

## Integrative Plan for Discipleship and Worship

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DM 906: Leading worship and Discipleship: Forming a People Communicating the Word

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## **Christian Sacraments for Worship and Discipleship Practices**

### **Abstract**

Encountering God through Christian Practices regarding discipleship, Lord's Supper, Spirit baptism, and foot washing requires an open relationship with the Lord. The body of Christ comes together corporately to complete and produce a whole or larger unit. The fulness becomes an integration of ethnic minorities with desires to join other Christians in a worship and praise setting. It is coming together to enter His courts with thanksgiving. Giving thanks to the Lord and continuing in blessings and praises for Him forever.

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Discipleship is a command also known as the great commission, the body of believers has a mandate to go forth in the world and draw all people unto Jesus. First, and foremost a disciple is a learner, Jesus admonishes His disciples to be learners of the Word. Each one is encouraged to love others, bear fruit, and always put Jesus first. After learning, believers must share Jesus good news of the gospel to everyone who will receive it. The New Testament gives this primary command.

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matt. 28:18:20. Another important aspect of baptism is it brings individuals into a closer relationship with Jesus believers die to sin

and resurrect to new life. It also symbolizes believer's willingness to follow Jesus and live according to the Word of God.

Accordingly, Jesus last Words to His disciples were of the utmost importance. They were given authority to be encouraged to share the same information to the lost hurting souls throughout the world. Sharing the "Good News" involved proclaiming Jesus Words to all people through teaching, preaching, and baptism. Likewise, believers today and forevermore must adhere to this mandate by telling others the Good News and make disciples for God's Kingdom. All disciples are under Jesus authority to make more disciples and teach new disciples to do the same. The mission is not selective, it is worldwide because Jesus died for the sins of all people of every nation.

Also, every believer must obey and follow Jesus commands, going everywhere He sends him or her. It may be next door, in other parts of neighborhoods, across town, through various countries, cities near, and far. Regardless of the distance, "go" make more disciples in Jesus name. Jesus has given gifts of disciple making that can and should be used to fulfill the "Great Commission." There is no need of being afraid, He has not given us a spirit to fear, but power, love, and a sound mind.

Besides, there is an absolute assurance that Jesus is with believers everywhere. His Spirit abides in all believers and each should have this confidence in Him. The key is to be obedient to the call and submit to His authority. Also, there is strength and weakness in everyone, but they do not go in their own strength but in the Lord's strength. Actually, disciple making is the main purpose of going therefore, until the action "go" is carried forth submission to Jesus command is idle. When the Church obey the great omission, they fail to obey the "Great Commission."

Additionally, readily receiving the “Great Commission” involves believers building and using their Christian faith to evangelize lost souls to Jesus. Historical questions come to mind, why has the simple plan that Jesus put into action failed to go forth as a seed planted in believers’ heart. What happen to the continuation of this seed, it is as though the good seed that was once rooted in the disciples failed to continue in its growth in other followers. Perhaps the church did not take care of the seed and blocked its growth. They did not let the seed grow deep enough to take root, but allowed it to suffer from malnourishment. Neglecting good roots God has planted in believers’ heart prohibits growth of the seed.

Furthermore, practical theology is needed to enable better church practices that will engage more worship that ushers the Holy Spirit’s presence. More Christ like interactions among various intercultural and all families are needed to maintain awareness of relationship building in a spirit of unity. It is vital important for the church to worship in a spirit of love and total commitment of building up and reaching out. Another important aspect to focus on is to maintain a faithful relationship in Jesus during crisis.

Nevertheless, mission work is another way of worshipping and discipling lost souls unto Jesus to fulfil His plans and purpose for all people. If the right programs are not developed in the mission field to fulfill missiology works that exhibit Christian practices, there will be “theological and ministry flaws.” From another theological point of view, church doctrine is another important aspect of practices adhered to by Baptists and other denominations. These practices include the Lord’s Supper, foot washing, and baptism. Not only that, but they are faith practices and acts of obedience to carry out the mandates of Jesus.

Another frame of theological work within the church “requires attention to God, to each other, and to the world God loves.” There is no separation in these work initiatives, they must

maintain a deep spiritual connection always. Yet, there are “frameworks for understanding ethnicities and cultures, another need is to make no provision for the flesh when establishing frameworks for clarity of the church who, what, and how it operates.”<sup>1</sup> The focus in this framework is to make connections to the body of Christ who regularly worship together within a congregation. The aspect of this worship is in relation to lessons taught and learned via bible studies, Sunday school, preaching and discipleship classes. The body of Christ also assembles together to provide care for the needy, having a heart to witness, and render good works.

