

Copyright © 2020 Peter Joseph

All rights reserved. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has permission to reproduce and disseminate this document in any form by any means for purposes chosen by the Seminary, including, without limitation, preservation or instruction.

EQUIPPING SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE SOUTH
BAHAMAS CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST NASSAU, BAHAMAS

A Project
Presented to
the Faculty of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Educational Ministry

by
Peter Joseph
May 2020

APPROVAL SHEET

EQUIPPING SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE SOUTH
BAHAMAS CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST, NASSAU, BAHAMAS

Peter Joseph

Read and Approved by:

Danny R. Bowen (Faculty Supervisor)

Dr. Shane Parker

Date _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	vi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Context	2
Rationale	6
Purpose	7
Goals	7
Research Methodology	8
Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations	9
Conclusion	10
2. THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASES FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP	12
Passing on the Faith in the Home	13
Loving God with the Whole Being	17
Meditating on the Word	18
Teaching Children the Word	18
The Basis of Sustainable Partnership	20
The Call for Unity	21
Diversity of Gifts	24
Maturity	26
Caring for the Souls of Parents and Children	29
Enlightenment	30

Chapter	Page
Encouragement	36
Mutual Submission and Effective Spiritual Leadership	38
Conclusion	41
3. THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, HISTORICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES RELATED TO SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP	43
The Goal of Spiritual Leadership	44
A Strategy for Spiritual Leadership	51
A Biblical and Historical Framework	58
Vision That Includes the Whole Person	65
Conclusion	72
4. DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT	74
Preparation and Permission	74
Preparation of Sermon Series	76
Consultation with Expert Panel	93
Implementation of Equipping Project	94
Conclusion	95
5. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT	96
Evaluation of the Purpose	96
Evaluation of the Goals	98
Strengths of the Project	100
Weaknesses of the Project	102
My Correctives	103
Theological Reflections	104
Personal Reflections	105
Conclusion	107

Appendix	Page
1. SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP SURVEY	109
2. SERMON EVALUATION RUBRIC	115
3. SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP ADVANCE ORGANIZER	116
4. RESULTS OF THE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP SURVEY	118
BIBLIOGRAPHY	128

PREFACE

At the outset, this project would not have been possible without the active involvement of sincere people God has brought into my life. First, I am grateful to the Heavenly Father for His divine initiative through His Son, Jesus Christ, and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit that saved me from sin. This effectual work of God continues in calling me to the gospel ministry. Very early in my life I sensed the pull of the Holy Spirit on my heart to prepare for gospel ministry. Indeed, I am thankful.

Second, while it is true that my biological father, John Joseph, absconded when I was only eight, my mother, Iola Joseph nee Richards, remained steadfast in spiritual parenting. Her stellar commitment to raise children to think biblically about life, the world, people, God, and sin, had a profound impact on me. An environment was in place for the Holy Spirit to work on my heart. In the home I studied the Bible, memorized Scriptures, sang hymns, spiritual songs, and psalms. Further, in family worship I listened the story of creation and redemption, which provided purpose, rootedness, and identity for my existence. I praise God for my mother, who is now deceased.

Third, when it comes to academic preparation, the Lord exposed me to gifted men of faith. Although all these men have left an indelible mark on my life, a couple must be mentioned. Dr. Shane Parker guided me to embrace faithfulness, fruitfulness, love for human beings, and passion for faith development. Dr. Danny Bowen, my doctoral supervisor, exemplifies Jesus, as he came to my level and coached me through the intricacies of foreboding Project Methodology. He exudes a calming effect that compelled me to believe in what is possible through Christ. I am eternally indebted to all these men and others.

Fourth, I am grateful to the membership South Bahamas Conference of Seventh-Day Adventist for their support throughout my doctoral study. I am delighted to be in the midst of a people who value the pursuit of God and yearn for God's kingdom to come among us. Two outstanding examples of these majestic people of God are Dr. Silas Napoleon McKinney and Mrs. Ruth McKinney. They are like lit candles in the dark of night that guide the footsteps of the worn and weary in the path of life and godliness. Their prayerful and material support will never be forgotten. I am grateful that God placed me amid a people who love me as Jesus loved them. I love them all.

Finally, time is too short and the world too constricted to hold my love and affection for my wife, Michelle. Unquestionably, she is my number one supporter. Through all the changing scenes of our twenty-seven years journey in marriage, she has remained faithful and steadfast in her support. She has absorbed the lonely days and nights when I had to be detained in front of a computer due to rigid time lines and schedules. She continues to encourage me to press on to the goal. Our children, Newton and Edmund, praise her noble character. Michelle is still my favorite person in the world.

Notwithstanding the struggle to get this point, I hope and pray that this project will make the South Bahamas Conference of Seventh-day Adventist and myself fruitful in the replication of faith from generation to generation.

Peter Joseph

Nassau, Bahamas

May 2020

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The family is the primary place for the replication of faith. In like manner, parents are the primary spiritual caregivers and disciple-makers of their children (Deut 6:3-8). However, disciple-making requires spiritual leadership. In recent discussion on the passing on of faith, a controversial debate has been whether parents have the tools and time to effectively pass on faith to their children.¹ On the one hand, some argue that the family appears to be an exhausted, beleaguered, and broken specter of its original state; therefore, parents cannot provide the spiritual leadership required for disciple-making in family.² On the other hand, some argue that the primary faith-developers of children are parents.³ In other words, parents cannot outsource this responsibility of spiritual leadership to anyone else.

¹ Timothy Paul Jones writes, “Parents need training, to make time to be told that God has called them to play a crucial role in their children’s spiritual development.” Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing, 2011), 113.

² Robert J. Choun and Michael S. Lawson explain, “Clearly parents must take the lead in giving spiritual direction. Some parents however are ill-equipped to begin or sustained the responsibility. Some have never started their own spiritual journeys, some have only just begun, and others have plateaued early in their development. Some face debilitating struggles.” Robert J. Choun and Michael S. Lawson, *The Christian Educators Handbook on Children’s Ministry: Reaching and Teaching the Next Generation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 22.

³ George Barna writes, “Parents should provide the primary spiritual training of children.” Although churches should have a viable role in the process, biblical obligations identify parents as primary leaders in the provision of faith development. The challenges parents face in the faith development process are not reasons to justifiably outsource their primary responsibility to professionals. George Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2003), 89.

Nevertheless, a partnership can be fostered between the family and the church (Eph 4: 11-13). One of the main proponents of this view is Timothy Paul Jones. He calls this model of family ministry, the family-equipping ministry.⁴ According to this view, the church equips parents to be the primary disciple-makers of their children. Evidently, the family needs support. The issue of spiritual leadership in the home is important because of its implication for proper functioning of the family, church, and the society (Luke 18:8).

Context

The South Bahamas Conference of Seventh-day Adventist (SBCSDA) consists of the Central and Southern Islands of the Bahamas.⁵ According to the Adventist Church Management System (ACMS), 48 churches exist in this organization, with a membership of 11,294, as of February 15, 2018.⁶ The majority of the membership is located in Nassau, Bahamas. This ministry project took place among the churches in Nassau.

The SBCSDA boasts of its adherence to high moral and spiritual standards. However, from observation, interpersonal interaction, and reports, families needed urgent attention. Notwithstanding members' avid commitment to Bible doctrines and church polity, glaring weaknesses associated with spiritual leadership in the family remain rife. When compared with the criterion or standards of the church, families need to strengthen their ability to replicate faith from one generation to the next. In this ministry context it can be assumed that families are doing well, but several weaknesses were connected to

⁴ Timothy Paul Jones, "Foundations for Family Ministry," in *Perspective on Family Ministry: 3 Views*, ed. Timothy Paul Jones (Nashville: B & H, 20019), 43.

⁵ Inter-American Division Working Policy 2013-2014, "Constitution of The South Bahamas Conference of Seventh-day Adventist."

⁶ Adventist Church Membership System, "South Bahamas Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Membership Statistical Report," South Bahamas Conference Executive Committee Minutes, September 2017.

the family's struggle to pass on faith from one generation to the next. In like manner, several strengths exist that allowed SBCSDA to equip families.

Weaknesses

The first weakness had to do with broken marriages and single parents homes. Marital harmony contributes to faith replication. Unfortunately, many church members choose to divorce when faced with conflict. The church is often not even aware that a couple is going through marital distress until the divorce has occurred and been filed. It has become common to dismiss appeals for the church to have a more active role in marriage. The lapse of the church in administering discipline to members who violate the permanence of marriage has opened the door for gratuitous divorce. Members who divorce return to church and function as church officers without true repentance and are allowed to remarry. Such practices increase blended families. Furthermore, divorce, death, and abandonment increase the single parent family. The stress of marital disharmony and eventual separation prevents parents from engaging in spiritual leadership that passes on the faith to the next generation.

The second weakness was emotional abuse. Wounded memories of adults make it difficult for them to see that their behavior hurts their marital and parental relationships. Instead of disclosing the inner struggle, they are contented with repeated explosions of temper and rage. It has become common for parents to live out their dreams through their children. Hence, when children fail, they are treated harshly. Parents preoccupied with issues of emotional abuse are not equipped to provide spiritual leadership that is required for disciple- making.

The third weakness was the hurried child condition, which David Elkin describes in *The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast Too Soon*.⁷ Adults are so invested

⁷ David Elkind, *The Hurried Child: Growing Up too Fast too Soon* (Cambridge, MA: Bookcomp, 2001), 3-21.

in themselves—in their careers and new relationships—that they have little time to engage in faith-training in the home. They want the church school instructional system to train their children. As early as two years old, children are placed in early childhood education centers, while parents go to work. In an effort to make up for parental absence, children are given entertainment gadgets at home to pass the time away. Therefore, parents fail to provide spiritual leadership needed for disciple-making.

The fourth weakness was lack of family worship. Children are succumbing to secular social and cultural forces. They are weak spiritually. When asked if they have family worship, they say no. Further, their lack of interest in Bible reading and prayer indicate unfamiliarity with family worship. Family worship is the prime opportunity for disciple-making in the morning and evening (Deut 6: 3-8). Notwithstanding, parents allow children to go to bed late after watching TV and surfing the internet, and then in the morning they do not rise early for worship. Children sense supernatural forces are drawing them away from spiritual development, but they have no power to resist (Eph 6:11-12). The absence of spiritual leadership results in the absence of faith development.

The fifth weakness was the lack of family time. The busy life of contemporary society has been a blight on marital and parental relationships. Young people get into risky behaviors because parents do not spend time with them in spiritual nurture and bonding.⁸ While this is happening, parents drift apart because of work. An obvious casualty is spiritual leadership, and faith formation does not take place.

The sixth weakness was a lack of parental supervision. Parents' busy schedules have allowed more freedom and independence for children. This phenomenon has resulted in children spending unusual amounts of time with TV, computer, internet, and

⁸ Donna J. Habenicht and Larry Burton, *Teaching the Faith: An Essential Guide for Building Faith-Shaped Kids* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing, 2004), 17.

social media. Instead of spirituality, they develop a craving for entertainment and instant gratification. Again, parents do not provide spiritual leadership for the passing on of faith.

Strengths

It has become common today to focus on weaknesses and dismiss strengths. Nevertheless, when it comes to the topic of spiritual leadership, some strength existed in this ministry context of the SBCSDA.

The first strength was an established Family Ministry Department at the SBCSDA headquarters. While the department provides annual marriage conferences, home and marriage week of emphasis, family week of emphasis, singles conferences, men's conferences, family fun day, and parenting seminars, the department often takes for granted follow up ministries to ensure that the programs are actually improving the environment for spiritual leadership to take place in the home. At first glance, some may say that these programs are sufficient, but on close inspection one has to agree that the seasonal nature of the programs and lack of will to ensure that the home environment is conducive to spiritual leadership diminishes the impact of the programs to fully counter the weaknesses.

The second strength was an organized Children and Adolescence Ministry Department. Essentially, this department provides weekly ministry to children, training for children in evangelism, milestone ministries, training for concerts, and annual fun days. Although the children who participate become motivated, the observable evidence shows that the brevity of time and the inability of the department to partner with parents to replicate faith diminishes the impact of the programs to fully counter the weaknesses. Anyone familiar with disciple making should agree that the influence of parents in spiritual matters is a most significant factor.

The third strength was an organized Men's Ministry. This ministry provides workshops and seminars for the express purpose of equipping men to be provider, protector, and priest of the household. While the men who attend testify wholeheartedly

to the benefits they receive, there is no follow up mechanism to help men create an environment for spiritual leadership in the home. Further, only a paucity of men attend.

The fourth strength was an organized Education Department. The department has done an outstanding job for over a century through its school system, Bahamas Academy. Its motto is “touching hearts to educate minds.” While many children have received a good education, it does not necessarily follow that the school instructional system has done a great job passing on faith to the children. Although the teachers embrace and impart the integration of faith and learning, the school has not been able on its own to replicate faith effectively in the children. Great efforts have been made to bring together the home, school, and the church; however, the focus is mainly on a project or academic performance.

Whereas the strengths can be leveraged to counter the stated weaknesses, in reality that was not being done. In other words, the weaknesses persist.

Rationale

The contextual weaknesses described indicate a need for equipping parents of SBCSDA to be spiritual leaders. A few related reasons show a necessity of equipping parents to be spiritual leaders.

The first reason had to do with clarity and confidence that generate enthusiasm among parents to wholeheartedly embrace their task as primary disciple makers of their children (Deut 6:3-8; Eph 6:1-4). To correct the confusion that spiritual development must be left to the professional ministry and to restore confidence and clarity, the church needed to equip parents in the task of faith replication. The reproduction of faith was important because parents possessed the most significant influence on children in matters of faith development. Ultimately, confidence and clarity that bolster parents to engage in the task of disciple making was at stake.

The second reason had to do with parents and the church becoming accepting of the presence of spiritual gifts in the church that can help parents be spiritual leaders in

their homes (Eph 4:10-13). The validation of spiritual gifts was important because it eliminated the vapid misunderstanding that a multiplicity of church services are effective enough to disciple children. A correct understanding of the church's role as equipper should have been of interest to SBCSDA because it fostered an environment for spiritual leadership in the home. Further, it bridged the gap between the church and the family. On the one hand, parents should experience confidence to rise above their shortcomings and lead in faith development of their children. On the other hand, the church could resist the tendency to take over the role of parents in spiritual development, but instead be a willing equipper and partner.

The third reason had to do with the protection of the church and the family. This protection is important because the church is comprised of families. Equipping parents to be spiritual leaders strengthened a partnership between the church and the family that ensured the wellbeing of both.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip parents in the South Bahamas Conference of Seventh-day Adventist to be spiritual leaders in their family.

Goals

The equipping of parents to be spiritual leaders was guided by four goals. The goals are as follows:

1. The first goal was to assess knowledge, attitude, and level of engagement in spiritual leadership in families who hold membership in SBCSDA.
2. The second goal was to develop a sermon series on spiritual leadership for families who hold membership in SBCSDA.
3. The third goal was to deliver the sermons on spiritual leadership to families who hold membership in SBCSDA.
4. The fourth goal was to measure the change in knowledge, attitude, and level of engagement in spiritual leadership among families who hold membership in SBCSDA.

The completion of each goal was contingent on defined means of measurement and benchmark of success. The following section explains the research methodology and the instrument used to measure the success of each goal.

Research Methodology

The effectiveness of the project was based on four goals.⁹ The first goal was to assess the knowledge, attitude, and level of engagement in spiritual leadership in families. This goal was measured by administering a spiritual leadership survey to parents. The spiritual leadership survey included questions about conversion, marital status, age, church membership, and understanding of spiritual leadership, Bible reading, prayer, family worship and spiritual growth. The goal was considered successfully met when 70 percent of the parents completed and returned the survey for analysis. The analyzed surveys gave a clearer picture of the knowledge, attitude, and level of engagement in spiritual leadership in the family.

The second goal was to develop a series of eight sermons that focus on spiritual leadership among families. The sermons included the use of Bible references, theological foundation, and Human Development Theory. A panel including three pastors and two educators utilized an evaluation rubric to measure the biblical, theological, and theoretical content of the sermons. The goal was considered successfully met when 90 percent of the evaluation criteria met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The third goal was to deliver the sermons on spiritual leadership to families. This was measured by conducting a series of presentations on spiritual leadership in a church building for the duration of eight evening sessions. The meetings took place

⁹ All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project. The research methodology for this project included a spiritual leadership survey.

between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. each evening. The goal was considered successfully met when the sermons were presented to parents in sustained effort for eight evenings.

The fourth goal was to measure the change in knowledge, attitude, and level of engagement in spiritual leadership in families. The goal was measured by administering the spiritual leadership survey a second time to the parents. This second treatment of surveys indicated change in spiritual leadership due to increase knowledge. The goal was considered successfully met when the pre-test scores and post-test scores demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference as measured by a *t*-test for dependent samples.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

To foster understanding of the subject matter in this ministry project, certain key terms had to be defined.

Partnership. For this project *partnership* describes the relationship between the home and the church as pointed out by Parrett and Kang:

Without question, if we want to see parents become more faithful and effective spiritual leaders in their families, we need to provide more than parental training. In other words we need to help them become more obedient disciples of Jesus Christ. We need to provide equipping for living as followers of Jesus Christ. We need to help them become immersed in the glorious Gospel and to proclaim to them the reality of Jesus Christ, who is truth, the life and Way of God incarnate.¹⁰

In this partnership, the church coordinates the process that equips parents to be the primary agents in making their children disciples of Christ.

Spiritual leadership. In his project, Jerry Greg Birdwell cites John Piper's definition of spiritual leadership.¹¹ In like manner, this project adopted John Piper's

¹⁰ Gary A. Parrett and Steve Kang, *Teaching the Faith and Forming the Faithful: A Biblical Vision for Education in the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), 166.

¹¹ Jerry Greg Birdwell, "Training Men of Providence Bible Fellowship, West Chester, Ohio, to Be Spiritual Leaders in Their Homes" (DMin project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 6. Birdwell did an effective job in arguing men to be equipped as spiritual leaders as a God-given role. This project took into consideration perfect condition before the fall and the ensuing restoration by Jesus Christ, to argue for equipping of parents to be spiritual leaders.

definition of spiritual leadership, which consists of “knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.”¹² God wants parents to be spiritual leaders. The church must take the initiative to get parents to be spiritual leaders in their homes by using methods God has made available to the church. The glory of God is at stake here. Accordingly, Piper claims, “Therefore, the goal of spiritual leadership is that people come to know God and to glorify him in all they do.”¹³

As it relates to delimitations, this project required that all participants be baptized members of SBCSDA. Further, the brevity of the time to discharge a series on spiritual leadership in eight evening sessions was a delimitation. While the sessions were constructed in simple and easy to understand ways, participants needed more time to understand and apply the principles.

As it relates to limitations, the response to the questions in the survey might not have received all credible answers, even though it was made clear that the answers remained anonymous. For some, the intention might have been to give answers that put them in a good light. Another limitation was expectation of attendance. To expect perfect attendance and consistency was not realistic; therefore, the sermon series were made available on YouTube, Facebook Live, and email texts to all participants.

Conclusion

Spiritual leadership was needed to remedy the inability of parents to pass on faith to the next generation. To put it another way, parents regained confidence and clarity as the church equipped them to carry out their primary role of spiritual leadership.

¹² John Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader,” *Desiring God*, January 1, 1995, <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/articles/the-marks-of-a-spiritual-leader>.

¹³ Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader.”

When parents are equipped to be spiritual leaders in their families, the outcome should be the replication of faith.

Within the unity of the church, God has a diversity of resources available to the church for equipping parents to be spiritual leaders in their homes. The following chapters point out the call of God to parents to be spiritual leaders and the partnership that is needed for the church to equip parents effectively. Chapter 2 provides biblical support for God's call to parents and the concomitant partnership with the church.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASES FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

When it comes to the topic of spiritual leadership in the home, many parents appear to agree that it is their responsibility.¹ Although they accept that spiritual development of the children is their designated task, the majority remains disengaged.² Whereas some claim they are too busy, and gratuitously outsource the responsibility to professionals, others claim they do not know how to engage in faith-training with their children.³ As it relates to equipping families for spiritual leadership, prominent family expert Timothy Paul Jones states, “When it comes to planning for spiritual growth in their children’s lives parents have received little or no guidance from their churches. Most have never been asked how their churches might help them to disciple their children. Parents in this category need to be acknowledged and equipped to guide their children’s spiritual growth.”⁴ The essence of Jones’ statement is that parents need training, guidance, and knowledge to carry out the critical role of faith development. Jones is surely right as research shows that vulnerable families need strong churches to step up and remind parents of their divine call, as well as provide training.⁵ In this life and death struggle for

¹ Timothy Paul Jones, *The Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 112-13.

² Jones, *The Family Ministry Field Guide*, 113.

³ Jones, *The Family Ministry Field Guide*, 113.

⁴ Jones, *The Family Ministry Field Guide*, 113.

⁵ Peggy Johaningsmeir, “Report of Family Focus Groups” (Minnesota Annual Conference, Family Ministries Initiative, Minneapolis, 1996), 5. Parents want the church

faith development, parents need to embrace the biblical foundation of their call to be the primary spiritual care givers of their children.

This chapter explains the biblical and theological basis for spiritual leadership in the home, pointing out that God has provided parents with sufficient admonition in the Bible about their divine call and partnership with the church to provide faith development. This thesis is supported by the exploration of four biblical passages. First, exegesis of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 will show that God instituted the home to be the primary place for faith replication by establishing that parents are called by God to be primary spiritual caregivers to their children.

Second, an exegesis of Ephesians 4:1-16 shows that God instituted the church with the capacity to include in its role the work of equipping parents to be the primary spiritual caregivers of their children by utilizing the spiritual gifts resident in the church. Third, an exegesis of Hebrews 10:19-25 shows that God's church sets the tone for the primacy of spiritual leadership in the home by showing how the church provides a climate of encouragement and enlightenment for its role of equipping parents. Finally, Ephesians 5:21-33 shows that God's Word sets the foundation for mutual submission by establishing that spiritual leadership is effective when there is mutual submission. These passages are not exhaustive on the subject; however, they provide broad support for the idea of parents providing spiritual leadership in the home.

