

Making Disciples in Croatia

Jeremy Bohall

EPC Stijena Spasenja, Zagreb
jeremy.bohall@gmail.com

UDK: 27-27:27-31:27-4:277
Original scientific paper
<https://doi.org/10.32862/k.13.2.2>

Abstract

This project explores how the Evangelical Pentecostal Church (EPC) in Croatia is making disciples of Jesus Christ today. The goal is to demonstrate that despite the worldwide and local deficit in effective disciple making, the EPC has the resources and potential to live in obedience to the Great Commission. This has been shown by looking at the historical definition of a disciple, exegeting Matthew 28:16-20, exploring the proper context of disciple-making, and interviewing several members of the EPC. Upon examination, while there are multiple causes for the lack of disciples in Croatia, the primary problem is that of what will be called naive disobedience. It will be argued that local churches in the EPC have not been taught how to properly make disciples. By presenting the importance of teaching, relationships and practicing the spiritual disciplines, it will be demonstrated that a solution to the lack of disciple-making exists within the EPC.

Key words: *disciple, disciple-making, The Great Commission, obedience, church*

1. The Problem

1.1 The Global Problem of Making Disciples

The Church is not properly responding to Jesus' command to make disciples. Noted Christian thinker and writer Dallas Willard asserts that "the greatest issue

facing the world today, with all its heartbreaking needs, is whether those who, by profession or culture, are identified as ‘Christians’ will become disciples” (2006, Kindle, 162). There are others who agree with Willard’s assessment. Eminent Christian leader John Stott believes that the “superficiality of discipleship” is “everywhere” (2012, Kindle, 275). He observes that the church is growing numerically in various parts of the world, but bemoans that it is often “growth without depth” (2012, Kindle, 275). The reason, according to Paul Borthwick, is that the church has “emphasized the making of evangelical-experience converts, which has at times resulted in an anemic church and nominal disciples.”¹

Jesus’ ‘Great Commission’ to his disciples, as recorded by Matthew, is the foundation of this study. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt. 28:18-20).² Jesus’ disciples heard, obeyed and passed on his words as the early church grew. The book of Acts demonstrates that commitment to their Master’s Commission resulted in the spread of the gospel and the multiplication of disciples. More than 2,000 years later, those words are heard around the world from preachers, teachers and leaders who genuinely desire to respond to a call they believe is every bit as relevant as it was to the first audience. Yet the crisis remains: generally the church is not responding to the call to make disciples as it should. While solving this global dilemma is beyond the scope of this paper, it is crucial to be aware that this is not simply a local problem.

1.2 The Problem of Making Disciples in Croatia Today

During the opening address at the Protestant Evangelical Council in Croatia in October of 2016, Stanko Jambrek read Matthew 28:16-20 and asked the question, “What is the most vital problem in the Croatian church today?” His answer was “disobedience to the Lord’s command to make disciples.”³ I have heard similar thoughts expressed on other occasions throughout Croatia. What has been identified as a global problem by respected and experienced missionaries and thinkers is also considered a local issue by Croatian church leaders. I have witnessed

- 1 Paul Borthwick, interview by Stan Guthrie via Internet, August 17, 1999. Quoted in Stan Guthrie, *Missions in the 3rd Millennium: 21 Key Trends for the 21st Century* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2000), 178.
- 2 The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®) Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved. ESV Text Edition: 2018. All Scripture references use the ESV unless otherwise noted.
- 3 Stanko Jambrek, “Izazov temeljne biblijske ekleziologije”, (lecture, Protestantansko evanđeosko vijeće u Republici Hrvatskoj, Baptistička crkva Zagreb, Croatia, September 20, 2016).

several examples first-hand. I believe that the Evangelical Pentecostal Church (EPC) in Croatia has failed to develop a biblical, contextualized response to the Great Commission. This inquiry will demonstrate the seriousness of the situation. I will then posit ideas for a way forward.

I am interacting with this challenge as an American missionary who has lived in Croatia for ten years. The EPC has offered me a place to learn the language and culture, and to serve the Lord in various ways. Most significantly, I have had the privilege of engaging in some of the most meaningful relationships of my life. All of these aspects of my first decade in Croatia have led to this project. I have developed a great fondness and love for the EPC. But I have also noticed what I believe is a blind-spot in the Church—a failure to fruitfully respond to the Great Commission. This thesis is born out of a genuine desire to see the EPC flourish in its efforts to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Is Dr. Jambrek's assertion of disobedience the complete answer? EPC congregations in Croatia have many genuine Christians who seek to be obedient to their Lord. The fact is that there are multiple factors contributing to the problem. A complex conclusion must account for both the numerous faithful disciples in Croatia and the fact that many are not aware that they are not responding obediently to the Great Commission. I will argue, therefore, that the Evangelical Pentecostal Church's failure to make disciples is due to what can be termed naive disobedience.

1.3 Defining the Terms

The first half of this project will be devoted to exploring the meaning of key words and concepts. Vital to this investigation is the word disciple and the phrases making disciples or disciple-making. Part 2 is devoted to understanding what a disciple of Jesus Christ is. I will briefly examine the way the Ancient Greeks used the concept while comparing the original word with how it is used in the Bible. In part 3, I will exegete the Great Commission. My goal is to understand what Jesus meant when he told the eleven to make disciples. Without a thorough familiarity with the Great Commission, the Church cannot proceed to the task of actually making disciples.

One term that will be avoided is discipleship. This word is problematic for several reasons; First, the noun 'discipleship' is not in the Bible. With Matthew 28:16-20 at the foundation of my argument, I will seek to understand the words of Jesus as closely as possible. Whatever biblical concept the word discipleship might represent, I prefer to use the biblical language. By carefully defining the two key concepts mentioned above, I will seek to keep biblical integrity. Secondly, discipleship is frequently used but seldom defined in books, manuals and

sermons dealing with topics from church planting to leadership to social action. While all of these topics overlap with our task as Christians, the way the word discipleship has been used can prove to be ambiguous and confusing. As Dallas Willard puts it; “The term discipleship has currently been ruined as far as any solid psychological or biblical content is concerned” (Willard 2006, 53). Therefore, other than quotes which will help support the main arguments, and offer clear ideas about discipleship, the word is avoided entirely.