Moreover, Branson and Martinez points to this, “our work shows a commitment to a particular understanding of ecclesiology as it is rooted in the incarnation and the cross.” In like manner, Paul reminds the Colossians, of all the fullness of God that dwelt in Jesus through His suffering, death, and resurrection. He paid the price “through the blood of His cross” for reconciliation for all humanity and His perfect sacrifice reconciled all things to Him. This analogy views the concept of church as believers in the body of Christ that connect with another.

### **Encountering God: Holy Sacraments of the Lords Supper**

Sacraments are viewed as a belief of Christian religious ceremony of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Ecclesiastical it is an invisible sign of an inward grace, especially one of the solemn Christian rites considered to have been instituted by Jesus to symbolize or confer grace. The sacraments of the protestant churches are baptism and the Lord’s supper; the sacraments of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches are baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, matrimony, penance, holy orders and extreme unction. What does it mean to Christians? For, the

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11.Branson, Mark Lau, and Juan F. Martinez. *Churches, Cultures & Leadership: A practical Theology Congregations and Ethnicities*. Downers Grove, ILL: IVP Academic, 2011.

Roman Catholic church, the sacrament is the holy bread eaten at the Eucharist. Whereas, the Anglican church views the sacraments as the holy bread and wine taken at Holy Communion.

“And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, “This cup is the New Covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” I Cor. 11:24-25. These words are a reminder that the Lord’s supper celebrates deliverance from sin by Jesus death. Likewise, the Lord’s Supper was instituted on the night of the Passover meal by Jesus. Passover also celebrated deliverance from slavery in Egypt.

Several reasons are given as to how Christians perceive what Jesus meant when He spoke of “this is My body.” Several have speculated on the meaning of “this is my body,” one belief is the bread and wine became Jesus physical body and blood. Yet other beliefs are the bread and wine do not change, but Jesus presence is spiritually with the bread and wine. Another belief is the bread and wine symbolize His body and blood. From a Christians view the Lord’s supper is an important “element in the Christian Faith.” Jesus presence strengthens believers spiritually.

Consequently, the frequency of the Lord’s Supper in the first century is difficult to determine. But at the Jerusalem Church they integrated together daily to partake of communion. This action of partaking the eucharist strengthens the community with more strength and binds the people together, excluding them from compromising with evil. White points to this, “being in the Eucharistic community demands making no concessions to evil. There can be no involvement in social evilness ever.”<sup>2</sup> This is a demand placed upon the eucharistic community.

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2 White, James F. A Brief History of Christian worship. Nashville, Abingdon, 1993.

## Encountering God in Water Baptism

Moreover, believers have the Word of God as a continuous guide of His expectations for life. His Word informs this, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” Matt. 28:19. As they went forth believers of today must go forth to make disciples, baptize them and teach them Jesus commandments. Jesus gives the assurance that believers are never alone, He is with each one until the end. These are the last instruction Jesus left with His disciples.

In like manner believers are under His authority to go forth make disciples, baptize, and teach them to obey Jesus. The mission today is world wide because He died for all people of every nation and He is Lord of all. Jesus has freely provided a gift of water baptism as “a visible sign of invisible grace.” At the same time, it is identified as “a bath of grace in which the believer is spiritually cleansed in waters upon which the Holy Spirit of grace is resting.”<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, the free gifts of water baptism and salvation has been looked upon as two separate entities, but considered as distinct or independent. At this point, salvation may be treated “as a series of crisis experiences along the way of salvation, instead of a single event.” If that is the case “water baptism becomes a visible sign of visible grace.” Then the Spirit of grace becomes a part of the new believer’s life whereas the fleshly desires yield to the fruit of the Spirit. At the same time water baptism is the “initial evidence of the new birth” in Jesus.

Moreover, Christian baptism in relation to Jesus baptism is an act of worship and discipleship is an action like the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. Although John’s baptism was baptism of repentance but not a ritual cleansing. This action was a preparation for the

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<sup>3</sup> Tomberlin, Daniel. *Pentecostal Sacraments: Encountering God at The Altar*. Cleveland, Tennessee: Center for Pentecostal Leadership and Care, 2010.

