

Alliance Theological Seminary  
Nyack, NY

DML 871 Research Seminar 1 "Writing the Proposal"  
Learning Experience 4: Thesis Proposal First Draft  
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## Introduction

### **Title**

“Measuring the effect of personal coaching on the implementation of a one year developmental plan for new members as a follow up to The Daybreak Church Membership course (Journey Class).”

### **Ministry Context**

This fourteen year old church plant has grown in number from 60 to over 1,300 people in 14 years on two campuses in South Central Pennsylvania. Daybreak is a member church of The Christian and Missionary Alliance and part of the Eastern Pennsylvania District of the C&MA. The church was intentionally planted by Immanuel Alliance Church of Mechanicsburg to target an unreached people group in the greater Capital region that was not drawn to a typical protestant, evangelical church.

The church has been heavily influenced by five factors:

1. The C&MA (global evangelization)
2. Willow Creek Church (local evangelization)
3. Saddleback Church (Purpose Driven)
4. New Thing Network (Multi-site)
5. The Simple Church Process (Great Commandment & Great Commission)

Daybreak has successfully been able to reach a portion of its target audience and launch a second campus in the past two years with plans to launch the third campus in the next four years. Before launching the second campus the church engaged in the Simple Church Process that helped streamline the church so that multiplication was more effective. The end of the process is summed up in a vision statement that church members are able to embrace and emulate.

### **Daybreak Church exists to help people discover a life-changing journey with Jesus...**

- Celebrating God’s Grace
- Connecting with God’s family
- Contributing to God’s work

A major “Simple Church” adjustment to the church ministry was the morphing of the Purpose Driven Class System that had been developed (101 Membership, 201 Maturity, 301 Ministry and 401 Mission) into one longer nine week course now called The Journey Class. The staff was convinced that people were not grasping fully and implementing the vision of Daybreak because the CLASS system was ineffective. It was noted that after people became membership they often did not register for or engage in further classes within the system. Therefore, the Lead Pastor worked with this group to combine the 4 classes into one longer course that would teach the main objectives of

Membership, Maturity, Ministry and Mission under the new emphasis of the simple church vision. The development and implementation of the new course has been a collaborative project. The Journey class was launched in the fall of 2011 as a replacement for the old 101, 201, 301 and 401 Class system. This transformation of the membership class into the current Journey class was a collaborative effort of the Central Staff Team led by the Lead Pastor. The result of this work is an entry level course that helps new church members embrace and emulate one vision at both campuses.

The New class is offered two times per year in the fall and in the winter. The main teachers and hosts of the class are the Lead Pastor and Campus Pastor with the other Central Staff Members teaching in their respective areas (i.e. Celebrating, Connecting, and Contributing). Over the span of the course the members are encouraged to develop their own Journey Plan using the template that is provided. The class culminates with a coaching session that solidifies their plan and their commitment to Christ and his Church through the Daybreak Church Family

### **Problem and Purpose**

The church has grown in number by reaching its target audience and effectively helping them come to faith. Daybreak has struggled in the area of developing those new believers to multiple themselves in a third spiritual generation (Sanders, 2005). The Journey class was developed to be the catalyst to address this lack of multiplication.

The class has been up and running for two years and is accomplishing the goal of helping new members embrace and emulate Daybreak's simple vision. The participants are able to accomplish the development of a Journey Plan and appreciate all the teaching and coaching provided by the staff. The problem is that after they graduate the staff has no way of measuring if the people are actually successful at the implementation of their Journey Plan.

The intention of the researcher is to develop a one year coaching plan that follows up Journey graduates, helping them implement their rule of life in the transformational environments that include personal coaching. It is the hope of the researcher that the coaching will help new members implement their plan so that they become Christ followers who are more apt to multiply themselves in a third spiritual generation.

### **Basic Assumptions**

This thesis projects carries with it several assumptions. First, that the materials provided in the Journey Class are sufficient for people to form a rule of life that they are able to implement. Secondly, that coaching will enhance the implementation of the individual's plan as a rule of life that will help them grow and multiply. Thirdly, that this process will include a means by which the Central Staff can measure the effectiveness of the Journey class and follow-up coaching.

### **Definitions, Delimitations and Limitations**

#### ***Definitions***

“*Coaching*” will refer to a specific set of skills that will be employed in four specific environments (classroom, small group, one-on-one, and retreat) to achieve the greater implementation of the personal Journey Plan.