Passing on the Faith in the Home

Studies of Deuteronomy 6:6-9 have indicated that the whole of Israel is commanded to pass on faith to the next generation. Merrill argues, "The sentence itself commences with the imperative of *sama* in the second person singular form. . . . The singular form of the verb emphasizes the corporate or collective nature of the addressee

to provide learning support opportunities on matters of faith and spirituality that help them teach faith at home to make God relevant.

Israel.”⁶ According to Peter T. Vogt, “The Israelites are expected to ensure the dissemination to future generations by diligently teaching children the words that were spoken by Yahweh.”⁷ Although Israel is the addressee, the primary place for faith development will be the home. Christopher Wright clears up an age long misconception by stating, “The second misconception is that religious traditions and observances are the preserve of a professional elite with esoteric knowledge, whether clerical or academic.”⁸ He further points out, “The priests of Israel were, indeed, to teach the law, but not as something only they within the confines professional guild could understand. On the contrary, the law was to be the topic of ordinary conversation in ordinary homes, in ordinary life, from breakfast to bedtime.”⁹ Home is the nearest place to children and therefore most relevant as the primary place for the replication of faith.

The primacy of the home is clear from the sharp emphases of the imperatives, which state, “Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. . . . Write them on the door frames of your houses” (Deut 6:7-8).

Regarding spiritual leadership, most agree readily that the home is the primary place for faith training. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of who has the sole responsibility in the home to carry out the task of faith development. Whereas some believe that the role of spiritual leadership in the home solely belongs to

⁶ Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary, vol. 4 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 162.

⁷ Peter T. Vogt, *Deuteronomic Theology and the Significance of Torah: A Reappraisal* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 156.

⁸ Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 100.

⁹ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 100.

father, others hold that the role is the responsibility of both father and mother in partnership. For instance, in addressing Deuteronomy 6:7, James M. Hamilton, Jr., argues,

The Hebrew verbs rendered, “you shall repeat” and “you shall talk” are second person masculine singular forms. Unlike English, which does not distinguish between masculine and feminine forms of the second person pronoun “you,” Hebrew has a masculine form for “you” and a feminine form for “you.” The fact that these forms are masculine singular means that, as Moses addressed the nation of Israel he directed the responsibility to teach the “sons” to the fathers.¹⁰

According to this view, mothers and daughters sit in the presence of fathers and sons as passive learners.¹¹

Although, the exegesis of the word “you” by Hamilton is helpful, the application can include both parents and sons and daughters in the broader context. Given that the concept of individual and individual identity did not yet exist in the Old Testament, it would be palatable to say that the use the masculine singular affirms the male as the patriarchal head of the home, but not the exclusion of the female in a partnership role.¹²

Whereas Hamilton’s claim is relevant, a false disjunction arguably may be committed.

D. A. Carson defines false disjunction as “a false either/or requirement when complementarity might be acceptable.”¹³ Even though pupils are called sons, and teachers, fathers, scriptures allow the teaching role of the mothers (2 Tim 1:5,6; Acts 18:24-26).¹⁴ Thus, both parents could be included. In like manner, the commandment in

¹⁰ James M. Hamilton, Jr., “That the Coming Generation Might Praise the Lord: Family Discipleship and Old Testament,” in *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*, ed. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 37.

¹¹ Hamilton, “That the Coming Generation Might Praise the Lord,” 38.

¹² L. G. Perdue et al., *Families in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 21. One who is influenced by the individualism of the twenty-first century has difficulty in Old Testament concepts. See Michael Anthony and Michelle Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries* (Nashville: B & H, 2011), 67.

¹³ D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 90.

¹⁴ Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 5 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 340.

Exodus 20:12 that requires children to honor father and mother implies a shared authority between the parents. Yet one cannot overlook the father-child emotional closeness in comparison with the mother-child emotional closeness. Vern L. Bengtson points out, “But what is really interesting is that, for religious transmission, having a close bond with one’s father matters even more than a close relationship with the mother.”¹⁵

The implication of the call includes the preservation of God’s stories and family identity. According to Walter Brueggemann, “One major function of intergenerational life is to transmit stories and promises which identify the family, so that each new generation has an inheritance that gives both identity, and roots, purpose and vocation.”¹⁶ In other words, the home is the primary unit of shaping, meaning, and defining reality in the Old Testament context.¹⁷ The essence of the argument for father and mother partnership in disciple-making is further borne out by the celebration of the Seder meal, held every Friday evening. This was a major ritual and tradition through which families in the Old Testament celebrated God’s story and Israel’s identity. During the Seder meal and other family rituals, the father and mother function as priest, spiritual teacher, and leader.¹⁸ This is consistent with the command for parents to pass on faith intentionally in the home (Deut 6:7).

¹⁵ Vern L. Bengtson, Norella M. Putney, and Susan Harris, *Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down across Generations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 76. Evangelicals, Mainline Protestants, Catholics, Jewish, and Mormons indicate that closeness to father is more influential and crucial than closeness to mother in religious transmission. Nevertheless, emotional closeness to mother is still significant for religious legacy. Hence both are needed in religious transmission.

¹⁶ Walter Brueggemann, “The Covenantal Family: A Zone for Humanness,” *Journal of Current Social Issues* 14, no. 5 (1997): 18.

¹⁷ Brueggemann, “The Covenantal Family,” 18.

¹⁸ Merton P. Strommen and Richard A. Hardel, *Passing on the Faith: A Radical New Model for Youth and Family Ministry* (Minneapolis: Saint Mary’s Press and Christian Brothers Publications, 1989), 28.

Martin Luther reflected his convictions about the role of father and mother by stating, “Most certainly father and mother are apostles, bishops, and priests to their children for it is they who make them acquainted with the Gospel.”¹⁹ God calls parents to be spiritual leaders in the home (Deut 6:4-9). As such, parents must love God with their whole being, give full attention to the Word of God, and intentionally teach the children the Word of God.

Loving God with the Whole Being

Loving God with the whole being will bring parents to a level of spiritual maturity that fits them for the task of faith training. An exclusive love relationship with Yahweh comes first in the preparation. The first verse says, “Hear O Israel. The LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Deut 6:4).

Those unfamiliar with covenantal terms may be interested to know the irresistible connection between the uniqueness of God and seeking to love God with the whole being.²⁰ For instance, the uniqueness and exclusiveness of God in the *Shema* provides commentary on the first commandment, which states, “You shall have no other God’s before me” (Deut 5:7). Therefore, the uniqueness of God requires an exclusive love relationship between God and covenant partners.²¹ That relationship requires parents to love God with the whole being. According to Eugene H. Merrill, “In covenant terms love is not so much emotive or sensual in its connotation (though it is not excluded in those

¹⁹ Martin Luther, “The Estate of Marriage,” in *Luther’s Works* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1958), 45:46.

²⁰ Wright maintains, The command to love is linked to the command to obey, in a sort of prose parallelism, that the two terms virtually synonymous. In Deuteronomy, love is not merely an emotion. It is a commitment to Yahweh, which generates corresponding action in line with His word. ‘If you love me keep my commandments, John 14:15. Covenantal response is total to include, heart, soul and strength. (Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 98)

²¹ Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 162.

respects), but it is the nature of obligation, or legal demand.”²² He further insists, “Obedience is construed as love; that is to obey is to love God with every aspect and element of one’s being.”²³ To love God requires, heart, soul, and strength (Deut 6:5). This triad of the *Shema* agrees that a person must love God with all his being if he is to be obedient to the first and great commandment.²⁴

Meditating on the Word

The Word must be indelibly fixed in the heart so that obedience to God’s commandments, especially in carrying out the commands of the *Shema*, will be born out of love and understanding and not legalism.²⁵ Meditation requires memorization and daily reflection. One must make a determined and deliberate work of planting the Word of God at the seat of the intellect. Eugene H. Merrill, points out, “In the psychology of the Old Testament the heart is not the center of emotional life and response but the seat of the intellect or rational side of humankind.”²⁶

When parents reflect on the Word, understand the Word, and commit the Word to memory, they are ready to take up the responsibility of disciple-making. The Word will be “upon their heart” or in their constant, conscious reflection (Jer 17:1; Prov 7:3; Dan 7:28).²⁷ Meditation on the Word is a necessary prerequisite for parents to be prepared to lead in the teaching of the Word.

²² Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 164.

²³ Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 163.

²⁴ Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 166.

²⁵ Peter Campbell Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1976), 170.

²⁶ Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 167.

²⁷ Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 167.

Teaching Children the Word

Parents demonstrate the divine call through diligent impartation and explanation of God to their children. The final verses encapsulate this most important parental task (Deut 6:7-9). The teaching of faith is critical for children to learn faith. The knowledge of faith as presented in the Torah must be taught to provide a foundation for the experience of faith in children. Both knowledge and experience are indispensable to faith development.

Deuteronomy 6:7 says, “Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” The text demands diligence from parents in the execution of the teaching task. Impressing God’s words on the children means to repeat them constantly.²⁸ Accordingly, Merrill reminds, “The covenant recipient must impress the words of covenant with faith into the thinking of his children by inscribing them there with indelible sharpness and precision. The image is that of an engraver of a monument who takes a hammer and chisel in hand and with painstaking care etches a text into the face of a solid slab of granite.”²⁹ This picture demonstrates the diligence required by teachers, in this case parents, to transmit the Word of God to the next generation.

The impression is made permanent by constant repetition. Children and adults must speak the Word of God among themselves for faith in God to spread across the entire population of Israel.³⁰ The Word of God must be the subject of conversation both inside and outside the house, from the beginning of the day to the end of the day.³¹ In figurative expression, the following verses 8-9 add to the primacy of the Word of God in

²⁸ Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 184.

²⁹ Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 169.

³⁰ Jeffery H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 78.

³¹ Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 170.

everyday life. Verses 8-9 read, “Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and your gates.”

Ultimately, what is at stake here is the Word of God and its continuity to the next generation. Therefore, Merrill, declares, “In less figurative terms and yet clear hyperbole; Moses said that the way the message is made indelible is by constant repetition.”³² Faithful transmission requires preoccupation with the Word of God. The importance of this cannot be overstated when one understands that Moses gave the *Shema* to the Moab generation and not the Horeb generation. The Horeb generation had God’s presence in the form of a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. The Moab generation that Moses now speaks to will not have that kind of theophany. Therefore, the teaching of the Word of God has deep connection to the presence of God.³³

Just as the *Shema* is a major imperative in the Old Testament, its relevance continues in the New Testament. In New Testament theology, Jesus and the apostle Paul alluded to the *Shema* (Matt 22:34-38; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:27; John 17:3; Rom 3:29-30; 1 Cor 8:1-6; Rom 3:29-30; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Tim 2:5). For instance, Jesus referred to Deuteronomy 6:5 when he was asked in Matthew 22:34-38, about the greatest commandment in the law. His answer states, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matt 22:37; Deut 6:5). In one situation Paul used the *Shema* to address idolatry (1 Cor 8:1-6).

Clearly Deuteronomy 6: 4-9 is a potent text in establishing the command of God

³² Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 167.

³³ The people on the verge of entering Canaan will experience dramatic changes in the way Yahweh’s presence is experienced. In contrast to Exodus, Deuteronomy is especially concerned with instructing the people about how Yahweh will continue to be present with his people after they enter and settle the land. Further, Moses addressed the people at Moab, so they are called the Moab generation. The Torah is now applied to the Moab generation. This law was first given at Horeb (Exod 20-24). The addressee at Horeb is termed the Horeb generation or the Exodus Generation who experienced the covenant at Horeb. What happened at Horeb was foundational. See Vogt, *Deuteronomical Theology*, 150-54.

for the home to be the primary place for the replication of faith.

The Basis of Sustainable Partnership

Although the Shema establishes unequivocally that the primary place for faith replication is the family, research has shown that parents lack clarity and confidence that is required to embrace their primary role of spiritual leadership.³⁴

The presentation of unity, diversity of gifts, and the natural outgrowth of maturity found in Ephesians 4:1-16 provides a basis for a sustainable partnership between the church and the family. In this partnership, the church equips the parents to carry out their function of disciple-making.

The Call for Unity

Unity is of significant importance for a productive partnership between church and the home.³⁵ Upon the reality of unity rests the strength of partnership.

Paul begins the passage under treatment with a call for unity: “as a prisoner for the Lord, then I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Eph 4:1-3).

The urgent necessity of unity is borne out by Paul’s use of *parakaloo*, meaning “to call.” Coupled with the sense of urgency is the authoritative nature of the call.³⁶ The context of the call to corporate and individual unity receives further relevance in light of the composition of the church. Sproul celebrates the fact by saying, “The church in the first century was threatened by division between Jewish believers and Gentile believers.”³⁷

³⁴ Jones, *The Family Ministry Field Guide*, 111-12.

³⁵ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 50.

³⁶ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 50.

³⁷ R. C. Sproul, *The Purpose of God: Ephesians* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian

The improper attitude to unity must give way to a proper attitude to unity. As such, this is the meaning of living a life worthy of the calling received. The new conduct balances with the call. Lenski insists, “Conduct and calling are to balance in weight.”³⁸ Believers can only work together in partnership if there is a proper attitude to unity and a conduct that correspond to the new spiritual position that resulted from the divine call to personal salvation (Eph 1: 3-14; 1:15-23; 2: 1-10; 2:11- 3:13;3:14-21; 4:1).

While Paul urges the authoritative call for unity, he presses forward the intricacies of worthy living. The intricacies of holy living include humility, gentleness, patience which operates with love (Eph 4:2). This is coherent living and not just coexistence.³⁹ Accordingly, Hoehner points out, “Their lives should demonstrate humility, gentleness, and patience, which are accomplished by forbearing one another in love and making every effort to preserve the unity that comes from the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁰ The imperatival force given by the context indicates deliberate and conscious decisions to live in unity. Hoehner writes, “A walk worthy of their call demands humility, gentleness and patience. In other words, these words do not describe an automatic response but one that demands conscious effort on the part of the believer who relies on the Spirit.”⁴¹

Humility, gentleness, and patience are all dimensions of love (Eph 5:22,23). Essentially, love helps believers to bear with one another. Simpson points out, “The uniting bond of love precludes all rankings of petulance or ill-will.”⁴² Without love, bearing

Focus, 2011), 109.

³⁸ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg, 1946), 506.

³⁹ Robert Nicoll, *The Expositor’s Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 4:320.

⁴⁰ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 513.

⁴¹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 508.

⁴² E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids:

with one another will result in bitterness. The word used for love is *agape*. According to Hoehner, “This kind of love seeks the highest good in the one loved and more particularly for the believer, it has the idea of seeking the will of God in the one loved. Hence, forbearance left unqualified could result in resentment or anger rather than love.”⁴³

The admonition is to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The word *terein* calls for a preservation of what has been given by the Holy Spirit and presently exists. Robert Nicoll argues, “Keep in a sense of maintaining with watchful care; suggesting also that what is to be kept is something already in our possession.”⁴⁴ Practical coherence among believers provides evidence that the unity of the Spirit exists. The unity that exists in the church provides a solid foundation for partnership between parents and the church.

Any equipping ministry must emerge from the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Peace that exists among believers becomes necessary for meaningful partnership between the church and the home. In the words of William Barclay, “The four great virtues of the Christian—humility, gentleness, patience and love—issue into a fifth, peace.”⁴⁵ Divisiveness will make it impossible for partnership of any sort. Barclay contends, “In a society where self predominates, men cannot be other than a disintegrated collection of individualistic warring factions.”⁴⁶

Paul states abruptly the basis of unity: “There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977), 89.

⁴³ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 510.

⁴⁴ Nicoll, *The Expositor’s Greek New Testament*, 4:321.

⁴⁵ William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1958), 140.

⁴⁶ Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, 140.

one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph 4:4-6).

Hoehner states,

The Trinity is an integral part of this treatise on unity. The one body of believers is vitalized by one Spirit, so all believers have one hope. That body is united to its one Lord (Christ) by each member’s one act of faith, and his or her identity with him in his one baptism. One God, the Father, is supreme over all, operative through all, and resides in all. All seven components are united in the Trinity.⁴⁷

The Trinity is the indisputable model for unity (Eph 1:4-14,17; 2:18,22; 3:4-5, 14-17;4: 4-6; 5: 18-20). As it relates to divine essence the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are identical. However, one sees diversity in roles and relationships. While this is the reality, the three, Co-Eternal Trinitarian Persons are one and function as one (Eph 1:9-10; Phil 2:6-8; Acts 10:38; Luke 4:18-21; John 16:8-11).

Diversity of Gifts

The preservation of unity is experienced in the diversity of gifts, which is important for an equipping church. Diversity is essential in the oneness of the body (Rom 12: 4-5; 1 Cor 12:4-29).

Paul advocates the necessity of different gifts and validation for giving the gifts: “But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it” (Eph 4:7). This is why it says, “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.”

What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens in order to fill the whole universe. It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to

⁴⁷ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 520.

the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:7-13)

Ralph Martin enjoins, “Grace, is not an allusion to Ephesians 2:6,8 but rather to those other places in Pauline writing where the same Greek expression (*Charis*) refers to the Spirit’s gifts to the church (Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 12:4).”⁴⁸ As members of the church, all must be involved in the life of the church because all have been equipped with the (*charismata*) gift. The messianic work of Jesus, by his incarnation and ascension, validates the giving of gifts to all believers. Therefore, instead of becoming consumers, believers become active in the service of the Lord. Accordingly, Hoehner exclaims, “The entire phrase is an agreement with Paul in Romans 12:6-8, where he states that the gifts differ according to the grace given and they are to be used accordingly.”⁴⁹

To validate the giving of gifts, Paul used Psalm 68:18. Leupold posits that Paul might have been referring to the victorious entrance of Christ in Jerusalem as type of his triumphal entrance into the heavens when he used Psalm 68:18.⁵⁰ Hoehner disagrees when he writes, “Satan, sin and death have been defeated by Christ’s redemption. Consequently, those who were held in their bondage have been freed and have obtained the gifts of the Spirit from their victorious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”⁵¹ The essence of his argument is that Jesus conquered supernatural enemies and liberated his people at the same time. Then he ascended to heaven triumphantly and poured out the Holy Spirit on the church, who gave gifts to every member.

He ascended and gave gifts to men (Eph 4:8). In verse 11, the gifts are listed as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Gifted ones who immediately prepare

⁴⁸ Ralph Martin, *Ephesians*, in vol. 11 of *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, ed. Clifton J. Allen (Nashville: Broadman, 1971), 155.

⁴⁹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 523.

⁵⁰ H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 445.

⁵¹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 530.

the saints for their work of ministry use these foundational or leadership gifts. *Katartismos* rendered “prepare,” can be better translated equip, instruct, and train.⁵² Everyone must do the work of ministry. As such, Hoehner advocates, “Therefore gifted persons were given to the church for the immediate purpose of training or preparing believers.”⁵³ These gifted leaders are in a position to equip families in faith development (1 Tim 3:2; Eph 4:11).

Also, the distinction between clergy and laity is eliminated as this completely goes against the thrust for unity in diversity where the saints are equipped for ministry. The idea that the ministry of the church is to be done solely by paid professionals, while the laity receives the benefits of the theologically trained clergy, has no support in the New Testament. Martin Luther reminds, “Let everyone who knows himself to be Christian be assured of this and apply it to himself— we are all priests and there is no difference ministry that builds up the whole body.

The service the saints render is not for personal glory but the experience of the unity in faith and knowledge that leads to maturity and Christ’s full stature (Eph 4:13), which is achievable through the power of the Holy Spirit. Hoehner affirms this point when he writes,

This can be accomplished because believers who function in the body have the foundational gifts to prepare them and also because each individual believer has been given a gift in measure (v.7). Hence if every individual believer allows the Spirit to use that gift to the measure given to him or her, then all the body of Christ will grow to the measure of Christ’s fullness.⁵⁴

⁵² A. T. Robertson, *The Epistles of Paul: Ephesians*, Word Pictures in the New Testament, vol. 4 (Nashville: Broadman, 1933), 537. The Greek word *katartismos* gives the picture of correcting all deficiencies, not just preparing someone to accomplish a task but actually correcting the deficiencies that prevent believers from performing the intended task. *Katartismos* and *katartissis* in Eph 4:12 and 2 Cor 13:9 respectively, both from *katartizo* which means to mend (Matt 4:11; Gal. 6:1). Hence, equipping is “for the mending or repairing of the saints.” It is not just an instructional work but surgical as well, that builds up the body. See also Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fauset, and David Brown, *Commentary Practical And Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967), 1290.

⁵³ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 550.

⁵⁴ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 558.

The ideal of maturity in Christ constantly remains the ultimate aim of the body.

Maturity

A lack of confidence on the part of parents and an inclination on the part of the church to take over the role of parents shows disunity and lack of maturity. Both must grow to understand their roles and giftedness. However, the church has a role to play in equipping parents to be obedient disciples of Christ, who in turn will disciple children to grow up into Christ.

Paul makes reference to a maturity described as a full-grown man in contrast to an immature and inexperienced child (Eph 4:12). When there is no maturity, there is instability that leads to disastrous results. One such negative result is no protection against confusion, turmoil, and disunity that is deceitfully visited upon the church by false teachers whose goal is to counteract the sound teaching of the pastor-teacher. Ultimately, trickery on the part of false teachers destroys clarity and confidence needed to do ministry. Paul elaborates further on growing to maturity:

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head that is Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Eph 4:14-16)

The church has succumbed to one of the great deceptions that advance the notion that the church is solely responsible for the faith development of children. The deception can be seen in the lack of engagement of parents in the professional ministries the church designed to disciple children. Such condition can only be prevented if believers are trained and matured in the teachings of Christ. Sproul advocates, “Believers who have not been deeply trained and matured in the things of God are vulnerable and exposed to every wind of doctrine that blows through the church.”⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Sproul, *The Purpose of God*, 114.

Growing together necessitates connecting to one another in love and proceeding toward Christ who is the standard of the Christian lifestyle (Eph 4:15). Moreover, the believer appreciates the truth and does not confuse love with niceness. Niceness must not contradict truth.⁵⁶ Also, ministering to one another in love, in order to experience the fullness of Christ, is essential to a sustainable partnership between the family and the church (1 Cor 13). Love is always a prerequisite for growth, as it motivates believers to look out for the best interest of each other (Matt 5:43-48). Undoubtedly, growth and maturity take place better in an atmosphere of love (Eph 4:16; Deut 6:5).

