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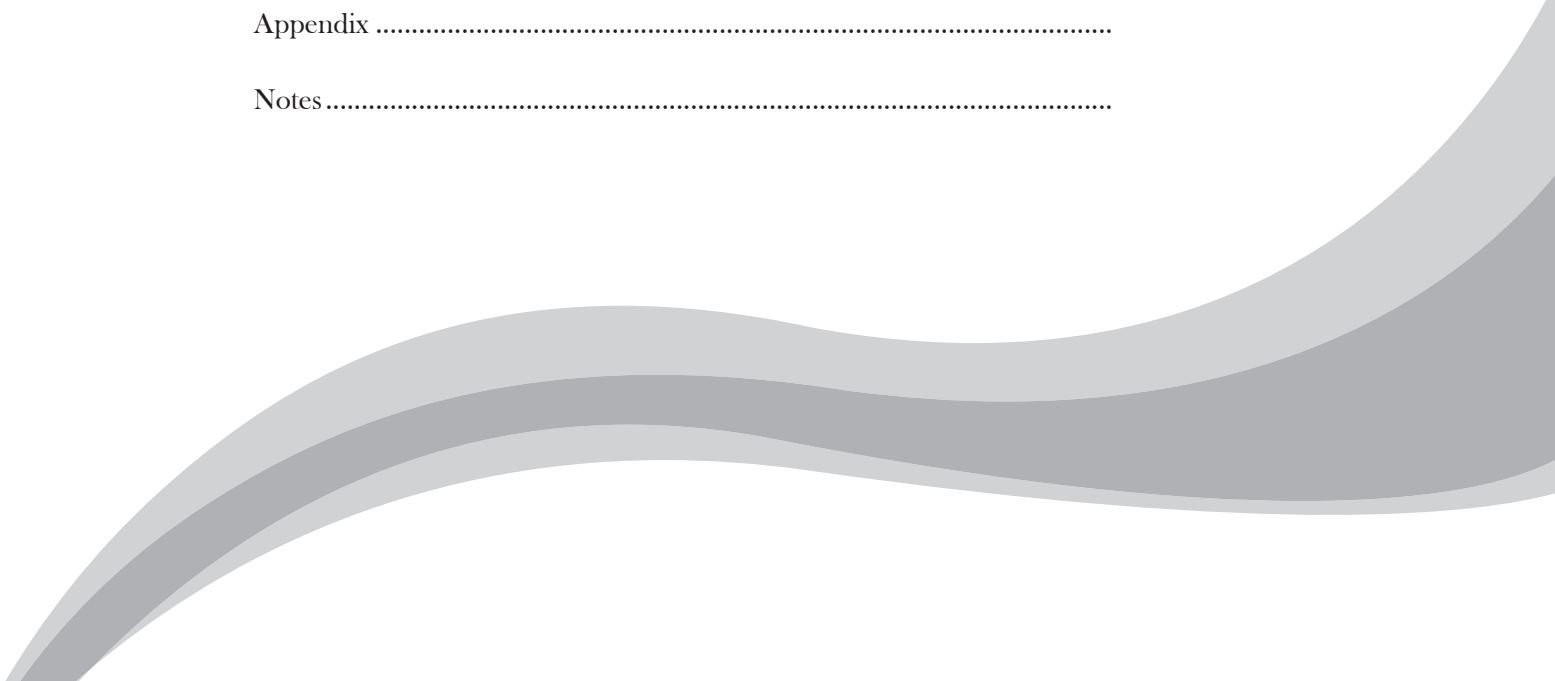
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Forward

Obedience to Jesus' commandment to make disciples does not happen automatically. Effective discipleship requires intentionality and determined focused efforts. Understanding the basic and fundamental principles of disciple-making is best achieved if someone teaches and models the foundational concepts.

People often ask, "What can I use to train others for productive disciple-making?" Ramón Sierra has produced a valuable resource that precisely answers that question. *A Handbook for Discipleship Training* provides ten essential lessons that are invaluable for training others in the great challenge of how to make disciples. It addresses the broad spectrum of needs and issues faced by local churches, pastors and small group leaders.

This training handbook provides useful tools and materials, strategies and practices that can be implemented in the local church. This well researched guidebook equips church and family leaders to not only live in obedience to the Great Commission, but to also reproduce that obedience in the lives of those they serve.

Ramón Sierra's life and work are well reflected in these instructions for being a disciple of Jesus, learning from Him and obeying Him, then intentionally modeling how to teach others to know and follow Jesus in the same way.

I pray that your ministry will be enriched and will result in much fruit to the glory of God as you utilize this significant discipleship training resource.

Dr. Woodie Steven
Church of the Nazarene
Global Director Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries International

We thank God for the opportunity of witnessing of the great blessing we received through this discipleship training material. We never imagined that through this material the life of our church would be motivated, but above all, we were confronted with the need of making disciples.

We are aware that our mission is “to make Christlike disciples in the nations”, but I believe that many times those are pretty words that do not transcend. Through this course, we were challenged to fulfill this great commission. This task is not easy because it requires that we invest time, money and effort. But I believe this is what it really means to be disciples: deny ourselves, take up his cross every day and follow him; dying to our bad habits, to our “ego” and dedicating our lives to the Lord in worship and service.