1.4 The Purpose of this Study

Many well-intentioned faithful Christians engage in activities that they believe will result in more people attending their local church. Often these pastors, lay leaders and congregants are disappointed. Programs, ministries and works of service rarely lead to lasting results. The story of the church in Horvatovci is one of at least several examples. The contrast between the original call of Jesus Christ and the points of emphasis of the way evangelical churches direct their efforts is puzzling. This project is the result of my search to discover why the call to make disciples has been set aside in favor of other, lesser visions and goals.

After investigating the meanings of disciple, and Jesus’ command in parts 2 and 3, I will turn my attention to how Jesus’ disciples follow him today. Part 4 is concerned with where Master and disciple are found—the Church. Included are several ways disciples learn, grow and make fellow disciples of Jesus Christ within Christ’s Church. Part 5 contains the results of numerous interviews I conducted with various EPC members. My purpose is to offer evangelical Christians in Croatia a plan for making disciples. The perspective of local church members and leaders is vital for understanding what is actually happening throughout the country.

This call is global. Yet the only way it can be realized globally is to contextualize it locally. This paper investigates how Jesus’ call in Matthew 28 can be most effectively realized in Croatia in 2018 and beyond. I do not expect it to be an all-encompassing tutorial for making disciples. Instead, this is simply the beginning of my own research. I hope that it will also become a helpful resource for my colleagues. In the end, my goal is to point not to the imperfect church, but rather to our Lord and Savior whose authority provides the calling for our mission and whose presence means we are not striving on our own.

Though my purpose is ambitious, it is deeply personal. I consider it my mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ in Croatia and I see no better context for engaging in this task than the EPC. This project has become the natural result of pursuing my calling in the specific context I’m in. Therefore, I have conducted

my research to inform my own mission of making disciples. I hope that in doing so, I can also offer the EPC a resource for the local church's engagement in the Great Commission.

2. What is a Disciple?

The word disciple is not used in everyday English. Nor is the concept widely understood or applied today—even within the local church. There is often a perceived freedom to define a disciple according to the pastor's, author's or even scholar's need. Many characterize a disciple as a mature Christian,⁴ commonly contrasting it with a “normal” or “nominal” Christian. On the other extreme, some consider anyone and everyone a disciple (Dever 2016, 43).⁵ The word is often used to promote other Christian ideas: church planting, small groups or leadership development. These ways of incorporating the concept of disciple often exchange the primary relationship Jesus called his followers to for a secondary (often modern) purpose. This chapter starts at the beginning. I will briefly examine the history of the Greek New Testament term which is translated disciple, briefly explore whether the notion exists in the Old Testament (OT). Then I will look at Jesus' definition as recorded by the New Testament (NT) writers and the early church's image of a disciple in order to come to an understanding of what it originally meant to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. I will demonstrate that the definition has certain parameters and that, based on what the word meant in Jesus' day, the master explicates those guidelines and calls his disciples to live up to them.

2.1 μαθητής

The Greek noun μαθητής (mathétés, disciple) was used widely before Jesus was born. It is found first in written form in Herodotus (Rengstorf 1967, 416) but was probably spoken well before that and appeared frequently in Greek literature afterwards (Wilkins 1992, 72-73). From the beginning, a disciple always had a master; “there is no μαθητής without a διδάσκαλος (didaskalos, teacher or instructor)” (Rengstorf 1967, 416). Related to μαθητής is the verb μάνθάνω (manthánō, to learn). Both Socrates and Plato use the noun and verb interchan-

4 This comes from personal experience and conversations.

5 Dever notes that “To be human is to be a disciple.” While his point is to show that everyone is following someone or something, the argument throughout this chapter demonstrates that one *intentionally* follows their master. I.e., one cannot unintentionally follow Jesus Christ. Therefore someone who unintentionally follows someone else is not a disciple.

geably to associate a “learner” with someone who “learns” (Wilkins 1995, 12). By the 3rd century A.D., although there are still examples of μαθητής referring to a learner, the Hellenists used it as a terminus technicus to refer to an adherent (Wilkins 1995, 33). The term described a learner in a course of study or an adherent of a teacher, philosophy or culture milieu (Wilkins 1995, 32). One could be a disciple of a culture—an adherent to the Greek way of life, for example—or a master or teacher. Therefore the relationship between master and disciple varied considerably depending on the situation (Wilkins 1992, 74-75).

In the late Hellenistic period, disciples ranged from being the pupil of a philosopher to being a follower of a hero or thinker of the past to adhering to a religious figure. In each of these situations the master gave specific guidelines as to what it meant to follow him. Most important to this study is the fact that the nature of adherence was always defined by the master. “The type of relationship is not to be found within the inherent meaning of the term μαθητής but within the dynamic created by the master and the kind of commitment to him” (Wilkins 1992, 75). This aspect of the definition will prove to be vital in reading how μαθητής was used in the New Testament. From the beginning, then, a μαθητής was someone who depended on a teacher, master or mentor to teach him.