“*Rule of Life*” is a term borrowed from Peter Scazzero and refers to the concept of forming a skeletal plan that is the “trellis” on which spiritual formation takes place.

“*Simple Church Process*” is a reference to the process that was developed by the researcher when he led the Elders and staff through the reading, processing and implementation of the book *Simple Church*.

“*Journey Class*” is the name of the nine week course developed by the researcher and the Central Staff of Daybreak Church to help new members embrace and emulate the vision and values of Daybreak Church.

“*Journey Plan*” is the personal growth plan that each new member of Daybreak develops as they take the Journey class and receive coaching.

### ***Delimitations***

The researcher is choosing to limit the coaching to a one year process that is a follow up to the Journey Class. Select Members of the Elders and Central Staff will be employed to help design the coaching process and environments. The experiment will take place for a one year period after the close of one of the Journey Class sessions. Only Journey class graduates will be able to participate in the study.

### ***Limitations***

The scope of this project is limited to determining if a prescribed course of coaching, lasting one year, upon completion of the Journey Class at Daybreak Church, enhances the implementation of the students Journey Plan or not. The nature of the study is confined to the new members of Daybreak Church who graduate from the Journey Class, no other churches or groups will be considered.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Theological Foundations**

*“The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters,  
but a man of understanding draws them out.” Proverbs 20:5*

The propensity of the evangelical church as a whole is to put the emphasis of the great commission and great commandment on the shoulders of the “discipler” almost to the exclusion of the person being “discipled.” Secondly, we tend to focus on a “disciple making curriculum” in this scenario the emphasis is on completing the curriculum and

meeting for strategic check-ins to make sure the person is making headway on completion of the designed course or curriculum.

Both of these emphases are vital but one must wonder; if this is the case, has this emphasis on both the disciple maker and the curriculum contributed to the phenomenon called ‘lack of self-feeding?’ Willow Creek church uncovered this phenomenon in their famous study called Reveal. (Reveal Study, 2004-07)

Has being a member church of the Christian & Missionary Alliance and having a majority of it’s pastors trained in Alliance Educational institutions caused Daybreak to error on the side of “making disciples” and not helping people become or develop as disciples?

Jesus, quite often put the emphasis on becoming his disciple on the shoulders of the individual he was calling to do so. Probably the most notable passages about personal engagement in your own development are the two that envelope Peter’s earthly relationship with Jesus. Both passages echo the short but poignant phrase that may well have been both the first and last words Peter heard from Jesus on this earth, “Follow Me...” (John 1:35-43 & John 21:19)

The basic assumption of this thesis is that, if new members of a church are given the right teaching in combination with the right coaching they will be empowered to become more engaged in their own development as a disciple of Christ. A balanced approach to disciple making is dependent upon these three elements: the disciple nurturing themselves, the teaching (curriculum) being built on biblical principles and the disciple maker acting as a spiritual coach who “aids and guides” the growth of the disciple by helping them implement, adjust and expand their “rule of life” or growth plan.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

***“It is every Christ follower’s responsibility to carve out a satisfying life under the loving rule of God or else sin will start to look good.”*** (Willard, 1988, 80)

The author of this paper assumes that the emphasis on personal responsibility that has come with the new emphasis on spiritual formation and soul care is one that has been missing from the evangelical church and has caused a “ham string” effect when it comes to spiritual growth in the life of the believer.

The practices and principles of soul care and spiritual formation will inform the backbone of the coaching plan and its components. It is assumed that for spiritual growth to occur the individual needs to be offered environments in which to plant themselves and grow. These growth opportunities will draw from both classic authors to contemporaries in the area of spiritual formation such as Saint Ignatius, Peter Scazzero, Martin Sanders and others.

These coaching environments will include but not be limited to classroom teaching that integrates small group discussion/interaction, reflecting on and writing out the person’s redemptive story, the development of the Journey plan as a ‘rule of life’, group retreats that are “other directed,” personal retreats that are “self directed,” and personal coaching sessions that help the individual develop, implement, adjust and expand their growth plan during a one year period.

## Methodology

### **Intervention: *Treatment Effects Method***

The nature of the research will be to measure the difference that systematic coaching makes upon the implementation of a course of action our church calls “The Journey Plan”. Currently, at the end of our nine week membership class (The Journey Class), participants develop a Journey Plan that is designed to help them apply the vision and values of Daybreak Church to their lives in a developmental way.