“Messiah’s “baptism of spirit and fire.” It is noted that John’s wilderness baptism in the Jordan river “symbolized death to the past and birth to the future.” Jesus baptism was a significant major event it was an identification of His taking the sins of the world upon Himself. Another action step of baptism includes, John encouraging believers with repentant hearts to be spiritual cleansed by baptism. This action is necessary for believers to participate in “God’s coming kingdom.” Also, “water baptism anticipates the cross” after Jesus baptism He entered a wilderness temptation and His mission on earth cause Him to yield to a “baptism of sufferings.”

### **Encountering God in Foot Washing**

Jesus persisted in teaching His disciples principles of serving in a spirit of humility. He is the perfect example of love displayed in action. Jesus love is deep for all believers and He release peace to all through faith. His example of a greater love is for all believers to follow Him. But when Peter protested of the Lords desires to wash his feet, Jesus response to Peter was “unless I wash you, you won’t belong to me.” Peter did not understand the significance of love displayed in action by Jesus. Nor did he grasp the intent of humbleness to wash the feet of others.

Nevertheless, Tomberlin suggests, “the feet washing service is one among the most beautiful and attractive services that we have.”<sup>4</sup> He proclaimed, “foot washing as a sacred act of worship.” Further mentions of foot washing informs that it is not an acceptable sacrament, but is “observed by the church as an occasional sacramental rite.” Yet, “the church fathers associated foot washing as a sacrament associated with water baptism.”<sup>5</sup>

However, others agree on some writings in the gospel of John concerning baptism. Yet, Augustine described foot washing as a “wonderful sacramental symbol and a lofty mystery.”

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4 Ibid., 193.

5 Ibid., 194.

Others describes it as a sacramental act that demonstrates the “mystery of humility.” Many recommendations were given for reasons to render the service of foot washing. It is the proclamation “as a sacrament for the remission of sins.” Not only was it recommended, it was a command of Synod of Toledo for all Bishops and priests in authority to wash the feet of each persons under their leadership.

Furthermore, foot washing has also become a part of “Maundy Thursday” or “Holy Thursday” a Christian observance in the United Kingdom. Other pertinent information on this observance is it occurs during Holy Week on each Thursday prior to Good Friday. In addition, this service commemorates Jesus last supper and the initiation of the Eucharist. Many Christian Churches observe the Eucharist, it is “celebrated in time and is the center of worship, but not its sole content.”<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, Chan suggests, foot washing is “the example of mutual service and the giving of the “new commandment” to love one another, by which all will know that “you are my disciples.”<sup>7</sup> When love is presented in a spirit of Christ likeness, believers are showing love demonstrated from a godly heart. Jesus followers are demonstrating His love toward all people with the realization that love reveals itself in action. Love is seen when individuals render help to someone out of inconveniences. More actions of love are seen by giving when it hurts, and “devoting energy to others welfare” rather than self. “Love does not lose faith, love is hopeful and endures through every circumstance.

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6 Ibid., 78.

7 Chan, Simon. *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community*. Downers Grove, Ill. Inter-varsity Press, 2006.

## Conclusion

Each sacrament holds its own significance in the body of Christ, most importantly they represent the significance of Jesus and His activities during His time spent on earth. “For the Lord is Good and His mercies endure forever.” Another action includes enhancing the atmosphere of honoring the Lord in all sacred practices. His Holy name is to be exalted by all believers, each one has the benefit of abiding in His presence with Thanksgiving. The action of entering His courts with praise and his gates with thanksgiving, bring blessings to His holiness. The sacraments are visible signs of God’s grace. They have been instituted by Jesus to bring together into a whole for His grace.

Another way of expressing the eucharist is to view it as a way of giving thanks. This approach is called a central dimension according to Judaism and the way they “approached God with thankful recital of His actions.” Thanksgiving is also appropriate in exalting God and it is a joyful place to be in the Lord. Believers are asked to come before the Lord with gladness, and be thankful to Him and bless His holy name. In addition, “thanksgiving is given in commemoration of what God has already done.” Besides, through the years there is now the realization of more commemoration than the “passion, death, and resurrection.” The thought is “commemoration begins with creation and it continues through all works of God until the end of time.

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