When one considers that Jews and Gentiles have come together in the church, *agape* love is a critical ingredient in this new oneness (Eph 4:16; 2:11-18). The life that keeps the church together belongs to him. That life is the overflowing presence of his love that maintains practical cohesion in the body. Martin writes,

Christ the head imparts his risen life and bestows by the Spirit his gifts of all ministries. His ministers fulfill their mission by equipping the saints (V.12) and being the ligaments (the Greek *haphe* is a medical term) of the church's cohesion to Christ and to one another. Christ's people make the contribution (which in the sense of the Greek *meros*, RSV part) needful for Christ's design to be realized for the body's up building and growth into him. And above all it is growth in love (1 Cor. 8:1).⁵⁷

Mature and stable individuals are needed for the church to be stable.

Nevertheless, Moule argues that the dominant thought here is the body that is always growing to maturity.⁵⁸ The oneness in the body that exists between Jews and Gentiles continues when both experience maturity in Christ. Similarly, a partnership between the home and the church will need the requisite maturity to be sustainable.

⁵⁶ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Christian Unity: An Exposition of Ephesians 4:1-16* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 244.

⁵⁷ Martin, *Ephesians*, 158.

⁵⁸ H. C. G. Moule, *Ephesian Studies* (Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications, 2002), 141.

Maturing in faith is about obedience to Jesus as revealed in the gospel. As such, the church must create an equipping environment that motivate parents to be obedient disciples of Jesus Christ; while at the same time caring for the souls of their children.

Caring for the Souls of Parents and Children

In a massive study of twelve thousand parochial school adolescents (grades 6-12) of the Seventh day Adventist church in the United States, data revealed that children who had caring environments reported healthy growth in faith. Those unable to report a caring environment showed very little evidence of growth and maturity in faith. On the other hand, those who reported three caring environments—home, school, and church—showed strong growth and maturity in faith.⁵⁹ These results illustrate the importance of the church to display or model a caring environment for both parents and children. The caring model involves seeing and hearing.

The model of seeing and hearing was used by Jesus to equip his disciples for public ministry (Matt 5-7; Mark 8:34; Matt 13:34, 35,51; Acts 10:38; Matt 9:8). Seeing and hearing is about the knowledge of faith that comes through teaching and the experience of faith that comes through God’s intervention and participation in congregational life. The essence of seeing and hearing is witness—bearing or faith replication.⁶⁰ Such an environment makes families feel that they are valued. As the church carries out its spiritual leadership in the formation of believers, the family will be inclined to do the same in the homes. A caring environment constitutes enlightenment and encouragement. In Hebrews

⁵⁹ Strommen and Hardel, *Passing on the Faith*, 65.

⁶⁰ A. B. Bruce contends, "In the early period of their discipleship, hearing and seeing seem to have been the main occupation of the twelve." Accordingly, training of the twelve for the work of Apostleship, hearing and seeing the words and works of Christ necessarily occupied an important place. Eye and ear witnessing the facts of an unparalleled life was an indispensable preparation for future witness-bearing. The apostles could secure confidence for which we have seen and heard declare we unto you. (A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1971], 41)

10: 19-25, Paul provides several elements of enlightenment and encouragement that form the fabric of a caring environment:

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our body washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Enlightenment

Paul shows what constitute enlightenment in a congregation. He gives pastoral teaching on a new worship experience (Heb 10:22). Andrew Murray exclaims,

It is a call to all doubting, thirsting believers, who long for a better life than they have yet known, to cast aside their doubt, and believe that this is what Christ has indeed done and brought within the reach of all of us: He has opened the way into the Holiest! This is salvation which he has accomplished, and which he lives to apply in each of us, so that we shall indeed dwell in the full light of God's countenance.⁶¹

Believers must have confidence to enter this new worship experience without any vacillation and unbelief (Heb 3:9-18).

Paul uses a few instructive terms that move the church from an old pattern of worship to a new one. These terms of enlightenment are “confidence,” “new and living way,” and “draw near.”

First, “confidence” resides not in the worthiness of the believer but in the sacrifice of Jesus for the believer (Heb 10: 19). The worshipper enters with *parresia*, joyful “confidence” because his entrance in the Holiest of All is through the blood of Jesus. No reason exists for shrinking back and doubting.⁶² This quality of congregational

⁶¹ Andrew Murray, *The Holiest of All* (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1966), 364.

⁶² Robert Milligan, *Hebrews*, New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1989), 357.

worship will give parents “confidence” to lead their children at home into family worship.

“Confidence” stands in contrast to the restrictions and fear in the Old Testament sanctuary worship. F. F Bruce explains this new period of enlightenment:

In it not all the people could exercise this privilege, but the high priest only, as their representative; and even he could not exercise the privilege anytime he chose, but at fixed times and under fixed conditions. But those who have been cleansed within consecrated and made perfect by the sacrifice of Christ have received a free right of access into the holy presence; and our author urges his readers to avail themselves fully of this right.⁶³

All believers can approach the throne of God with “confidence” (Heb 4:16). When the message of “confidence” is heard and seen in the congregation, parents will stop shrinking back and engage in their role as spiritual leaders in the home. When the church shows that it cares about the souls of parents, parents will grow in the faith required for faith training at home. The notion that professionals must disciple their children gives way to a new “confidence” in Jesus that motivates parents to disciple their children. “Confidence” in congregational worship contributes to “confidence” in family worship (Josh 24:15). Congregational worship and family worship go together.⁶⁴ While the Israelites’ approach to God was timid and fearful, the believers can now approach God with joyous confidence.⁶⁵ Parents must see and hear joyous “confidence” in congregational worship.

Second, “new and living way” is another term of enlightenment (Heb 10:20). Nicoll agrees: “The antecedent of the clause is *eisodon*, and this way into the holiest is

⁶³ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 249.

⁶⁴ Donald S. Whitney, *Family Worship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 20. Congregational gathering at the temple in the Old Testament and regular family worship are done to show that God is worthy of worship (Josh 24:15).

⁶⁵ Raymond Brown, *The Message of Hebrews*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1982), 184.

further described as first used by Christ that it might be used by us.⁶⁶ Accordingly, David Allen remarks, “Here the word refers to the opening of a way that was previously unavailable.”⁶⁷ This “new and living way” was opened by means of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. Thus, the rendering of the phrase “by means of his body.” Guthrie expresses this thought by writing. “As the old covenant priest had to pass through the veil, the new covenant people of God enter his presence via the sacrificial death of Christ.”⁶⁸ This new reality is very important for spiritual leadership in the home. Parents do not need to outsource spiritual leadership.

One of the ways to lead children to Jesus is to engage them in prayer. As the congregation joins Jesus in prayer, in the holiest of all, parents see and hear how they must carry out this practice in the home (Heb 7:25). Children believe that adults who pray are spiritual leaders (Mark 10:13-15). Therefore, as chief influencers of children, parents can be equipped as the congregation engages in prayer. Prayer is one of God’s methods in spiritual leadership (Heb 4:14-16; Luke 18:1-8).

Most parents lack a healthy model in family prayer. The church can address this lack by training parents in the spiritual discipline of prayer. Parents have the example of Jesus who constantly prays and advocate on their behalf (Heb 7:25). The congregation can practice praying the scriptures in worship (Pss 1, 4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 90; Matt 6:9-13; Eph 3:14-20; 1:15-23; Phil 1:3-11; Col 1:3-14). Paul admonishes the congregation to come with confidence before the throne of God (Heb 4:16). This “new way” was only made manifest when Christ died on the cross and the curtain of the temple was torn in two

⁶⁶ Nicoll, *The Expositor’s Greek New Testament*, 4:346.

⁶⁷ David Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary, vol. 35 (Nashville: B & H, 513), 513.

⁶⁸ Donald Guthrie, *Structure of Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 343.

(Matt 27:51). The “new way” is the living way. Milligan posits, “The new and living way is the same as the entrance way.”⁶⁹

Jesus is the great high priest over the house of God (Heb 10:21). In his presence, prayer and supplication become effective and unceasing. Murray claims, “Here in union with Christ, in his unceasing intercession, we are emboldened to take our place as intercessors, which can have power with God and prevail.”⁷⁰

Third, “draw near” is another enlightening teaching. As Allen points out, because of being secured of an acceptable entrance keep on approaching (Heb 10:22), “draw near occurs frequently in Hebrews and in the LXX, where it is used for priests approaching God with a sacrifice for worship. The idea is that of approach and the present tense of the verb implies continuous or repeated approaching.”⁷¹ In like manner, Bruce states, “No longer is the privilege of access to him carefully fenced about by conditions like those laid down for the high priest when he made his annual entrance into the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement; the ‘better hope’ of 7:19, ‘through which we draw near’ to God has been realized.”⁷²

Whereas Hebrews 4:16 parallels Hebrews 10:22 and focuses on prayer done in “confidence,” prayer is the specific focus of Hebrews 4:16. Notwithstanding, it is acceptable, given the context, that Hebrews 10:22 includes prayer and all aspects of worship. Allen agrees: “However, given the overall context, it would appear the author has in mind all aspects of worship, individually and corporately, with the focus here on corporate worship.”⁷³ All aspects of worship in the New Testament would include prayer,

⁶⁹ Milligan, *Hebrews*, 358.

⁷⁰ Murray, *The Holiest of All*, 355.

⁷¹ Allen, *Hebrews*, 514.

⁷² Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 254.

⁷³ Allen, *Hebrews*, 514.

reading of Scripture, singing spiritual songs, preaching and teaching, amen, exhortation, offerings, doxologies, confessions, baptism, Lord's Supper (Heb 12:22-24, 6:1-3, 5:11-14, 3:13; Eph 5:18-21; Luke 4:16; 2 Tim 2:1-2, 4:1-4; 1 Cor 16:2; Eph 1:3; Jas 5:16; Matt 28:18-20). These acts of worship are for the purpose of praise, thanksgiving, and dedication to God (Rev 19:4-7). When parents see and hear all aspects of worship and are challenged to carry out such worship in the home, they are in a better position to function as spiritual leaders. The church sets the tone. Although some aspects are more fitting for the congregation, family can pray, read Scripture, and sing to the Lord in family worship.

However, approaching the throne of God in worship cannot be done flippantly and irreverently. Prerequisites include a sincere heart, full assurance of faith, and a clean life (Heb 10:22). Charles A. Trentham posits, "We cannot blunder into the presence of the Almighty and All Holy on our own terms."⁷⁴ While the approach is confident, the right attitude is required. Worship is done to God and therefore requires one's best attitude.

The first aspect of an attitude of worship is a sincere heart, *meta alethines kardias*. Nicoll articulates the meaning of this term: "With a true heart, not merely bodily approach as if all were external and symbolic, but with that genuine engagement of the inner man which constitutes true worship."⁷⁵ John Brown agrees: "This is not just bodily service but by the exercise of mind and heart—not figuratively but really—with a true heart—with the mind enlightened with the truth, and with the heart made true, sound and upright, through the influence of this truth; not under the influence of the evil heart of error and unbelief."⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Charles A. Trentham, *Hebrews*, in vol. 12 of *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, ed. Clifton J. Allen (Nashville: Broadman, 1972), 74.

⁷⁵ Nicoll, *The Expositor's Greek New Testament*, 4:346.

⁷⁶ John Brown, *Hebrews*, The Geneva Series of Commentaries (Philadelphia: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 459.

David Allen continues, “The manner by which we approach God is with a ‘sincere’ heart where ‘sincere’ is the translation of the word meaning true, genuine, and sincere.”⁷⁷

Murray captures the experience when he writes, “The true heart is nothing but true consecration, the Spirit that longs to live wholly for God that gladly gives up everything that it may live wholly for him, and that above all yields up the heart, as the key of life, into his keeping rule.”⁷⁸ Acceptable worship requires a true heart. In the words of Milligan, “That is, with a heart that is free from all guile, deceit and hypocrisy.”⁷⁹

The second aspect of an attitude of worship is full assurance of faith. Having done his part through the blood of Jesus Christ, God has enabled believers with firm convictions. Reflecting on full assurance of faith, Milligan states, “That is, with a faith that dispels all doubt with regard to God and his promises; a faith which enables us to take God at his word and to do just what he commands, feeling perfectly sure that all things work together for good to them that love and serve God.”⁸⁰ Moreover, the perfect tense participles “having our hearts sprinkled” and “having our bodies washed” indicate that because persons have been washed and cleansed then they can draw near in worship (Heb 10:22, 23). The conscience that has been made evil by sin and human bodies that have been dominated by evil have been set free by the blood of Jesus Christ (1 John 3:20; 1 John 1:7,9; Titus 3:5; Heb 9:19).

The third aspect of an attitude of worship is a clean life. A clean life is a prerequisite for drawing near to God in worship (Rom 12:1-2). This truth is captured in the use of sprinkling and washing. In the sprinkling and the washing there are allusions to the Old Testament sanctuary service (Exod 28:4, 20, 30:20, 40:30; Lev 16:4). At the brazen

⁷⁷ Allen, *Hebrews*, 515.

⁷⁸ Murray, *The Holiest of All*, 372.

⁷⁹ Milligan, *Hebrews*, 360.

⁸⁰ Milligan, *Hebrews*, 360.

altar the blood was sprinkled while at the laver the body was washed. While the internal cleansing for worship is emphasized in Hebrews 10:22, it seems acceptable to connect the washing of the body to baptism, which for the author was a present reality. Accordingly, Donald Guthrie agrees: “The reference to hearts sprinkled and bodies washed is undoubtedly an allusion to Christian baptism.”⁸¹ The rite of baptism is an important act of worship. After enlightenment comes encouragement (Heb 10:23-25).

Encouragement

Negative conditions can force people into isolation (Heb 10:25). Although the expectations to find a solution to human inadequacy have been met through the blood of Jesus, people tend to draw back because of the hostile conditions around them. Worship leaders can lose appreciation for encouragement and take it for granted that worshippers will invariably attend worship services regardless. In addition to surrounding negative circumstances, some may stay away from public worship because of the feeling of human inadequacy.

Paul made three appeals of encouragement (Heb 10:23-25). The first appeal is to hold unswervingly to the hope believers profess (Heb 10:23). The idea here is that the second coming of Christ, which is the fulfillment of hope has not taken place yet (Heb 9:28). Therefore, the pilgrims hold on to the hope without any equivocation. Nicoll states, “For as yet in this life the fullness of blessing which comes of fellowship with God is not experienced, the perfected salvation and heavenly country are yet to be reached (Heb 12:22-23).”⁸² The worshiper can tenaciously hold on to the hope because of promises made by the Faithful God who cannot lie (Heb 6:12, 18).

⁸¹ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1981), 780.

⁸² Nicoll, *The Expositor's Greek New Testament*, 4:347.

Worship must be forward looking and hopeful. Emil Brunner illustrates the significance of hope by saying, “What oxygen is for the lungs, such is hope for the meaning of human life. As the fate of the human organism is dependent on the supply of oxygen, so the fate of humanity is dependent on its supply of hope.”⁸³

The second appeal encourages believers to consider how to spur one another on to good works and love (Heb 10:24). Herschel Hobbs explains, “Consider means to put the mind down on one. They were to fix their minds and eyes on each other to avoid the danger of wavering in God’s purpose. In doing so, they should provoke (stimulate, incite) one another with respect to love and good works.”⁸⁴ Raymond Brown gives further insights by saying, “In teaching of this passage, the exhortation is not simply to exercise fellowship, but to the stimulation of compassionate activity in the work of Christ.”⁸⁵ Milligan concurs, “That is, let us not be selfish, caring merely for ourselves; but let us have constantly in mind each other’s wants and circumstances as members of the one family of God; and that to for the purpose of exciting and encouraging one another to love and good works.”⁸⁶

The third appeal encourages believers not to give up meeting together. In order to know one another’s needs and circumstances and at the same time respond with acts of love, the believers cannot keep away from one another. Although the presence of persecution in Palestine appeared rife at that time, the believers are encouraged to attend public worship (Heb 12:1-12). A. Harnack expressed the onerous and precarious condition the church faced: “Many too were actuated by fear of authorities; they shunned attendance

⁸³ Emil Brunner, *Eternal Hope* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), 7.

⁸⁴ Herchel Hobbs, *Hebrews: Challenges to Bold Discipleship* (Nashville: Broadman, 1971), 103.

⁸⁵ Brown, *The Message of Hebrews*, 187.

⁸⁶ Milligan, *Hebrews*, 303.

at public worship, to avoid being recognized as Christians.”⁸⁷ The worship service is designed for encouragement and edification (Heb 10:24). If they fail to come together then the witness of the church will be forever lost. At the same time, the believers will not be equipped to face the difficult circumstances. Neither will parents be equipped to carry out their role of spiritual leadership in the home. Consistency in congregational worship should lead to consistency in family worship.

The urgency of the appeal is attached to the approaching day. This day could be the day of the overthrow of Jerusalem (Matt 24:4-41; Luke 21:20-22). It could also refer to the day of Christ second coming (Matt 25:1-13). When one considers the urgency New Testament scriptures place on the second coming of Christ, it is quite fitting to view the day as such (Heb 11:10, 39, 40; 1 Thess 4:13-16; Rev 1:7; 2 Pet 3:1-13; 1 Thess 5:1-19).

Assembling together in worship bears witness to the world about the second coming of Christ. C. Raymond Holmes captures the urgency: “The Christian church is an eschatological phenomenon, born in the end times for an end-time life and an end-time mission with an end-time message. The worship of the end-time church is also an eschatological phenomenon.”⁸⁸ In other words, the congregational worship is informed by the urgency of the second coming of Jesus. In like manner, the second coming of Jesus can motivate family worship. As such, parents must gather the little flock together every day to pass on faith in order to prepare the home for the second coming of Jesus Christ (Luke 18:8).

⁸⁷ Adolph Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity* (London, 1908), 434, quoted in Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 257.

⁸⁸ C. Raymond Holmes, *Sing a New Song: Worship Renewal for Adventists Today* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1984), 56.

Mutual Submission and Effective Spiritual Leadership

Marital harmony contributes to effective spiritual leadership. Therefore, the equipped parents must experience cohesion in the home in order to pass on faith to the children. In Ephesians 5:21-33, Paul shows the importance of mutual submission in an experience of marital oneness. First, Paul says, “Submitting to one another out of reference for Christ. Wives submit to your husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything” (Eph 5:21-24).

Harmonious relationships between husband and wife are a result of the filling of the Spirit and character that the Spirit reproduces in spouses (Eph 5:18-20; Gal 5:22, 23). The use of *upotassomenoi allelois* must be understood in the middle voice, where there is mutual cooperation and the subject acts as a free agent.⁸⁹ Moreover, the choice of action is made under the influence of the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18). In the broader context, mutual submission is an outgrowth of harmonious relationships in church, workplace, home and any social gathering (Eph 5:22-6:9). Cooperation involves submission and submission requires harmony.

The idea of submission in the home is developed in Ephesians 5:22-24, first in reference to the wife. There is harmony so the wife acts freely without force, just as the church’s submission to Christ is not done by force. As a free agent, the wife submits to her husband out of reverence for Christ. The motivation is out of reverence for Christ. Therefore, as she submits to Christ, she accepts the delegated authority her husband, in the fear *phobos* of the Lord.⁹⁰ The purpose of the oneness must be a deepening of harmony and not the suppression of the wife in any manner.

⁸⁹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 731.

⁹⁰ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 737.

Submission is not about essence and value or superiority and inferiority of the woman, but functional submission.⁹¹ The model for functional submission is the Trinity (1 Cor 11:3). Harmony is the context. The husband as the head of the wife shows the function of the man in the relationship. Nevertheless, there must be no reduction of the force of the word *kephale* to mean source or beginning. Standard lexicons and dictionaries define the Greek word as “ruler” or “one who stands over another.”⁹² Submission and headship do not conflict because of the existence of harmony. Moule argues, “St. Paul’s last precious sentence has uttered the far reaching precept of mutual submission—the natural attitude of will to will where both have been taken in hand by the grace which dethrones self-will to install the Lord.”⁹³

The nature of headship as authority over is not about domination but sacrificial love (Eph 5:25). Just as Christ was willing to give himself up for the wellbeing of the church, so also must the husband be willing to expend himself for the wellbeing of his wife. He does so under the headship of Christ. As Christ led in sacrificial service, so also must the man lead in loving service to the wife (Phil 2:8-9; Matt 20:26, 23:11; Mark 9:35, 10:43). The husband wants the best for his wife. This is submission at a deep level (1 Cor 13:4-7).

The function of headship is to minister to the needs of the family with unconditional love, *agape*. Just as Jesus set the church apart, provides and protects it, so a man must lavish love on his wife that issues in protection, provision, and care (Eph 5:26-29). Headship is by no way an easy task; however, the aid of the Holy Spirit, that brought practical and internal cohesion, helps husbands function effectively in their role. Headship

⁹¹ Samuel Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1992), 138.

⁹² Heinrich Schlier, “Kephale,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 3:675.

⁹³ Moule, *Ephesian Studies*, 201.

and submission can only exist in a context of harmony. Paul says, “After all no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body” (Eph 5:29-30).

The reference to creation in Ephesians 5:31 shows the interest of the apostle in harmony. Paul says, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh” (Gen 2:24). The reference of Genesis 2:24 brings to mind the paradise of God where once perfect harmony existed (Gen 1:31). At such time functional headship and functional submission persisted.

The intent of the command for the man to leave, *kataleipsei*, father and mother is for the deepening of harmony.⁹⁴ It means to forsake, abandon, or leave behind (Ruth 1:16; Isa 54:6,7; Matt 4:13; Luke 5:28; John 8:9). The act of leaving results in clinging to one another. The Greek word used for “cleave” is *proskollethesetai*, which means to glue or cement two objects together.⁹⁵ The context supports the sense of people joined together (Luke 15:15; Acts 5:13; Acts 10:28; 1 Cor 6:16). Both leave and cleave are in the future passive indicative, which give the sense of being joined to after leaving. Cleaving results in one flesh.

Here is a mystery that two shall become one flesh. Sproul points out, “The union does not annul or annihilate individual personalities.”⁹⁶ Two distinct personalities blend together in new union, each affecting the other but not destroying any. When two come together in marriage they are likened to Christ and his church (Eph 5:32, 33). Such harmony is the context for submission and headship.

