disciples."⁴⁹ He states that the Great Commission is to be a "team effort" when this concept is communicated sooner, it aids towards the preparation of coaches and prevents members from merely being "consumers."⁵⁰ This reproducing discipleship model is evident in the life and ministry of Christ, who exhorted all Christians to participate in the Great Commission. Gallaty expounds on the idea of multiplication over addition. He is convinced that in the long run multiplication yields greater results. He explains the difference between an evangelist and a disciple maker and calculates the result of their labors for a year:

⁴⁷George Barna and David Kinnaman, (Kindle Locations 1723-1726).

⁴⁸Robby Gallaty, *Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples* (CrossBooks, 2013) Kindle edition, 13.

⁴⁹Gallaty, 13.

⁵⁰Gallaty, 13.

The evangelist hits the streets every day with the goal of sharing the gospel with as many people as needed to see God save one person. In contrast, the disciple-maker walks two people through a year of intensive discipleship. The slow-moving discipleship process creeps forward with only four people being impacted in two years, compared to 730 converts through the solitary work of a busy evangelist. However, this radically changes with the passing of time. After sixteen years of the same activity, the evangelist would have seen almost 6,000 people come to faith in Christ, while the disciple would have impacted 65,536 people. Every person on the planet would be reached multiple times over after thirty years. It is a ministry shift from a strategy of addition, where the clergy performs the ministerial duties, to one of multiplication, where believers are expected and equipped to personally participate in the Great Commission.⁵¹

Although the statistics sound unbelievable, the point is reasonable. If life-on-life discipleship is the crucial call of Christians, Galtaty is hopeful that the Great Commission will be fulfilled. He does not undermine the work of the evangelist but insists that both evangelism and discipleship are important. Discipleship and evangelism must go hand in hand. Jonathan Dodson refuses to dichotomize evangelism and discipleship. “The gospel integrates, not dichotomizes, evangelism and discipleship by announcing a grace that saves and sanctifies disciples!”⁵² According to Dodson, the Great Commission is about the gospel and is gospel-centered. Hence, discipleship and evangelism are integral to the life of the believer.

David Lanier weighs in on the idea of multiplication over addition. He argues that when converted believers do not disciple other people the percentage is much lower compared to those who faithfully engage in discipleship. He states:

Multiplication is much more powerful than mere addition. If you won one convert a week to Christ and added him to the church but failed to disciple him, in ten years you would have 520 immature believers. If I won one convert a week and disciplined him so that he could lead another to Christ and disciple him each year, in one year I would have 52 disciples. In two years I would have won 52 others

⁵¹Galtaty, 14.

⁵²Jonathan K. Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship* (Crossway, 2012), Kindle Edition: 40.

while those 52 would have won another 52, for a total of 156 disciples. The third year there would be 312. The fourth 520. The fifth 780, the sixth 1,092. The seventh year there would be 1,456. The eighth year 1,872. The ninth year 2,340, and the tenth 2,860. In ten years I would have 2,860 mature converts. You would have your 520 immature believers. The next year you would add 52 immature believers; I would multiply 2,860 disciples. Which way is better?⁵³

The optimism is unmistakable. Intentional discipleship helps produce mature believers who can positively impact the discipleship process by reproducing more mature believers. Lanier anticipates, “by multiplication the Great Commission becomes achievable in our lifetimes even though the population of the earth keeps expanding.”⁵⁴

Bill Hull remains unconvinced and does not ascribe to the multiplication perspective. He reasons:

As many writers and teachers have proclaimed, when all who become disciples make disciples through several spiritual generations, the result should not be reproduction (adding disciples one at a time) but multiplication (one disciple makes two, who make four, who make sixteen, and so on). ... In spite of how logical it sounds, this plan runs aground repeatedly on the rocks of human frailty and ignorance of how people really change.⁵⁵

Hull believes that personal transformation is important and that Christians should impact others, but the “programmatic,” “marketplace” and “church growth strategies” can obscure the importance of intimate union with Christ.⁵⁶ Hull cautions against the fickle nature of humans and false motivation that may be inadvertently involved.

⁵³David E. Lanier, “The Multiplication of Disciples,” *Faith and Mission*, 16: 2, (Spring 1999), 6, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/fm16-2-01>

⁵⁴Lanier, 6.

⁵⁵Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (The Navigators Reference Library), Kindle Edition: Locations 211-217.

⁵⁶Hull, Loc 206-210.

The Lost Art of Disciple Making by LeRoy Eims⁵⁷ can be considered a classic discipleship booklet. At a time when not many churches were open to the idea of multiplying discipleship,⁵⁸ he articulated and espoused the discipleship methods that he and others were using. Eims served with the *Navigators*,⁵⁹ and his insights on discipleship are invaluable. His discipleship concepts are found in the book and can be easily replicated anywhere in the world. According to Eims, “Today a growing groundswell of interest in multiplying disciples is to be seen in many churches and by many people. ... I have seen it in action for over twenty-five years and it works.”⁶⁰

Eims’ model of helping somebody grow to become a leader is explained in four stages: evangelizing, establishing, equipping and in-depth personal training.⁶¹ This concept can be reproduced and adapted to any ministry setting. The normal timeline for progression to each stage may take two to three years although there can be exceptions. Because leaders do not spring up overnight, Eims’ reminder is that effective leaders take time to build.⁶²

In summary, the advantage of multiplication over addition cannot be overstated. The idea is not to celebrate numbers over spiritual maturity but to be very intentional about discipleship. When believers step out in obedience to the Great Commission, the spiritual harvest would be enormous. Edmund Chan issues a timely reminder,

⁵⁷LeRoy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Zondervan, 2009), Kindle Edition: 26.

⁵⁸Eims, 20.

⁵⁹Robert Coleman, foreword in *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* by LeRoy Eims, (Zondervan, 2009), Kindle Edition: 10.

⁶⁰Eims, 21, 25.

⁶¹Eims, Appendix 2.

⁶²Eims, Appendix 4.

“Multiplication is not the chief challenge of the church. Transformation is! Transformation must precede multiplication.”⁶³

Conclusion

This chapter examined the biblical imperative for disciple making as commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ. The researcher attempted to highlight the importance of discipleship and how the life of every Christ follower must be governed by intentionality in following Jesus and teaching others about Him.

The researcher also makes note of the fact that the Naga churches are not following the biblical pattern of making disciples. The Naga church is concerned about winning souls but is not intentional in its discipleship approach. Evangelistic efforts take place from time to time, but evangelism and discipleship must go hand in hand. As much as it is important to win souls for Christ, it is also important to guide new believers towards maturity in Christ by means of discipleship. In the words of R. C. Sproul, “The Great Commission calls us to do more than work to convert people. It calls us to teach them, to ground them, to help them grow in conformity to Christ. That is our mission!”⁶⁴

There are a couple of important themes that emerged from the study of the Great Commission passage, which would be of great benefit to the Naga church. First, Jesus invested time in His disciples. Although He spent time with others in larger settings (Jn. 6: 25, 60), most of His time was centered on the committed core (Jn. 3: 22, 13: 34-35). Jesus lived a life of transparency, simplicity and discipline. He not only modeled for the

⁶³Edmund Chan, *Mentoring Paradigms: Reflections on Mentoring, Leadership and Discipleship* (Oklahoma City, OK: Lifestyle Impact Ministries, 2008), 111.

⁶⁴R. C. Sproul, *Matthew: St. Andrew's Expository Commentary*, (Crossway: 2013), Kindle Edition: Locations 12758-12759.

disciples the importance of living in community but also emphasized communion with God. He knew that for the disciples to carry on His mission, He needed to spend significant amount of time with them. It was more than a weekly meeting. He was intentional about the people He was preparing. From His example it is clear that disciple making is an intentional pursuit. An important lesson for the Naga church is to realize that discipleship does not take place accidentally but it takes time, prayers and effort.

Second, Jesus engaged in careful instruction and modeling of truth. All throughout the gospel of Matthew, He called His followers to a higher standard of obedience and faith. According to F. F. Bruce, Jesus' teachings are seen in five main sections throughout the gospel of Matthew (5:1-7:29, 10:1-42, 13: 1-58, 18: 1-35, 24:1-25:46).⁶⁵ In all of these teachings, Jesus calls His followers to complete obedience. These teachings are not only meant for head knowledge but are aimed at the heart. Craig Blomberg states, "Teaching obedience to all of Jesus' commands forms the heart of disciple making."⁶⁶

Jesus' teaching clearly cuts against the notion of personal success and self-gratification. It is a difficult teaching that involves the challenge to give up all that the human tendency pursues and values. Christ introduced His disciples to the ways of the Kingdom through His teaching and His obedient life. In the truest sense of the word, Christ walked His talk. Craig Blomberg writes, "The emphasis on obeying 'everything I have commanded you' shows that the discourse sections are not really didactic material

⁶⁵F.F. Bruce, *Matthew: Open Your Bible Commentary, New Testament Book 1*, (Creative 4 International, 2014), Kindle Edition: Locations 304-306).

⁶⁶Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew: The New American Commentary, Vol. 22*, (B&H Publishing, 1992), Kindle Edition: 434.

to be learned but more importantly practical injunctions to be lived.”⁶⁷ A true follower of Christ must exhibit obedience in every detail of his/her life.

In the Naga church, although preaching takes place every week, teaching obedience to all of Christ’s commands is poorly emphasized. It is important to realize that only through fidelity to Christ and His promises can there be lasting peace. If Christ’s words were taken seriously, there would be much hope for personal and corporate renewal.

He is the Lord of the universe yet Christ lived a humble life on earth and exhorted His disciples to follow in His steps. Despite being poor, nobody could accuse Him of sin (Jn. 8: 46). When Christ spoke about rewards (Matt. 5: 11, 6: 1-6, Lk. 6: 23), it was not a temporary reward but a permanent one. Christ’s words are trustworthy because He modeled kingdom living for His followers. It was not a life of luxury or grandeur but a life of obedience and trust. Therein lies the believer’s joy and peace.

The Naga church must continue to proclaim messages that uphold God’s holiness and righteousness in this time of moral and spiritual decline. Due to the fact that very little premium is placed on obedience to Christ’s teachings, followed by the compounding lack of role models, the ministry of discipleship is stunted. However, this is an opportunity for Christians to be salt and light in the places they inhabit. The Naga society must see and experience a Christianity that is altruistic and not self-absorbed. The Naga church needs people who follow the way of Jesus by embracing humility as the norm instead of seeking after worldly riches.

⁶⁷Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew: Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (Zondervan, 2010), Kindle Edition: Location 20532.

CHAPTER THREE: THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Often touted as the “only predominantly Baptist ethnic state in the world,”¹ Nagaland is a small state in northeast India surrounded by mountainous regions and international borders that complement the state’s distinct identity. The people of Nagaland, comprising sixteen major tribes,² are known as “Nagas” meaning “hill people.”³ The word “Naga” is a generic term used in reference to the indigenous people of Nagaland including those that are scattered in states like Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and parts of Myanmar.⁴ The Nagas’ mongoloid features, distinct food habits and strong tribal adherences sets them apart from their Indian counterpart. A Naga scholar observes, “The Nagas are the indigenous people who inhabit parts of the extreme

¹Gordon C. Olson, *What in the World Is God Doing? The Essentials of Global Missions: An Introductory Guide*, 5th ed. (Cedar Knolls, NJ: Global Gospel Publishers, 2003), 268. Also Erroll Hulse refers to Nagaland as “a province of India” and “the only Baptist country in the world” in Erroll Hulse, “Global Revival: Should We Be Involved in Concerts of Prayer?” *Reformation and Revival*, 02: 4 (Fall 1993): 41.

²“About Nagaland,” Government of Nagaland, accessed September 2, 2014, <http://nagaland.nic.in/profile/history/about.htm>.