2.2 Disciple in the Old Testament and Rabbinic Judaism

Only in several untrusted versions of the Septuagint (LXX) is μαθητής found three times.⁶ In the most established LXX, the term is not found (Rengstorf 1967, 426). That does not mean that the concept is non-existent. Wilkins (1992, 54-55) posits that talmidh appears to be the Hebrew equivalent of μαθητής”. Yet talmidh is used only once in the OT where a musician is being described in contrast to his teacher (1 Chr. 25:8). The clearest example of disciple related to how the Greeks understood it is found in Isaiah where lamadh is frequently translated disciple. “Bind up the testimony; seal the teaching among my disciples” (Is. 8:16). This suggests that there existed a discernible group of people in Israel known as disciples or taught ones (Wilkins 1992, 56). Still, Rengstorf (1967, 426) concludes that the concept of disciple, the way the New Testament writers envisioned it, is almost completely absent in the Old Testament.⁷ D. Müller (1975, 485) agrees stating:

- 6 In A: Iep. 13:21; 20:11 and 26:9. Rengstorf submits that the readings are not well-attested and that the final example is simply a scribal error (1967, 426).
- 7 Nor does Rengstorf see Isaiah 8:16 as an exception to his claim: “Here a few exegetes see evidence of the founding by the prophet of a fellowship of disciples whose members will save his witness and teaching for a better time. But the state of the text is such that no certain results can be attained from it (1967, 430).

Even as a learner the individual always remains a part of the whole chosen people, all of whom encounter in the divine Word the authority of the Electing One. This excludes any possibility of a disciple-master relationship between men, because the priest and the prophet do not teach on their own authority.

Both the clear reference to “my disciples” in Isaiah 8:16 and Müller’s quote pick up on Yahweh’s teaching or the “divine Word”— which I suggest is a red thread throughout the Christian Bible indicating how Yahweh’s people are in relationship with Yahweh. Learning, obeying and receiving knowledge of Yahweh’s standards are themes consistently interwoven throughout Israel’s Holy Scriptures.⁸ Although there is a shadow of the master/disciple relationship in the OT, the concept fully emerges in the Greek/Hellenistic usage, is practiced in Rabbinic Judaism,⁹ and finds its ultimate figure in Jesus Christ. The sort of adherence Jesus demanded incorporated old truths and disciplines that Israel was already familiar with. In the next section I will examine where there is overlap, while showing how Jesus exemplifies the Greek concept of master/disciple.

2.3 μαθητής in the New Testament

Just as Torah was the authoritative mediator between Israel and Yahweh in the OT, Jesus became the improved, indeed perfect, mediator between God and his people. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law (Mt. 5:17-18). “Unlike the former Judaism of Matthew’s first readers, the obedience of discipleship is now centered not upon the commandments but upon Jesus and his teaching” (Hagner 1998, 364-371). Just as the Law enabled Israel be in relationship with Yahweh and taught them how to act, Jesus even more perfectly enables Yahweh’s people to be in relationship with him while offering an example and teaching on how to live. This is precisely what Jesus says throughout the gospels. After delivering his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, Jesus concludes by saying that everyone “who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the

8 Psalm 1, Proverbs 1-9, along with the multiple quotes and paraphrases of Deut. 6 (*Shema*) throughout the OT are examples.

9 Despite its relative absence in the OT, rabbinic tradition finds great use of the master/disciple relationship. Containing words of the sages (masters) between the 3rd century BC and the early 3rd century AD, the Mishnah provides numerous instructions on this relationship. See especially ABOTH (The Fathers), Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 446f. Key to being a disciple was a commitment to the study of the Torah. In fact, memorization of the entire Torah was helpful to being faithful to the Law and often required later to be a rabbi. “The entire rabbinic literature bears testimony to the fact that the Rabbis knew the Bible by heart.” Saul Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1994), 52.

rock” (Mt. 7:24). The crowds were amazed because Jesus taught as one who had authority. As the Messiah, Jesus offers his disciples both a direct relationship to God and a model to follow. In this way, Christ fulfills the Law.

At the same time, Jesus is the ultimate example of the Greek/Hellenistic understanding of master. Μαθητής fits the NT context because it allows the master to define the terms of adherence. All four gospel writers clearly point to Jesus as the Master and model the disciples are to emulate. Matthew portrays Jesus as the one whose teaching produces understanding. In doing so, he brings Jesus to the forefront. In the gospel of Mark, Jesus exemplifies true servanthood, for Jesus lives what he preaches (Mk. 0:45). Of the evangelists, Mark most starkly portrays the consequence of not understanding. The disciples’ incomprehension is shown dramatically in Judas’ betrayal, Peter’s denial and the disciples overall forsaking their master (14:43-72) (Wilkins 1992, 196). It is here that Jesus defines his ultimate role of servant by being crucified. Only as the disciples become servants will they truly follow Jesus.

Luke emphasizes belief in Jesus Christ as the key to entering a life as his disciple (Lk. 7:50; 8:48; 17:19). He also stresses the cost involved (Lk. 9:57-62; 18:24-30). In Luke, it is total attachment to Jesus and therefore detachment from all other allegiances that marks the disciple of Jesus (Talbert 1985, 62); “So therefore, anyone of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Lk. 14:33). This recalls the fact that in a master/disciple relationship, the master determines the stipulations. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is the one in whom his disciples must remain or abide. Therefore, like in Luke, belief is emphasized as the indication that one is truly a disciple of Jesus (Jn. 3:16-18). Belief means accepting Jesus’ claims that he and the Father are one (Jn. 6:67-69; 13:13). But that inner faith will necessarily be manifested outwardly as Jesus’ disciples “bear fruit” (Jn. 15:1-17). None of these aspects are separate from, or various stages of, being a disciple. Rather, belief in Jesus allows disciples to begin their life of following the Master, while that initial faith is proven through abiding in Christ throughout ones’ entire life.