⁹⁴ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 775.

⁹⁵ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 772.

⁹⁶ Sproul, *The Purpose of God: Ephesians*, 151.

Marital harmony is needed for spiritual leadership. The absence of marital harmony leads to parental disharmony, which counters any intention to carry out faith development in the home.

Conclusion

The primary place for faith replication is the home. This truth has been established by the divine call for parents to pass on faith to their children. Given the lack of clarity and confidence on the part of the parents, the church equips parents for the work of faith development in the home. This partnership is sustained by unity, diversity of gifts and maturity. As a climate of mentorship, the church sets the tone for spiritual leadership by providing enlightenment and encouragement in worship. In the home, where faith replication takes place, there has to be harmony between husband and wife. The out growth from harmony is mutual submission. Both agree to function in their roles and provide spiritual leadership.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, HISTORICAL AND
DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES RELATED
TO SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

While the theological and exegetical points established the essential biblical structure that support the divine call for parents to be spiritual leaders in their homes, it does not necessarily follow that parents will embrace the task. Parents must first fall in love with the biblical vision.¹ For parents to fall in love with a biblical vision, they need to be engaged and equipped. Timothy Paul Jones discovered that many parents have not been discipled by *their* parents and exclaimed, “Yet because most parents in our churches were never discipled by their own parents, these parents did not naturally arrive at Biblical conclusions about their responsibilities.”² This deficit exposes the necessity for parents to be engaged and equipped in spiritual leadership.

Although extra-biblical sources and ideas will be cited, the content of this chapter has its root in biblical teaching. The extra-biblical literature will give insights on the application of scripture.

This chapter will address theoretical, practical, historical, and developmental elements related to engaging and equipping parents for the task of faith development in a partnership that should exist between the church and the home. The intention is to arrive at the goal God designed for parents. At the same time, parents need gifted people from the church to lead them in the attainment of the desired result (Eph 4: 11-12). Those who

¹ Jay Strother, “Family Equipping Ministry,” in *Perspective on Family Ministry: 3 Views*, ed. Timothy Paul Jones (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 154. Strother points out that Andy Stanley talks about falling in love with a biblical vision and not a method.

² Strother, “Family Equipping Ministry,” 148.

know the way must show the way. Further, only spiritual leaders can equip parents to be spiritual leaders. Therefore, they must know where God wants people to be and then take the initiative to use God's method to get them there by relying on God's power.³

A sober analysis of the preceding statement engenders four essentials that will be explained in this chapter. First, the goal is to engage and equip parents to love God, know His mandate, and be obedient to His directives to model the faith they want their children to possess. This aim is where God wants his people to be. Second, the method or strategy is to equip parents with knowledge of spiritual parenting to emphasize the religious influence they possess to pass on faith to their children. Third, the framework is a family-church partnership. The necessity exists to equip parents with knowledge about biblical family and the concomitant history of family-church partnership to become aware of pitfalls and the importance of reliance on God. Fourth, the vision is discipleship of the whole person. The need exists to equip parents with a working knowledge of developmental theory to understand that relationship with God is not just cognitive, and that children have the capacity to have a relationship with God even though they are not adults.

Parents may be at different levels on the continuum that leads to the goal. For instance, all parents will not see the biblical vision and get to biblical conclusions at the same time. Therefore, those who equip parents must lead with attentiveness and sensitivity to arrive at the goal of loving God and others.

The Goal of Spiritual Leadership

The church engages and equips parents to raise children who will love God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength (Mark 12:28-34).⁴ This is the noble goal of

³ John Piper, *The Marks of a Spiritual Leader* (Minneapolis: Desiring God, 2014).

⁴ Strother, "Family Equipping Ministry," 145. Strother declares the goal of parenting in a partnership between parents and the church.

spiritual leadership. Without a doubt this goal stands in contradistinction to the aims of many children and parents. For instance, after doing in-depth interviews with 250 American teenagers about their religious and spiritual lives in 2005, Christian Smith and Melinda Denton discovered among them a self-oriented living termed Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.⁵ For the teenagers, God is distant, and the goal of life is to feel good and be happy.

Accordingly, a 2009 Lifeway Research Survey revealed that parents are no different from their children. Parents want their children to become happy adults.⁶ When Jones decided to engage parents in matters of spiritual development of their children, he appears shocked to discover that the parents' purpose for their children was happiness: "As it turned out, most parents did have a purpose for their children's lives, but this purpose was not maturity in Jesus Christ. Their purpose was for their children to be happy."⁷

Overall, the cultural and secular purpose have slid to the frightening reality known as the rise of the "nones"⁸ and a growing secularism that operates without any reference to a Transcendent God.⁹ This phenomenon is a significant cultural challenge

⁵ Christian Smith and Melinda Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 162-63.

⁶ Rodney Wilson, Shelma Wilson, and Scott McConnell, *The Parent Adventure: Preparing Your Children for a Lifetime with God* (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 117, 224. Jay Strother, "Making the Transition to Family-Equipping Ministry," in *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*, ed. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 254.

⁷ Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 147.

⁸ "Nones" are young millennials who, when polled on their religious affiliation, offer an overwhelming response of "none." See James Emery White, *The Rise of the Nones: Understanding and Reaching the Religiously Unaffiliated* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 16-17.

⁹ James Emery White, *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 20-24.

facing the church today. Almost 25 percent of Americans under twenty-five years old, when polled about religious identity, say they have none.¹⁰ The demographic is continuing to grow. Consequently, engaging and equipping parents to raise children to love God is indispensable in an effort to roll back the tide of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.

Loving God

The church must first call parents to raise their children to love God and then equip them to do so through teaching. Jesus first called the twelve men who were busy with secular aims and then he taught them the way of love (Matt 4:18-21). They needed to renounce secular callings and enter fellowships that made them aware of love.¹¹ The teaching of love must first expose parents to be aware of God's love. Parents need this awareness if they are going to train their children to love God. However, before this can occur, they must be called to abandon secular aims and enter the partnership to come to biblical conclusions. Just as Jesus called twelve men and clearly pointed out that he will make them fishers of men, so must the church call parents and state clearly that they will be taught to be lovers of God (2 Tim 3: 1-5). Consequently, the church's influence on children will be positive and lasting when parents are engaged and equipped.

The need exists for the teaching of love, particularly to parents. The estrangement between the purpose of parents for their children and that of the church indicate that the culture of success in the social and academic realm is more compelling to parents than what the church offers. The church can no longer disengage. Parents must be engaged by an intentional call and teaching to raise their children to love God.

Love is a behavior modifier.¹² The life-changing propensity of love moved

¹⁰ White, *Meet Generation Z*, 24.

¹¹ A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1971), 11.

¹² Leo F. Buscaglia, *Living, Loving & Learning* (Toronto: Ballantine Books, 1982), 33.

Thomas á Kempis to optimistically declare, “The love of Jesus is noble, and inspires us to great deeds; it moves us always to desire perfection. Love aspires to high things, and is held back by nothing base. Love longs to be free, a stranger to every worldly desire, lest its inner vision become dim, and lest worldly self-interest hinder it or ill-fortune cast it down.”¹³ When parents become exposed to such magnificent, incomparable, and life-changing love of God, their aim will be to love God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength, and not be consumed by worldly interests (Mark 12:28-31).

Such a noble goal will not be traded for social and cultural happiness. However, parents must be called and taught this subject of love. Just as a child will trust his parents due to the lavishing of parental care and love, so also will parents become trusting as they become aware of God’s life changing love (1 John 4:19). Hence, they will be passionate about seeing the love of God inculcated in the lives of their children, which requires knowing the mandate of Scripture.

Knowing the Mandate

It cannot be assumed that parents know what the mandate requires. They must be taught to raise children who will love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12: 28-31). While Jesus urged his disciples to love one another with *agape* love, it was clear that this love could not be found in the human heart (John 15:12; 5:42).

Nevertheless, Jesus desired to saturate the human heart with the love of God by his Spirit (Rom 5:5). Given the human condition, parents must be exposed to four requirements.

The physical expression of love. Karen Flowers and Ronald Flowers decry the human condition:

What we know is that sin has ravaged the human heart, leaving it devoid of love. The experiences of life leave indelible marks on people. Many spend their lifetime

¹³ Thomas á Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (London: Penguin Group, 1952), 97.

recovering and trying to cope. We know that God intends for mothers and fathers to provide children with physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual nurturance. They need tangible love—touching, holding, caressing, a soothing caring voice of understanding, expressions of love and protection, security and a sense of belonging. In a very real sense when this kind of caring is missing or minimal in childhood, individuals face life with certain defects.¹⁴

The expression of love is indispensable to faith development and such love cannot exist without expression. Essentially, without love children will not have faith (John 13:34-35; Rom 5:7-8; John 15:13).

The devastating consequences of disregarding God and the demeaning of human beings is at stake. Leo F. Buscaglia calls this condition alienation, and writes,

It's understandable how out of this generation, how out of our time, a philosophy like early existentialism developed and that is our tremendous alienation. Am I real? Do I exist? Nobody touches me. I speak to people and they don't hear me. They are looking over my shoulder to see who else is there. Nobody looks me in the eye anymore, I'm alone and I'm dying of loneliness.¹⁵

Parents must be taught the practical expression of God's love in the parent-child relationship. Knowing the practical expression of God's love is necessary for their spiritual growth and their children's spiritual growth.

One cannot gainsay that the teaching includes the practical expression of love to build relationship (John 15:15). Ross Campbell states, "The more a parent makes eye contact with his or her child as a means of expressing their love, the more a child is nourished with love and the fuller is his emotional tank."¹⁶ In regard to teenagers, Campbell explains, "Appropriate and consistent physical contact is a vital way to give your teenager that feeling of conviction that you truly care about him."¹⁷ The motivation for the physical expression of love is the love of God in the heart. By experiencing

¹⁴ Karen Flowers and Ronald Flowers, *The Family: A School of Human Relations* (Doral, FL: Inter-American Division Publishing, 2009), 68.

¹⁵ Buscaglia, *Living, Loving and Learning*, 33.

¹⁶ Ross Campbell, *How to Really Love Your Teenager* (Chicago: Victor Books, 1981), 39.

¹⁷ Campbell, *How to Really Love Your Teenager*, 48, 49.

practical love, children become open to the love of God.

Boundaries or limits to love (Matt 20:22-24; Luke 9: 52-56). There is no place for coaxing and bribes to get children to comply with doing what is right. Accordingly, Ellen White states, “It is not love but sentimentalism that palterers with wrongdoing, seeks by coaxing or bribes to secure compliance, and finally accepts some substitute in place of the thing required.”¹⁸ Love never supports wrongdoing (1 Cor 13).

Responsibility in love. Parents have primary responsibility for spiritual care-giving to their children. Amidst the throes of discussion about family decline, parents still rank as the primary social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of their children.¹⁹ Parents cannot leave their sacred responsibility to professionals.

Lessons of responsibility are learned from generation to generation. Jones points out, “In God’s design, your children and mine will raise children who will in turn beget more children. How we mold our children’s souls while they reside in our households will shape the lives of children who have yet to draw their first grasp of air (Ps. 78: 6-7).”²⁰

Sacrifice in love. The death of Jesus on the cross is the very embodiment of love (John 15:13). Sacrifice requires that the best energies are put in the nurturing of children’s spiritual lives and not the compelling culture of material and academic success. Ultimately, the questions of faith imply sacrifice. Will one’s children have faith? Will they live out that faith in service and compassion to others?²¹ Such sacrifice must be motivated by love.

¹⁸ Ellen G. White, *Education* (Nampa, IN: Pacific Press, 1952), 290.

¹⁹ Smith, *Soul Searching*, 261.

²⁰ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 102.

²¹ Donald Ratcliff, *Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives Research and Applications* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2004), 42. Marcia J. Bunge, “A More Vibrant Theology of Children,” in *Christian Reflection*, ed. Bob Kruschwitz, issue 8 (Waco, TX:

While love is the motivation for sacrifice, contentment is the essence of sacrifice. Although it requires sacrifice to do what God says, the attitude of contentment makes it possible. Paul writes, “But Godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim 6:6). One obeys God freely when he has an attitude to please and accepts the providential work of God.”²²

According to J. I. Packer, “Contentment is essentially a matter of accepting from God’s hand what he sends because we know that He is good and therefore it is good.”²³ Deeply rooted in knowing the mandate is love for God that leads to unconditional obedience in a state of contentment. Nevertheless, obedience must not degenerate into legalism.

Obedience

To avoid legalism, obedience must be gospel-oriented. Drawing from *A Study of Generations*, researchers explain the difference between gospel-oriented and law-oriented obedience. Law-oriented parents may talk the talk and even grudgingly appear to walk the walk, but they possess no personal knowledge of the life-redeeming gospel.²⁴ In contrast, gospel-oriented parents put their whole selves—heart and knowledge—in the parenting enterprise; law-oriented parents fall short. Parents need to know whole-hearted

The Center of Christian Ethics at Baylor University, 2003), 11-19. Issue 8 provides historical perspectives of children in church and resources for spiritual formation and a theology of childhood today.

²² Richard A. Swenson, *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992), 186-87.

²³ James Innell Packer, “The Secret of Contentment” (chapel address, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL, February 27, 1984).

²⁴ Merton P. Strommen and Richard A. Hardel, *Passing on the Faith: A Radical New Model for Youth and Family Ministry* (Winona, MN: Saint Mary’s Press, 2000), 84. Search Institute in *A Study of Generations* found out among Lutherans ages 15 to 65 that religious commitments are the strongest indicators of how people will live, also gospel-oriented teaching creates close relationship with God. Merton P. Strommen, *A Study of Generations* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972), 100-115.

obedience motivated by a personal love for God that ensues in the passing on of beliefs and values. Strommen and Hardel confirm, “The research consistently found a high correlation between people’s identity with a personal God and their sense of moral responsibility. The two aspects of faith and life interrelate powerfully; they encourage each other.”²⁵

A personal relationship with God is critical for the forming and sustaining of faith. Moreover, the example of parents provides powerful and effective mentorship for children. The sharing of knowledge and living a gospel-oriented life is a great vehicle for the passing on of faith. Margret Krych writes, “Children need to see your whole-person respond to God’s action in Christ; not only your words but also your attitudes, your behavior, your participation in worship, your enthusiasm in witnessing. Children quickly sense where there is a depth of quiet faith and the serenity that comes from a life of prayer and meditation on Scripture.”²⁶ When the church engages and equips parents to love God, know His mandate, and be obedient to His directives; then a strategy for spiritual leadership can be presented. This strategy is spiritual parenting.

A Strategy for Spiritual Leadership

Parents possess great influence to pass on gospel-oriented faith to their children. However, they need help to know and exert this reality. Dolores Curran articulates the significance of parents: “We need to gather together the impressive data showing that the parent is the primary determinant of a person’s faith, and present it over and over in every way possible until convince parents of its validity.”²⁷ While presenting the compelling data

²⁵ Strommen and Hardel, *Passing on the Faith*, 79. Strommen elaborates in Merton P. Strommen, *Five Cries of Youth: Loneliness, Family Trouble, Outrage, Closed Minds, Joy* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), 133-35.

²⁶ Margaret Krych, *Teaching the Gospel Today* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987), 143-44.

²⁷ Dolores Curran, *Family Ministry* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1980), 17.

over and over can be convincing, a strategy is needed for spiritual formation. People can be convinced and still disregard obedience. Parrett and Kang explain the ultimate concern of information: “Information is vital, when properly ingested for the glory of God, because of the role it plays in the formation of believers—individually and corporately—in Christlikeness.”²⁸ The strategy to bring about obedience and Christlikeness cannot be physical but spiritual. In other words, church leaders and parents have to now look at parenting in spiritual terms.

Just as Henry F. Cope made the case that the restoration of family requires persons to see family in religious terms, so also faith development of children requires parents to see parenting in spiritual terms²⁹—there has to be a spiritual purpose. The purpose has been established already in the treatment of the goal. The strategy will emphasize the religious influence that parents possess and their capacity to pass on faith that achieves biblical aims.

Religious Influence

Parents must know the religious influence they possess. The tendency of parents to give in to the pressure of a compelling culture of happiness and social attainment, as well as a willingness to outsource spiritual caregiving to professionals, have resulted in parents becoming oblivious to the religious influence they possess. Church leaders must equip parents to be better at spiritual parenting. More than parenting classes are needed. Parrett and Kang point out, “We need to provide equipping for living as followers of Jesus in every area of life. In other words we need to help them become more obedient

²⁸ Gary A. Parrett and Steve Kang, *Teaching the Faith, Forming the Faithful: A Biblical Vision for Education in the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2009), 151.

²⁹ Henry F. Cope, *Religious Education in the Family* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1915), 1-3.

disciples of Jesus Christ.”³⁰ In addition, they state, “One of the greatest ways to help parents be better parents is simply to help them grow in their own faith and walk. In other words encouraging them to grow as children of God will be of great help to them as they seek to encourage their children.”³¹

Helping parents grow in faith prepares them to be spiritual parents. The primary way to do so is for church leaders to model spiritual parenting. Essentially, church leaders must show the way. Parrett and Kang continue, “This is a call to church leaders—pastors, elders, deacons and their families—to show the way. It is not enough to wag a finger at parents behind a pulpit or a lectern, chiding them for not doing their jobs well. Pastors and other church leaders who are parents themselves must provide role models for other parents in the congregation.”³² Modeling reinforces information with authenticity.

The principals involved cannot simply talk the talk but must be sterling examples of spiritual parenting. Jones provides counsel that is apropos for all equippers: “You can’t lead a family ministry with any degree of integrity unless you become a family minister in your own household. *Be* before you *do*. A flurry of activities to change the church organization will not be effective.”³³ In like manner, equipping parents with knowledge to be spiritual parents will only be effective when church leaders practice what they teach (Titus 1:6; 1 Tim 3:4-5,8). Jones continues, “It is a misplaced perspective that fails to see the home as the Ministry leader’s first context for ministry. As a result, Ministry leaders try to do ministry in their churches and communities without first becoming ministers in their own households.”³⁴ Accordingly, Peter R. Schemm, Jr., posits, “It is by

³⁰ Parrett and Kang, *Teaching the Faith*, 166.

³¹ Parrett and Kang, *Teaching the Faith*, 162.

³² Parrett and Kang, *Teaching the Faith*, 162-63.

³³ Jones, *Family Field Guide*, 138.

³⁴ Parrett and Kang, *Teaching the Faith*, 145.

God’s design, then, that learning and living the Gospel at home brings a depth to spiritual formation that is otherwise unlikely if not impossible.”³⁵ When this understanding becomes true for church leaders it will have productive impact on parents. As such parents will discover their religious influence to pass on faith in spiritual parenting.

Spiritual Parenting and Faith Transmission

The goal informs spiritual parenting. The goal of spiritual parenting is to love God with all one’s heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30-31). This goal is spiritual, but it affects every other domain of one’s life. Barna points out, “Every dimension of a person’s personal life hinges on his or her moral and spiritual condition.”³⁶ Focusing on spiritual parenting is a valuable strategy for the passing on of faith. Michelle Anthony explains spiritual parenting: “Spiritual parenting is not perfect parenting—it’s parenting from a spiritual perspective with eternity in mind. It’s a way of parenting that declares, ‘I want to parent the child or children that God gave me in such a way that I first honor God, and then second, create the best environment to put my children in the path of the Divine.’”³⁷ Having modeled how to grow in faith, church leaders essentially show what honoring God looks like. This modeling must be followed by putting children in the path that leads to God. God is the parents’ greatest helper.

When parents honor God they become living models of how children should live their lives. In a real sense, they actually strengthen parental control. While congregations must help parents adopt the democratic process that includes defining rules

³⁵ Peter R. Schemm, Jr., “Habits of a Gospel-Centered Household,” in Stinson and Jones, *Trained in the Fear of God*, 191.

³⁶ George Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2003), 12.

³⁷ Michelle Anthony, *Spiritual Parenting: An Awakening for Today’s Family* (Colorado Springs: David Cook, 2010), 12.

and boundaries, defining and applying clear consequences for breaking rules, handling conflict in a positive way, and use of good judgment to take a flexible stance, the church most importantly must expose parents to honoring God in their homes.³⁸ In as much as the democratic approach leads children to do their best to reach expectations and are likely to have positive attitude to God, church, and home, placing children in the path of the Divine has a more lasting effect because children fall in love with Jesus and thus faith is passed on.³⁹

Parents no longer need to feel incapable because they have supernatural help.

Michael Anthony and Michelle Anthony elaborate,

Faith is supernatural. Parents are not capable of creating it in their children. It takes supernatural transformation. Just as belief and trust that produce faith in a person's life are a supernatural transaction, the behavior and action that align with faith need to flow supernaturally. When we try to manufacture this or impose it on others, they become resistant or rebellious.⁴⁰

As children are placed in the path of God they will fall in love with Jesus. Essentially, falling in love with Jesus is the goal. The Holy Spirit will make the actions of children correspond to their beliefs. He is the one who causes the process of their hearts to be more and more like Jesus.⁴¹

Spiritual parenting requires divine and human effort. On the one hand, the Holy Spirit does the supernatural work; on the other hand, parents must create room for the Holy Spirit to work. Michelle Anthony contends, "If we believe that the Holy Spirit is

³⁸ Strommen and Hardel, *Passing on the Faith*, 61.

³⁹ V. Bailey Gillespie, "Valuegenesis Report" (Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1994), 5, 127. All students in Seventh-Day Adventists parochial schools, from grades 6 to 12, engaged nationally in a random stratified sample of all students. Over 11,000 youths participated.

⁴⁰ Michael Anthony and Michelle Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries* (Nashville: B & H, 2011), 186.

⁴¹ Vernie Schorr, *Compass: A Guide for Character and Spiritual Formation in Children* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2008), 140.

God's chosen teacher in our children's hearts and that he is the one who causes spiritual growth when and as he chooses, then we must be willing to cultivate environments for Him to do his work."⁴² Although she provided a relevant approach to create the environments, parents may need to ponder strategic questions as they engage in every aspect of spiritual parenting.

Just as Strother advances the necessity of strategic questions in an effort to make every church program family equipping,⁴³ so also must parents ask strategic questions that focus their attention on spiritual parenting. Consequently, parents will not give in to the compelling social and cultural view of parenting. Three strategic questions focus parents on spiritual parenting.