³Mazie Nakhro provides this rendition of the meaning of the word ‘Naga’ in Mazie Nakhro, *To the Top in Two Generations*, (Bangalore: Brilliant Printers, 2010), 209. The word ‘Naga’ is rather ambiguous and its meaning is debatable among scholars because of its varied possibility. Bendangjungshi writes, “The name ‘Naga’ did not originate from the people who are today so described, but was imposed by outsiders” in Bendangjungshi, “Confessing Christ in the Naga Context: Towards a Liberating Ecclesiology,” PhD Diss., (Protestant Theological University, 2011), 20. For more about the Nagas, see Kaka D. Iralu, *The Naga Saga: A Historical Account of the Sixty-Two Years Indo-Naga War and the Story of Those Who Were Never Allowed to Tell It* (Kohima, ACLS Offset Press, 2009). Naga Journalist Charles Chasie poignantly discusses the present state of Nagaland in Charles Chasie, “Nagaland in Transition,” *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol. 32 No. 2/3, (Monsoon-Winter, 2005), 253, accessed October 2, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/i23005926>.

⁴H. Srikanth, and C. J. Thomas, “Naga Resistance Movement and the Peace Process in Northeast India,” *Peace and Democracy in South Asia*, Vol.1 No. 2, (2005), 58.

northeastern part of India and the northwestern part of Myanmar. Racially, Nagas are Mongoloid, in contrast to the Aryan and Dravidian communities in India.”⁵

The Naga church has come a long way amid turbulent times of trial and bloodshed. The revival movements that swept through the Naga Hills in the 1950s-70s saw the formation of a church planting movement in a region deeply entrenched in syncretistic and animistic beliefs.⁶ The transformation through the preaching of the gospel brought Nagas to the fore of history in missions amongst the tribal people in northeast India.⁷ A Naga scholar recounts, “Christianity came to the Nagas only in the late nineteenth century. Despite being latecomers to Christianity, today Nagas form the major pocket of Christian communities in India where we live as an ethnic religious minority.”⁸ With the coming of Christianity, tangible signs of change and renewal permeated the Naga society. The worship of spirits, warfare, headhunting, and other ritualistic practices that once characterized the Naga culture receded. A remarkable sense of piety and fervency developed that led to the building of churches and places of worship in every village and town. The fear of God was inherent to the life of the new believer. Paul Hattaway writes, “It is said that during the Naga revivals a person could drop a bundle of cash on the main street of Kohima and find it untouched the next day.

⁵Bendangjungshi, “Confessing Christ in the Naga Context: Towards a Liberating Ecclesiology,” PhD Diss., (Protestant Theological University, 2011), 8.

⁶Paul Hattaway, *From Head-Hunters to Church Planters: An Amazing Spiritual Awakening in Nagaland*, (USA: Authentic Publishing, 2006), 17. Also see Charles Chasie, “Nagaland in Transition,” *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol. 32 No. 2/3, (Monsoon-Winter, 2005), 254, accessed October 2, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/i23005926>.

⁷Erroll Hulse, “Global Revival: Should We Be Involved in Concerts of Prayer?” *Reformation and Revival*, 02: 4 (Fall 1993): 41.

⁸Bendangjungshi, 8.

The Nagas would never consider taking the money, as their lives were ruled by extreme reverence for a holy God.”⁹

Most people in Nagaland are Christians; however, smaller communities of mostly immigrants¹⁰ are Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh. Before Christianity arrived in Nagaland through the American Baptist missionaries in the early nineteenth century, Nagas were warriors who practiced headhunting and waged wars against their enemies. Hunting and farming were the primary source of livelihood. Being recognized as a Christian state today, Nagaland enjoys freedom of worship unlike other states in India, and which provides a huge potential to live out the Great Commission across borders.

In recent years, Nagaland has seen increasing commercial prospects as trade routes connecting several states in the northeast converge within its periphery. The ubiquitous Christian influence in Nagaland is marked by the presence of huge church buildings nestled in the picturesque valleys and hills throughout the state.

Christianity brought tremendous changes to the Naga society in terms of education, health, politics and socio-economic well-being. The most significant change is the shift from animistic tendencies and coming to a saving relationship with the crucified Christ. The Naga churches have grown significantly over the years and have been involved in sending out missionaries throughout the world.¹¹

A brief synopsis of the circumstances that preceded the revival movements

⁹Paul Hattaway, introduction to *From Head-Hunters to Church Planters: An Amazing Spiritual Awakening in Nagaland*, (USA: Authentic Publishing, 2006).

¹⁰The word “immigrant” is employed here to refer to mainland Indians and also people from Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, etc., that have made their settlement in Nagaland mainly due to trade and work related purposes. They are referred to as “non-locals” by the Naga populace. Nevertheless, familiar dialects and interests make acculturation feasible.

¹¹Hattaway, 108.

reveals that Christianity came at a great price to Nagaland. In the beginning embracing Christianity brought the risk of persecution from the predominantly Hindu neighbor, India. Christianity created disorientation, which affected one's local identity. The Nagas endured significant challenges as they embraced Christianity. The missionaries' initiative to convert the headhunters, as the Nagas are referred to, displayed a deep conviction against the looming threat of losing their own heads should things go awry. Just as the missionaries risked their lives for the sake of the gospel, the Nagas learned to persevere and nurture their faith in the face of persecution and hostility.¹² The deep inner conviction in Christ brought peace and resilience during the hard times, as evidenced by the fact that instead of their newfound faith being stunted, the church continued to grow.¹³ Their search for identity, the volatile relationship with India, and the hardships that had engulfed them only helped prepared them further for the spiritual awakening that changed the course of history in Nagaland.

Some scholars opine that this intrusion by the missionaries in partnership with the British colonizers resulted in the Nagas having to give up part of their cultural identity in order to pursue a "personal"¹⁴ faith. The idea is that it essentially segregated the new converts from their loved ones who were still yet unconverted. Their natural disposition to community living was now replaced by a form of ostracism because they could not partake in the rituals or social events which caused confusion and identity issues. Charles Chasie observes:

¹²Hattaway,, 46.

¹³Hattaway, 83.

¹⁴Charles Chasie, "Nagaland in Transition," *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol. 32 No. 2/3, (Monsoon-Winter, 2005), 256, accessed October 2, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/i23005926>.

Despite the many good things Christianity brought the Naga people, it was also responsible in large measure for the destruction of Naga culture and traditions at its very core. The notion of personal salvation encouraged individualism in a society where individual identity was indivisible with that of family, clan, khel [sector]¹⁵ and village. The values by which the Nagas lived were turned upside down.¹⁶

Chasie notes the normal lifestyle of the Nagas was disrupted upon their encounter with Christianity, which brought positive as well as negative consequences. Their exposure to modernity in the form of Christian education left them susceptible to ideas alien to the Naga culture. However, it also proved opportune for the newly converted to take the faith into the community in which they belonged.

Catholic scholar Abraham Lotha decries the fact that Christianity in Nagaland lacks originality because it is an “imported one” and calls for a “paradigm shift” in doing Christianity that is relevant to the Naga way of life.¹⁷ He writes:

Religion plays an important part in culture. The majority of Nagas are Christians but the type of Christianity in Nagaland is very alien to the Naga culture. If Christianity is to contribute to the preservation of Naga culture, and, more important, if it is to become meaningful, personal and relevant to the Nagas, it must be inculturated.¹⁸

The challenge of applying theology in the Naga context demands a deep knowledge of both culture and the Bible. Abraham Lotha’s concern stems from the fact that the gospel message has not penetrated every aspect of the Naga culture. For the gospel to be effective, its truths must apply to all of life. T. Solo writes, “Nagaland church today has

¹⁵Kajen Mongro, *Naga Cultural Attires and Musical Instruments* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1999), 124.

¹⁶Chasie, 261.

¹⁷Abraham Lotha, *The Raging Mithun: Challenges to Naga Nationalism*, (Tromso, Norway: Barkweaver Publications, 2013), 85.

¹⁸Abraham Lotha, 77. By “Inculturation” the author means “understanding and practicing the Christian faith in and through the culture of a people thereby transforming the culture through its integration with Christianity.” 75.

the theology but not much of its practice. This is the sum total of all its composite weaknesses.”¹⁹ These reflections from Naga writers express a common sentiment. The faith that was embraced in the past is no doubt losing its relevance in the present. The gospel must speak into every aspect of the socio-political lives of the Nagas. Regardless of the criticisms leveled at Naga Christianity, there is hope. Abraham Lotha continues, “If, in the past, Christianity was the main instrument for destroying Naga culture, it is only proper that today churches take the lead in restoring Naga culture back. It is the responsibility of all the church leaders to preach Christ in and through the Naga culture. Inculturation is a must; it is not an option.”²⁰ For this to happen, the church must acknowledge its complete dependence on the Holy Spirit, Christians must live as salt and light in the world (Matt 5: 13-16), and Biblical authority must be upheld over and against unbiblical practices within the society.

The initial tension between the gospel and Naga culture produced mixed feelings, but it is fair to conclude that Christianity prepared the Nagas to embrace and adapt to the modern age. If Nagaland had not accepted Christianity then, Nagaland would have had a huge disadvantage. There is no denying that western education, which was part of the missionary endeavor, stirred the people’s curiosity and brought them together, broadening their once narrow outlook. Pikheto Achumi writes:

As a consequence of the growth of modern education, the Naga society witnessed gradual tendency for social cohesion the characteristic of which was conspicuously lacking among them in pre-colonial period. ... It played the role of renaissance in the Naga society for it came to them with Christianity as bread and butter. ... The impact of education on the socio-cultural life of the Nagas was in fact the impact

¹⁹Thepfulhouvi Solo, “What are the Three Greatest Challenges to The Church in Nagaland? And What are the Most Important Principles that Undergird Your Life As a Christian?” *The Morung Express*, March 21, 2014, accessed March 24, 2014, <http://www.morungexpress.com/Perspective/112836.html>

²⁰Abraham Lotha, 80.

of Christianity, for it permeated their culture through the agency of colonial education.²¹

The Naga tribes warred against each other from time to time. The distrust, enmity and narrow-mindedness gradually dissipated. The opportunity for education brought people together.

Subsequent to the British relinquishing their control over India, Nagaland was brought under the Indian union despite its desperate appeals to be left alone, as it had always been prior to the invasion of the British. Charles Chasie states, “When it became known that the British might leave, the Nagas submitted their now famous ‘Memorandum’ to the Simon Commission in 1929, asking the British to either ‘retain’ them separately under the crown or to leave them ‘as they were’ before the British came.”²² The dominance of the Indian nation upon the autonomous and sequestered Naga people led to further misunderstanding and conflict. The Naga leaders assumed a recalcitrant stance to protest the annexation of Nagaland to the Indian union. Unfortunately, this attitude was met with fierce brutality and force. The Nagas took to armed resistance leading to numerous loss of lives on both sides. The resistance continues to this day, but a landmark cease-fire agreement was reached in 1997, followed by another one in 2001,²³ paving the way for peace as negotiations for mutually acceptable terms continue. After about fifty rounds of talks between the Indian government and the Naga underground movement largely represented by the National Socialist Council of

²¹Piketo Achumi, *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland 1881-1947*, (New Delhi: Scholar Publishing House, 2012), 92.

²²Chasie, 262.

²³H. Srikanth and C .J. Thomas, “Naga Resistance Movement and the Peace Process in Northeast India,” *Peace and Democracy in South Asia*, Volume 1, Issue 2, (2005), 57.

Nagaland (NSCN-IM) nothing much has been achieved to further the chances for an independent Naga nation.²⁴ To add to the irony, a parallel government now exists in Nagaland, one that is constitutionally mandated by the Indian government and one that is controlled by the underground Naga army.²⁵ The underground has been able to sustain itself due to its influence over businesses, politics and varied forms of taxation that has been vehemently condemned by both the Indian government and the Nagas in general.

While the conflict between India and Nagaland may seem like a thing of the past, patriotic Nagas still believe and look forward to an independent Naga nation. However, people do not fully support the policies of the underground. It also does not mean that all Nagas are spiteful towards Indians. Naga historian Kaka Iralu argues, “To superimpose the Indian national identity on the Naga identity and say that they are one and the same thing is unthinkable and therefore utterly unacceptable as far as the Nagas are concerned.”²⁶ The issue is about recognizing the Nagas’ distinct identity. Most Nagas do not like to be branded “Indian” although they live under the Indian constitution. The younger generation couldn't care less, as long as there is peace in the land.