In the eighth session of the class participants meet with a coach and one or two other members of the class and write out the Journey Plan they have been considering during the course based on the course content, their personal context and where they are on their spiritual journey. This class, coupled with the coaching session and plan has been very helpful in helping people see membership in light of a developmental journey with Christ and His family. This process is limited however in its ability to help new members, as well as the church staff, measure the implementation of and effects of the Journey Plan over the first year of their engagement as a new member of Daybreak. Given this scenario, my thesis research work will be to:

1. Develop a one year coaching plan for new members based on the implementation of their Journey Plan.
2. Apply the one year coaching plan as the “Independent” variable to my experiment.
3. Survey the members of group 1—the group with no first year coaching to determine to what extent they have implemented the plan in the first year of membership without any follow-up coaching.
4. Survey group 2 to determine to what extent they have implemented their Journey Plan in the first year of membership.
5. Compare the results of group 1 and group 2 to determine if one year of follow up coaching makes any measurable difference in the life of new members at Daybreak during their first year of membership.

Given this scenario for research, I believe that the ***Treatment Effects*** research method will best help me set up the experiment and measure the results of the two groups. “*Experimentation involves attempting to cause something to happen. This is done by matching several groups and doing something different with each of them.*” (Davies, 14).

### **Evaluation**

Both groups will be interviewed personally by the researcher at the inception of the Journey plan and at the end of one year of implementation. To set the stage for this

interview each participant will complete a before, midway and after questionnaire by means of a survey monkey.

In addition to the participants, the coaches will also be interviewed and take either the same survey or one slightly different to measure how effective they perceived the coaching process to be.

The nature of the survey monkey is that it will allow the researcher to tabulate the results and also run comparison reports.

## Results

It is projected that the research will show that the group that received the one year of coaching was more successful and fulfilled in the implementation of their Journey Plan than the group that did not receive the coaching. The researcher expects that the majority of the people who chose the coaching track were favorably impressed with their results and would recommend it to others taking the Journey Class.

Findings will be reported to both the Elder Team and Central Staff Team of Daybreak Church. The results of the research will also be documented in the thesis itself and an appendix table or tables.

## Conclusion

The researcher will interpret his findings and draw conclusions related specifically to the value that a coaching component brings to the developmental process of new members at Daybreak Church. An evaluation will be made to see if the findings point to new members becoming more apt to “multiply themselves in a third spiritual generation” or not.

The Eldership of Daybreak along with the Central Staff Team will use the findings to determine if the coaching should continue, be enhanced or be abandoned. They will use the finding to see if the coaching protocol enhances the simple church process or makes no difference.

## Resources

The proposed timeline for this study is as follows:

1. Approval from Alliance Theological Seminary (January 2014)
2. Assemble and charter coaching design team (Fall 2013)
3. Design one year coaching plan with team (Spring 2014)
4. Plan Integration into Journey Class Follow-Up (Summer 2014)
5. Hold Journey class for participants (Fall 2014)
6. Implement one year coaching plan (Fall 2014-Fall 2015)
7. Conduct Interviews & surveys with participants and coaches (Fall 2014-Fall 2015)
8. Write results and conclusions into thesis format (Spring 2016)

## Thesis Outline

1. Introduction
  - a. Introductory paragraph
  - b. Description of ministry context
  - c. Statement of the problem
  - d. Statement of the purpose
  - e. Basis assumptions
  - f. Definitions, delimitations and limitations
2. Theological and Theoretical Foundations
  - a. Introduction
  - b. Theological Themes relevant to the project
  - c. Theoretical principles, models and practices relevant to the project
  - d. Integration of the theological and theoretical themes
3. Methodology
  - a. Introduction
  - b. Format of the project intervention
  - c. Description of the participants
  - d. Description of the coaching process
  - e. Evaluation methodology
4. Findings and Results
  - a. Introduction
  - b. Evaluation of findings; descriptions of results and conclusions
5. Conclusion and Implications
  - a. Introduction
  - b. Interpretations
  - c. Applications
  - d. Significance of the study
  - e. Questions that point to further implications of research
  - f. Concluding paragraph
6. Bibliography
7. Appendices

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## Appendix A: Working Bibliography & Websites

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## **Websites**

[International Christian coaching association –](#)

[Creative Results Management: Coaching, coach training, and leadership development for cross-cultural leaders](#)

[Ministry Coaching International | Home](#)

[The Christian Coaching Center](#)

[Christian Coaching Institute](#)

Christian Coaches Network