First, why are children here? This question is about calling, purpose, and meaning. Children are here to know God and love him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:29-31; Eph 1: 17-18). To communicate knowing and loving God, parents need to be equipped with the truth in God's Word, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and prayer (John 17:17; 1 Cor 15:1-4; Luke 18:1-8). Although these are essential for a relationship with God, they have become casualties in a post- modern culture. Parents must communicate the truth of God's Word, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and a prayer life to their children (Rom 10:5). Beyond Bible texts and facts memorization, parents and children must know God in a love relationship (John 5:39). Anthony and Anthony argue, "Knowing God must always be the center of all we do; otherwise our children will know it is not authentic."⁴⁴ This can also be said for loving God.

⁴² Anthony, *Spiritual Parenting*, 38.

⁴³ Strother, "Family-Equipping Ministry," 151. Strother encourages strategic questions for the purpose of staying focused on family ministry.

⁴⁴ Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries*, 203.

Second, how did children get here? This question of origin fits in a big story. The story is a spiritual one. It has to be part of the parenting approach or children will never have faith. Westerhoff agrees by stating, “At the heart of our faith is a story. Unless the story is known, understood, owned and lived out we and our children will not have faith”⁴⁵ The grand story of Redemption, stretching from creation, fall, covenants, incarnation, the cross, the resurrection, the high priestly ministry of Christ, and the second advent is not known by many parents. The church can serve a valuable catalyst in equipping parents with the entire narrative. This story is bigger than personal reproductive account. Hence, parents and children realize that they are part of something bigger than themselves. The faith of children is further developed in an inclusive community that proclaims the big story. A community that demonstrates God’s love makes the story more telling on the faith of children. Catherine Stonehouse states, “The faith of children is most likely to grow when they have the opportunity to associate with adults who are growing persons who know and love God. The child’s faith is inspired when he or she belongs to an inclusive community that seeks to live out God’s love.”⁴⁶

Third, who are children? Children are image bearers (Gen 1: 26-28). Like parents, their identity is tied to being created in the image of God.⁴⁷ Estep and Kim posit, “We are the bearers of God’s image, the *imago Dei*. This is the quintessential distinction of humanity within God’s creation.”⁴⁸ The task of parenting is sacred. Parenting must be done in reference to the Transcendent God. While developing a complex view of children

⁴⁵ John H. Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (New York: Morehouse, 2012), 32.

⁴⁶ Catherine Stonehouse, *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a Life of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 37.

⁴⁷ James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim, *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development* (Nashville: B & H, 2010), 15.

⁴⁸ Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 11.

is vital (Ps 127:3, Ps 51:5; Deut 6: 5-8; Gen 1:27; Matt 18:2-5),⁴⁹ the predominant perspective must be the *imago Dei*. Nancy Pearcey provides clarity:

The Bible does not begin with the fall but Creation: Our value and dignity are rooted in the fact that we are created in the image of God, with the high calling of being his representatives on earth. In fact it is only because humans have such high value that sin is so tragic. In redemption, He restores us to the high dignity originally endowed at Creation recovering our true identity and renewing the image of God in us.⁵⁰

When parents ask these strategic questions, the answers will lead to biblical conclusions. Thus, they will see parenting in spiritual terms. Moreover, there will be greater confidence on the part of parents to exude spiritual influence on their children with the support of church leaders. The faith of children will grow as spaces are created for the Holy Spirit to work and parents model their growing love for God. The strategy flourishes in a biblical and historical frame work.

A Biblical and Historical Framework

While the elevation of Scripture is paramount in the spiritual formation of parents and children, the church has sought to understand the Word throughout the centuries (Matt 15: 5- 9).⁵¹ God’s revelation in Scripture and the church’s response in history provide a framework that equips parents with knowledge of the biblical family and the history of family-church partnerships so that parents can avoid pitfalls and rely on God.

The disciple-maker has to listen to Scripture and the ancestors. Just as sure as reflection is the work of theologians, it is also the responsibility of disciple- makers. Ultimately, the authority is God. Kelly Kopic posits, “This means that while we respect and listen to our ancestors, we do not accord their testimony the same weight as that of

⁴⁹ Ratcliff, *Children’s Spirituality*, 44-46.

⁵⁰ Nancey Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 87.

⁵¹ Kelly M. Kopic, *A Little Book for New Theologians: Why and How to Study Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2012), 93.

the prophets and apostles as contained in scripture.”⁵² Knowledge of Scripture and history relative to church and home partnership in the work of discipleship must be presented for reflection. Then a model of family ministry that engages parents as the primary disciple-makers of their children must be chosen and communicated in the home and the church.

Knowledge of Scripture and History

Ultimately, communicating a family model is about changing the perspective of parents to embrace biblical conclusions. Kenneath Boa writes, “There is no permanent change without a change in perspective, since our perspective, shapes our priorities and our priorities shape our practice.”⁵³ Change in perspective requires thinking through issues. If parents are to adequately think through the issues of Scripture and history relative to spiritual leadership, then the church must present a body of material for reflection that will inform habits of faith. The issue of authority is most important. Thinking about God as ultimate authority is indispensable in a culture that lives without reference to God.

Thinking about God in Scripture and history in the context of church-home partnership and discipleship is verily a theological reflection. Kopic posits,

Theological reflection is a way of examining our praise, prayers, words and worship with the goal of making sure they conform to God alone. Every age has its own idols, its own distortions that twist and pervert how we view God, ourselves and the world. . . . We aim not to escape our cultures, however, but to recognize that God calls us to respond faithfully to him in our place and time, whatever our social and philosophical climate.⁵⁴

Parents and the church have to be faithful to God regardless of deviant social and cultural trends. Social status and the culture of happiness must not be allowed to supplant maturity

⁵² Kopic, *A Little Book for New Theologians*, 100.

⁵³ Kenneath Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 379.

⁵⁴ Kopic, *A Little Book for New Theologians*, 18.

in Christ.

God's mandate for faith transmission has been buried under the rubble of cultural happiness and social advancement. The role of the church is to unearth what God has prescribed in Scripture and present it to parents in a deliberate way for reflection. The intention is to see parents practice spiritual leadership in their homes and walk in the way of the Lord. According to Packer and Parrett, "It is not knowledge as abstraction as is sought through faith training. It is, rather, that God's people will actually walk in the way of the Lord."⁵⁵ Notwithstanding the lack luster view of faith training, they make a valuable point. Further, parents will show a reliance on God and not the prevailing social and cultural aims. Scripture is the primary source for the discovery for home-church partnership as a framework for replication of faith.

Scripture

In the Old Testament, relationships defined individuals. According to Anthony and Anthony, relationships moved from closest to most distant relatives; however, relationships, not individuals, held sway.⁵⁶ Family was not seen as husband, wife, and children; the Old Testament model of family includes the nuclear family and extended family—household, tribe, and clan.⁵⁷

Hence, the discipleship of children took place in households with the support of the larger community or extended family. Parents occupy an important position as the primary influencers of their children. The engagement between the spiritual community and the households made faith replication unavoidable.

Spiritual leadership requires a love for God by parents that translate into an

⁵⁵ J. I. Packer and Gary A. Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 37.

⁵⁶ Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries*, 68.

⁵⁷ Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries*, 68.

everyday life of moral and spiritual lifestyle (Deut 6:4-9). The parents passed on to children what they possess—a relationship with God. Parents understood that God wanted to be remembered for all generations, so faith replication was indispensable. Intentional teaching, memorization, practical life lessons, religious meetings, and rituals reinforced transformational faith. Children experienced discipleship not just with their parents but other generations as well. Generations that were discipled reached out to share faith and knowledge with other generations (Gen 12:3; Prov 6:23; Pss 128, 144, 146:9, 78:2-8; Exod 12: 26-27, 13:8,14, 22: 21-24; Deut 6: 4-9, 31:12; Lev 19: 32; Ezek 16: 2-21; Ruth 2:14-16).

The partnership between the household and spiritual community form the framework for the disciple-making process. Strommen and Hardel capture God’s intended framework:

Parents ignite faith in the lives of their children by making it an affair of the heart. And they look to the congregation for help in making this faith a commitment of the mind. Through a congregation’s program of Christian education young people’s minds are helped to understand what their hearts have come to know in the home—namely that Jesus loves them, cares for them, and is their savior and friend.⁵⁸

The New Testament continues with the same framework. There is nexus between the New Testament model of family discipleship and the Old Testament model. Much of the details are not repeated as this continuity from the Old Testament to the New Testament is understood (2 Tim 3:15-17). Unquestionably, family relationship in the New Testament resembles that of the Old Testament. This is borne by the similarity of terms *family, household, father, and mother*. Kittel, Friedrich, and Bromiley point out that the Greek word for family (*patria*) can be used broadly for *family house, tribe, race, nation* or more specifically the *family tree*.⁵⁹ Hence, the terms in the New Testament support

⁵⁸ Strommen and Hardel, *Passing on the Faith*, 104.

⁵⁹ G. Kittel, G. Friedrich, and G. W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 815, cited in Michael S. Lawson, *A Theology for Family Ministries* (Nashville: B & H, 2011), 91.

family structure in the Old Testament, which include parent-child relationship, marital relationship, and intergenerational relationship in a church-home partnership (Luke 2:4, 8:21; Acts 3:25, 10:7,24, 16:15, 31-34; Eph 5:18,22-32, 6:1-4; Titus 2:1-10; Jas 1:27; Heb 12:11-13).

History

History has a reservoir of resources that church leaders can use to equip parents to be disciple-makers of their children. The goal of spiritual leadership is a love relationship with God that passes from one generation to the next. God has to be explained to every generation for this to happen. Therefore, history is an important resource in the framework.

History is a lesson book that if investigated will point out pitfalls and show the way to the faith life. Explaining the value of history, Sittser points out,

History can be a valuable resource for us, especially in the spiritual life, for it provides examples of how believers who lived in other times and places understood what it means to seek, know and experienced God, which captures the essential meaning of spirituality. . . . It could be by looking back we will be able to look ahead and set a new course for our lives. The Holy Spirit will use the knowledge of history to send us on a journey that could lead us into the depths of God.⁶⁰

According to Paul Tillich, “There is a depth in God.”⁶¹ He asked, “Why have men always asked for truth? Is it because they have been disappointed with the surfaces, and have known that the truth that does not disappoint dwells below the surfaces in the depth?”⁶² Social status and cultural happiness constitute the surface while loving God forms the depth. The depth of history can lead to the depth of God.

How does the church use history to teach a framework that equips parents to be faith trainers of their children? The church must teach it to parents in the context of

⁶⁰ Gerald L. Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries* (Chicago: IVP, 2007), 18-19.

⁶¹ Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundation* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1948), 55.

⁶² Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundation*, 53.

biblical obligations and conclusions. Church-home partnership is a biblical obligation. Parents need knowledge of history to arrive at biblical conclusions.

On the one hand, the history of the church's ministry to families reveals a lot about the struggle and failure of the church to empower parents to lead in the faith development of children at home. On the other hand, there are successes when the church partners with parents to replicate faith from generation to generation. The strength of history is in its use to replicate faith. Just as one must experience the love of God, know and experience the truth of God, and experience transformative faith to transmit it; similarly, one must know family history to pass it on in the context of biblical obligations for the building of faith. The history shows ups and downs, highs and lows, which makes history a credible lesson book on church-home partnership.

Until the third century AD, families worshipped together in church. The church and its leaders supported parents in their role. Resources like the *Didache* and *Letter to Barnabas* show the primary role of parents in the disciple-making process of their children. Anthony and Anthony write about this period and further point out how church leaders like Polycarp and Chrysostom, the golden tongue preacher, enjoin parents to engage in their primary function in discipleship.⁶³

The emergence of Imperial Rome before the fourth century and the collapse of the Roman empire in the fifth century AD brought along a rupture of the church-home partnership. By the early middle ages, discipleship moved from a home-church partnership to the institutional church. The decline worsened in the later Middle Ages as fathers disavowed spiritual leadership at home due to responsibilities in the feudal system.⁶⁴

⁶³ Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries*, 159.

⁶⁴ Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries*, 160.

The reformers called parents and fathers in particular to reengage in the primary role of spiritual leadership at home. In the church-home partnership, the church encouraged age-organized ministries for the training of children.⁶⁵

The Puritans formulated a clear model for spiritual leadership that required parents to be the spiritual care-givers of their children in the home-church relationship. Family worship was the locus of family discipleship. It included prayers, praises, and reading of scripture. The church continued with aged-organized classes for instructing children. However, Jonathan Edwards strongly admonished families to disciple children in the nurture of the Lord.⁶⁶

The Industrial Revolution dealt a significant blow to the home-church partnership. The first casualty was family worship, as fathers went to factories to work and abandoned their spiritual role in the home. Moreover, children worked in the factories and received no spiritual formation. Although the Sunday school came to the rescue, it took the place of parents as faith trainers of their children, despite its good intention.⁶⁷

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the rise of Associations to help the needy emerged alongside Sunday school societies that trained teachers to educate children. Notably, Family Improvement Societies and Young Peoples Societies developed. Given that fathers were out the house, Family Improvement Societies equipped mothers in child-rearing practice. The home-church partnership remained in decline.⁶⁸

Three modern family ministries models emerged to restore spiritual leadership and the home-church cooperation. However, all the models did not equip parents to be the primary disciple-makers of their children. These family ministry models are A

⁶⁵ Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries*, 160.

⁶⁶ Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries*, 161-62.

⁶⁷ Stinson and Jones, *Trained in the Fear of God*, 145-46.

⁶⁸ Stinson and Jones, *Trained in the Fear of God*, 151-52.

Comprehensive Coordinated Model, Age Segmented Programmatic Model, and An Educational Programmatic Model. In like manner, contemporary models of family ministry have now come age. These are the Family-Based Model, Family-Integrated Model, and Family Equipping Model.⁶⁹

Whereas the Family-Based model and Family Integrated Model address and include parents as the primary faith developers of their children in the home-church partnership, the Family- Equipping model goes a step further. Jones writes, “Put another way, family equipping makes certain that every aspect of ministry with children or youth training, involves, or equips parents as primary disciple- makers in their children’s lives.”⁷⁰ Indeed, this model rises to the level of biblical obligation.

The reflection on history unearths deep lessons that lead parents to a love relationship with God and a willingness to pass on faith to the next generation in partnership with the church. Moreover, the church must see the home as its partner and equip parents to be spiritual leaders in their homes. Undoubtedly, the partnership can be wrenched by materialism and a trek toward social and cultural attainment. Ultimately, faith and spirituality are at stake. Michelle Anthony insists, “Whether we are single or part of a blended or traditional parenting model, the most significant part of our lives—and our children’s lives—is our spiritual health.”⁷¹ Parents need to hear that history is used to arrive at biblical obligations. Biblical obligation has implications for the whole

⁶⁹ Stinson and Jones, *Trained in the Fear of God*, 154-60. In a comprehensive coordinated model for family ministry, resources were provided for parents and church leaders visited the homes to equip parents to be primary disciple makers of their children. The Age Segmented Programmatic Model for Family Ministry took the form of age-organized programs done by professionals. An Educational Programmatic Model for Family Ministry provides family life programs in colleges and universities to help build family relationships. On the other hand, all the contemporary models equip parents to be primary disciple-makers of their children.

⁷⁰ Jones, *Family Field Guide*, 180.

⁷¹ Anthony, *Spiritual Parenting*, 16.

person. The vision for spiritual leadership must address the whole person in the framework borne out from the Bible and history. Such a vision is necessary to arrive at biblical conclusions.

Vision That Includes the Whole Person

Almeda M. Wright used the term *fragmented spirituality* to describe the spiritual lives of young African Americans. She explains, “God is very important and active in certain areas of their lives, but God appears limited or non-existent in other areas.”⁷² In like manner, it appears as though a fragmented spirituality exists when it comes to passing on faith to children. For instance, a relationship with God is seen as just cognitive. Therefore, it is believed that children do not have the capacity for a relationship with God because they are at concrete stage. This kind of fragmented spirituality is influenced by how professionals apply developmental theories. Spiritual fragmentation results in a vision that precludes wholeness, while advancing a view that a relationship with God is only cognitive.

Undoubtedly, the vision of wholeness needs clarity. A lack of clarity simply reinforces the deficiency in confidence among parents to disciple children. Also, it exposes the church’s willingness to support the decision of parents to outsource their primary responsibility to professionals because parents may not be fit for the task. Parents need clarity and not discouragement. The intention at this point is not to explain the stages in the various developmental theories, but to show that viewing people as whole and not fragmented domains enhances the effectiveness of spiritual leadership. By doing this, the limitations can be removed by integrating the theories in the light of the whole person.

Scripture records, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30). The text gives

⁷² Almeda M. Wright, *The Spiritual Lives of Young African Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2.

a vision of the whole person. Every area goes through developmental process. Therefore, an understanding of developmental theory provides clarity on the vision for spiritual development of children. Dana Kennamer Hood explains,

Developmental perspectives, particularly the theories of Jean Piaget and James Fowler, have been very influential in research on children's religious faith and development. These views however, focus primarily on the cognitive abilities of young children. Often emphasized are the universal stages that affect development in that area. These theoretical perspectives have several drawbacks when discussing children's religious and spiritual concepts.⁷³

For instance, the theories tend to advance limitations in the areas of religious and faith development.⁷⁴ Matters of faith are viewed as belonging to adults. The belief exists that children must have a certain cognitive capacity, like adults possess, to experience God. This is ruinous in that children become off limits for matters of faith until they see the world as adults. Notwithstanding that teaching children beyond their cognitive ability should be avoided, cognitive capacity does not make a relationship with God impossible.⁷⁵ Undoubtedly the brain has to develop to a certain level of maturity, but it does not make a relationship with God impossible.

Cognitive ability is not a limitation. In fact, children have the capacity to go beyond what is concrete and real to what is imagined.⁷⁶ Hence, imagination is well suited to form a picture of God in the mind as God Himself is unseen.⁷⁷ To correct this fragmented spirituality, theories should be examined in a manner that show their implications for spiritual formation of children. In this way, developmental theories and the Bible can enjoy a happy friendship in the context of discipleship. As such, the

⁷³ Ratcliff, *Children's Spirituality*, 234.

⁷⁴ Ratcliff, *Children's Spirituality*, 234.

⁷⁵ Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 91.

⁷⁶ Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 234.

⁷⁷ Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 234.

implications for discipleship can be presented to parents in the context of developmental theories.

Implications for Spiritual Formation

First, whereas Piaget sees rationality as the basis of knowledge, Vygotsky sees relational situations as part and parcel of how one thinks and interprets faith.⁷⁸ This relational aspect has implication for faith development. Rational knowledge and relational knowledge go together—they both have an impact on faith development. Estep and Kim state, “It involves a holistic engagement of mind and heart that allows us to anchor theoretical and praxis knowledge to our faith—theoretical knowledge generating the concept-driven faith and praxis knowledge, the experience- driven faith.”⁷⁹ Rational knowledge and relational knowledge build faith. Along with the teaching of faith, children require practical trusting relationships, which cannot be overlooked. Kenda Creasy Dean claims,

Trust depends not on what we comprehend, but on who we love, which is why the church’s initiation rites (for example baptism and confirmation) are freely offered to people who may lack the cognitive ability or emotional ability grasp their significance. What awakes faith is desire, not information, and what awakens desire is a person—and specifically, a person who accepts unconditionally as God accepts us.⁸⁰

Although children may not have the cognitive capacity of adults, social relationships make up for any deficiency. Strommen and Hardel agree by stating, “We know that a child who is loved and cared for develops faith in people. A child’s faith in a caregiver is based on his or her sensory and affective modes of knowing rather than on intellectual knowledge.”⁸¹ Rationality and relational knowing work together. There is no

⁷⁸ Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 84.

⁷⁹ Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 89.

⁸⁰ Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 119.

⁸¹ Strommen and Hardel, *Passing on the Faith*, 75.

fragmentation. Stonehouse acknowledges, “At every stage of development, the way of knowing is critical to an eventual mature knowing and deserves to be highly valued.”⁸² The way of knowing is not just rational.

Second, Erik Erikson’s psychosocial theory explains identity development from the cradle to the grave.⁸³ It shows the correlated interaction between the mind and social experience as one moves to adulthood. Eight stages with specific developmental tasks are explained. On the other hand, James Marcia views identity emergence from adolescence to adulthood.⁸⁴ The theory addresses four identity status: diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement. Its focus is on the status of identity achievement. Kathleen Stassen Berger explains, “That is, adolescents ideally establish their own identities by reconsidering the goals and values set by their parents and culture, then accepting some and rejecting others.”⁸⁵

Identity cannot be separated from spirituality. Mulholland argues for the indispensability of spirituality:

Our spirituality is not an add-on; it is the very essence of our being. We are spiritual beings whose emotions, psychology, body and mind are the incarnation of our spiritual life in the world. We will see that holistic spirituality always takes place in the midst of our emotional, psychological, physical and mental conditions and emerges out of them.⁸⁶

Any discussion of personality must include spirituality. A person is a whole being including mind, strength, soul, and heart (Mark 12:30). In fact, spirituality comprises the

⁸² Stonehouse, *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey*, 91

⁸³ Erickson’s work is about the significance of childhood. Erik Erikson, *Child and Society* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1950).

⁸⁴ Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 107.

⁸⁵ Kathleen Stassen Berger, *The Developing Person through the Life Span* (New York: Worth Publishers, 2001), 436.

⁸⁶ M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL Intervarsity, 2016), 16.

deep nature of one's personality (Eccl 3:11). The fragmentation caused by sin can be remedied by the finished work of Christ on the cross and the Holy Spirit (Rom 5: 12-21). Therefore, conversion is a necessity for personality to receive an imputed spirituality. Such a person must be born of the Spirit through the reconciling work of Jesus Christ.⁸⁷ Parents and church have the opportunity to shape the faith of children at various stages of identity. For instance, when children learn to trust according to the Infancy Stage of psychosocial theory, a foundation is set for the teaching of faith in God.