After brutal conflicts with the Indian army that subsided with the signing of the cease-fire agreement, the Naga army today fights amongst themselves, much to the dismay of the people. Ideological and personal conflicts have propelled the armed Naga movement to split into various factions that regard each other with intense hatred and

²⁴Udayon Mishra, “The Naga Conflict: Towards Resolution,” in *Negotiating Peace in Deeply Divided Societies: A Set of Stipulations*, ed. Radha Kumar (New Delhi, India: Sage Publications, 2009), 157.

²⁵Mishra, 157.

²⁶Kaka D. Iralu, *The Naga Saga: A Historical Account of the Sixty-Two Years Indo-Naga War and the Story of Those Who Were Never Allowed to Tell It* (Kohima, ACLS Offset Press, 2009), 7.

suspicion. Charles Chasie writes, “The splits among Nagas into underground and overground, and, later into various factions within the underground set-up, have only worsened the conflict and complicated the finding of a settlement even more.”²⁷ Disunity and strife reign between warring Naga underground groups²⁸ and as a result people’s loyalties are unwholesomely divided. The Naga populace finds itself stymied and stifled by these groups/factions and their wayward activities. Because of several splits within the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), which originally split from its parent organization, the Naga National Council (NNC), further splits down the years have only weakened their political cause.²⁹

The splits also caused the various factions to totter with lopsided interests. Subir Bhaumik writes, “The Naga uprising, the strongest ethnic insurrection in northeast India, has been weakened by repeated splits on tribal lines.”³⁰ It does not take much to realize that the battle for sovereignty has taken a downturn, owing to the unabated forms of taxation, extortion, kidnappings and killings, all in the name of sovereignty.

Compounding the plight of the people, these various factions not only cause unnecessary dread and fear but also great confusion. The issue of Naga sovereignty has been an elusive topic with no positive outcome despite several rounds of talks between the Indian government and the Naga movement. Bhaumik continues, “After fighting India for forty

²⁷Chasie, 262.

²⁸Rupak Chattopadhyay, “The Challenge of Peace in Nagaland,” *Forum of Federations*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (March/April 2006), accessed March 30, 2014, <http://www.forumfed.org/libdocs/Federations/V5N2-in-Chattopadhyay.pdf>.

²⁹Srikanth and Thomas, 63-65.

³⁰Subir Bhaumik, "Ethnicity, Ideology and Religion: Separatist movements in India's Northeast," in Satu P. Limaye, Robert Wirsing and Mohan Malik (eds), *Religious radicalism and Security in South Asia* (Honolulu: Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2004), 223.

years, Naga ‘nationalism’ remains an incomplete process, its growth retarded by at least three major splits within the separatist movement, mostly along tribal lines.”³¹ Among the Nagas, the growing realization is that the only battle worth fighting for at the present time is within the Naga society, against those who threaten and terrorize the citizens under the guise of the Naga freedom movement. Although the people are wary of their illegal activities, very few openly berate or criticize them for fear of retaliation.

Fed up with all the conflict, the Naga people are now mustering the courage to denounce and condemn any affiliation or support of the wayward Naga factions for the sake of the future generations who may inadvertently be entrenched in a vicious cycle of violence and corruption.³² A scholar laments, “Sadly, today Naga society is experiencing internal dissonance because of our failures to set things right. Against this background, Naga politicians and Naga armed Nationalist groups are the two major social parasites who misuse our peoples’ historical yearnings for their own selfish ends, resulting in abject poverty of the masses.”³³ The discontent of the people is further augmented by the politicians who embezzle the rights and benefits of the citizens for their selfish ends and by their obvious association with the armed Naga factions.

Because the lives of the Nagas are centered in community and church activities, the church holds a strong influence on the people. Tragically, however, the church continues to meddle in political affairs with issues such as ‘prohibition act’ and ‘clean

³¹Subir Bhaumik, 226.

³²“The ACAUT Clarion Call to Naga People,” *The Morung Express*, accessed November 25, 2014, http://www.morungexpress.com/public_discourse_public_space/106336.html

³³Bendangjungshi, 8-9.

elections,' which has been a complete failure.³⁴ The “prohibition act” resulted in to a huge loss of revenue to the state.³⁵ This had given rise to syndicates that control the alcohol market and make illegal profit. The church has failed to speak against lawlessness and corruption in society. According to Solo, “None of the church associations have openly come out against the Naga national militant groups for misusing the Name of Christ in vain; the Church had not the eye to see the misuse.”³⁶ Through the years, people have called attention to the church’s laxity as it continues in its downward spiral. Solo continues, “The Church in Nagaland today -by and large- seems to have become like a corporate body grown insensitive to reality, become self-serving, and lacking conscionable responsibility to the faith.”³⁷

As people call upon the church to loosen its grip in political affairs, most churches have seemingly grown powerless and disenchanted to engage the culture. There is a dearth of honest and God-fearing representatives in political offices. The Naga society needs men of integrity who will cut the roots of corruption and injustice. The preaching of the gospel has been trammled by personal agendas and partisan politics. Needless to say, the church is losing traction in the world of the Nagas. The Nagas are stuck in a quagmire of an inert political system that promises infrastructure without results, power without accountability and a seemingly religious affiliation to Christianity without a

³⁴“Nagaland and Prohibition: NBCC’s Unfinished Battle,” *The Morung Express*, January 27, 2014, accessed November 29, 2014, <http://www.morungexpress.com/frontpage/110114.html>, also see “Nagaland Baptist Church Council Launches Clean Elections,” *The Times of India*, June 26, 2012, accessed December 5, 2014, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/Nagaland-Baptist-Church-Council-launches-clean-election-campaign/articleshow/14417598.cms>

³⁵“Prohibition In Nagaland Has Been A Total Failure,” *The Assam Tribune*, July 21, 2013, accessed on December 10, 2014, <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul2113/oth07>

³⁶Solo, *The Morung Express*

³⁷Solo, *The Morung Express*

relationship with Christ. One Naga scholar laments:

In the midst of our long and grievous historical struggle, the Naga churches have not undertaken any noticeable initiative towards restructuring our Naga society. All through our historical evolution, the Naga churches maintained a neutral position. However, in the midst of tyranny and in the face of the deplorable situation of the masses, our neutrality has become our solidarity with the status quo.³⁸

In light of all these circumstances, the researcher attempts to redirect the Naga people to the Lord Jesus Christ who is intrinsically involved and is working out His purposes for the Naga church. The researcher believes that despite all the criticisms she has suffered, the church can be restored to health and will continue to be the herald for righteousness and truth as she awaits the coming of her King.

Application for the Naga Church

As this part of the paper deals with the Naga context, it is only fitting to point out some major flaws with regard to the Nagas' understanding and practice of the Word of God. Although many Naga Christians have a basic knowledge of the Bible, the majority of Nagas who call themselves "Christian" do not study or understand the Bible. This is a contributing factor why there is a dearth of godly leadership in the land. The researcher is convinced that ignorance of God's Word impairs people's perception of God, which in turn affects lifestyles and life choices.

The Naga church has grown apathetic to personal Bible study. Due to the incompetence of those who do not handle the word of God correctly and espouse unbiblical ideas and teachings, the Nagas are in danger of being spiritually deceived. There is very little accountability among leaders and followers alike. The researcher believes this lack of personal Bible study is part of the reason why discipleship ministry

³⁸Bendangjungshi, 9.

has not been able to take root and sprout up.

The study of God's Word must lead to personal and corporate life transformation because of the power that accompanies the message (Rom. 1:16). Since Christ is the central figure in discipleship, a rigorous study of His Word and a clear understanding of His gospel must lead believers to a persistent love-relationship with the risen Christ.

The history and experiences of the Naga people reveals the life-transforming power of God at work wherever the gospel is preached. However, a sinister form of religious lethargy has afflicted the present Christ-professing Nagas. Where once Nagas had an unquestionable reverence for the Word of God, an obvious disregard and abuse prevails today. The Bible is often reduced to justify corrupt behavior and vile practices. An example is the underground's use of the slogan "Nagaland for Christ,"³⁹ which for many Nagas is an unfortunate mockery for everything that is Christian.⁴⁰

Misquotes and taking scripture verses out of context is common from the pulpit to online social media. For example, a case against a Naga leader or a politician on a Facebook page blog post elicited vigorous conversations on "money being the root of all evil" and "God being the punisher" and so on. Such examples are plentiful in online blogs and real life conversations. Compounding this problem is the haughty disregard for hermeneutical principles by those who engage in pulpit ministry. The researcher had to once sit through a sermon where the preacher repeatedly said, "God helps those who help themselves" as if that were a scripture passage. It was a motivational message but not really biblical. Nowhere in the Bible are believers exhorted to relegate God to a last

³⁹Subir Bhaumik, 234-235.

⁴⁰"Nagaland for Christ! Where is it Heading?" *The Morung Express*, accessed January 16, 2015, http://www.morungexpress.com/public_discourse_public_space/115790.html

resort/option although human nature and tendency tend to do so. The failure in being faithful to the scripture has contributed to biblical illiteracy, unchanged lives and purposeless existence for many. Even the educated lot receives little or no spiritual nourishment from their local congregations. A well-known Naga writer recently went public with his rant against the church in a local newspaper. He lamented:

The educated Church in Nagaland today does not seem to value spiritual quality; it prizes worldly camaraderie, clannish or crony loyalty to one another more than loyalty to Christ. ... The churches have solemn formality, style, training, decorum but appear lacking in warmth, depth, discernment, boldness of conviction and reality of good Christian life.”⁴¹

One can only imagine the pain behind such a statement. Very few Nagas have been brave enough to voice their disapproval against corruption and malpractices in society and the church. These voices are suppressed by means of threat and intimidation. Unfortunately, they comprise only a small fraction of the majority that harbor similar sentiments. Many chose to keep mum for fear of retribution.

As Christianity gained momentum throughout Nagaland, Naga families began to dedicate their sons and daughters, usually the firstborn, to the service of the Lord. As a result, theological studies became popular among the Nagas.⁴² Many families have encouraged or coerced at least one of their children into studying theology. Hence, sending a son or daughter to Bible college became a matter of pride and joy. The trend continues to this day. Every year, a huge number of young people throng the threshold of theological colleges across Nagaland and India. While a small percentage of students

⁴¹Thepfulhouvi Solo, “What Are The Three Greatest Challenges to the Church in Nagaland? And What Are the Most Important Principles that Undergird Your Life as a Christian?” *The Morung Express*, March 21, 2014, accessed March 24, 2014, [http:// www.morungexpress.com/Perspective/112836.html](http://www.morungexpress.com/Perspective/112836.html)

⁴²Vibha Joshi, *A Matter of Belief: Christian Conversion and Healing in North-East India*, (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012), 201.

may receive financial support from their local churches, the majority of funds come from their immediate families. However, not all enter into ministry upon the completion of their studies. The long hours of work and low pay makes church work almost unappealing. The reason is because although there are larger congregations that are self-sustaining, some churches struggle for lack of funding.

Two issues pose a major challenge to Naga Christianity. First, a large number of those who enter Bible colleges do not contribute to effective Christian witness in the society primarily because they are not committed. Because going to Bible college has been a trend among Naga families, the real value and purpose of a Bible college education is misunderstood. Some parents send their wayward youth to Bible college with the aim of straightening them out. Therefore, many enter Bible college with destructive habits and do not survive the course. The misconception is that parents hope their son or daughter would return home from Bible college with heavenly qualities and characteristics. But in most cases, that does not happen. The tendency to look at Bible colleges as options to rehabilitate wayward youth must be corrected. It is, indeed, a grave mistake to suggest Bible college to those without a clear sense of God's call or a compelling testimony of salvation. Bill Hull writes, "Participation in the Great Commission doesn't require great learning or ability, but it does require regeneration—being a transformed person. Only the habitation of God in a disciple enables her to answer the call to follow Christ."⁴³ The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). This verse teaches that a

⁴³Bill Hull, 224.

servant of God is one who is not only diligent in the study of God's word but also approved of God for the task of ministry. Those that do not have a sense of God's calling will find it hard to live a life of pretense, and will eventually fall away.