After the gospels, the word “disciple” is used less frequently. Luke uses the word in Acts but clearly transitions from “disciple” to “Christian” (Acts 11:26). These are two different words that appear to mean the same thing to Luke. After the book of Acts, μαθητής is used nowhere else in the New Testament. However the notion is no less common. “While scholars’ emphases and methods of inquiry vary, virtually all scholars agree that the concept of discipleship is present everywhere in the NT in related terminology, teachings, and metaphors” (Wilkins 1992, 279). The clearest example is found in Paul’s first letter to the church in Corinth in which he exhorts them to “be imitators of me as I am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). Paul uses “imitation” in other letters as well (Eph. 5:1-2; I Thes. 1:6-7), showing a continuation of sole devotion to Jesus in the early church. “The disci-

ple' and 'the imitator' of Christ are one and the same" (Michaelis 1967, 673). To be clear, Paul's exhortation to imitate himself did not indicate that he considered those who imitated him to be his own disciples. He makes that clear in I Cor. 1:10-17. Rather, their imitation of Paul, insofar as Paul imitated Christ, meant that their Master was Jesus Christ.¹⁰

Additionally, Paul and other NT writers pick up the image of "walking" from the OT idea of those who live according to God's ways (1 Kgs. 8:61; 2 Kgs. 20:3; Ps. 26:3; 86:11). Walking is used naturally in the NT for those who receive Jesus' call and join him on the Way (Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:1-2; 1 Jn. 2:3-6). As John uses the concept of "remaining" or "abiding" in the gospel, he continues exhorting his readers to do so in the epistles (Jn. 8:31-32; 1 Jn. 2:3-6). These three verbs in the continuous tense remind disciples that what they are embarking on is a continuous process.

Finally, the word *ekklesia* (church) is used throughout the NT to describe the group of disciples. As such, it provides a clear link from the gospels to the early church and the epistles (Wilkins 1992, 299). The fellowship of disciples considered themselves "the called out ones,"¹¹ bound together through Christ and brought together through the Holy Spirit (Grenz 1994, 606). The church is made up of God's people. The group of disciples identified themselves as the church after their savior had ascended. This continues today.

This study is hardly exhaustive, but it has been demonstrated that the NT is unified in seeing Jesus as the object of devotion and that obedience to his teachings is the hallmark of Jesus' disciples. The NT idea of disciple is similar to the Greek concept in that it describes an adherent of a master who defines the parameters of devotion. There is also common ground between the NT and rabbinic Jewish emphases on making disciples as expressed in the Torah. Although this strict definition is relatively absent in the OT, the importance of learning the words of Yahweh in order to be obedient is a value that binds the two testaments together. Disciples of Jesus Christ adhere to their master and strive to grow in understanding and obedience to his commands.

3. What did Jesus Mean When He Said "Make Disciples?"

Jesus' final address to his disciples as recorded in Matthew 28:16-20 carries tre-

10 There is discussion around Acts 9:25 as to whether Luke regards the disciples to be Paul's or Jesus'. This is the only case in the New Testament that an individual is said to have personal disciples. Wilkins therefore suggests that Luke is referring to "believers" who have gathered around a spiritual mentor—Paul (1992, 253).

11 *ek* ("out of") + *kaleo* ("to call") (Grenz 1994, 605).

mendous significance.¹² Many scholars have pointed to this passage as the “summary,” “manifesto” or “climax” of Matthew’s entire gospel.¹³ How one interprets these words has strong implications for how one reads Matthew, the other gospels and the rest of the Bible. The meaning of this periscope also has major ramifications for the Church today. This thesis is specifically concerned with what it means to make disciples in Croatia. Therefore, the Great Commission is the foundation of the entire project. This chapter is specifically focused on Jesus’ imperative in his final mandate to the disciples. My primary goal is to discover what Jesus meant when he told the eleven “μαθητεύσατε (matheteusate, make disciples!).”¹⁴ As I exegete the passage, I am operating from the perspective that Matthew portrays the ipsissima Vox Iesou (the very voice of Jesus).

To understand what Jesus meant, we must determine Matthew’s intention for recording this command. As I consider Jesus’ final speech, I will rely on Matthew’s¹⁵ particular style of writing, his way of situating Jesus’ words and his unique understanding of the disciples throughout the Gospel in order to exegete the call to make disciples. Tremendous benefit can be gained from searching for the original meaning. David Bosch laments that this passage “is usually couched in a most simplistic form of biblical literalism and proof-texting, with hardly any attempt at understanding the commission from within the context in which it appears in Scripture” (Bosch 1991, 341). This chapter is an effort to avoid this mistake while clearly asserting what Jesus intended to convey when he commissioned his disciples.

I will argue that in exhorting the eleven to make disciples, Jesus is telling his followers to emulate what he did while he was physically present with them. The Great Commission is Jesus sending as he was sent. The parallel is not exact—for Matthew portrays Jesus as the Messiah who ultimately and perfectly fulfilled the

12 Ulrich Luz (2005, 621) submits that “All of the basic theological statements of the Gospel of Matthew seem to be gathered up in these forty words at the end of the Gospel.” Adolf Harnack once quipped that “one cannot say anything greater or more in forty words” as cited by Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary Volume 2: The Churchbook* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 812.

13 An impressive list is included in Bosch 1991, 57.

14 Gordon Fee (1993, 27) defines biblical exegesis as the investigation into what the biblical author *meant* and *intended*.

15 While acknowledging the incredible amount of work that has gone into studying the authorship and dating of the First Gospel, for the purposes of this project, there is very little need to ‘prove’ the authorship of Matthew. France’s conclusion is fitting... “Matthew should not be an article of faith... But I happen to believe that it fits the historical and literary data sufficiently comfortably to give us strong reason to accept that the early Christians who saw it as his work were not mistaken” (France 1989, 80).

will of the Father in a way that his imperfect disciples could never accomplish. What's more, Jesus is not calling his disciples to make their own disciples as he "made" his own. However, throughout the gospel, Matthew emphasizes how Jesus calls his followers to imitate him in numerous ways. Jesus' final commandment is the capstone of them all. Matthew's Gospel provides the historical and theological background for making disciples of Jesus Christ while offering a handbook for the church to know how to undergo the task.

3.1 The "Great Commission"

28:16-17

"Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him, but some doubted."