Third, the theory of moral development by Lawrence Kohlberg addresses moral reasoning instead of moral behavior. How persons reason was a determinant for moral development and not moral conclusions.⁸⁸ Whereas behaviorism views moral behavior as a result of external stimuli, Kohlberg looks at internal reason. The theory defines and describes three stages: preconventional morality, conventional morality and postconventional morality. The aim of moral development is to arrive at postconventional morality. At this stage a person acts on principle and not self-interest.⁸⁹ Carol Gilligan applied Kohlberg's theory to moral development of women. On the matter of principle-centered moral reasoning she believed the ultimate moral reasoning was caring and not justice as in the case of men.⁹⁰

Morality cannot be separated from faith. Defining morality from internal understanding is not enough. Faith has a role to play. Dallas Willard writes, "Moral understanding can, allegedly, be established by careful human thought and experience apart from any historical tradition. But the centuries long attempt to devise a morality

⁸⁷ Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 113.

⁸⁸ Berger, *The Developing Person*, 336.

⁸⁹ Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 128.

⁹⁰ Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 129.

from within merely human resources has now proven itself a failure.”⁹¹ Innate moral process of development falls short of biblical expectation. Faith and faithfulness characterize a moral person (Heb 5: 12-14; Col 12-13; Gal 5:22-23). To separate morality from faith is like trying to separate spirituality from spontaneous expression, liberty, and pleasure.⁹² It is not possible. This is fragmented spirituality.

Moreover, the teaching of faith provides the reason for right actions by answering the question about why. Stonehouse explains, “As children meet Jesus and are introduced to God at work in the Bible stories, they see love and justice in action. A growing love for Jesus causes them to want to please him and to be like him. This gives them a reason to be moral.”⁹³ Real moral decisions are sometimes made in difficult times in favor of Jesus because of love for Jesus.

Fourth, the theory of faith development by James Fowler seeks to rest faith on the foundation of a universal principle as Kohlberg did in his moral development theory. He defined *faith* as “a person’s or group’s way of responding to transcendent value and power as perceived and grasped through forms of cumulative tradition.”⁹⁴ Interestingly, faith is not a result of the supernatural act of God but human nature. In other words, *faith* is a natural response that develops naturally and sequentially through six invariant, hierarchical stages.⁹⁵ This is fragmented spirituality.

However, faith cannot be separated from the supernatural work of the Holy

⁹¹ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 131.

⁹² Lewis Sperry Chafer, *He That Is Spiritual* (Findlay, OH: Durham, 1998), 69-71.

⁹³ Stonehouse, *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey*, 123.

⁹⁴ James W. Fowler, “Faith Development Theory and Postmodern Challenges,” *International Journal of Psychology and Religion* 11, no. 3 (July 2001): 167. See also Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 167.

⁹⁵ Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 167.

Spirit. Estep and Kim posit,

In our model, spiritual growth is not the result of movement through a static series of stages in which the individual discards one perspective and progresses to another. Growth begins with and is driven by personal allegiance to God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—coupled with assent to specific truths about God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ as revealed in Holy Scriptures.⁹⁶

In addition, faith development or the formation of faith is not separated from love, community, and suffering (Eph 3:17-21; 1 Pet 1:6-7; Jas 1:2-6). In fact, faith needs community in order to develop. In community one learns through the experience of life together. John H. Westerhoff posits, “For faith, it is therefore especially important to acknowledge that the most significant and fundamental form of learning is experience.”⁹⁷ The experience is both vertical and horizontal in community.

Clearly a relationship with God is not solely a cognitive matter. A faith and love relationship with God involves the whole person. God relates to children cognitively, socially, spiritually, and morally all at the same time. Relationship is not just about information, but also experience. As it relates to a love relationship with God, what one does not know intellectually he can know by experience. Robert Mulholland writes, “Every relationship has the potential of becoming the place of transforming encounter with God, and every advance in spiritual life has its necessary and immediate corollary in the transformation of our relationships with others.”⁹⁸ Ken Gire exclaims, “But if faith is substance of things unseen, maybe we come closer to spiritual things with our imagination not our intellect.”⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 194.

⁹⁷ Westerhoff, *Will Our Children have Faith?*, 61.

⁹⁸ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 51.

⁹⁹ Ken Gire, *Windows of the Soul* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 57.

Conclusion

The family-church partnership is an indisputable framework for spiritual leadership. Biblical obligations require that the church equip parents to experience a love relationship with God for parents to pass on faith to their children. Also, the church must equip parents to provide spiritual parenting. This strategy requires parents to model their relationship with God and place their children in the path of God so that the children can fall in love with Jesus. Such spiritual leadership thrives in a biblical and historical framework. In addition, the vision to arrive at a love relationship with God requires an understanding that sees God relating to the whole person without any limitations. God relates to children rationally, relationally, morally, spiritually, and socially as a whole persons.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The ministry project was implemented over a period of twenty-one weeks. The first four weeks consisted of organizing the expert panel, securing permission for the use of venue, and access to membership of the SDABC in Nassau, Bahamas. The next eight weeks were allotted to writing sermons. The following three weeks the sermons were given to the expert panel for evaluation. In the next three weeks the sermons were delivered for a sustained period of eight nights. Also, the first and second rounds of spiritual leadership surveys were administered. In the final three weeks, an evaluation of the pre- and post-series was completed using a t-test for dependent samples.

Preparation and Permission

The first four weeks of the project implementation served as a platform upon which future steps rested. During this time, I wrote letters to all pastors to access parents who hold membership in their congregations. I also drafted a letter to parents who were purposefully selected to participate in the project. Further, a communiqué was composed and delivered to every person on the expert panel. A letter was also sent to the chairman of the board of directors of the New Providence Seventh-day Adventist church for the use of their facility.

Week 1

The week of July 7, 2019, I relentlessly pursued access to the membership by sending letters to pastors of congregations in SBCSDA, to gain permission for members to participate in the research project. Letters were followed up with telephone

conversations and Whatsapp texts. The pastors responded in the affirmative to support the research project.

Week 2

During the week of July 14, letters were written and sent to parents who were selected purposefully to participate in the research project. The intention was to have representation from all twenty-five congregations in Nassau. Letters were hand delivered with the first Spiritual Leadership survey. Instructions were given on when and how to fill out the survey. They were instructed to fill out the survey before the beginning of the sermonic series then return it on the night the series commenced.

Week 3

In week 3, July 21-27, an expert panel was organized to evaluate and approve the sermons. The expert panel consisted of two career Christian educators and three pastors. The educators earned master's and doctoral degrees in education. The pastors were seminary trained. The five persons were officially sought by letter to comprise the panel. Further, they were given a sermon evaluation rubric, as well as a sermonic sequence that explained the various steps in the development of the sermon. Moreover, I explained to them the overarching purpose of the research project.

Week 4

From September 15-21, a letter was sent to the chairman of the board of directors of the New Providence Seventh-day Adventist church for permission to use the facilities. I rigorously followed up in order to secure a speedy and positive response. Having obtained permission to use the facility, I went to the church to promote the research project on the weekend.

Preparation of Sermon Series

The second phase of implementation was eight weeks long. These weeks were particularly taxing as I followed a sermonic sequence that required many details. I developed a sermonic sequence based the works of other homeliticians. Much has been written about sermonic sequence.¹ My sermonic sequence involved the following elements: situation, complication, behaviour, cause, consequences, gospel, new start and action. Situation is the context. Complication is any issue that complicates the contexts. Behavior comprises of acts or conduct that need to be changed by the gospel. Cause is anything that gives rise to the behavior that needs to be changed by the gospel. Consequences are the results or effects of the behavior. Gospel is the message of Christ that offers an alternative to the old ways of thinking and living, which is the answer to situation, complication, behavior, cause and consequences. New start is about new ways of living, thinking, and seeing due to the gospel. Action is about practical commitment to a new biblical way of life.

Week 5

During the week of August 4, I prepared the first sermon, titled “The Goal of Spiritual Leadership.” The goal of spiritual leadership, broadly speaking, is the level of spiritual maturity that God expects his people to attain. John Piper states, “I define spiritual leadership as knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God’s method to get them there in reliance on God’s power.”² The sermon began with two passages of scripture, Deuteronomy 6: 4-9 and Mark 12: 28-34. Then I proceeded to the situation or opening context to show that the goal of spiritual leadership in the

¹ Steven P. Vitrano, *How to Preach: A Practical Guide to Better Sermons* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing, 1991), 42-45. Such sermonic design provides flexibility that may not be afforded in the traditional method.

² John Piper, *The Marks of a Spiritual Leader* (Minneapolis: Desiring God, 2014), 1.

home is to love God with the whole being—all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength. God wants parents and children to love God with their whole being.

When parents love God with their whole being, then they are best suited to pass on faith. I made it clear, from the standpoint of developmental theory, that between infancy and childhood, when children are developing physically, socially, intellectually, and spiritually, parents have the unrivalled opportunity to concretely teach and model love for God that ensues in obedience to God.

I pointed out that God wants his name, as well as the identity, root, and purpose of his people to be remembered in every generation. As such, the whole community of Israel is first of all charged with the responsibility of passing on faith to the next generation. In particular, the passing on of faith takes place in the home. To pass on faith to their children, parents must love God with their whole being. Further, in the opening context, or the situation, I posited, “Parents should avoid unbiblical goals of parenting resident in the surrounding culture, which leads to behaviors and consequences that are in opposition to loving God with the whole being.”

In the complication I pointed out that many parents are in love with the world’s goals, which are comprised of material success and personal fulfillment or happiness. When this happens, the situation becomes complicated because the world’s goals contradict God’s goal.

In the section that addressed behaviors I showed the idolatrous acts that have roots in worldly goals. Like Israel who was plagued with the temptation to worship a pantheon of other gods, parents today contend with idolatrous behaviors, such as self-indulgence and individualism (Deut 5: 6-7; 5: 12-15). These post-modern gods set up the consumer over the community and give individual autonomy without accountability. These gods are supposed to help parents attain the goal of success and happiness. Therefore, instead of worshipping God with the whole being, parents worship false gods and pursue unbiblical goals. As it relates to the cause of these behaviors, I proffered that

idolatry in the heart moves parents to pursue unbiblical goals and thus renege on their duty to give their all in exclusive worship to God (Deut 5:7).

The section that deals the consequences highlighted the tragedy of parents and children turning away from God. Further, I expressed how parents contribute to the apostasy of their children. I referenced Ted Tripp for emphasis: “You must equip your children to function in a culture that has abandoned the knowledge of God. If you teach them to use their abilities, aptitudes, talents and intelligence to make their lives better, without reference to God, you turn them away from God.”³

In the gospel section I provided details on how sin in the heart has ignited a rebellion against God. Thus, parents have moved away from God, like Adam and Eve did. However, God has not abandoned parents. He calls parents through the gospel of Jesus Christ to return to biblical goal of parenting (Deut 6:4-5). Parents must abandon secular aims and move toward biblical obligations to partner with God in a covenantal relationship. In similar fashion, as the disciples left all to follow Jesus, so must parents reject unbiblical goals of culture and become followers of God and lovers of God (Matt 4:18-21). Because of the gospel, human beings can have a new start.

In the new start I outlined the readiness to follow the *shema* in covenantal relationship (Deut 6: 5-9). When parents experience the gospel, they will be ready to experience the goal of spiritual leadership. Finally, I crafted the action in the following commitment: “I am willing to enter a love relationship with God and love him with my whole being so I can pass on faith to my children.”

During week 5 I also organized promotional material to remind participants of the research project. The promotions were done through emails and social media.

³ Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2005), 45.

Week 6

During the week of August 11, I wrote the second sermon of the sermonic series, titled, “Striving for the Goal.” The thesis of the sermon was that, without a partnership between fathers and mothers, in power sharing and mutuality to diligently teach the Word to children, negative behaviors with devastating consequences will stand in the way of striving for the goal. In the situation, I set up the context for partnership in the following sentences. Regarding spiritual leadership, most agree readily that the home is the primary place for faith replication. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of who has the sole responsibility in the home for spiritual leadership. Some believe that the spiritual leadership task belongs solely to the fathers; others hold that the role is the responsibility of both father and mother in partnership.

Having pointed that out, I exegeted Deuteronomy 6: 4-9 and showed that the second person pronoun “you” in the imperatives are in the masculine. Whereas English has no masculine and feminine for second person singular, Hebrew has masculine and feminine form. Therefore, many believe that the responsibility rests with fathers only.

In the complication I showed that while the exegesis of the passage is correct, the application can have a broader context to include both fathers and mothers. For instance, the concept of individual identity emerged in our times. In the Old Testament, identity came from household, clan, and tribe. Further, equality and mutuality existed at Creation (Gen 1:26-28). In like manner the commandments allowed for shared authority (Exod 20:12). In fact, in the New Testament, mutuality and equality in spiritual leadership is perpetuated (2 Tim 1:5-6; Acts 18:24-26). The struggle about who is responsible complicates the situation.

In the behaviors I expressed several acts that need to be changed for effective partnership in spiritual leadership to occur in the home. First, gratuitous divorce and disharmony over headship must be abated. Second, wounded memories must be addressed to prevent repeated explosion of rage that devolve into abuse. As such, issues of emotional abuse must be resolved. Third, parents are too invested in their careers and

other relationships and faith development of children are outsourced to the church and school instructional system. This occurs at a stage when parents need to foster trust, security, and bonding. Fourth, entertainment gadgets and the internet are allowed to parent children while parents seek success in the world. Children are weak spiritually and taken over by secular forces. Family worship does not exist. Fifth, young people succumb to risky behaviors as parents drift apart because of work schedules. Sixth, children are allowed an enormous amount of time with television, computer, internet, and social media. These behaviors need to change.

In the cause I pointed out the idols in the heart that originated from the culture. Idols of pleasure, success, personal happiness, and social status have replaced God (Deut 5:7). The consequences exposed how lives are lived without reference to God. Families cave in because of the absence of God in the family. A generation comes up that does not know God (Deut 4: 15-24; Jdgs 2:10).

In the gospel I detailed how God has given fathers and mothers divine resources through Jesus Christ to strive for the goal (2 Pe. 1:3; Rom 6:14; Deut 6:6-8). I pointed out how preoccupation with the Word of God is a necessity for faithful transmission. In fact, the *shema* was given to the Moab generation and not the Horeb generation. The Horeb generation had God's presence in the visible form of a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The Moab generation did not have that kind of theophany. Therefore, the Word of God is indispensable for guidance and is inextricably tied to the presence of God (Ps 119: 105; Deut 5:1-4). God through Jesus has given parents resources to overcome the compelling culture (Matt 22: 34-38; Eph 4:4-6).

I made it clear that a new start requires repentance. Repentance will usher in a new beginning. The action is in the form of a commitment, which states, "I will strive for the goal and give up worldly goals."

Week 7

During the week of August 18, I wrote the third sermon of the series, titled, “Striving for the Goal with Others.” The thesis of the sermon states, The family and the church must unite as partners in spiritual leadership, because that is the only way parents will regain confidence to engage in their children’s spiritual lives.” The foundational scriptural passage came from Ephesians 4:1-16.

In the situation I expressed the idea that unity is strength. In a practical manner, I made it clear that while the primary role of spiritual care giving in the home belongs to parents, the church has a function to equip parents for their primary responsibility. That practical process requires humility, patience, forbearance, and love (Eph 4: 1-4). Further, I espoused how the family is in desperate need of a partnership with the church to eventually realize the goal of spiritual leadership (Deut 6: 4-5; Eph 4: 11-13). I also pointed out the following reality. Many parents agree that they are the primary spiritual leaders of their children. However, the same parents claim that they do not know how to carry out their function. Many confess that the church has done little to help them. Given that reality, I explained that God has given gifted leaders to the church who can equip parents for their primary task of faith development (Eph 4: 11-13). In other words, regardless of the deviant social and cultural trends and the lack of confidence among parents, the church will unearth scripture that is buried under the rubble of cultural happiness and social advancement; then, present it to parents in a deliberate way for reflection and obedience. The intention is to see parents practice spiritual leadership in the home and walk in the way of the Lord.

In the complication I explained the negative impact of specialization. Many believe that only well-trained specialists can educate children in matters of faith. In the behaviors I point out the retreat of parents from their primary responsibility because of a lack of confidence. But at the same time, the church seems to take over the role of the parents. There needs to be a partnership in which the church equips parents for their primary task of spiritual caregiving in the home (Eph 4:12). I showed how the

complication goes against the Bible and social science by quoting Christian Smith and Melinda Denton: “Contrary to misguided cultural stereotypes and frequent parental misconceptions, we believe that the evidence clearly shows that the single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents.”⁴

In the cause I point out that sin in the heart leads to rebellion. The rebellion is aided by the age of specialization—the god of the culture of individualism that has destroyed community and accountability (Deut 6:4). In the consequences I highlighted the tragic results of no partnership. When there is no partnership, there is no unity and maturity. Further, the protection against confusion, turmoil, and deceitfulness is removed, as false teachers seek to counteract biblical goal with unsound teaching. I showed how the untenable teaching destroys clarity and confidence needed for faith development (Eph 4:14-16).

The answer is the gospel. In the gospel I espoused a partnership where the home and the church proceed together in love toward Christ (Eph 4:15). I showed how every domain of development in Christ has a spiritual foundation (Mark 12:29-30). I showed the significance and centrality of Christ in the partnership, and how striving for the goal together creates an atmosphere of love for growth and maturity (Deut 6:5; Eph 4:16). The gospel gives a new start.

In the new start I used the illustration of the gospel that brought the Jews and Gentiles into the church for a new oneness (Ep. 2:11-18). The family and the church can experience oneness and move past divisions caused by unbiblical teachings. The action was in the form of a commitment. The commitment states, “I am committed to the partnership between the church and home for the sake of loving God with the whole being.”

⁴ Christian Smith and Melinda Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 261.

Week 8

During the period August 25, I wrote the fourth sermon titled, “A Strategy of Spiritual Leadership.” The thesis of the sermon was that “parents must have a strategy of spiritual leadership in the home in order to avoid behaviors that imitate a secular culture which consequently turn children away from God.” Having looked at the goal, I started to focus on a strategy. My foundational text was Mark 12:28-31. In the situation, I expressed the biblical strategy for passing on faith in love. Even though parents possess great influence to pass on gospel-oriented faith to their children, they must have a strategy that affects every domain of the child’s being—heart, soul, mind, and strength. This strategy brings out Christlikeness and therefore must be spiritual and not materialistic. I explained that church leaders and parents must look at parenting in spiritual terms to achieve biblical aims.

In the complication I show the tendency of parents to give in to a culture of happiness and social attainment, as well as a willingness to outsource spiritual care giving to professionals. Further, I pointed out the failure of church leaders to equip parents for their role. I also addressed the lack or sparsely available models of spiritual parenting. In fact, church leaders may not be showing the way. I espoused the thoughts of Gary A. Parrett and S. Steve Kang: “This is a call to church leaders—pastors, deacons and their families—to show the way. It is not enough to wag a finger at parents behind a pulpit or lectern, chiding them for not doing their jobs well. Pastors and other church leaders who are parents themselves must provide role models for other parents in the congregation.”⁵

In the behaviors I show how parents continue to resort to physical parenting. I outlined physical parenting based on a worldly goal. First, parents push for efficiency in sports and other skills. Second, parents resort to pop psychology and apply the advice of

⁵ Gary A. Parrett and S. Steve Kang, *Teaching the Faith and Forming The Faithful: A Biblical Vision for Education in the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 162-63.

gurus to build their children's self-esteem. Third, parents teach social graces to make other people comfortable. Fourth, parents spend an inordinate amount of time making sure their children achieve academic trophies and scholarly notoriety. Fifth, parents use behavior management techniques, such as reward and punishment, to control their children.

In the cause I explained that unbiblical and unspiritual goals push parents in the direction of cultural and societal parenting, which essentially is physical and without reference to the transcendent God. In the consequences, I point out that physical parenting without reference to God turns children away from God (Jdgs 2:10).

In the gospel, I pointed out the need for a spiritual strategy that complies with biblical obligation. The strategy is spiritual parenting that provides environments for children to fall in love with Jesus. I espoused the views of Michelle Anthony, who states, "Spiritual parenting is not perfect parenting—it's parenting from a spiritual perspective with eternity in mind. It's a way of parenting that declares, 'I want to parent the child or children that God gave me in such a way that I first honor God, and then second create the best environment to put my children in the path of the Divine.'"⁶ I made it clear that children are God's children first, and must be led into a relationship with God through Jesus (Jer 9: 23-24).

I emphatically pointed out that while congregations must help parents adopt the democratic process that includes defining rules and boundaries, defining and applying consequences for breaking rules, handling conflict in a positive way, and use of good judgment to take a flexible stance, the church most importantly must expose parents to honoring God in their homes. Moreover, I made it clear that inasmuch as the democratic process leads children to do their best to reach expectations and are likely to have

⁶ Michelle Anthony, *Spiritual Parenting: An Awakening for Today's Families* (Colorado Springs: David Cook, 2010), 12.

positive attitudes toward God, church, and home, placing children in the path of the Divine has a more lasting effect because children fall in love with Jesus and thus faith is passed on seamlessly (Matt 18:2-5).

In the new start, I wrote about how to begin spiritual parenting by seeing parenting in spiritual terms (2 Cor 5:17). Further, I pointed out that becoming mindful of a few existential questions can help parents look at parenting in spiritual terms. I gave answers to the following questions from the Bible: Why are we here? How did we get here? Who are we?

The action was in the form of a commitment. The commitment says, “I decided to parent the biblical way and will practice the strategy of spiritual parenting.”

Week 9

The period between September 1-7, 2019, I wrote the fifth sermon entitled “More on Strategy of Spiritual Leadership.” The foundational scripture text was Mark 12:30-31. The sermon thesis was that without a spiritual strategy that involves intentional transmission of faith, children will succumb to behaviors that consequently lead them away from God.

In the situation I reiterated that the goal of spiritual leadership is to love God with all one’s heart, soul, mind, and strength. I pointed out that the goal determines the strategy. Given that the goal is spiritual, the strategy must also be spiritual. Further, I argued that a spiritual strategy must include the replication of faith from generation to generation. Without a rigorous transmission, God, values, and biblical beliefs will be unknown (Ps 78:3-8; Deut 6:5-8). To rivet that message in the minds of parents and church leaders I quoted a supportive statement from John Youngberg: “Great ideals don’t live on just because they are great or even because they are true. They live on only when they are enshrined in the hearts of the young. Our most treasured religious beliefs are

always one generation away from extinction.”⁷ I explained that when one loves God with the whole being, he or she has to engage in the rigor of faith transmission.