The second problem is more complex. Some lay preachers and missionaries have a very low regard for theological education; most of them function as itinerant evangelists. While some believe that theological education is only meant for the clergy, some feel "called" into ministry and view theological education as a barrier to faith. Eventually, such people are more prone to fallacious thinking. Their reasoning is that since faith and the Bible are all that are necessary, Bible college is unnecessary. Their argument is that God is only looking for those who are willing to be used of Him. Although it is true that God can use anyone regardless of life experiences or status, such reasoning runs the risk of claiming things that are not true. Sometimes they act as God's mouthpiece saying things that God did not actually appoint them to say.⁴⁴ This group of people needs to be confronted because of the false claims and teachings that they propagate. It is easy to attribute that God gave them their ideas, while just promoting their own opinions. The researcher has encountered many dubious characters whose teachings do not align with scriptural authority. Because of the Nagas' hospitable and affable nature, churches and homes have been the playground for charlatans and false prophets. God does often use those without a theological degree, but a leader is not excused from learning.

In this day and age, a person has many opportunities to sharpen his/her

⁴⁴There are many self-styled prophets in Nagaland. The researcher has personally encountered a few of them that happen to be false prophets. The Nagas are friendly and respectful of anyone representing God, so there are no punishments or consequences.

understanding of the Bible, for both personal and corporate benefit. A servant of God needs to be properly equipped. Supporting the need for theological study Donald Luck writes:

Studying theology can be personally enriching and even liberating. It provides opportunities for clearing up misunderstandings; for working through seeming conflicts between the world depicted in the Bible and contemporary scientific understanding of human nature and the natural world; for learning what, in fact, the church teaches, in contrast to widespread popular religious notions; and for discovering the insight and wisdom hidden deep within what otherwise seem to be dull formulas or empty clichés. There's more to the meaning and implications of the Christian faith than most people realize, and many find themselves enriched when they discover these unknown depths.⁴⁵

Right teaching must flow out of right knowledge. For a biblical lifestyle to emerge it must be guided by the right knowledge. Discipleship ministry must build on the right foundation of the knowledge of God. Without this, there can be no godly transformation.

Studying theology is profitable both for the leader as well as the layperson. People throughout the centuries have benefitted from biblical counsel and insights on how to conduct their lives amidst changing times. It also encourages theologically aware believers to speak out and reason regarding destructive policies in society. Luck continues:

The urgent need for theologically informed laity becomes even more apparent when one thinks about the need for Christians to provide moral and spiritual leadership for a world struggling with massive problems. One only has to think, for example, of the growing global disparity between rich and poor, the hunger for liberation and a respect for human rights on the part of marginalized people, or threats to the environment posed by an exploding consumer economy. How can the Christian community provide any effective leadership if it does not have an important segment of its membership that is theologically aware? Theology helps to clarify what the claims of the gospel mean and what God wills for the world. By taking the theological task seriously, laypersons can begin to shape their

⁴⁵Donald G. Luck, *Why Study Theology?* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1999), 49.

discipleship by informing it. Theology provides the opportunity for them to gain perspective, *theoria*, in order to shape and direct Christian involvement in the world.⁴⁶

The best representatives in the community are those Christians who rally for justice and support the disenfranchised. Christian laypeople as well as clergy need theological education. Transformed people impact society and culture for the glory of God through selfless godly lives.

In summary, two significant issues have hindered the church regarding discipleship. These two issues represent two different mindsets: First, the misuse of theological education to reform wayward youth and second, the disregard for higher theological education. The first group represents those who have little or desire to serve God. Their indifference and lack of spiritual fervor cause people to look down on theological education. Many Naga youth struggle with drug abuse, alcoholism, etc., and need real help with their addiction; however, their well-meaning families send them to Bible colleges hoping they 'straighten out.' The success rate is debatable; many drop out of Bible colleges. This of course, is not true of every Bible college student; nevertheless, it is a common problem in the Naga society. The researcher has personally encountered such students during his Bible college days and also as a youth pastor. The Bible colleges are badly represented because some misfits who attend for the wrong reasons do not value theological training.

The second group represents those that probably have a basic Bible degree but do not place high emphasis on theological education because they declare God Himself will teach them. The researcher has encountered people in positions of leadership who have a

⁴⁶Luck, 56.

very low view of theological education. This attitude is both damaging and prideful. It is no wonder that the Naga churches have a shallow knowledge of the Bible. Due to the lack of proper teaching people are prone to error and being misled. Therefore, falsehood needs to be replaced by the gospel truth. For this to happen, consistent Bible teaching and instruction is vital. The researcher is convinced that truth can best be planted in the context of discipleship, shaping one life at a time with God's truth (John 17:17). The Naga culture thrives on the idea that "God helps those who help themselves." This idea is unbiblical because it promotes God as a last resort. When God's truth takes precedence over culturally accepted ideas, the Naga church will then be a blessing to the society and to the countries beyond. Paul Hattaway writes of the tremendous potential that is available to the Naga church,

If the Naga church is ever able to train and send that many missionaries out into the dark regions surrounding them, the impact would be immense. More than one thousand unreached people groups live in the stretch of land from Pakistan through northern India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and Laos. Hundreds of these groups are similar to the Nagas in appearance, culture and language.⁴⁷

If Nagas were intentional about sharing their faith, they can have access to countries beyond their borders. The opportunities are endless. Hence, the Naga church needs to change from the inside for it to be able to impact change in the regions beyond.

⁴⁷Paul Hattaway, 108.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method for this project was qualitative with some elements of a quantitative study. The mixed methods research endeavored to acquire data and information on the state of discipleship in the Naga church in context. The two streams for data collection included survey questionnaires and personal telephone interviews. The telephone interviews were open-ended; the survey questionnaires were mostly closed ended. Both sets of data were required to provide depth and consistency to the study. Grounded theory was employed due to inadequate or non-existent theories concerned with the research problem.¹

Creswell states, “Researchers have a personal history that situates them as inquirers. They also have an orientation to research and a sense of personal ethics and political stances that inform their research.”² Admittedly, researcher biases are present;³ hence, attempts were made to maximize the perspectives and voices collected from the field.⁴ Adequate attention was given to data that were collected in the course of the research. The researcher maintained transparency with the research participants while

¹John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 88. Also see Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 10th ed. (Boston: Pearson: 2013), 146.

²Creswell, 51.

³Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 10th ed. (Boston: Pearson: 2013), 159.

⁴Leedy, 147.

being respectful and appreciative of their participation. He was mindful of the ethical issues and the codes of ethics as suggested by Leedy and Ormrod.⁵ The participants were informed of the topic and purpose of the project as the invitation to participate was extended. Assurance was given for anonymity and safeguarding the respondent's privacy. The researcher also encouraged truthfulness and honesty in their responses.

Surveys

A total of ninety (90) people were initially invited to take two survey questionnaires prepared by the researcher. The questions were designed based on years of ministry and personal interaction with pastors and laypeople in Nagaland. He also studied important Naga issues discussed on Facebook blogs and Naga online news websites (nagalandpost.com, morungexpress.com) as he developed the questionnaire. The researcher kept in mind Leedy and Ormrod's guidelines for constructing a questionnaire.⁶

Sixty people were invited to participate in the first survey. Fifty-one responded within the given time frame. The second survey was sent out to thirty people. Half (fifteen) responded. The researcher knows most of them personally.

The first survey (Survey A) was sent to born-again believers who are considered as young Christian leaders or ministry volunteers. The researcher had prior acquaintance with some of them in ministry. Although not an exhaustive representation of the larger Naga church, this group comprises people from prominent evangelical churches in Nagaland. This group ranges from youth to young adult. Most of them are in college, and some are already working. The main purpose of this survey was to note if these group of

⁵Leedy, 104-112.

⁶Leedy, 196-200.

young leaders are in a discipling relationship and also to note their opinions about the state of discipleship in Nagaland. Altogether fifteen questions were asked. Most of the questions were close ended. Multiple-choice type questions were also included, and in most items a space/comment box was provided for them to elaborate if they wished.

The second survey (or Survey B) was administered to a group of leaders, those that are in full-time ministry as pastors, chaplains, missionaries, and so on. These are leaders that are well educated and have some influence in ministry in Nagaland. Altogether twenty questions were asked with the twentieth question being an optional one. The questionnaire comprised of both open and closed questions. Comment boxes were provided in every item for them to elaborate, agree, disagree or comment. The questions were aimed at their understanding of discipleship, their opinions about discipleship, and the state of discipleship in Naga churches.

The survey research was the preferred type for data collection because a large number of responses can be collected in a given amount of time. It also provides insider opinions of the phenomena being studied. John Creswell explains, “A survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population.”⁷

The researcher used SurveyMonkey.com, an online survey website for surveys and data collection. SurveyMonkey is a user-friendly tool that provides templates for designing an online research with a variety of item types.⁸ Once a survey is designed, a link is provided so that the user can copy paste and send the survey link to multiple email

⁷John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009), 145.

⁸Leedy, 205-206.

accounts. It also collects and analyses the responses and provides options for modification and/or editing. The website charges a modest fee for upgraded use but offers a free service for basic usage. The researcher used a paid monthly service because of the number of people, questions and the options therein.

In preparing and sending out the surveys, the researcher had to be mindful of several challenges: First, the research participants are located in Nagaland. Because of the remoteness of the place, electricity, telephone and Internet networks are unreliable. Secondly, not many people have the luxury of using computers or smartphones. Even with a desire to participate, people may be unable to take the survey. However, this challenge was soon overcome. The researcher made use of Facebook.com, an online social network, which is very popular among Nagas today. The idea of using Facebook to send links for the survey led to a major advantage. Due to the growing popularity of online social networks, telecom services in India offer pre-paid phone recharge services to phone users so they can “go online” through their phones. This works not only on smartphone or tablets but also on ordinary phones. The researcher had to do some pilot tests to make sure that people with ordinary phones were able to access the survey link through Facebook, which was successful. Another challenge was also to simplify the questions in a way that ordinary phone users could take the survey without having to spend too much time (and money) on their phones. The researcher was of the opinion that if questions were posed that required them to write long sentences, many would give up on the survey. Hence, the questions had to be simple, yet thorough enough for them to respond with honesty.

The third challenge was that because of the Nagas' cultural pattern of respect and not wanting to 'lose face' by speaking unfavorably about some issues the research data could be jeopardized. Therefore, constant reminders for honest responses and assurance of safeguarding anonymity were made. Moreover, follow up questions were asked in order to maintain consistency and balance. Leedy and Ormrod's reminder is useful:

When a questionnaire asks questions about a potentially controversial topic, some respondents might give answers that are socially acceptable rather than accurate in order to present a favorable impression. To allow for this possibility, you may wish to ask the same question two or more times—using different words each time—at various points in your questionnaire.⁹

The questionnaire also evoked interest and deep reflection on the part of participants. One survey respondent confessed to have “backslidden” and asked for prayers to be restored to God. This led to a series of email correspondence bathed in prayers and encouragement. Another interviewee confessed during the phone interview that these questions were “hard” and “convicting.” Like several others, this respondent appreciated being part of the study.

Interviews

The interview questions were designed to yield qualitative data. The data gathered from the interviews were analyzed in similar categories as in the surveys. To move from data collection to the data analysis phase, three underlying themes were considered: First, the respondents' experience of discipleship in the early stages of their faith journey. Second, the church's involvement in the respondents' growth by means of structured discipleship. Third, the role of discipleship in the respondents' current ministries.

⁹Leedy, 198.

