Title: Donald A. McGavran and Ellen G. White on discipling the perfecting in church growth: a comparative study

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Date Completed: 2001

Granting Institution: Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS)

Description: Unpublished Thesis (Ph.D.) ; 286 pages

Abstract:

Both Donald A McGavran and Ellen G. White agree on the importance of “discipling then perfecting” in church growth. McGavran teaches that Christ’s Great Commission is God’s command for discipling and obeying it is the evidence of believers’ faithfulness to God. “Discipling” should be followed by “perfecting” because without “perfecting” the church is enfeebled. Similarly, White maintains that Christ’s Great Commission is God’s command for every believer because to win souls to Christ and obeying it is the evidence of believers’ love for Christ. White also believes that discipling should be followed by perfecting. The difference between the two key aspects of church growth is not obvious at a cursory glance. Yet upon careful investigation, some distinctions emerge.

The purpose of this study is to explore and compare McGavran’s and White’s views concerning “discipling then perfecting” in church growth. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to this research. It indicates the motivation for the study, the problem, the purpose, the significance, the definition of terms, and some of the basic assumptions. Chapter 2 describes McGavran’s understanding of “discipling then perfecting.” It begins with exploring the context for McGavran’s concept of “discipling then perfecting,” highlighting the historical and theological background as well as his theology of mission. This chapter’s main focus is
on McGavran’s concept of “discipling then perfecting” which includes the meaning, the purpose, and the process of both discipling and perfecting.

Chapter 3 investigates White’s church growth concept of “discipling then perfecting.” This chapter also includes the historical and theological backgrounds of her ideas on this subject, followed by exploring the meaning, the purpose, and the process for discipling and perfecting.

Chapter 4 offers a comparison between McGavran’s and White’s understanding of “discipling then perfecting,” highlighting the similarities and the differences and showing how theses may enrich the theory and practice of Advent Mission. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings of the study by focusing on McGavran’s and White’s key points on church growth.