Matthew's use of the number eleven is significant to this account for two reasons. First, it demonstrates that the mission included each of his followers. Jesus did not commission a select few of the remaining disciples; he sent all eleven of them. This is in keeping with the commissioning in Chapter 10 which is also addressed to the group of twelve disciples rather than to select preachers. The body of disciples in both sending scenes make up the entire community. To Luz (2005, 149) then, "disciple" is "the most fundamental ecclesiological expression in Matthew's Gospel." As such, the eleven "become transparent for Matthew's community, whose members saw themselves as disciples."¹⁶ Secondly, by mentioning the eleven disciples in verse 16, Matthew prompts the reader to recall the one who is not there. "The designation 'eleven' has poignant significance" (Wilkins 2004, 947). To his Jewish Christian audience who are conditioned to think of twelve as perfection, this number is uncomfortable.

There is a similar tone of imperfection in the fact that "some ἐδίστασαν (doubted or hesitated)." The vast majority of English versions translate ἐδίστασαν with some form of the word "doubt." "There is no indication here that this description is especially negative; it is the way they have been all along" (Edwards 1985, 59). There is debate over Matthew's use of οἱ δὲ; a construction which some suggest refers to a group of people other than the eleven, or that only some of the disciples doubted. Most English translations carry the "but some" translation, allowing the reader to interpret who doubted and what the nature of their doubt was. Given that Matthew describes the disciples as having come to the place where Jesus directed them, it would be contradictory to conclude that they did not believe it was the resurrected Jesus who was in front of them. Their hesi-

16 This point will be explored in more detail in 3.2.

tation is likely closer to awe than disbelief.

This interpretation is supported by the fact that Matthew also reports that the disciples “προσεκύνησαν (prosekynēsan, worshiped).” This is a significant theme in the Gospel as it describes the way in which the wise men honored the baby Jesus (2:11), how the leper responded to being healed (8:4) and how the women reacted to their resurrected Lord (28:9). Additionally Matthew uses mountain imagery to emphasize key parts of his narrative including the temptation scene (4:1-11), Jesus’ teaching on the mount (Ch. 5-7) and the transfiguration (17:1-13). The mountain is also a reference to Moses and the Law, a typology Matthew has developed throughout his Gospel.

The only other use of διστάζω in the New Testament—Peter’s failure to keep his eyes on Jesus—finds προσεκύνησαν in the same story (Mt. 14:31-32). In that scene, Jesus rebukes Peter and calls him one of “little faith” (14:31). Matthew likely draws on this contrast in order to appeal to his readers who also find themselves in “the dialectical tension between worship and fear” (Bosch 2003, 76). It is reasonable to expect that they would draw comfort from the fact that even the physical body of Jesus Christ did not prevent hesitation in the eleven disciples. By including the disciples’ doubt and worship, Matthew is ultimately conveying the distinction between master and disciple—a distinction that is vital to the mission. It is Jesus whose authority is appealed to and whose presence the eleven are empowered and comforted by rather than their own self-confidence.

The fact that these are Jesus’ last words recorded by Matthew, that they are spoken on a mountain, and that Jesus promises his presence would prompt the readers’ scripturally educated imaginations to conclude that Jesus is like Moses. But rather than simply alluding to Moses, Matthew draws all the mountain scenes together and places Jesus’ last words at the climax of his gospel. As will be shown, Jesus confirms his ultimate authority when he addresses the disciples. This short text serves to set up the meeting between Master and disciple—the resurrected Messiah who is to be worshipped and the imperfect followers who nonetheless come to bow, listen and obey.

28:18a

“But Jesus came and said to them...”

As noted, there is a great distance between master and disciple in the short buildup to Jesus’ final speech. The disciples come to their teacher in worship but without any confession or apology for their desertion during Jesus’ suffering and death. Matthew’s audience would remember the trepidation with which Moses approached Yahweh on the mountain. This may be the background for the disciples’ hesitation as they approach Jesus. The eleven are imperfect, even

unfit for the task ahead of them, yet Matthew describes Jesus' response as a move towards them.¹⁷ Matthew reports no rebuke—a response recorded earlier when Peter hesitated: also included in Mark's version of the Commission (Mk. 16:15-18). Matthew provides a flawed picture of the disciples. However, Jesus' move towards his followers bridges the chasm between them.

28:18b

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me..."

After Jesus delivers his Sermon on the Mount, Matthew describes the crowds as astonished because Jesus taught as one who had ἐξουσία "authority" (7:29). After healing the leper, again the crowds glorified God because he had given "authority" to men (9:8). Throughout the gospel Jesus is described as one who has been given divine authority. Here, in the final scene, he confirms it himself. Matthew clearly finds the fulfillment of Daniel 7:13-14 in that Jesus has been "given" glory, dominion and a kingdom. Jesus is presented as the Son of Man whose absolute authority is realized.

28:19-20a

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. . ."

3.2 Μαθητής

In Matthew's Gospel, μαθητής often points to "discipleship instruction."¹⁸ In these cases the disciples ask a question or make a statement to which Jesus gives specific instruction. Several times the disciples move from not understanding to understanding in a single narrative (13:51-52; 16:13; 17:13). Matthew reports that they "understood" after hearing the warning to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees (16:13) and who Jesus was referring to after the Transfiguration (17:13). Some commentators criticize Matthew for idealizing the disciples compared to Mark in whose Gospel the disciples often do not understand. However, Luz (1995, 139) submits that, "for Matthew, the ambivalence of the disciples' behavior—the intermingling of faith and doubt, of obedience and

17 William Bronn (2010) suggests Jesus' reaction refers to Joseph's forgiveness of his eleven brothers. Bronn makes a compelling argument that when Matthew refers to his "brothers" in 28:10 he is anticipating the forgiveness that happens on the mountain in Galilee.

18 Wilkins (1995, 165) assembled a list of all the instances: 8:21,23; 9:27; 10:42; 12:49; 13:10; 15:23; 16:5; 17:6; 17:10; 18:1; 19:10; 21:20; 24:3; 26:8,40,45.

failure—apparently constitutes the reality of discipleship.” In Matthew however, Jesus does not leave them in that state. In showing the disciples’ progression, Jesus is brought to the forefront as the “effective Teacher of his disciples” (Wilkins 1995, 181). Ultimately, Matthew’s intention is to highlight Jesus’ authority.