The researcher noted patterns, trends and also variables that were crucial to the data gathering process. The conclusions were slowly and carefully analyzed. During the interview five main questions were asked including some follow up questions. The questions were all open-ended and were designed in a way that encouraged thoughtful reflection and free sharing.

The researcher interviewed 10 full time ministry workers involved in different roles in the church. All the interviews were conducted via telephone. Two of the interviewees have a D. Min degree, one has a Ph.D., and seven of them have Master's degrees. The interview was open ended and five initial questions were asked. In cases where follow up was necessary, the interview continued with some more clarifying questions. The researcher was careful not to ask leading questions or make hints to have the interviewee agree with the researcher. Adequate time was given to the respondents to elaborate. The interview times ranged from twenty minutes to one hour. The researcher recorded all the interviews in his iPod and transcribed the interview. The researcher asked for permission to tape the interview; each graciously agreed. Five questions were asked:

1. When you became a follower of Christ how often were you discipled? How did you grow in the faith?
2. How is discipleship done in your current setting? Is there a model, method or strategy that you use?
3. What are your thoughts about the Naga church and the way we do discipleship?

4. If you were to implement a discipleship program/method in your current ministry setting, do you think you will find adequate support and encouragement for doing so?
5. How satisfied are you with discipleship in your church?

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH DATA

The project focuses on the lack of intentional discipleship in the Naga church. In order to probe further into this issue, the researcher employed survey questionnaires and personal interviews for data collection. He designed two survey questionnaires (Survey A and Survey B) for two different groups of people. Survey A contained fifteen questions and was designed for volunteer/leaders not involved in full time ministry. Survey B comprised twenty questions and was designed for those involved in full time Christian ministry. The purpose for the questionnaire was to study the participants' attitude and experiences in matters related to discipleship in the Naga church. The words "respondent" and/or "participant" is used interchangeably to mean the same thing.

Survey A

These first five questions were basic questions with the intent to find out some information about the participants. The questions were about the participant's gender, age, work, location and personality/temperament. Questions 6 to 8 dealt with personal spiritual development. Questions 9 to 13 dealt with discipleship. Questions 14 and 15 asked about their opinions on church and society.

In almost all the questions, "other" or "N/A" including space/comment box options were given in case the respondents felt the multiple-choice answers did not reflect their thoughts. The reason for this is so that they may not feel coerced or falsely represented. The researcher encouraged them to express themselves freely.

Question 1: What is your gender?

Table 5. 1 Respondents' Gender

Answer options	Number of respondents
Male	24
Female	27
Total	51

The survey was evenly distributed to a number of 30 males and 30 females. As shown in the table above, the majority of respondents were female.

Question 2: How old are you?

Table 5. 2 Respondents' Age

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
18 to 24	51	26
25 to 34	43	22
35 to 44	4	2
45 to 54	2	1
Total		51

While the majority of respondents fall under the 18 to 34 years old category, 3 respondents between the ages 35 to 54 are not necessarily college going students but ones that volunteer and serve in their local church.

Question 3: I am currently

Table 5. 3 Respondents' occupations

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
In college	41	21
Working	43	22
Job-Hunting	10	5
Other	6	3
Total		51

Question 4: Where do you live presently?

Table 5. 4 Respondents' current living situation

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
At home	66	33
Away from home (hostel, rent, etc)	32	16
Other	2	1
Total		50

The ones that answered 'away' are probably those that have moved within Nagaland or outside of Nagaland for job opportunities or studies. In the Naga culture it is very common for young adults to live with parents in the family home. Joint families are common.

Question 5: How would you define yourself?

Table 5. 5 Respondents' personality types

Answer options	Percentage	Number of Respondents
Shy, silent types	14	7
Outgoing and Jolly	16	8
Friendly	26	13
Talkative	0	0
Depends on the situation	44	22
Total		50

There is no agenda for this question other than to gauge their personality types. The possibility is that one could be an introvert or an extrovert or a little bit of both. One person skipped this question.

Questions 6 to 8 are geared towards the individual's personal growth and involvement in spiritual affairs. These questions attempt to uncover where they are at in terms of their commitment to God, the Bible and Christian community.

Question 6: I read the Bible?

Table 5. 6 Respondents' Bible reading habits

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
Regularly	28	14
Once a week	18	9
Occasionally	40	20
Hardly	14	7
Total		50

Question 7: I go to church?

Table 5. 7 Respondents' church attendance

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
Regularly	63	32
Occasionally	27	14
Rarely	10	5
Total		51

Church attendance is an important activity for the Nagas. It is no surprise that the majority of respondents find time to attend church on a regular basis. Naga youngsters who study or work in the cities outside of Nagaland might find less opportunity to go to church.

Question 8: How would you define your relationship with God?

Table 5. 8 Respondents' relationship with God

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
Growing	42	21
Cold	0	0
Distant	8	4
Good	34	17
Confusing	16	8
Total		50

There was a note by one participant informing the researcher that she is “backsliding these days” and in serious need of prayers. It is noted that one person skipped this question.

Questions 9 to 13 deal with discipleship. The plan was to ascertain whether those who say they are involved in discipleship are really engaged or just agreeing with the question to avoid embarrassment. Many people consider attending church and Bible studies as discipleship, and assume they are being disciplined. While these are important, they may not be as intentional or structured in ways that lead to intentional discipleship. There are several follow up questions to check for consistency in answers provided. When they say they are being disciplined but fail to reveal the size of the group or how often they meet, there are obvious inconsistencies. Question 13 is asked to determine if indeed there is a current discipler or mentor that they can turn to in times of confusion and doubt.

Question 9: I am currently being disciplined by someone on a regular basis. (This person holds me accountable, prays for me and reaches me to love and follow God)

Table 5. 9 Respondents' discipleship status (Meeting regularly with someone for accountability, prayer and teaching)

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
Yes	33	17
No	55	28
Unsure	12	6
Total		51

Question 10: Do you meet one on one or in a group for Bible study?

Table 5. 10 Respondents' formal Bible study situation

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
One on One	12%	6
In a group	22%	11
N/A	67%	34
Total		51

Question 11: How many times do you meet with your discipler?

Table 5. 11 Respondents' meeting frequency with discipler

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
Daily	2	1
Once a week	16	8
Once a month	44	2
N/A	79	40
Total		51

Question 12: Do you think discipleship (the process of helping a believer grow in maturity in Christ) is important for Christian life and growth?

Table 5. 12 Respondents' belief in importance of discipleship

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
Strongly agree	90	46
Maybe	8	4
Strongly disagree	0	0
I don't know	2	1
Total		51

Question 13: Whenever I have questions about the Bible and Christian life?

Table 5. 13 Respondents and access to support with Biblical questions

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
I often wish there was someone to explain things more clearly to me	45	23
I consult someone who is biblically competent and explains things very clearly	35	18
I study on my own	16	8
I do nothing	5	3
Total		51

Question 14 was asked to determine how the participants viewed the current socio-political situation in Nagaland. This was an opportunity to express their opinions. The answers revealed how understand and engage with current issues. One respondent skipped this question.

Question 14: What top three issues do you feel are the major problems in Naga society today?

Table 5. 14 Respondents' view on the top three most impactful problems in Nagaland

Answer options	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Number of respondents
Christians behaving badly (unlike Christ)	46%	30%	12%	8%	2%	2%	23
Corruption	42%	44%	10%	4%	0%	0%	21
Church is powerless	6%	2%	8%	50%	16%	18%	3
Underground factions	4%	6%	18%	2%	12%	58%	2
Lack of Role models	2%	14%	48%	18%	16%	2%	1
Illegal Immigrants	0%	4%	4%	18%	54%	20%	0
Total							50

Question 15: What do you think about the following church activities?

Table 5. 15 Respondents' view of current church activities (Fair, Good, Confusing, Boring, No Comment)

Answer options	Fair	Good	Confusing	Boring	No Comment	Total
Bible study	18%	57%	0%	4%	22%	51
Youth services	32%	56%	4%	4%	4%	50
Preaching	22%	56%	4%	8%	10%	50
Music/ Worship	31%	61%	2%	2%	4%	49
Fellowship with believers	22%	59%	6%	6%	6%	49
Witness/ Evangelism	23%	46%	8%	0%	23%	48
Helping Poor and Needy	35%	41%	8%	0%	16%	49
Prayer meetings	26%	60%	4%	0%	8%	48

Question 15 assesses their opinions with regards to ministries that are intrinsic to most churches. This was a rating type question with multiple options for responses. The majority of the responses were rated “good.”

Survey B

The questionnaire contains twenty questions. The survey was sent to 30 people but only 15 responses were received. There were a total of twenty questions asked with the last question being an optional one. This survey was specifically aimed at for those who are in full time ministry. These leaders hold roles of influence in their respective settings. These are the learned group of Naga leaders who are well travelled, have a good grasp on modern issues, and ones that can possibly initiate changes in the society.

The questions from 1 to 8 were preliminary questions about the participant's gender, age, work, ministry location, size, assignment, etc. Questions 9 to 15 deals with discipleship. Questions 9 to 13 examines whether they are involved in discipleship. Questions 14 and 15 highlight their opinions about church and society.

In almost all the questions, "other" or "N/A" including space/comment box options are given in case the respondents feel the multiple-choice answers do not reflect their thoughts. The reason for this is so that they may not feel coerced or falsely represented. The researcher encouraged them to express themselves freely.

Question 1: What is your gender?

Table 5. 16 Respondents' gender

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
Male	87	13
Female	14	2
Total		15

Question 2: How old are you?

Table 5.17 Respondents' age

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
18-24	0	0
25-34	54	8
35-44	33	5
45-55	13	2
56-65	0	0
65-75	0	0
Total		15

Question 3: The church (organization) you currently serve/volunteer/attend falls under one of the following:

Table 5. 18 Respondents' current church denomination

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
Independent	13	2
Baptist	53	8
Assemblies of God	20	3
NCRC	0	0
Non-denominational	13	2
Presbyterian	0	0
Anglican CNI	7	1
Total		15

Question 4: What is the approximate number of attendees?

Table 5. 19 Respondents' churches' approximate number of attendees

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
0-50	13	2
50-150	20	3
150-300	20	3
500-1000	27	4
1000+	7	1
2000+	13	2
Total		15

Question 5: How long has your church been in existence?

Table 5. 20 Respondents' churches' age

Respondents	Answers
1	9 years
2	58 years
3	16 years
4	51 years
5	75 years
6	16 years
7	10 years
8	50 years
9	79 years
10	48 years
11	10 years
12	13 years
13	40 years
14	1 year
15	84 years

Several churches and denominations are represented here. The goal of this question was simply to get a sense of the churches being represented. The youngest church represented here is a year old. The oldest church represented in this research is 84 years old. 5 churches have been in existence for over 50 years.

Question 6: How long have you been in ministry?

Table 5. 21 Respondents' time spent in ministry

Respondents	Answers
1	8 years
2	14 years
3	8 years
4	6 years
5	20 years
6	5 years
7	10 years
8	11 years
9	3 years
10	5 years
11	15 years
12	10 years
13	N/A
14	15 years
15	16 years

Question 7: I am presently serving as

Table 5. 22 Respondents' current ministry positions

Answer options	%	Number of respondents
Pastor	27	4
Volunteer	20	3
Teacher	13	2
I am taking a break and exploring other areas of ministry	13	2
Missionary	13	2
Evangelist	0	0
Musician/Worship Leader	7	1

Three responses were recorded in the space provided indicating “other” (ones not in the list). The three responses came from three different individuals. They are: “Chaplain,” “Youth pastor,” “Director of a Christian NGO/worshipping in a new church started this year.

Question 8: How would you define your relationship with God?

Table 5. 23 Respondents' relationship statuses with God

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
Growing	87	13
Distant	0	0
Confusing	0	0
Good	13	2
Total		15

Question 9: When I first started following Christ as a new believer

Table 5. 24 Respondents' initial discipleship options (as a new believer)

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
I studied the Bible on my own with very little help from others	27	4
I was discipled regularly	13	2
I faithfully attended church and benefitted from the preaching	33	5
There was no Bible study group where I was at	20	3
I joined a Bible study and that contributed to my spiritual growth	7	1
Total		15

Question 10: I have someone (a disciple/mentor) who takes special interest in my growth in Christ. This person meets with me regularly, knows my weaknesses/struggles and offers spiritual support. (Not spouse or family member).