In the complication I mentioned how the culture has reduced parenting to providing care without responsibility for faith training. The culture seems to dictate parental practice, not the Bible. I lamented that secular aims such as happiness, success, and status, without reference to God, destroy the development of faith.

In the behaviors I insisted that sinful and idolatrous acts are many. To label these acts that destroy children I referred to Tedd Tripp, who laments,

We pander to their desires and wishes. We teach them to find their souls delight in going places and doing things. We attempt to satisfy their lust for excitement. We fill their young lives with distraction from God. We give them material things and take delight in their possessions. Then we hope that somewhere down the line they will see that a life worth living is found only in knowing and serving God.⁸

Clearly believers cannot serve two masters (Matt 6:24; Jer 2:13).

In the cause I explained that truth is suppressed by a sinful culture. Further, the lies of culture find resonance in sinful hearts (Rom 1:18-32; Pss 58:3, 51:5). In the consequences I lamented how children are growing up without a relationship with God. Moreover, children want to make sense of life without a relationship with God. There is little wonder why children fail in the understanding of life.

In the gospel I noted that spiritual parenting requires divine and human effort. On the one hand, the Holy Spirit does the supernatural work; on the other hand, parents must create environments for the Holy Spirit to work. I explained that the Holy Spirit is the teacher in children’s heart and parents must cooperate with the Holy Spirit by creating room for the Holy Spirit to work. Further, I expressed that Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to

⁷ John Youngberg, “Deuteronomy 6: Clearest Biblical Charter for Religious Education,” unpublished manuscript, Andrews University, 1991, quoted in Karen Flowers and Ron Flowers, *The Family: A School of Human Relations* (Doral, FL: Inter-American Division Publishing, 2009), 75.

⁸ Tripp, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*, 45.

help parents carry out parental functions in spiritual terms (Acts 2: 33, 39).

I elaborated on three strategic questions that are necessary to focus on spiritual parenting. These questions line up with the goal. First, why are children here? This question is about calling and purpose and meaning. Children are here to know God and love him with their whole being. I recounted how an environment filled with the Word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ, prayer, and family worship sanctify children for a personal relationship with God. Second, how did children get here? This question of origin fits into a big story. I mentioned the importance of communicating the story of Redemption; stretching from creation, fall, covenants, incarnation, the cross, the resurrection, the high priestly ministry of Christ, and the second coming of Christ. The story encourages an environment for faith development. I referenced the words of John H. Westerhoff III: “At the heart of our faith is a story. Unless the story is known, understood, owned and lived out we and our children will not have faith.”⁹ Third, who are children? Children are image bearers (Gen 1:26-28). I pointed out that being created in the image of God is the quintessential distinction within the creation. Therefore, the task of parenting is sacred and must be done in reference to a transcendent God. The Holy Spirit is indispensable in spiritual parenting.

In the new start I showed how Jesus addressed a question about the law in spiritual terms (Mark 12:28). In like manner, parenting must be thought of and done in spiritual terms. The action is in the form of a commitment. The commitment stated, “I want to achieve biblical obligation in parenting by engaging in the strategy of spiritual parenting.”

Week 10

During the week of September 8, I wrote the sixth sermon titled, “Leading

⁹ John H. Westerhoff III, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (New York: Morehouse, 2012), 32.

Parents Back Home.” The idea of this sermon was that parents need to hear and see what faith development is all about in church worship in order to resist perilous behaviors, and engage in the spiritual lives of their children. The major text for consideration was Hebrews 10:19-25.

In the situation I stated emphatically that God wants parents to return home. However, parents are not alone on the journey back home. In fact, the church is on that journey as well. I expressed that a successful journey requires that the church models a caring environment for both parents and children. I submitted that the caring environment involves seeing and hearing. Moreover, seeing and hearing involves the knowledge of faith that comes through God’s intervention and participation in congregational life. Further, the essence of seeing and hearing is witness bearing or faith replication. I explained how seeing and hearing in a caring environment make parents and children feel valued and motivated.

I insisted that parents need to see and hear in order to develop confidence to carry out their primary role of spiritual leadership in the home. Further, I contended that as the church carries out spiritual leadership in the formation of believers, parents will be inclined to do the same in the home. I maintained that enlightenment and encouragement come from seeing and hearing. As parents receive enlightenment and encouragement in church, they will be confident to engage in their children’s spiritual lives at home. The Bible passage under consideration was about encouragement through hearing and enlightenment through seeing that believers experienced in public worship. Such experiences lead parents back home (Heb 10: 19-25).

In the complication I pointed out how parents doubt their ability to lead their families in worship and faith development. However, when parents see confidence in worship and understand that boldness is based on the worthiness of Jesus, parents will be led back home to worship (Heb 10:22, 19; Jos 24:14-15).

In the behaviors I pointed out the perilous acts that can obfuscate the way back

home. For instance, professionals deliberately bury God's mandate of faith development under the rubble of cultural happiness and social advancement. Moreover, I mentioned the inexorable trek in the pursuit of social and cultural idols. Instead of drawing near to God, many give in to idolatry. I briefly recounted historical behavioral trends that contribute to a radical departure from biblical obligations. For instance, from about the third century AD, the biblical practice of families worshipping together in church, while the church equipped parents for spiritual leadership in their homes, gave way to a materialistic outlook on life. I remarked that the Reformers and Puritans called parents to return home to biblical obligations; however, the Industrial Revolution dealt a significant blow to the home-church partnership in faith development.¹⁰

I pointed out that notwithstanding the strides made by Family- Based Ministry and Family Equipping Ministry and Family Integrated Ministry, families in general are away from home. In the cause I opined that the church and family are in rebellion (Rom 3:23). In the consequences I stated that the ability of the church to encourage and enlighten parents in biblical living is waning (Heb 10:23-25). The church is retreating instead of drawing near. I pointed out that worship leaders take for granted that worshippers will invariably attend the place of worship and proceed to engage in the faith life at home. That is a mistake. I explained that the surrounding negative culture and feelings of inadequacy might prevent many parents from attending worship and learning their spiritual responsibility. I also showed how age segregation and ministry segregation adversely affect intergenerational ministry.

In the gospel I outlined how Jesus made a way that did not exist before; which leads to the holy of holies. Jesus has addressed human inadequacy through his perfect

¹⁰ Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 325-36. The church actually supported the split between private and public by encouraging religion and faith to be supervised by women in the home while men worked factories and were therefore freed from spiritual leadership in the home. Such an act of the church is against biblical obligation.

life, and death on the cross, which makes it possible for all to draw near. This new reality is important in spiritual leadership. I explained the need for the many aspects of worship delineated in the New Testament (Heb 7:25, 4:14-16, 10:22). These include prayer, reading Scripture, singing, preaching, teaching, amen, exhortation, offerings, doxologies, confessions, baptism, and Lord's Supper. When these are done confidently in church and parents see and hear, encouraged and enlightened, they will return home with confidence in Jesus to engage in spiritual leadership. That kind of partnership shows the kindred spirit of the church and the home.

I pointed out in the new start that the church sets the tone for the journey back home. The church and the home are called to worship and draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith (Heb 10:22). The action is in the form of a commitment. The commitment stated, "I am going back home in the name of Jesus to give spiritual leadership."

Week 11

I used the week of September 15 to write sermon 7. The sermon was titled, "A Vision of Spiritual Leadership." The thesis of the sermon was that without a vision of spiritual leadership, adults and children will experience complicated situations that will degenerate into unbiblical behaviors and negative consequences. The primary text for consideration was Mark 12:29-30.

In the situation I established that Mark 12:29-30 gives a vision of the whole person—heart, soul, mind and strength. I pointed out that every domain goes through developmental process. Therefore, an understanding of developmental theory provides clarity on the vision of spiritual leadership. I also maintained that God relates to children and adults rationally, emotionally, morally, spiritually, physically, and socially. Hence, a relationship with God cannot just be on cognitive levels (Matt 11:28-29).

In the complication I expressed that matters of faith are viewed as belonging to adults. I pointed out that many believe that children must have a certain cognitive

capacity, like that of adults, to experience God. Therefore, children are off limits in matters of faith until they see the world as adults. When this perspective is caught by children they plunge into irreverence and even rebellion. Notwithstanding, I insisted that although the brain must develop to a certain level of maturity, it does not make relationship with God impossible. Cognitive ability is not a limitation when one considers that children have imagination and can move from the concrete to what is imagined and form mental pictures of God (Heb 11:6; Mark 10:13-16).

In the behaviors I pointed out that children are pushed in a so-called moral safe zone until they reach the age of accountability. I expressed the dangerous behavior of delaying discipleship. Moreover, I recounted the reckless behavior of crisis conversion to awaken a level of reasoning that responds to conversion. I asked two questions of import. Is there a moral safe zone for children who have not reached the developmental age of moral and cognitive development? And, should the church and the home wait until children are older to engage them in spiritual matters? I answered the question with an emphatic “no” (2 Tim 3: 14-15).

In the cause I expounded on fragmented spirituality. When a relationship with God is just seen as cognitive, then spirituality is fragmented. Spirituality and a relationship with God must be the foundation of every domain (Mark 12:30). As such, no area of development can be bifurcated from spirituality.

In the consequences I showed how parents can lose opportunity for discipleship that will never return. I addressed the unrealistic expectation that children will be opened to a relationship with God when they grow up, if left alone in childhood. When opportunities for discipleship are squandered, they might not return (Eph 5:15-17).

In the gospel I explained that experiencing God through Jesus Christ is not circumscribed by rational knowledge. A vision of spiritual leadership must be about the whole person. To expand on the vision of wholeness I quoted Kenda Creasy Dean:

Trust depends not on what we comprehend, but on what we love, which is why the church’s initiation rites (for example baptism and confirmation) are freely offered to

people who may lack the cognitive ability to grasp their significance. What awakes faith is desire, not information, and what awakens desire is a person—and specifically, a person who accepts unconditionally as God accepts us.¹¹

A practical trusting relationship cannot be overlooked (Rom 5:6-11).

In the new start I pointed out that people make strides in a relationship with the God they love with their whole being. Further, God makes up for every deficiency. The action is in the form of a commitment. The commitment stated, “I give my whole being to Jesus by faith so that I can have a vision of children as whole beings and not fragmented parts.”

Week 12

During the period September 22-28, I wrote sermon 8, titled, “The Second Coming of Evil.” The thesis for this sermon stated that if parents do not take hold of God’s revelation in Scripture to keep evil from their household, then children will fall prey to destructive behaviors that have adverse consequences. The primary scripture text for consideration was Matthew 12:43-45.

In the situation I highlighted the presence of evil, as presented in the text, lurking around and seeking an empty home. I advocated the importance of preventing evil from returning in maximum measure. Further, I pointed out that the Word of God, the operation of the Holy Spirit, and the work of new birth and the total transformation of a human being can keep evil from returning in maximum measure (Deut 6:4-8; Acts 2:38-39).

In the complication I expressed that when a person is touched by grace but refuses to allow grace to transform him or her through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in prayer and Bible study, he or she will experience the second coming of evil. I made it clear that any home that has no Bible study, no prayer, no family worship, and no

¹¹ Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 119.

Holy Spirit is empty.

In the behaviors, I pointed out that ungodly behaviors have made successive generations weaker. Second Timothy 3:1-5 identifies the decadence and pursuit of pleasure and other godless behaviors that have brought to perilous times. I explained that matters of personal faith in Jesus and religious participation are on the decline with successive generations after the World War I to the now millennial and adaptive generation. There is a dismissiveness of Scripture and a rejection of prophetic voice (Mal 4:5-6; Matt 11:9-14).

In the cause I showed the folly of forgetting that human beings have been conquered before by evil (Ps 51:5; 1 Pet 1:22-23). In the consequences I explained how patterns are repeated as another generation becomes worse than the previous (Luke 17:26-28; 2 Cor 6:14-8).

In the gospel I challenge parents not to grapple with evil on their own but to embrace the power of Jesus Christ that is more powerful than the power of darkness (Eph 6:12-18). I expounded on staying at the feet of Jesus in prayer, Bible study, and family worship. These acts of worship create the presence of God in the home (Jos 24:14-15).

In the new start, I admonished parents to walk in newness of life as presented in Romans 6:3-8. The action was in the form of a commitment. The commitment states, “I will remain in prayer, Bible study, and family worship so that evil will not have second coming in my home.”

Consultation with Expert Panel

The third phase of implementation was three weeks long. This period required consultation with the expert panel on the evaluation of sermons. Also, during this period updates on the upcoming research project were sent to all participants.

Weeks 13 to 15

During the week September 29-October 5, 2019, all sermons on spiritual leadership were sent to the expert panel by email for evaluation and approval. Given the

volume, I had to be tenacious and persistent in my follow up to have the experts return the sermons on a timely basis. The experts accepted the challenge and proceeded with the evaluation.

During the week of October 6-12, 2019, the experts returned the sermons after much follow up. The eight sermons were individually evaluated. The responses showed greater than 90 percent of the indicators scored at “sufficient” or above in each sermon. Therefore, every sermon was approved. I also used the week to send more promotional materials to the participants.

In the week of October 13-19, sermons were printed with advance organizer for participants to easily follow the delivery of the sermons. The advance organizer showed the sequential steps of the sermon with lined spaces for note taking.¹² The sequential steps are situation, complication, behaviors, cause, consequences, gospel, new start, and action. Also, PowerPoints were made for each sermon to facilitate the learning experience.

Implementation of Equipping Project

The actual implementation of the project required paying attention to details. I made sure that the facility for the event was completely ready and outfitted with high quality technology and internet. I visited the New Providence Seventh-day Adventist church to do on site check and personally promoted the research project.

Week 16s to 18

The week of October 20 the first round of the spiritual leadership surveys were administered to participants and collected. Participants filled out the surveys and turned them in the night the series began. During this week sermons were presented every night to the participants. The series concluded after eight nights of sustained spiritual leadership

¹² See appendix 3.

sermons. After every sermon there were lively feedback with substantial questions. Before every succeeding sermon a review was done of the previous sermon. The sermons were also available on YouTube, emails, and social media platforms. In addition, the presentations were streamed live on Facebook. Participants welcomed the sermons with a certain alacrity. In chorus the participants expressed a need to do this series annually because of its present benefit to the home and the church. The series ended on October 27, 2019.

During week 17 and 18, from October 27 to November 9, I administered the second round of spiritual leadership surveys. The second treatment of surveys required an enormous amount of follow up as some participants were not quick on returning the surveys. Participants who were absent the last night or missed one or two nights had to listen to the presentations on YouTube before I administered taking the survey. Nevertheless, the surveys were retrieved.

Weeks 19 to 21

In weeks 19-21, the pre- and post-series were compared using a *t*-test for dependent samples. From November 10-30, 2019, I spent much time viewing and listening to Joseph Harrod's webinar recording on *t*-tests. I collated the pre and post-test spiritual leadership surveys and then entered data in the in the *t*-test template. Having variable 1 and variable 2 in place, I proceeded to compare pre-and post-test results, which will be shown in the next chapter.

Conclusion

All deadlines were met and project's tasks completed.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF PROJECT

This chapter will assess the project by evaluating the purpose that gave rise to this project. Further, it will assess the project's, goals, strengths and weaknesses. Also offered are my personal reflections and theological reflections.

Evaluation of the Purpose

The purpose of the project was to equip members of the South Bahamas Conference of Seventh-day Adventist to be spiritual leaders in their families. As noted in chapter 1, a set of circumstances led me to realize the need of this intervention in the SBCSDA. First, the frequency of broken marriages has made it difficult for families to pass on faith. This matter of broken marriages is significant because marital harmony tends to be a contributor to faith replication. While the stress of marital disharmony and eventual separation may prevent parents from engaging in spiritual leadership that passes on faith to their children, it appeared that this situation was simply accepted by the leaders of SBCSDA.

Second, the issue of parents who had experienced emotional wounds was rife. Consequently, emotional abuse injured marital and parental relationships. It is unlikely that parents who are preoccupied with issues of emotional abuse would effectively demonstrate the capability required for disciple-making.

Third, Parents are so invested in their careers and relationships that they have little time to engage in their children's spiritual lives. As such, parents wanted the church instructional system to train their children. Further, children were given entertainment

gadgets to pass the time away. Essentially children were pressured to grow up independently instead of being disciplined.

Fourth, the pervasive absence of family worship removed the primary opportunity for disciple-making. While family worship was neglected, the inexorable engagement of children with television and surfing the internet late into the night soared. The neglect of family worship created an environment for evil forces to draw children away from faith development.

Fifth, the lack of family time due to busy schedules has been a blight on marital and parental relationships. Consequently, children who experienced no Christian formation devolved into risky behaviors.

Sixth, a lack of parental supervision has brought about a new independence and freedom for children. That freedom was used to spend inordinate time with TV, computer, internet, and social media. Instead of a yearning for spiritual development, there was a craving for entertainment and instant gratification.

To address these circumstances, I noted in chapter 1 that SBCSDA organized the Family Ministry Department, Children and Adolescence Ministry Department, Men's ministry Department, and Education Department. However, the departments provided ministries that were more programmatic and lacked the will to follow up with families. As such, the departments were not leveraged to counter the adverse circumstances.

The completion of this project made it clear that the project is relevant. The participants sincerely embraced the equipping because they were acquainted with the circumstances. Fifty-four persons began the training, and all completed it. They testified of the benefits they received in attending the sermon series for eight nights. They noted that the presentations arrested an insidious retreat by parents to accept the culture of happiness and social status. Becoming immersed in the culture of happiness and social status seemed to leave families void of spiritual resources to make disciples of children. The spiritual resources include family worship, prayer, and Bible reading.

One of the many encouraging stories had to do with a husband and wife who were on the verge of divorce. Both chose to participate in the project. They attended all of eight nights. The wife pointed out that her relationship with her husband has significantly improved. She further stated that they were not having family worship. They were awakened to this spiritual reality as a result of the presentations on spiritual leadership. Without boasting, she expressed that she and her husband are in a stronger position after attending spiritual leadership presentations. Harmony has returned to their marriage. Parental alliance that was once missing in the home is now evident. The fact that this couple began implementing spiritual leadership immediately and saw their marriage and parenting turned around in a positive way is an indication that this was the right project to address the circumstances of SBCSDA.

Many families were helped by the eight sermons on eight nights consistently. Based upon personal testimonies that participants shared privately and publicly, the project came at the right time to address the set of circumstances.

Evaluation of Goals

In the research methodology in chapter 1, I stated that the effectiveness of the project was based on four goals. The first goal was to assess knowledge, attitude and level of engagement in spiritual leadership in families. In accordance with the methodology, this goal was measured by administering a spiritual leadership survey. Seventy percent of the parents needed to return surveys for analysis for the goal to be considered successfully met. The first treatment of spiritual leadership survey was administered purposefully to 54 parents. All of the 54 parents returned surveys for analysis. Therefore, this goal was successfully met.

The second goal was to develop a series of eight sermons that focus on spiritual leadership among families. In accordance with the methodology, the sermons included Bible references, theological foundation, and Human Development Theory. Moreover, a panel including three pastors and two educators utilized an evaluation rubric

to measure the biblical, theological and theoretical content of the sermons. The goal was considered successfully met when 90 percent of the evaluation criteria met or exceeded sufficient levels. The series of eight sermons was developed and sent to the expert panel with the evaluation rubric. Each sermon based on the evaluation criteria met or exceeded sufficient levels. Therefore, this goal was successfully met.

The third goal was to deliver the sermons on spiritual leadership to families. In accordance with the methodology, the goal was measured when a series of presentations on spiritual leadership convened in a church building for the duration of eight evening sessions. The goal was considered successfully met when the sermons had been presented to parents in a sustained effort for eight evenings. The sermons were delivered to parents for eight evenings consistently in a church building. Therefore, the goal was successfully met.

The fourth goal was to measure the change in knowledge, attitude, and level of engagement in spiritual leadership in families. In accordance with the methodology, the goal was measured by administering the spiritual leadership survey the second time to the 54 participants. The goal was considered successfully met when the pre- and post-test scores demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference as measured by a *t*-test for dependent samples. The spiritual leadership survey was administered the second time to 54 participants. These surveys were returned for analysis. The pre- and post-series tests were measured by *t*-test for dependent samples. The mean score for variable 1 was 159.72, while the mean score for variable 2 was 173.50. The *t*-test showed that the sermonic series made a positive significant difference, which resulted in improvement in knowledge, attitude, and engagement $t(53) = 4.940, p = 0004$). Therefore, the goal was successfully met.

Of the 54 persons who desired to lead their family well, 34 in the pre-test and 36 in the post-test strongly agree on the question, “I desire to lead my family well.” However, for the question that states, “I have a strong grasp of what it means to be a

spiritual leader at home,” 22 in the pre-test and 26 in the post-test strongly agree. In fact, 22 in the pre-test and 16 in the post-test strongly agree with the statement, “I am an effective spiritual leader in my home.” Further, 17 in the pre-test and 21 in the post-test strongly agree with, “If asked I could articulate the gospel.” Also, to the statement, “I could instruct another parent in how to be a spiritual leader in his or her home,” 7 in the pre-test and 26 in the post-test said strongly agree. While the overall tenor of the results of all statements in the survey indicated a desire to be spiritual leaders, the results of these statements show the struggle of parents to actually perform the task. However, parents tend to welcome support of the church to provide equipping that improves their knowledge, attitude and engagement.

Strengths of the Project

The first strength of the project was the communication and promotional efforts to advertise the sermon series to a purposefully selected group of participants. The content of the letters and social media materials sent to the participants seemed to have removed trepidation about participating. The communications explained the importance of parents participating in the eight-night sermon series and the benefits that would accrue. For example, parents would be equipped to do an effective job of training their children to love God with their whole being. As such, the ways of God would flow naturally out of the lives of children and secure them against social pathologies and the culture of self-fulfillment. Fifty-four parents participated, and with the exception of a few, all attended the eight nights. Those who missed one or two nights were sent YouTube videos of the presentations and manuscripts of the sermons.