Some argue that Matthew is interested in using μαθητής strictly to describe the twelve closest disciples, but France (1989, 261) argues that this unduly limits Matthew’s scope. While the vast majority of Matthew’s use of the noun refer to the twelve, his emphasis is less on who they are and more on how they react to Jesus’ teachings. “Disciples are those who hear and understand the commands and teachings of Jesus and do God’s will” (Luz 2005, 131). If this is true, the label disciple may be used outside of Matthew. In fact, this is probably exactly what Matthew had in mind. Wilkins (1995, 222) submits that, “Matthew has constructed a gospel that will equip the disciples in the making of disciples.” France (1989, 261) agrees, claiming that μαθητής refers to anyone—past, present or future—who follows Jesus as their master. As stated above, this passage has tremendous implications for today’s Church. This “transparent” way of reading Matthew’s Gospel brings Jesus’ words to the ears of contemporary disciples and presents the Commission as a responsibility to be lived out now.¹⁹

3.3 Μαθητεύσατε

πορευθέντες οὖν
μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη,
βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς
εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος,
διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς
τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν

Μαθητεύσατε is the main verb in this sentence. The three other verbs (shown in italics) are supporting participles; πορευθέντες (“go” or “going”), βαπτίζοντες (“baptizing”) and διδάσκοντες (“teaching”). βαπτίζοντες and διδάσκοντες are adverbial participles in that they are subordinate to the controlling verb in the clause. Specifically, as participles of means “baptizing” and “teaching” answer the question of how Jesus expects disciple-making to happen. The purpose of these participles is to clarify what the author meant to communicate with the main verb (Wallace 1996, 628-629). Therefore, making disciples cannot happen without baptizing and teaching.

19 Perhaps no scholar emphasizes this as much as Luz in various studies. His view is that “the verb μαθητεύω functions transparently to make discipleship in the Gospel illuminate the Evangelist’s own day” (2005, 131).

Βαπτίζοντες (“baptizing”) is the first participle that informs the imperative. Jesus clarifies that disciples are to be baptized “in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The use of εἰς (“in” or “into”) can mean “into possession of.” Baptism, therefore, demonstrates that a person has moved from the possession of one owner into “the position of belonging to God” (Witherington 2006, 535). This command, along with the explicit Trinitarian formula, recalls Jesus’ baptism in Matthew 3:13-17. During this short scene, the Father speaks to the Son who listens and on whom the Spirit descends. While one can debate whether Matthew is emphasizing this point, the Trinity is latent in the text (Witherington 2006, 81). Jesus’ baptism also contributes to Matthew’s Christology. The voice from heaven carries tones of Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1—pointing to Jesus’ role as divine Son and suffering servant. Blomberg (1992, 82) suggests that Jesus’ baptism is a “formal installment and commissioning.”

Διδάσκοντες is the second supporting participle. The close connection between Jesus’ teaching and his disciples has already been examined in the greater context of the Gospel but it is important to focus on Jesus’ emphasis in the Commission. Here, Jesus commands his disciples to teach them to obey πάντα²⁰ (“all”) he has commanded them. Matthew is unique in that he records Jesus not as calling the disciples to “proclaim the gospel” (Mk. 16:15) or “repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Lk. 24:47). Rather, they are to teach. The content is both broad—everything Jesus commanded, and narrow—only what Jesus taught. “Jesus not only was, he always is the ‘only teacher’ of his church” (Luz 2005, 633). In commissioning the eleven to make disciples of Jesus Christ, he calls future disciples to be his own followers rather than disciples of those who proclaim his message.

This brings to mind the five discourses throughout Matthew, indicating that nothing is to be left out as the disciples communicate Jesus’ teaching to future disciples.²¹ Matthew, in fact includes more of Jesus’ commands than do Mark, Luke or John. His point is clear: Jesus’ disciples listen and obey Jesus’ teaching. Therefore, the “chief means of making disciples is teaching” (Witherington 2006, 534). This demonstrates the connection between the noun and verb: disciples accept and obey Jesus’ teaching. Those who make disciples teach everything Jesus taught and commanded while resting on Jesus’ ultimate authority and promise.

The form of πορευθέντες (“go” or “going”) is slightly different than the other two participles. Blomberg (1992, 431) considers it an “introductory circumstantial participle.” He claims it ought to be treated as coordinate to the main verb—

20 One of four uses in this passage.

21 Each discourse is closed by a similar formula; “And when Jesus finished these sayings” (7:28; 19:1; 26:1), “When Jesus finished instructing...” (11:1), “And when Jesus had finished these parables” (13:53).

here “Go and make.”²² However, the dominant imperative quality of μαθητεύσατε stands on its own as an imperative. In other words, “make disciples” is not dependent on anything else in order to be regarded a command. This hardly means that πορευθέντες lacks significance. Jesus also began his initial commission (10:5-15) with this word, demonstrating both where the disciples were to go (to the “lost sheep of Israel”) and not go (the “Gentiles” and “Samaritans”). Further, Matthew locates this verb on the lips of the angel who told the women to “go quickly” (28:7) to the disciples.²³ The message is clear: the command to “make disciples” includes movement towards potential disciples of Jesus Christ.

In the final commission though, the disciples are to go πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. There are conflicting views on what Jesus means: either all “Gentiles” or “peoples.” The former is supported by those who interpret Matthew that Jesus rejects the Jews once and for all.²⁴ This analysis is controversial.²⁵ The outlook held here is the more widely accepted view that Jesus is now including Jews and Gentiles alike as the recipients of evangelism and judgment (Meier 1977, 94-102). This interpretation has historical exegesis on its side and makes sense of the stark contrast between the explicit limits of the first commission (10:5-15) and the expansive tone (and lack of restriction) in this one. Luz (2005, 26) summarizes; “What is cancelled in 28:19 is the exclusive nature of the mission to Israel.”