Table 5. 25 Respondents' access to regular discipler/mentor

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
Sorry I am a solo pastor/leader	13	2
Occasionally, not regular or structured	60	9
Yes, I trust this person with my life	13	2
I wish	13	2
Total		15

Question 11: How often do you meet?

Table 5. 26 Respondents' frequency of meeting with discipler/mentor

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
Weekly	13	2
Monthly	33	5
Hardly	20	3
N/A	33	5
Total		15

Question 12: I am currently investing my life in someone (group of people)

Table 5. 27 Respondents' current discipling/mentoring options

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
Regularly	53	8
Occasionally	33	5
I would like to. I am planning on it	13	2
Maybe	0	0
Sorry, but I am busy with other things	0	0
Total		15

Question 13: How often?

Table 5. 28 Respondents' current discipling/mentoring frequency

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
Weekly	62	8
Monthly	31	4
Hardly, I don't remember	8	1
N/A	0	0
Total		13

Question 14: How does discipleship take place in your current ministry?

Table 5. 29 Respondents' current ministries' discipleship format

Answer options	Percentage	Number of respondents
One on one	40	6
Small groups/cell groups	27	4
Men/Women's Bible study	13	2
N/A	20	3
Total		15

Question 15: What does “discipleship” mean to you? (Share in a few words. Also okay to elaborate)

Table 5. 30 Respondents' current perspective on discipleship

Respondents	Answers
1	Discipleship is mentoring
2	Discipleship is discipling to disciple
3	Teaching others to become obedient followers of Christ
4	Training and shaping a believer to become teachable to someone else
5	Growing, deepening, and maturing Christ in others and myself by conscious planning. Intentional spirituality—a structured practice of faith in a loving and non-judgmental environment where the wholeness of life in Jesus is emphasized.
6	Imprinting footsteps in Christ for others to follow
7	Discipleship is a process in which a newly converted person is being taught how he/she can become a practical Christian in which the person will act and live like Jesus in the community, as a result this person may reach out to others and produce the same kind.
8	Following Jesus and living by the wisdom of His Word.
9	To me, discipleship means diligent or faithfully follow Christ. Growing in the Lord Jesus Christ.
10	For me, discipleship means helping one person to grow in the Lord in every aspect of his life, spiritual, emotionally, physically and mentally. And praying with him and helping him in every step of his life decision
11	Leader of His people
12	Building another leader to share and to carry out the gospel of Jesus Christ
13	Serving without expecting any rewards
14	It is a process of helping believers grow into deeper relationship with God
15	Nurturing and helping someone to follow Christ sincerely

Questions 16 to 18 dealt with present Naga issues that are widely discussed. The researcher provided six items for the responders to chose their top three. SurveyMonkey collected and analyzed the responses according to the respondents' choices. Some respondents picked at least two to three of the answer/options provided, while some picked only one. Hence, the numbers may vary as the response shows. Scores were tabulated to indicate first, second and third respectively.

Question 16: What top three issues do you feel are the major problems in Naga society today? Rate the first three with one (1) being the highest.

Table 5. 31 Respondents' perspective on top three issues that are major problems in current Naga society

Answer options	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Score
Illegal immigrants	0%	7%	7%	33%	33%	20%	2.47
Corruption	47%	20%	13%	7%	7%	0%	4.87
Christians behaving badly (unlike Christ)	47%	20%	7%	0%	0%	0%	5.07
Lack of role models	0%	40%	33%	7%	7%	0%	3.93
Underground factions	0%	7%	0%	47%	47%	26%	2.33
Church is powerless	7%	7%	13%	7%	7%	53%	2.33
Total number of responses	15	15	15	15	15	15	

Question 17: Pick two or three that best describe you at this point.

Table 5. 32 Respondents' perspective on best self-descriptors

Answer options	Percentage	Most picked responses
I need further theological study/training	47	7
I am confused: I think I am in a transition	20	3
I am enjoying my work	47	7
I wish I had someone to hold me accountable and guide me spiritually	13	2
I need a break from all this work and stress	7	1
I need more people to disciple	13	2
Ministry is hard but I am learning to persevere	53	8
I love to do ministry but have limited resources	33	5

Question 18: What do you think are the hindrances to discipleship (making disciples)? You can pick more than one answer or provide your thoughts in the comment box below.

Table 5. 33 Respondents' perspectives on hindrances to discipleship

Answer options	Percentage	Number of times responses picked
Lack of commitment in potential disciples	40	6
Lack of committed and competent leaders or role models	40	6
Lack of strategy, models or methods	47	7
Lack of support from the church and leadership	33	5
All of the above	53	8
None of the above	0	0

**Question 19: In your present ministry context, how would you rate the following?
Kindly tick where appropriate.**

Table 5. 34 Respondents' rating of current statuses of different ministries (Fair, Good, Dull, Needs more focus, No Comment)

Answer options	Fair	Good	Dull	Needs more focus	No Comment	Total
Bible study	27%	20%	7%	40%	7%	15
Preaching	27%	53%	13%	7%	0%	15
Music/ Worship	13%	27%	33%	20%	7%	15
Fellowship with believers	27%	40%	13%	20%	0%	15
Witness/ Evangelism	20%	47%	13%	20%	0%	15
Developing leaders	13%	27%	13%	47%	0%	15
Helping the Poor	20%	33%	13%	33%	0%	15
Prayer meetings	14%	57%	14%	14%	0%	15
Reaching the unreached	7%	33%	13%	40%	7%	15

The last and final question was an optional one. This was to provide an opportunity for respondents to share their thoughts, comments and/or suggestions on anything that the researcher might have missed out on. Only two comments were recorded.

Question 20. Is there anything you would like to add?

This was an optional question. There were two comments:

1. "Good luck Rolland"
2. "Pray for me also, so that I can work more faithfully."

Interview responses

A total of ten full time ministry workers were interviewed separately over a period of one month. The participants granted permission to the researcher to record the interview sessions on his iPod. The interviews were conducted in English and Nagamese (common dialect of Nagaland). The purpose for the interviews was to assess the experiences and opinions of those in the ministry field in Nagaland concerning the subject of discipleship. The interview was structured in a flexible way that allowed for free flow of ideas and opinions. At several intervals during the interview the researcher asked follow up questions to make sure he understood what they were saying.

In order to arrive at unbiased conclusions the researcher looked for key patterns and trends related to discipleship and the ministry of the church. The data analyzing process involved three categories: the respondents' experience of discipleship, the ministry of the church and its impact on the respondent's lives, and the respondents' current involvement in discipleship.

The researcher aimed at studying the respondent's early conversion experiences and the frequency in which discipleship had taken place in their own lives. Next, the researcher sought to look for models, methods or strategies that the churches might have utilized or developed in the discipling process. Finally, questions were asked to ascertain the depth of the respondent's involvement in discipleship and their hopes and expectations related to the ministry of discipleship. The conclusions were all based on the responses and closely evaluated within the prism of these categories.

The people interviewed included a wide spectrum of Christian leaders and ministries. They included a Bible teacher, college campus chaplain, three missionaries,

and five pastors out of who three were youth pastors. As regards to their educational qualifications, two of the interviewees have a D.Min degree, one Ph.D., and seven have Master's degrees. The names and details of their ministries were kept strictly confidential. The researcher thought it best to refer to the interviewee/respondents in abbreviated form as R1- R10 whenever direct references become necessary. He consulted the interview transcripts and the recordings whenever quotations were included. Below is a summary of the five questions and responses. The researcher focused on keywords, commonalities and differences in the responses.

Question 1: When you became a follower of Christ how often were you disciplined?

How did you grow in the faith?

This question received mixed responses. Respondents 1 to 6 (R1 to R6) answered "occasionally." Respondents 7 and 8 answered "regularly but for a short period of time." Respondents 9 and 10 answered "I disciplined myself."

Respondents 1-6 answered "occasionally" in the sense that although there was no structured Bible study or discipleship, they made regular contact with pastors and people at church on Sundays. The reason for combining R1-R6 together was because their experiences were similar. Subsequent to their salvation experience, they were not part of any discipleship group. They were occasionally encouraged and prayed for by the pastor and/or other believers from the churches they were attending at that time. Attending church on Sundays and mid week services helped them in their faith journey. One of them credited his mom for continually teaching him about God and taking him to church every Sunday.

Another one mentioned that he got baptized shortly after accepting Christ. He explained that he was offered a week of discipleship class prior to the baptism. Another response closely resonated to this one except that the baptism class for him was only a few hours of teaching.

R7 and R8 both had similar experiences in that they were regularly disciplined for sometime. R8 also revealed that he disciplined myself while talking about later life experiences. On closer verification the researcher found out that their circumstances provided the opportunity for them to be disciplined. They had each attended different Christian boarding schools. R7 was not sure if he would call it discipleship but agreed that it was partaking every evening in chapel service and being taught in a group that gave him some foundation in the faith. R8 shared his experience,

I got saved in a school event when they organized a gospel crusade. After the event, a few of us who lived in the boys' dorm were disciplined regularly for a couple of months. We were taught discipleship materials, particularly a topic titled "Who I am in Christ." That was our discipleship class for some hours every evening. Back in those days, the subject was hard to comprehend even though now I know and understand better now. The topic was difficult for a school student. Hence, it was not very relevant at that time. It was beneficial but not enough to call it discipleship. Later on in life, I read the Bible and other Christian resources that I had. I practically disciplined myself.

Respondent 9 recalled, "I got saved in 1996. No one disciplined me. My parents were busy. Dad had cancer. Discipleship in that case was really nil. Even today, there is little or no emphasis on discipleship." Respondent 10 echoed similar experience: "I disciplined myself as I grew in faith. I did my own study of the Bible and attended church regularly."

Question 2: How is discipleship done in your current setting? Is there a model, method or strategy that you use?

Three different responses were received. First, nine of the respondents admitted to not having a specific discipleship strategy other than some age-specific programs in the church. Second, all ten of them cited the devotional and mid-week services as meeting a discipleship need but admitted that more needed to be done. Each of them believed that their churches were moving towards being more discipleship-focused. Third, two respondents stated that discipleship was going well for them. One was able to explain a method they used in a campus setting. The other did not have a model.

Nine of the respondents admitted that there were no models or strategies other than programs tailored to meet the needs of youth, teens and children. There were several hints at programs that were “in the works” that needed to be implemented but were yet to take shape. This group also considered the Sunday devotional services, preaching of the Word, and church community events as important aspects to discipleship.

Some respondents were obviously unhappy at the lack of discipleship. A youth leader confessed, “There is none in my church. I don't see any. There is a Sunday church, and a midweek service, but apart from that there is no discipleship program.”

One respondent reported that discipleship is very shallow in his church and recounted his struggles with convincing the leadership board. After several failed attempts, he stated that he is now focusing on the young people. He has a group of four that he is intentionally investing his life in.

The two respondents who believed discipleship was going well for them serve in different settings with different target groups of people.

Respondent 1:

We don't meet everyday with the people we serve. However, we meet at least once or twice a week. We follow up with them. We also try to find out where they are at in their faith. We try to keep in touch with them and try to connect whenever we can. That's our follow up.

Respondent 2:

I don't use any manuals. There is already a system that has been around for a long time. The way we do this is that we first check whether the person is a born again believer or not. We observe, pray for them and approach them to see if they would be willing to give time to us. With their willingness and once they agree, we spend time together, we look for their potential and provide avenues for them to make use of their talents. In that process they become more confident and open. Then we being Bible studies with them feed them the Word. We also let them reason in areas where they are struggling. Our ministry makes it available for young people to approach us if they have struggles. Our system works in our present situation.