In our local church, with God’s help and through Sunday School, we have designed a discipleship system for children, young people and adults. We are expanding this system one step at a time, but God is blessing this precious initiative in many ways.

Thank you brother Ramón, you have put in our hands more than a course, a vision, that I believe comes from heaven, as the desire of God’s heart.

Rev. Marcos Galicia Rodríguez
Pastor Church of the Nazarene
Toluca, State of Mexico

In 2007 a group of leaders from our churches attended a discipleship training time in Villaflores, Chiapas, Mexico guided by our missionary Ramón Sierra. After two days of training and motivation we returned to our area of work with the enthusiasm of sharing what we had received with other brothers and sisters from our local churches.

Little by little we began to form discipleship groups in various churches of our zone. Fifty two leaders signed up and participated in prayer, fellowship and studying some themes related to discipleship. In 2008, with the greater part of these persons we started the School of Timothies, where we continued studying monthly directed by selected teachers. In January 2009 we graduated 25 students from this project.

At the present, we continue working with discipleship in this manner. We are preparing so that leadership classes may begin in each one of our churches. Already in one congregation we have 22 persons that meet for weekly classes. But besides this, discipleship in the churches and the School of Timothies have provided the foundations to open two new theological by extension centers with 16 students in the basic level and 16 more students at the degree level (post-graduate studies before the masters level).

An important part of the impulse for this whole process was our experience of the discipleship training, the material you now have in your hands. It is our desire that through this discipleship training God may initiate in your church or churches a process similar to the one he has work with us!

Rev. Manuel Molina
Superintendent Sierra District
Chiapas, Mexico

Presentation

Welcome to this time together around the theme of discipleship that could revolutionize your walk with Christ and change the direction of the church. This is our hope and prayer.

This basic discipleship training is initially oriented to trainers, men and women, young and old, followers of Jesus in the Church, committed and with the necessary gifts to disciple others. All of this with the local church as the central objective for Christian discipleship, since it is the local church where we will focus everything we do in this time of learning.

The training you will receive in these days is comprehensive and intense. In this discipleship experience, although there will be lectures, we will utilize the small group process. In the small groups you will share devotional times, exercises in each lesson, so you will have the opportunity to establish close friendships and spiritual support beyond the training time.

The lessons aim to provide basic tools for carrying out the realization of an intentional, dynamic and life-long discipleship ministry.

Each lesson contains:

- A lesson summary at the beginning with the general objective and the key Bible verses to memorize.
- Group exercises scattered throughout the lesson and at the end an integration exercise.
- After each lesson you will find a sheet titled *Focusing* to go deeper in one aspect of the lesson.

With the necessary adjustments, this material can also be used for training local discipleship leaders, and thus provide solid foundations for this ministry. Also, this same material can be used as lessons to teach the local congregation, whether it be as Bible studies, Sunday School classes or in small groups for adults or young people during various months. Each lesson can be divided into more lessons depending on the time available.

At the end of this material in the appendix is included an evaluation sheet to be used at the end of each lesson or at the end of the training time.

This material can also be shared with a group of pastors and leaders of various churches, zones or districts. They in turn would train leaders in the local churches. The schedule is flexible, depending on your needs. It can be taught over an intense weekend, at least three days, weekly, monthly, or spread out over a semester.

Apart from all that the student will learn, the most significant thing about this training is what happens after the class is over. To build the bridge between this training and the local church we will conclude with a conversation among the participants of each district to initiate a strategy that will help churches in their discipleship ministry.

As part of this strategy—that later on should be developed with greater detail—a discipleship coordinator (either by district, zones, or a group of churches) can be appointed. This coordinator should facilitate the reproduction of this training and based on what has been learned, put in place mechanisms to evaluate and accompany each local church in the process of effectively developing their discipleship ministry.

This training could be the “mustard seed” that God can use so that our existing churches and the new ones to be planted can become communities of disciples that carry out the mission of the Master: make disciples in all the nations. This requires that we begin a process, This requires that we begin the process, knowing that it will not be easy. We must be persistent in the task and sensitive to the voice of the Spirit, and that we be persistent and sensitive to the voice of the Spirit. We will not see instantaneous fruits, “for at the proper time we will reap (a great harvest) if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9, NIV).

Let us begin together this training time with joy, great expectations and our willingness to let Jesus continue to shape us as His authentic disciples so we can then touch the lives of others!

Introduction to Discipleship Training

General Objective

Share with the trainers a general orientation and launch the challenge of the urgent need of a discipleship ministry in each local church.

Lesson Summary

- Worship time together.
- Welcome and organize participants into small groups.
- Mission and vision of the discipleship ministry of the Church of the Nazarene in the Mesoamerica Region: Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America.
- Focus and seven objectives of this Discipleship Training.
- Format of the training sessions
- Discipleship Challenge: excerpt of the report of the Board of General Superintendents to the General Board of the International Church of the Nazarene in February 2006.