The three supportive participles significantly contribute to Matthew’s expression of what Jesus was calling his disciples to. Yet they alone do not constitute Jesus’ commission. Jesus’ own disciples did not become true followers through teaching or baptism. Jesus’ followers responded to the call of Jesus (4:18-21). “That Peter and the others become disciples not in response to Jesus’ teaching but his call is suggestive” (Davies and Allison 1991, 684). It suggests that while making disciples cannot be done without going, baptizing or teaching, those three components on their own do not produce disciples. As Jesus called his disciples to imitate him in numerous other areas, so too he exhorts them, in turn, to call potential disciples to himself.

Therefore, obeying the Great Commission is fully dependent on Jesus’ authority and completely focused on how he made disciples himself. It is a mandate

22 Other examples of introductory circumstantial participles in Matthew are 2:8; 9:13; 11:4; 17:27; 28:7 (Blomberg 1992, 431). Wallace (1996, 645) considers πορευθέντες an “attendant circumstance participle”. Therefore like Blomberg, Wallace also considers πορευθέντες coordinate to μαθητεύσατε.

23 Interestingly, this verb is not used when the chief priests send the guards to tell the false story of how it is that Jesus’ body was missing. There are four commissions in Matthew 28. Only the three that take true account of Jesus’ resurrection incorporate a form of the verb “go”.

24 Blomberg (1992, 431) points to D.R.A. Hare and D.J. Harrington as proponents of this view.

25 By Blomberg (1992, 431- 432), for example.

for the whole Church. Following the observation made above that Jesus addressed all of the eleven, the Great Commission is a task to be undertaken by the entire community. Finally, making disciples is a process. The call does not end when one becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ. Frederick Bruner (2007, 817) suggests that “the word’s (μαθητεύσατε) prosaic character relaxes and says in effect, ‘work with people over a period of time in the simple educational process of teaching Jesus.’” Making disciples means to call people to follow Jesus. It includes going, teaching disciples to obey everything Jesus commanded and baptizing them in the name of the Triune God.

28:20b

“...And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Jesus’ final words to his disciples echo the name Emmanuel given him at the beginning of Matthew’s Gospel (1:23). They recall the claim related to church discipline and assurance that he will pray for you when “two or three” are gathered in his name (18:20). Jesus’ final promise also recalls God’s presence in the Old Testament where it often accompanied a call to service (Ex. 3:12; Jos. 1:5,9). Such is the case here as Matthew includes Jesus’ promise with the Commission and ends the Gospel without the ascension. Jesus’ presence with his disciples will last as long as the task itself: “to the end of the age.”

Of some surprise is the fact that Jesus announces that he himself, rather than the Holy Spirit, will remain with his disciples. It is indeed true that Matthew does not include talk of the Spirit as much as the other three Gospel writers. Mark’s version of the Commission includes mighty signs and wonders (Mk. 16:17-18). Matthew omits these and quotes Jesus’ command to teach his disciples to be obedient. Jesus connects his presence to keeping all of his commands. “The Spirit speaks with many voices, and many people have appealed to it. Jesus on the other hand speaks clearly. He teaches his commandments to the disciples so that they will be recognized in the world by their praxis” (Luz 2005, 635).

Still, it does not appear that Matthew intends to answer the question of exactly how Jesus is present to his disciples. Yet, I contend that it is precisely in the way that Matthew wrote his Gospel and intended his audience to hear it that he expects the resurrected Jesus to be with his disciples. Matthew brackets the entire Gospel with the theme of “God with us,” suggesting that Jesus is present in the reading of the Gospel (Resseguie 2005, 58).

3.5 Conclusion

I wish to make two points before answering the question of what Jesus meant when he commissioned his disciples. First, Matthew binds Jesus’ claims about

himself (indicative) with his mission to his disciples (imperative). Despite the incredible wealth of this passage, the Great Commission to make disciples cannot be separated from Jesus' complete authority and everlasting presence. Disciples of Jesus Christ participate in the authority of Christ and are secure in the presence of the exalted Lord. The mission Jesus gives to the eleven can only be properly interpreted if the sender is correctly understood. What Jesus does is intimately connected to who he is. Christology must be the foundation of Christian mission. "The indicative and the imperative are connected in the person of Jesus because he himself is both giver and author of the demand (Luz 2005, 137)."

Throughout Jesus' entire ministry he calls his disciples to imitate him. Matthew portrays numerous connections between Jesus' words and his deeds (Davies and Allison 1997, 715). From the Sermon on the Mount, where he exhorted his listeners to be meek and to love their enemies (among many other things) to his command to his disciples to carry their crosses, Matthew shows again and again that Jesus' own actions were matched his words. It is no surprise then that Matthew portrays Jesus' disciples as living out many of the commands Jesus gave. Jesus, in fact, makes it explicit: "it is enough for the disciple to be like his master" (Mt. 10:25). Matthew, in turn, arranges the material to fit this theme. Before commanding his disciples what to say and do (Chapter 10), the Gospel records Jesus' words (5-7) and deeds (8-9) (Davies and Allison 1991, 197). If then, Matthew's gospel is filled with examples of Jesus' own disciples being called to imitate Jesus, and actually doing so, the natural conclusion would be for Jesus to exhort his disciples to call more to imitate their Master. That is exactly what we have in the Great Commission. Therefore, to remove the Commission from the context is to lose the divine authority and presence of the mission.