Respondent 1 did not have a specific model but there was obviously some intentionality in the approach. Respondent 2 had a strategy that was time-tested and seemed to work in their particular setting.

Question 3: What are your thoughts about the Naga church and the way we do discipleship?

This question evoked a lot of spirited discussions, so the researcher thought it best to summarize all the answers and list them as spoken by the respondents. Since it is not possible to note down every detail of the discussion, the important points are highlighted. Some of the responses are almost identical to each other. Almost all of the respondents admitted that discipleship is “missing” in the Naga churches.

R1: “Most of our leaders are not aware of the need for discipleship. They assume when people attend church they learn. Everything revolves around church services.”

R2: "Christians lack a lot of Bible knowledge. In a typical devotional service, it is usually 30 minutes to an hour of preaching that has no relevance to the life of people. Young people are genuinely hungry for the gospel and so they look to televangelists. They lack proper Bible teaching, they need mentors and they need to be disciplined."

R3: "We are lacking in discipleship. The majority of churches are Sunday service oriented."

R4: "I think it is a good idea if many leaders and church members are able to do discipleship. The concept of discipleship in our churches is really shallow and needs to be hammered out. I think discipleship begins from home and the foundation of Sunday school is very important. Few churches are coming up but majority of churches are not able to discipleship. We need to start this early when our youths are at a young age. I want to emphasize on young people. My focus is on starting them early."

R5: "Now the church is coming to understand the need for discipleship. The older generation did not emphasize on discipleship so we always have leadership problems. Today, church members want their children to be disciplined. The church and people are warming up to the idea of discipleship."

R6: "I think discipleship is very important. We have conferences, youth crusades, camps, revival meetings and other programs but when it comes to reality, something is missing and the church must seriously ponder on this issue."

R7: "Many people look to the church for their spiritual well being. They don't give importance or are interested in discipleship maybe because they don't understand. There are many churches that are not strong on discipleship. The disciples do not want to follow or see the importance of replicating because they are not taught."

R8: “I think some churches are doing well. Some churches have more pastoral staff that is assigned specifically to care for people. But most of our churches are lacking. We rejoice in getting new members but when it comes to discipleship, we assume that since they have now become Christians they will come to church and grow. These are some of the issues. We need to bring back the significance of discipleship. We assume that new believers will grow like us (leaders). This breeds namesake Christians. Most of our churches have people like this.”

R9: Few churches concentrate on mentoring. Majority of churches suffer in mentoring the younger generation. Because of the lack of mentoring church is no longer attractive to young people. And since church is no longer attractive they go to other areas to expose their potential. The church is not attracting young people nor giving them the platform to be who they are.”

R10: “Our churches in Nagaland do not disciple their members. They charge them up emotionally in youth camps, retreats, crusades, and through prophetic words. Pastors hardly follow up those that make decisions to follow Christ. Many people are emotional Christians in Nagaland. The only thing we have at church is weekly fellowship, plus the worship service. The most people get out of the Bible is during the devotional service. The present Sunday school system follows a set curriculum. It is just a course for learning. Not personal and not discipleship. They only learn the curriculum. Discipleship is not happening. Those people fall away because they are not deeply rooted in the word of God. Many people do not actually know scripture since there is no discipleship. The need of the hour is not preaching, it is teaching. The church needs to emphasize more on teaching and discipleship. The pulpit preaching is not helping the believer to grow in

Nagaland today. It might prick his/her conscience. The preaching loses steam after the believer steps out of church. We must give more attention to discipleship. We need a systematic approach to Discipleship.

There are several important points that emerged from the discussion. It would be helpful to summarize the responses in a few sentences:

1. The common perception is that Sunday church services works as a substitute in the absence of discipleship
2. There is a need for solid Bible teaching and mentors who model discipleship in a way that people can relate to and understand
3. The church's focus on activities and programs is not producing true disciples
4. The church is starting to realize the need for discipleship but this realization must lead to action
5. New members or converts cannot be expected to grow and mature when there is no discipleship to help in the process. It will only produce nominal Christians.

Question 4: If you were to implement a discipleship program/method in your current ministry setting, do you think you will find adequate support and encouragement for doing so?

Nine of the respondents were positive about this with the exception of one who responded, "I don't know." The respondent then commented that that whether the church supports it or not, one simply needs to take the plunge for something as worthwhile as this.

There were some doubts with regards to questions on logistics but that was not really an issue according to most respondents. The common response was that if the church failed to come up with a consensus, the plan would only remain on paper.

Another response discussed about the power of communication or vision casting. A lot depended on how vision was communicated. If leaders were not clear in explaining what this was about, it would lead to confusion. Hence, the objectives must be properly stated to avoid confusion.

A number of respondents talked about the church but only one rightly used the word “institutionalized.” Three respondents lamented the fact that the church was run by people who had “power,” “status” and “position” in society. The respondents claimed that some leaders had the power to influence the decision of the church but had no discernment or spiritual authority. Their only claim to leadership was due to their wealth and since it was hard to oppose powerful people, pastors chose to stay mum. This had led the church to go in many different directions and away from the purposes of God. One respondent complained that some churches were afraid because such people were usually the highest donors in church. The respondent claimed that the church has become like a government office.

Question Five: How satisfied are you with discipleship in your church?

All of the ten stated that they were “not very satisfied” with the discipleship in their local church context. One of them made some important observations about the Naga culture. The respondent explained that Nagas claim to know Jesus Christ but when it came to living like Christ, there was a total disconnect. This made Christians look like hypocrites and puts Christianity in poor light.

Two of the respondents were optimistic about the discipleship programs that were underway in their denominations. It has yet to be implemented but the hope was that such changes and intentionality would lead to a harvest of souls.

CHAPTER SIX: EVALUATION

The research problem this project addressed was the lack of intentional discipleship which has resulted in spiritual apathy and has hampered the development of leaders in the local churches in Nagaland, rendering Christians ineffective to impact the community. Because Nagas are generally considered Christian, non-locals tend to judge Christianity by the conduct of their Naga neighbors. The ‘Christian’ tag is an unfortunate generalization because many Nagas are known to be “nominal” Christians,¹ The religious practices and rituals of the church have become intertwined with the life and culture of the Nagas. The church continues to struggle with producing men and women who proclaim Christ’s righteousness in word and deed. The Nagas receive a heavy dose of preaching and Bible instruction every Sunday, but the application of truth has been waylaid by serious corruption in the church and society, which calls for a deep introspection so that change and reformation can take place. This dissertation is born out of thoughtful reflection and observation of the present state of Christianity in Nagaland.

The first subproblem was to examine the importance of discipleship as demonstrated in the Bible. In order to accomplish this, the researcher examined the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) passage. Christ’s command to His disciples is to “make disciples of all nations.” The kingdom invitation is extended to every person throughout the world. His disciples are to bear witness to the good news wherever they went. They

¹Manpreet Singh, “The Soul Hunters of Central Asia,” *Christianity Today*, February 1, 2006, accessed December 12, 2014, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/february/38.51.html>

were to be so consumed with the good news of God's salvation that proclaiming and living the gospel truth would be a natural expression of their existence. This message was a call to faith in God, the creator. Jesus Christ, the Son of God secured the salvation of all sinful humanity by bearing upon Himself the sins of the world. Through His perfect obedience and death He made the way for mankind to be reconciled to God (John. 3:16). Christ's authority, power and presence make the Great Commission great. The promise of His power, presence and authority inhabits the command. As Christ-followers bear witness to Him in their daily lives, they are to influence those around them in faith and holiness. Christ followers are commanded to win people to Christ through their daily interactions of going about life, by baptizing them into God's family and teaching them to live lives that bring glory to God.

“Making disciples” in essence is reproducing followers who take after the likeness of Christ—being conformed to Christ's likeness in every aspect of their being and doing. It also means bringing new believers to maturity in Christ. The church today is not exempt from this command. The church must make disciples, by means of continued instruction and modeling of truth. Jesus modeled what discipleship looked like. He lived what he preached and made Himself nothing for the sake of others (Phil. 2: 5). Sinners found comfort in Him (Luke 7: 36); the self-righteous felt convicted in His presence (Matthew. 23); the poor and the outcasts found hope in Him (Luke.18: 38). The church stands as a beacon of light in this evil and unrighteousness time. People must find hope, comfort and life in Christ by the effective witness of the church—God's people, through whom He reveals His goodness to all creation.

Those who claim to know Christ and yet live a life that does not reflect His holiness and truth are without excuse. Unfortunately, the church is filled with pew-Christians who serve no benefit to the kingdom purposes of God. If anything, the cause of Christ is repeatedly put to disrepute by the sinful conduct of those who claim to know Christ but have no resemblance to Him.

The Great Commission is not a call to a life of comfort, but a call to proclaim the good news of Jesus through living, teaching and making disciples. Thus, the challenge for the church is to invest intentionally into the ‘making’ of disciples who will in turn reproduce generations of disciples that honor and glorify God. Disciples must also be intentional about their personal growth by the daily practice of spiritual disciplines to help maintain a godly life. The road to discipleship is tough. The church cannot exhort people to do battle against evil if the church is not preparing people through discipleship. The Naga church is failing to make disciples despite its many outreach and mission endeavors. The evangelistic efforts have seen conversions, but due to the lack of follow up and ongoing discipleship process, many fall away or do not mature spiritually. It is imperative for the Naga church to understand that evangelism and discipleship must be one inseparable entity and to not choose one over the other.

The second subproblem of this research was to explore relevant literature that dealt with discipleship in the Naga church context. Due to the paucity of sources on this topic the research acts as a first step towards highlighting this crucial issue. How Christianity came to Nagaland is a momentous story of God’s activity in the world. The Naga people were rescued out of darkness into God’s light through the propagation of the

gospel. However, today, many people have lost sight of the beauty of the gospel message and continue to blatantly indulge in sinful habits that undermine the teaching of the Bible.

The Naga church is beset with problems from within, mainly due to a misunderstanding of the church's essential purpose in the world. Although this is a general assessment, it is something that Naga people are well aware of. Complaints and criticisms about the church abound in Naga newspapers and social media. The church's focus on making more buildings, alcohol prohibitions, involvement in politics and so on has sadly turned many away from the church. The church has failed to see beyond the superficial and continues to play a defensive or prohibitive role. The obvious flaws of the church can still be corrected. While the church dabbles in affairs that are secondary, precious lives are being lost due to the lack of proper guidance and teaching.

The church must move beyond its rituals and into the core of human depravity where sinners encounter God's saving grace. The mask that 'nominal' Naga Christians wear can only be removed by a genuine encounter with the risen Christ. Therefore, the church throughout Nagaland must make a dramatic shift in focus, and commit to discipling men and women.

The word "church" also needs to be properly defined. Whenever Nagas think of "church," they immediately think "buildings." This is indicative of the fact that throughout Nagaland, elaborately designed church buildings adorn the hilltops of every village and town. Most churches are either always in debt or in need of more financial support to construct church buildings. The buildings continue despite no marked increase in membership. The researcher is not against constructing a church building, but his argument is to prioritize on human souls. Two years ago the researcher encountered a

situation where a couple of young people were denied financial support to go to a Bible college because their home church was financing the modification of the church building in preparation of approaching golden jubilee celebrations. The manner in which the situation unfolded left the researcher sorrowful and perplexed. Naga people need to understand that the church is not merely the building but people. The Bible often makes reference to the church in the context of ‘people’ (Col. 1: 18, 1 Cor. 3: 16). The scriptures declare that the church is “people” who are called by God for His purposes (Acts 14: 27). While a gathering place or an auditorium is helpful and convenient, the ‘church’ always has to do with people. Her mission in the world is to bear witness to the one who established it in the first place.

The research also briefly discussed an important issue that affects Christianity in Nagaland: Bible colleges. While Bible colleges and theological institutions are necessary, these institutions have been objects of much criticism. Theological schools need to produce authentic and diligent students of the Bible. Intentional discipleship must be initiated and robustly be promoted in these institutions which attract all sorts of people, who need to reach out to others.