Key verse to memorize

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:42, 46-47, NIV).

Opening: Prayer and Worship Time.

I. Welcome to this training: a discipleship experience

This is training for trainers, for leaders committed to the mission of the church.

II. Organization of small groups

Group exercise

So that the participants may get to know each other by doing the exercise on the *Focusing* sheet at the end of



“We must give more attention to discipleship... the time has come to move beyond membership to discipleship.”

JERRY PORTER



III. Mission and vision of the Discipleship Ministry of the

Church is to create a system to help each local church in its discipleship ministry as it...

- studies its biblical bases.
- presents a basic strategy that motivates a local discipleship strategy.
- offers supervision, counsel and training (team of leaders).
- develops materials and tools together.
- provides a space to share and improve.
- establishes a solid foundation for leadership development.

IV. Focus of the discipleship training

Develop training by inviting small mixed group of leaders of each district, zone or community to form a team of trainers in discipleship ministry for the local churches.

Seven objectives for this training

1. Have a discipleship experience—grow in a disciple-making way of life.
2. Rediscover the biblical and practical foundations of discipleship that should be reflected in the type of church, pastor and ministry we need today.
3. Share knowledge, tools and experiences.
4. Create awareness of the urgent need of a dynamic discipleship ministry in each local church.
5. Form a team of trainers that can develop an effective discipleship ministry in each local church.
6. Be acquainted with and know how to use materials, strategy and available resources for the local discipleship ministry.
7. Elaborate an implementation strategy for this training, taking into consideration the foundations we have studied and the needs in the discipleship ministry in the churches.

Group Exercise

Trust Walk: Pair up in twos, preferably men with men and women with women. One of the persons should close their eyes or cover their eyes with a handkerchief. He/She will be guided by other person that can see around the room and surrounding areas. You can give verbal instructions and hold on to the person, if you would like. After a few minutes you will trade places.

Reflection after the experience: What did you feel when you were being guided? What did you feel when you were guiding your partner? What does this exercise teach us about discipleship?

V. Format to follow

- This handbook provides all the material in writing.
- The teacher will share the lessons and carry out the learning activities.
- Small groups will be used at all times.
- Sharing questions and experiences around discipleship will be welcomed.
- Go over the program and time allotments.

VI. Extract of the report of the Board of General Superintendents to the General Board of the International Church of the Nazarene in February 2006 prepared by Dr. Jerry Porter

We celebrate the nearly 700,000 new Nazarenes who have joined our church since 1999. Unfortunately, due to death or removal, during these six years we lost two of every three who joined our denominational family.

The International Church of the Nazarene is a denomination from the Wesleyan tradition and part of the Holiness Movement. It was founded in 1908 by Dr. Phineas Bresee, Methodist pastor, when various holiness groups merged in the USA. Their headquarters are in Lenexa, Kansas and the ministry

We must give more attention to **discipleship**. What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? It is to be a continual student of Jesus—guided, instructed, and helped by the Lord through fellow believers in every aspect of our life; reproducing other disciples as a natural part of our total devotion to Christ.

... the time has come to move beyond membership to discipleship. The goal is not to make believers, or even members, but to **make disciples**. That was the mission of Jesus, and it is our declared mission as well.

Author and Wesley scholar Mike Henderson insists that we have things turned around. “Jesus said, ‘I will build my church. You make disciples.’ Instead, we try to build the church; and who is making disciples?”

The real cost of discipling is investing time in someone’s life—giving ourselves away. It means spending more time with fewer people, the basic principle taught by Christ.

These new disciples are nurtured into mentoring relationships that lead to spiritually-disciplined lives. If these **new disciples** do not become **strong disciples**, much of the increase will dissipate.

We can no longer justify carelessness in assimilating new believers. New Methodist converts were immediately assimilated into small groups where they were discipled and taught the way of Christian perfection. This is our Wesleyan heritage.

Those needed for mission and ministry are within the sound of our voices. It is our joy and responsibility to disciple, equip, and empower them to be the new generation of spiritual and servant leaders.

In his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes: “Christianity without discipleship is Christianity without Christ.” Evangelism and making disciples go together. Our future is bright as we develop spiritual leaders who will reproduce themselves and multiply their effectiveness. Whether it’s one-on-one or groups of 3, 7, or 12, John Wesley’s call for spiritual accountability among believers is relevant and urgently needed for our day!

We can and we must close the back door of the Church of the Nazarene. We dare not be careless with the precious new believers. By God’s grace we will become churches that learn to multiply disciples through intentional relationships, accountability, and participation in ministry. We will multiply disciples by multiplying leaders, small groups, and new congregations. With the Lord’s help we will judge our personal and collective fruitfulness by how effectively we **make disciples**.

Note: In 2007, the international leaders of the Church of the Nazarene summarized their mission statement with the following phrase: “To Make Christlike Disciples in the Nations.”



“Christianity
without
discipleship
is Christianity
without Christ.”

DITRICH
BONHOEFFER



Integration Activity

What do you think about this report that speaks to the Church of the Nazarene around the world? What feelings, concerns and reactions does this report provoke in you?