Secondly, Michel (1995, 45) states that Matthew 28:18-20 is the key to understanding the whole book. As such, Matthew is calling his audience to read it again in order to grasp everything that Jesus has commanded. "The Gospel of Matthew is a story that needs to be read from beginning to end. This is the only way it properly discloses itself" (Luz 2005, 83). Matthew 28:16-20 is the key to understanding God's presence (1:16), the introduction of the trinity at Jesus' baptism (3:13-17), Jesus' authority recognized by the crowds (7:29; 9:8), the importance of each one of his "five discourses" and perhaps most importantly, Jesus' method of making disciples. David Sim (1994, 2) identifies this text as "a bridging passage that concludes Matthew's story of the 'historical Jesus' and points the reader to the new era of the universal mission of the Church which conducts its endeavors under the protection of the risen Christ." I agree that it points to the future in the way Sim concludes, but it can only point to the future if it offers Jesus' teaching to future generations of disciples. The past, historical aspect of Matthew's Gospel is just as important. Jesus instructs his disciples to make disciples; Matthew hands

the new disciples Jesus' teaching in order to continue the task.

Therefore, to Matthew, Jesus' command to make disciples means to imitate Jesus in how he called, taught, related to, and ministered to his disciples. Obeying the Great Commission means to call people of all nations into a relationship with God shown through the act of baptism in the name of the Triune God and by instructing them to observe everything Jesus commanded. Because of his ultimate authority and continuing presence, Jesus Christ is at the center of all disciple-making. Disciples of Jesus Christ are devoted to their master and obey his teaching. As so, they are part of a community, for "μαθητης" is an ecclesiological term" (Luz 2005, 132). Simply put, Jesus' mission is for the church. His gospel is all inclusive, for it begins with the genealogy, ends with "the end of the age," and proclaims Jesus' exclusive, eternal authority and his desire to bring all people into relationship with the Father. Jesus' message as recorded by Matthew is, therefore, just as applicable to his disciples today as it was on the mountain in Galilee. Those who approach their master in worship, despite their imperfections, will experience the authority and presence of Christ as they endeavor to make disciples of all nations.

Bibliography

- Blomberg, Craig L. 1992. *Matthew*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.
- Borthwick, Paul. 2015. *Great Commission, Great Compassion: Following Jesus and Loving the World*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press.
- Bosch, David, J. 2003. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Bronn, William R. 2010. "Forgiveness in 'My Brothers' of Matthew 28:10 and its Significance for the Matthean Climax (28:16-20). *Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology*.
- Bruner, Frederick Dale. 2007. *Matthew: A Commentary I*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. 1991. *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*. Vol.2. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd.
- Dever, Mark. 2016. *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus*. Wheaton Ill: Crossway.
- Edwards, Richard A. 1985. "Uncertain Faith: Matthew's Portrait of the Disciples". In: Fernando F. Segovia. *Discipleship in the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Fee, Gordon. 1993. *New Testament Exegesis*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John

- Knox Press.
- France, R.T. 1985. *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.
- France, R.T. 1989. *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher*. Grand Rapids, MI: Paternoster Press.
- Grenz, Stanley, J. 1994. *Theology for the Community of God*. Nashville, TN: Broadman&Holma Publishers.
- Guthrie, Stan. 2000. *Missions in the Third Millennium: 21 Key Trends for the 21st Century*. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press.
- Hagner, Donald A. 1998. "Law, Righteousness and Discipleship in Matthew." *Word and World*, Vol. 18, No. 4, (1998): pp. 364-371.
- Luz, Ulrich. 1995. *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew*. Translated by J. Bradford Robinson. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Luz, Ulrich. 2005a. *Matthew 21-28: A Commentary*. Translated by James E. Croch. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.
- Luz, Ulrich. 2005b. *Studies in Matthew*. Translated by Rosemary Selle. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Meier, J.P. 1977. "Nations and Gentiles in Matthew 28:19?" *CBQ* 39 (1977): 94-102.
- Michaelis. 1967. „μμούμαι”. In: Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 4. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Michel, Otto. 1995. "The Conclusion of Matthew's Gospel," *The Interpretation of Matthew*, 45.
- Müller, D. 1975. „Disciple“. In: Colin Brown, *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Vol.1. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Rengstorf, K. H. 1967. „μαθητής”. In: Gerhard Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 4. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI.
- Resseguie, James, L. 2005. *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Sim, David C. 1998. *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism. The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community*. T & T Clark Ltd.
- Stott, John, R.W. 1990. *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church & the World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Talbert, Charles H. 1985. "Discipleship in Luke-Acts". In: Fernando F. Segovia, *Discipleship in the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

- Wallace, Daniel B. 1996. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Wilkins, Michael J. 1992. *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co.
- Wilkins, Michael J. 1995. *Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew's Gospel*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Wilkins, Michael J. 2004. *Matthew*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Willard, Dallas. 1997. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering our Hidden Life in God*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Willard, Dallas. 2006. *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship*. London: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.
- Witherington, Ben III. 2006. *Matthew*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing.

Jeremy Bohall

Podizanje Kristovih učenika u Hrvatskoj

Sažetak

Ovaj projekt istražuje kako Evanđeoska pentekostna crkva (EPC) danas u Hrvatskoj podiže učenike Isusa Krista. Cilj je pokazati da unatoč smanjenoj učinkovitosti stvaranja i slanja Kristovih učenika, kako u svijetu tako i na lokalnoj razini, EPC ipak raspolaže znatnim resursima i potencijalom da i nadalje poslušno ispunjava Veliko poslanje. To se ovdje pokazuje kroz razmatranje teksta Matej 28,16-20 i pripadajuće povijesne definicije Kristova učenika, istraživanjem izvornog konteksta učenja te kroz razgovor sa nekoliko članova EPC-a. Kao rezultat ovog istraživanja, prepoznajem nekoliko razloga za značajno smanjen broj novih Kristovih učenika u Hrvatskoj, no kao primarni problem se ipak ističe pojava koju ćemo ovdje biti slobodni nazvati naivna neposlušnost. Ustvrdit ću da lokalne crkve u sustavu EPC-a nisu primjereno poučene kako na pravilan način podizati Kristove učenike. Ukazivanjem na važnost kvalitetnog poučavanja, gradnje odnosa i prakticiranja duhovnih disciplina, namjera mi je pokazati da unutar EPC-a postoji rješenje za problem nedovoljno učinkovitog učenja.