Another issue highlighted in chapter three was the lack of regard for theological education among some pastors. It is apparent that many of those who were never disciplined do not see the need for discipleship. Although many people, including church leaders, subscribe to the idea that discipleship or some sort of mentoring is necessary, minimal efforts are made for these ideas to materialize. Underlying issues of pride, arrogance and power seems to hinder attempts for accountability and discipleship.

The issues concerning politics and militancy in Nagaland raises the topic of corruption. Although complete peace with India cannot be guaranteed, the Nagas by virtue of their association with Christianity surely know better how to deal with adversaries. The researcher believes that all the political upheaval and problems that Nagas have experienced in the past, and some in the present, are perhaps a call to deeper commitment to Christ. The Naga opens landscape tremendous opportunities for mission work amongst unbelieving people groups within and surrounding Nagaland. Affluent politicians and people who occupy high positions also have the opportunity to not be involved in corruption and to lead their people by example. Because the church is at the heart of the Naga culture, she plays a vital role in bringing about change and reformation.

Findings from Chapter Five

The researcher made several discoveries from chapter five that lent credence to the fact that intentional discipleship is not taking place in Nagaland. Hence, Nagas are powerless against spiritual attacks, unable to discern between truth and lies, and live in a vortex of conflict and chaos. The Naga church is failing in its witness to the people because of the lack of spiritually mature disciples who can impact change in society.

The survey results reveal that leaders and volunteers have no accountability and are often lonely in their spiritual journey. The interviews further corroborated the fact that discipleship is not happening. As a result, society is in the condition that it is now. The researcher is mindful that issues in society will not disappear overnight, but there will be change in the culture when Christians are disciplined to live lives that honor God. The cultural thirst for materialism and success will only pale when compared to the beauty of life that Christ gives (John 10:10).

Some important observations borne out of the research are:

1. The Nagas must differentiate between discipleship and church attendance. They are two different things.
2. Most leaders feel the need for discipleship but are not sure how to implement this process because they have never been disciplined themselves.
3. The Naga leaders must be intentional about leaving a legacy instead of building a dynasty
4. Naga people's real need is spiritual awakening rather than a political solution
5. The responsibility of the Naga church in being light to the nations far outweighs the temporary squabbles present in Nagaland. The church must look beyond itself.

Strength of the research

The topic that this research addresses elicits renewed interest and discussion even in social occasions. In the Naga context the topic of discipleship is widely familiar but the concept is poorly realized. This research may be useful as a basic first step in helping identify bigger problems that continue to arise in Naga society. The researcher is hopeful that this research provided a much-needed voice to address the Naga spiritual situation.

The data collection was helpful because it gave an affirming boost to the researcher to continue on this project. The survey and interview responses were encouraging and beneficial. The long talks and discussions over the telephone and Internet with Naga leaders further clarified the researcher's initial assumptions with regards to the lack of discipleship in the Naga church.

Also, the opportunities that the researcher had to visit and spend time with churches and leaders in Nagaland during the course of his D. Min studies helped build relationships and conviction to pursue this topic.

Weaknesses of the research

The weaknesses of the research are many: The paucity of sources by Naga theologians on this topic made the researcher's task of procuring and studying materials a little more strenuous than he had initially anticipated.

Although the quantitative data was useful, a larger sampling especially of village (rural) churches might have been helpful. The project did not particularly survey churches in the villages and remote areas. It was assumed that since the city churches set the tone for smaller churches in the rural areas, studying the main churches would be sufficient because most village churches acquire training and also financial support from city churches.

In the past, Christianity spread throughout Nagaland through the village communities. Unfortunately, churches in the villages suffer decline as people move into towns in search of jobs and education.

The phone interviews were primary sources which provided substantial information, but the questions could have been expanded and more in-depth probing would have been helpful.

After talking with the ten participants, the researcher felt like all of them were echoing the same thing. The researcher regretted not having more telephone interviews.

CHAPTER SEVEN: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

This project is significant to me because of my personal struggles with discipleship. As a young Christian, I looked for mentors but couldn't find any. In high school, my faith began to waver and despite my strict Christian upbringing, I started to drift away. While in college, God was gracious to rescue me from a life of sin and rebellion. My life turned around as I encountered Jesus in the truth of His Word.

I was born in a Christian family. Like every Naga, I believed I was a Christian because of my family and also because I attended church regularly, though sometimes reluctantly. As a family, the first and the most important thing we did on Sundays was to go to church. It was also a good day to connect with other kids and play. Despite all of the good things that took place at church, the church was also a place of constant bickering and gossip. Several families were not even talking to each other, and church leadership offered very little support to help people resolve conflicts biblically.

As I grew up, I started to notice that the lives of church members and so-called Christians were no different from my non-churchgoing neighbors. People's attitudes on Sundays were solemn, but come Monday, it was a different story. I began to see why people used terms like "Sunday-Christians" and "hypocrites" in reference to church-going people. I have uncles and relatives that are ordained clergy, and I got to experience Christianity from a front row seat.

The lives of Naga Christians are marked by deep sense of piety and service. It is not unusual to hear Naga families sing hymns and have family prayer meeting during the evenings. Pastors and other church members made occasional home visits, which always ended with prayer and hymn singing.

Families have changed a lot over the years. Very few families engage in family prayer and worship these days. Due to increased mobility, most church memberships have been on the decline. The church seems to be losing its relevance in these modern times.

The function of the church needs to be mentioned. Not much has changed since I was a little boy. The church was the center of all we did, but it was only a Sunday thing. Usually, the devotional service format was an hour-long sermon followed by hymn singing and long prayers. I don't remember any long-term training or guidance. The fact that families conducted evening prayer meetings in their homes did not actually mean that people were getting disciplined. Despite the fact that I have been a member of two churches since my birth, I had not experienced discipleship. Being aware of the conditions of other churches in the area, I noticed the church was oblivious to the need for discipleship then, as it still is today. Christians, who have been attending church all their lives, still possess very poor knowledge of the Bible and how to apply it to their daily lives.

As a young man, I received very little guidance from the church. It was easier to find people who encouraged me to smoke, drink and party than it was to find friendly Christians. Bad influence was all around me, yet my soul longed for someone — a brother or friend, a follower of Christ, to hold me accountable and to counsel me in truth.

It is difficult for any person to live the Christian life alone. As I write this chapter, memories from the past flood my mind. The only way I fed my spiritual life was by getting hold of Christian resources, studying the Bible, and being a regular church attendee. Upon hearing the call of God in my life, I prepared to go to seminary. I was fortunate to have teachers and friends in seminary who modeled a Christ like life before me. It is in the company of Christ-followers that the beauty of the gospel truly glows. In Bonhoeffer's words, "The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer."¹ Unfortunately, most believers do not have Christian friends or accountability partners who stir within them the passion to love God and to live for Him. The church must no longer be silent to the needs of the people. Discipleship is the missing element in most churches and Christian communities. If Christ followers were to intentionally engage in "making disciples" as Christ commanded (Matt. 28-18-20) there would be substantial change in society and the world. A new generation of truth-seekers may inspire and exhort others to live lives that will usher transformation in our nation.

This study reminds me of the thousands of churchgoers in Nagaland that have yet to be discipled. As a result, the Naga society lacks authentic and genuine leaders. The Naga culture continues to disintegrate into further chaos and ungodliness. The government has failed to meet the basic needs of the common person with no sign of development or infrastructure. The Naga Christians not only fight a physical battle, but our battle is also a spiritual one. Spirit-filled believers need to take the lead in reconstructing the culture. A recent report of the presence of Satan worshippers in

¹Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper and Row, 1954), 19.

Nagaland has alarmed many.² People will deviate from the truth of scripture if they are not taught to engage truth on a regular basis. Hence, the urgency for believers in Nagaland to engage in intentional discipleship.

The Naga people have been longing for another wave of revival to transform Nagaland. But that kind of expectation, however noble, reeks of irresponsibility. Naga Christians have been given much, and we must make use of all opportunities to learn, train, and engage in all that God is calling us to do, especially to be responsible to obey God's final mandate to make disciples.

Several years ago as a youth pastor, I resolved to make myself available to any young person who genuinely sought after God. Because of my experience in the past, my heart was not willing to let any young person wander aimlessly looking for someone to invest in his/her life spiritually. That led me to a journey of success and failure, also of joy and pain. I have learned over time that people do respond to truth. It takes time to invest in others. My expectations can be faulty, but God is ultimately faithful.

Christopher Adsit's reminder is worth remembering, "Our objective is to help a person become a disciple of Jesus Christ, not of you or me. What a stagnant muddle this world would be in if we made only duplicates of ourselves! This planet does not need another me, but it sure could stand a few people who are more like Jesus, and that's what we aim to produce."³

At different times and phases of my life, God has strategically placed people in

²Vishal Arora, "Satan Worship in India worries Christian Groups in Nagaland," *huffingtonpost.com*, August 07, 2013, accessed November 21, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/08/satan-worship-in-india_n_3562369.html

³Christopher B. Adsit, *Personal Disciple Making: A Step-By-Step Guide for Leading a New Christian from New Birth to Maturity* (Orlando: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1996), 12.

my life who disciplined and encouraged me. These relationships are ongoing, and my life is richer because of those who continue to invest in my life. Their faith and commitment in loving me for Christ's sake stirs within me the desire to love and serve Christ faithfully.

With the education that I have been so fortunate to have, my prayer is that the Lord would use this degree to open up wider avenues for His renown. It is my hope and prayer that the next generation of pastors/leaders would do far greater things because of the investment that the present leaders are willing to make in their lives. The effectiveness of our leadership today will be determined by the way we prepare the next generation. Andy Stanley sums it up: "The church needs leaders who are willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure that we hand it off to the next generation in better shape than we found it."⁴

⁴Andy Stanley, *Deep and Wide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 55.

Suggestions for Further Study

As the researcher studied the issue of the urgent need for discipleship in Naga churches, it has raised some important questions in the areas of leadership development and leadership transition in the Naga church. The contexts in which emerging leaders are developed needs further examination. In most denominations today, a theological degree is required for acceptance into the ministry. A study is needed to determine the level of input received from the academic institution and the church's involvement in the formation of leaders with the purpose for both to be more involved and intentional in building up leaders. Secondly, leadership transitions in the local churches lead to messy conflicts between leaders and church members. The researcher feels that these issues need further attention and clarity. Leaders today possess more educational degrees and training compared to leaders in the past. Rather than it being a blessing, this has given way to conflicts between new leaders and older leaders. Paul Hattaway recounts, "After all the foreign missionaries had been expelled from Nagaland in the early 1950's, the Naga church found itself without adequate leadership."⁵ He concludes that the missionaries "had failed to train enough local pastors to lead the church when they were gone."⁶

The church in Nagaland is still seeking to fill the significant void in preparing adequate leadership since the missionaries left. Without intentional discipleship the spiritual apathy will remain and the development of leaders will be hampered. The church will continue to be ineffective to impact the community and beyond for Christ.

⁵Paul Hattaway, *From Head-Hunters to Church Planters: An Amazing Spiritual Awakening in Nagaland*, (USA: Authentic Publishing, 2006), 91.

⁶Hattaway, 91.

The urgency to increase discipleship is one step toward developing leaders and transitioning these leaders into local churches. Further studies are needed to track the progress and employ fresh insights to make the church more effective in obeying and living out the Great Commission.

Further study on the history of Christianity in Nagaland is needed in terms of understanding the faith heritage and its relevance to the present generation. The researcher believes that incorporating the history of Naga Christianity into the discipleship process would help Naga believers become more familiarized with their own history and help them to unashamedly embrace their unique identity. Today, the Naga society enjoys many benefits due to the struggles, sufferings and risks that the early Christians faced. The tremendous impact of Christianity in Nagaland cannot be ignored and must serve as a reminder of God's faithfulness in these challenging times. Such a study could be instrumental in several ways. It could reveal potential handicaps and blind spots in the discipling ministry of the church and also generate a renewed zeal for the church to move forward by gaining perspective from early Naga church history.

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