At first glance, letters and social media materials appeared to have had the most significant influence on the participants’ acceptance. However, on closer inspection, letters and social media texts were made effective because of personal calls I made to participants. Repeated explanations and reminders were given to attend the sermon series October 20-27, 2019.

A second strength of the project was the inclusion of a review of the previous night's sermon and feedback after each presentation. Also, each participant had an advance organizer. The review of the sermon for ten minutes refreshed minds of participants on the salient points. Moreover, those who missed any night received a review the following night. Therefore, the review, along with the YouTube video and sermon manuscript, increased learning possibilities and potential.

The feedback after each sermon was lively, substantial, and provocative. During this period many probing questions were asked about how the church and home could escape the clutches of cultural idols and move together toward biblical obligations. There was evidence of synergy as a chorus of comments called for revival of biblical truths in the home and the church. It was relentlessly proffered that there must be a spiritual leadership in the home series once a year. In response to this plea, a group of participants were organized to meet after the series for initial planning of the next spiritual leadership series.

The advance organizer made it easy for participants to follow the presentation in a seamless manner. Anyone familiar with advanced organizers knows their effectiveness in learning and attention gathering.

The third strength of the series was its saturation with Scripture. Biblical principles were espoused and supported by Scripture. Although I quoted from social scientists and educational ministers, I remained focus on biblical authority. As Scripture was read to support the biblical mandate for parenting, the principles espoused had an unmatched authority. For example, every night we delved into the *shema*. The *shema* is rich in knowledge for spiritual development. In the *shema*, God is exalted to be worshiped and known through all generations. Essentially, the family is the primary social infra-structure for the elevation of God and the replication of faith. Also covered was Ephesians 4:1-16, which establishes the way forward for the home and the church to work together in disciple-making. The church on the basis of spiritual gifts can equip

parents to be spiritual leaders in their homes. Further, Ephesians 5:21-33 and Hebrews 10:19-25 show that marital harmony and modeling of spiritual leadership in the church have an inescapable nexus with faith development at home.

To achieve biblical aims, parents were empowered to practice in their homes the biblical content of spiritual leadership immediately. This practice was to aid memory and practice. The remembering pyramid was at work. According to the remembering pyramid, people remember 10 percent of what they read, 20 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, 50 percent of what they see and hear, 70 percent of ideas that they discuss, 80 to 85 percent from personal experience, and 95 percent of what they teach others.¹

The participants seemed confident to go home and practice spiritual leadership. It would appear that when the church equips and expects parents to carry out their responsibility, parents accomplish the specific tasks.

Weaknesses of the Project

In retrospect, the structure of the learning process needed more attention. While the participants may have understood, organized, and memorized biblical knowledge, more could have been done in learning spiritual leadership skills. Learning factual knowledge is a different process from learning skills. Both learning processes are necessary for longevity of change.

Another weakness of the project was the absence of a recommended bibliography of resources relating to each night's presentation. Additional resources would have contributed to a broader and deeper understanding of the nightly emphases. Moreover, participants would have had resources in their possession after the series to

¹ Donna J. Habenicht and Larry Burton, *Teaching the Faith: An Essential Guide for Building Faith-Shaped kids* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing, 2004), 46. Every aspect of mind, body, and emotions must be engaged in learning.

motivate them in the spiritual leadership task. Of course, this is an afterthought and should have been looked at while I was preparing for the series.

Further, a system of accountability partners was not put in place before the participants dispersed from the project. This neglect constitutes a weakness because this system is ideal for families to hold each other accountable and support each other.

The final weakness was the brevity of the sermon series. Although participants met for eight nights consistently, more time was needed to practice important concepts in spiritual leadership during each evening session.

My Correctives

I have a few correctives as I look back at the project. The correctives pertain to the weaknesses of the project. First, I would pay closer attention to the process of learning spiritual leadership skills. This process would include building mental models, providing clear practical steps, and practicing the steps each night of the series. For example, I could give a model for studying the Bible, give a plan with clear steps, and then practice the steps.

Second, I would painstakingly prepare a list of resources for each presentation. This list would include books that I referenced in the sermons and additional resources. Moreover, the list would include resources on marriage and family, spiritual parenting, family worship, prayer, and Christian formation. Titles in these disciplines would enhance knowledge and motivate parents to stick to the primary task of disciple-making.

Third, I would put together a system of accountability partners. The matter would be brought to the participants in session. Then, in a purposeful process, parents would be organized in groups to check up on one another's progress. In this case, telephone numbers and other social media contacts would be voluntarily shared for the purpose of partnership and accountability. Essentially, this system is family helping family.

Fourth, I would extend the series to ten nights so that more time could be devoted to practice and role-play during the evening sessions. Practice is the key to success when learning spiritual leadership skills. In addition, I would administer the second treatment of surveys a week or two after the conclusion of the sermonic series. This allowance would provide more time for practicing the principles of spiritual leadership at home.

Theological Reflections

The project has shown how essential the partnership between the church and the home is in the disciple-making process. While parents have the primary function of discipling their children, biblical obligation requires that the church equips parents to carry out their primary task in the home. In Deuteronomy 6: 4-8, the command is given to the whole of Israel. However, the replication of faith would take place in the home. The family is the primary social infra-structure for passing on faith to the next generation. Nevertheless, the family is not left on its own. The spiritual community of Israel as it relates to religious leadership had the responsibility to equip families.

Partnership for equipping becomes clearer in Ephesians 4: 1-16. God has gifted leaders to prepare God's people for their work of ministry. Spiritual leadership in the home is a most important ministry. Therefore, the church has the biblical obligation to partner with families and equip parents for their primary function of disciple-making.

As I conducted the project, I saw clearly how this partnership was brought before the participants. As an equipper, I represented the church's leadership gifts. The process was a partnership that allowed me to equip parents for their primary function of faith development at home. Moreover, in accordance with Hebrews 10: 19-24, I spurred them on to good works by letting them see and hear what spiritual leadership is all about. The presentations provided enlightenment and encouragement to restore confidence among parents. Such confidence is needed for disciple-making.

The partnership is like a marriage that requires harmony and submission. Ephesians 5: 18-31 shows the importance of the Holy Spirit bringing harmony in marriage. The same Holy Spirit who gave spiritual gifts for leadership is also responsible for harmony in the home and the church. The harmony is called the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:1-3). When there is harmony at home, disciple-making is enhanced. Moreover, a harmonious relationship between the church and the home makes for effective spiritual leadership in the home. Little wonder the family is called the domestic church.²

The focus in this theological reflection is the partnership between the home and the church. The church equips families for their primary work of faith replication in the home. Notwithstanding the compelling culture that focuses on happiness and social status, a strong partnership between family and church is a bastion of protection from cultural and social idols.

Personal Reflections

This project exposed me to my own shortcomings. I have been so invested in the faith development of my own children that I neglected to equip parents in the church for disciple-making. This project helped me reflect on the many families I failed to equip along the way. I was the recipient of discipleship training by gifted leaders of the church. When my wife and I got married I felt ill equipped to be a parent. Consequently, I registered for a parenting class at Andrews University in 1994. For the first time in my life I became exposed to Christian formation of children. I shared wholeheartedly with my wife the principles of disciple-making that I learned. Both of us were ready to lead our two children to love God with all their being. However, I failed to engage in equipping

² Diana R. Garland, *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 292. The family shares the life of the church and is the church in cellular form. They both have the same mission of discipleship.

other parents for their primary function of spiritual leadership in the home. As a pastor, I have conducted many evangelistic series and family life education programs, but I did not do the vital task of equipping parents for spiritual leadership. On occasions I have even been critical of parents instead of equipping them.

I am thinking of how often I violated the counsel given by Garry A. Parrett and S. Steve Kang, who insist, “One of the greatest ways to help parents be better parents is simply to help them grow in their own faith walk. In other words encouraging them to grow as children of God will be of great help to them as they seek to encourage their children.”³ I am now determined to equip parents instead of being judgmental. Biblical obligations require that the church equip parents to be spiritual leaders in their homes.

The parents who participated in the project have been propelled to go home and make disciples of their children. Instead of being condemnatory, I used my gift to point parents to God and biblical aims. I did so in love, humility, and patience. As such, they became more aware of what God requires. They became willing recipients of scriptural obligations. This experience expressed that parents will regain confidence and clarity about their role when the church equips them. This is a valuable principle.

Another valuable principle is that the church and family will value the role of spiritual gifts in the lives of believers during the process of equipping. It is a flaw to depend on church services and programs as the sole means of disciple-making. Unfortunately, this is the case in many churches. Church services and programs are not effective enough to disciple children. Parents must be equipped to carry out their primary function of faith development in the home. In the process of equipping, both the church and the family begin to value the manifestations of spiritual gifts in believers. The value of spiritual gifts will be seen in the increase of knowledge, confidence, and clarity. When

³ Gary A. Parrett and Steve Kang, *Teaching the Faith and Forming the Faithful: A Biblical Vision for Education in the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), 164.

parents know with confidence and clarity what is expected of them, in the context of a partnership, they will engage in the spiritual lives of their children.

The generous participation of parents in this project is indicative of a desire to fulfill their faith development functions. The attendance was heartening. Moreover, the persistent willingness to push for an annual spiritual leadership series demonstrates their serious concern for the wellbeing of the church and the family. Essentially, this concern is a longing for improvement.

Conclusion

My theological and philosophical basis for ministry were garnered at Northern Caribbean University and Andrews University. Inasmuch as I believe that these learning institutions provided me with a sound theological education, it was incumbent upon me to practice what was for the most part theoretical.

When I entered the pastorate, I soon realized that problems were not Greek and Hebrew problems, but family problems. Family problems can be quite messy and require disciplined and practical responses. Many times there are no easy answers. The Doctor of Educational Ministry degree at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary helped me bring theological preparation and practical well thought out responses together to address everyday family problems. One of the problems is the lack of spiritual leadership in the home.

This project required the systematic process of gathering data, and analyzing and interpreting data in the South Bahamas Conference of Seventh-day Adventist. Generally, I had to take a long and critical view of the disturbing conditions that existed. Families seemed to have lost their way. The effect was the inability of parents to pass on faith to their children. In the main, the leaders of SBCSDA did not appear to be involved in equipping parents for their primary task of disciple-making.

To effectively respond to the condition, I labored not just in serious thought, but reading, writing, organizing, promoting, analyzing, managing, praying,

communicating, planning, directing, and controlling. In the process I have grown in the ministry. I now have tools to address the messy problems of church and family relationships. Specifically, I have tools to address spiritual leadership in the home.

APPENDIX 1

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current understanding and practices of spiritual leadership of the participant. Peter Joseph is conducting this research for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer.

Part 1

1. Are you a Christian and a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church in South Bahamas Conference?
 A. Yes
 B. No
2. Have you repented of your sin and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation?
 A. Yes
 B. No
3. Are you married?
 A. Yes
 B. No
4. Do you have any children age 18 or younger living in the home?
 A. Yes
 B. No
5. What is your age in years?
 A. 18-24
 B. 25-34
 C. 35-44
 D. 45-54
 E. 55-64
 F. 65 and over

Directions: Answer the following questions: (1) Place a check by the multiple-choice questions. (2) Some questions ask you to give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree; please circle the appropriate answer.

Part 2

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 6. | I consider myself to be the spiritual leader of my home. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 7. | I am an effective spiritual leader in my home. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 8. | I desire to lead my family well. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 9. | I have a strong grasp of what it means to be a spiritual leader in my home. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 10. | My spiritual health directly impacts my ability to lead my family spiritually. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 11. | If asked, I could articulate the gospel. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 12. | I consider personal accountability with other parents to be a vital part of leading my family spiritually. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 13. | I could instruct another parent in how to be the spiritual leader of his/her home. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 14. | I read my Bible (check only one)
<input type="checkbox"/> A. more than once per day
<input type="checkbox"/> B. once per day
<input type="checkbox"/> C. several times per week
<input type="checkbox"/> D. once per week
<input type="checkbox"/> E. several times per month
<input type="checkbox"/> F. once per month
<input type="checkbox"/> G. several times per year
<input type="checkbox"/> H. not at all | | | | | | |
| 15. | I meditate on Scripture (check only one)
<input type="checkbox"/> A. more than once per day
<input type="checkbox"/> B. once per day
<input type="checkbox"/> C. several times per week
<input type="checkbox"/> D. once per week
<input type="checkbox"/> E. several times per month
<input type="checkbox"/> F. once per month
<input type="checkbox"/> G. several times per year
<input type="checkbox"/> H. not at all | | | | | | |

16. I pray (check only one)
 A. more than once per day
 B. once per day
 C. several times per week
 D. once per week
 E. several times per month
 F. once per month
 G. several times per year
 H. not at all
17. I have a specific time set aside for prayer.
 A. Yes
 B. No
18. I most often pray for (check only one)
 A. myself
 B. family
 C. friends
 D. other
19. I most often pray (check only one)
 A. at church
 B. at home
 C. while traveling
 D. at work
 E. other
20. I meet with other parents for the purpose of accountability (check only one)
 A. several times per week
 B. once per week
 C. several times per month
 D. once per month
 E. several times per year
 F. not at all

Part 3 (If you are not married, please skip to Part 4).

SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 21. I understand what the Bible teaches regarding how to lead my spouse spiritually. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 22. The Bible calls me to love/submit my husband/wife as Christ love the church and as the church submits to Christ. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 23. If asked, my spouse could articulate the gospel. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

24. I pray with my spouse (check only one)
 A. more than once per day
 B. once per day
 C. several times per week
 D. once per week
 E. several times per month
 F. once per month
 G. several times per year
 H. not at all
25. I discuss spiritual matters with my spouse (check only one)
 A. more than once per day
 B. once per day
 C. several times per week
 D. once per week
 E. several times per month
 F. once per month
 G. several times per year
 H. not at all
26. I read the Bible with my spouse (check only one)
 A. more than once per day
 B. once per day
 C. several times per week
 D. once per week
 E. several times per month
 F. once per month
 G. several times per year
 H. not at all
27. I read Christian books with my spouse (check only one)
 A. more than once per day
 B. once per day
 C. several times per week
 D. once per week
 E. several times per month
 F. once per month
 G. several times per year
 H. not at all
28. I know the areas in which my spouse is struggling in his/her sanctification. SD D DS AS A SA
29. I encourage my spouse to have close accountability relationships with other parents. SD D DS AS A SA
30. I encourage my spouse to spend time reading the Bible and to pray. SD D DS AS A SA
31. I seek to serve in the church with my spouse. SD D DS AS A SA

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 32. I seek to minimize the impediments to my spouse's spiritual growth. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 33. I value my spouse's help in my own spiritual growth. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 34. When I sin against my spouse, I express repentance and ask for forgiveness. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 35. When my spouse and I have conflict, I take the lead in seeking biblical resolution. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

Part 4 (If you do not have children age 18 or younger, please skip Part 4.)

SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 36. I understand what the Bible teaches regarding how to raise my children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 37. I am an effective spiritual leader for my children. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 38. I know the areas in which my believing children are struggling in their sanctification. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 39. I use occasions of my children's sin to instruct them with the gospel. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 40. I encourage my children to spend time reading the Bible and praying. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 41. I use everyday situations as opportunities to instruct my children with biblical principles. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 42. When I sin against my children, I express repentance and ask for forgiveness. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 43. When my children have conflict with each other, I lead them to seek biblical resolution. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

44. I pray with my children (choose only one)
- A. more than once per day
 - B. once per day
 - C. several times per week
 - D. once per week
 - E. several times per month
 - F. once per month
 - G. several times per year
 - H. not at all
45. I read the Bible with my children (choose only one)
- A. more than once per day
 - B. once per day
 - C. several times per week
 - D. once per week
 - E. several times per month
 - F. once per month
 - G. several times per year
 - H. not at all
46. I read Christian books to/with my children (choose only one)
- A. more than once per day
 - B. once per day
 - C. several times per week
 - D. once per week
 - E. several times per month
 - F. once per month
 - G. several times per year
 - H. not at all
47. I lead in family worship (specific time of Bible-reading and prayer) (check only one)
- A. more than once per day
 - B. once per day
 - C. several times per week
 - D. once per week
 - E. several times per month
 - F. once per month
 - G. several times per year
 - H. not at all

Personal Identification Number: _____

APPENDIX 2

SERMON EVALUATION RUBRIC

Spiritual Leadership Sermon Evaluation Tool					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The sermon is clearly relevant to the issue of spiritual leadership in the home.					
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on spiritual leadership.					
The material is theologically sound.					
The thesis of the sermon is clearly stated.					
The points of the sermon clearly support the thesis.					
The sermon contains points of practical application and developmental theory.					
The sermon is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
Overall, the sermon is clearly crafted.					

APPENDIX 3
SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP ADVANCE ORGANIZER

SITUATION

COMPLICATION

BEHAVIOR

CONSEQUENCES

CAUSE

GOSPEL

NEW START

ACTION

APPENDIX 4

RESULTS OF THE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP SURVEY

Part 1

1. Are you a Christian and a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church in South Bahamas Conference?

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. Yes	54	54
<input type="checkbox"/> B. No	0	0

2. Have you repented of your sin and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation?

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. Yes	54	54
<input type="checkbox"/> B. No	0	0

3. Are you married?

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. Yes	47	47
<input type="checkbox"/> B. No	7	7

4. Do you have any children age 18 or younger living in the home?

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. Yes	41	41
<input type="checkbox"/> B. No	13	13

5. What is your age in years?

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. 18-24	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> B. 25-34	5	5
<input type="checkbox"/> C. 35-44	15	15
<input type="checkbox"/> D. 45-54	15	15
<input type="checkbox"/> E. 55-64	11	11
<input type="checkbox"/> F. 65 and over	8	8

Part 2

6. I consider myself to be the spiritual leader of my home.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	2	1	3	7	11	30
Post	1	1	2	7	13	30

7. I am an effective spiritual leader in my home.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	0	2	1	8	21	22
Post	0	0	4	8	26	16

8. I desire to lead my family well.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	0	0	0	3	17	34
Post	0	0	1	4	13	36

9. I have a strong grasp of what it means to be a spiritual leader in my home.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	1	0	2	11	18	22
Post	1	0	2	6	19	26

10. My spiritual health directly impacts my ability to lead my family spiritually.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	1	0	2	7	16	28
Post	0	1	3	4	12	34

11. If asked, I could articulate the gospel.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	2	0	1	9	25	17
Post	0	0	0	11	22	21

12. I consider personal accountability with other parents to be a vital part of leading my family spiritually.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	1	3	2	11	22	15
Post	1	1	0	9	17	26

13. I could instruct another parent in how to be the spiritual leader of his/her home.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	1	1	2	17	25	7
Post	0	0	0	11	17	26

14. I read my Bible (check only one)

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. more than once per day	19	16
<input type="checkbox"/> B. once per day	13	19
<input type="checkbox"/> C. several times per week	16	13
<input type="checkbox"/> D. once per week	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> E. several times per month	3	4
<input type="checkbox"/> F. once per month	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> G. several times per year	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> H. not at all	0	0

15. I meditate on Scripture (check only one)

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. more than once per day	23	32
<input type="checkbox"/> B. once per day	10	8
<input type="checkbox"/> C. several times per week	17	9
<input type="checkbox"/> D. once per week	0	2
<input type="checkbox"/> E. several times per month	3	3
<input type="checkbox"/> F. once per month	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> G. several times per year	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> H. not at all	0	0

16. I pray (check only one)

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. more than once per day	41	48
<input type="checkbox"/> B. once per day	3	2
<input type="checkbox"/> C. several times per week	2	2
<input type="checkbox"/> D. once per week	0	1
<input type="checkbox"/> E. several times per month	4	0
<input type="checkbox"/> F. once per month	4	1
<input type="checkbox"/> G. several times per year		
<input type="checkbox"/> H. not at all		

17. I have a specific time set aside for prayer.

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. Yes	27	31
<input type="checkbox"/> B. No	27	23

18. I most often pray for (check only one)

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. more than once per day	6	9
<input type="checkbox"/> B. once per day	31	31
<input type="checkbox"/> C. several times per week	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> D. once per week	17	14

19. I most often pray (check only one)

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. more than once per day	35	36
<input type="checkbox"/> B. once per day	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> C. several times per week	3	3
<input type="checkbox"/> D. once per week	3	4
<input type="checkbox"/> E. several times per month	11	10

20. I meet with other parents for the purpose of accountability (check only one)

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. more than once per day	6	2
<input type="checkbox"/> B. once per day	8	11
<input type="checkbox"/> C. several times per week	3	6
<input type="checkbox"/> D. once per week	2	2
<input type="checkbox"/> E. several times per month	3	5
<input type="checkbox"/> F. once per month	32	26

Part 3

21. I understand what the Bible teaches regarding how to lead my spouse spiritually.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	4	0	1	10	15	17
Post	3	1	0	4	19	20

22. The Bible calls me to love/submit my husband/wife as Christ love the church and as the church submits to Christ.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	0	0	0	10	13	24
Post	1	0	0	3	13	30

23. If asked, my spouse could articulate the gospel.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	2	2	3	13	11	16
Post	0	0	2	9	18	18

24. I pray with my spouse (check only one)

	Pre	Post
___ A. more than once per day	4	7
___ B. once per day	11	14
___ C. several times per week	12	10
___ D. once per week	9	6
___ E. several times per month	1	3
___ F. once per month	10	7
___ G. several times per year	0	0
___ H. not at all	0	0

25. I discuss spiritual matters with my spouse (check only one)

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. more than once per day	8	16
<input type="checkbox"/> B. once per day	10	6
<input type="checkbox"/> C. several times per week	12	17
<input type="checkbox"/> D. once per week	5	2
<input type="checkbox"/> E. several times per month	7	2
<input type="checkbox"/> F. once per month	5	4
<input type="checkbox"/> G. several times per year	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> H. not at all	0	0

26. I read the Bible with my spouse (check only one)

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. more than once per day	6	10
<input type="checkbox"/> B. once per day	5	11
<input type="checkbox"/> C. several times per week	8	10
<input type="checkbox"/> D. once per week	5	3
<input type="checkbox"/> E. several times per month	6	2
<input type="checkbox"/> F. once per month	17	11
<input type="checkbox"/> G. several times per year	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> H. not at all	0	0

27. I read Christian books with my spouse (check only one)

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. more than once per day	3	8
<input type="checkbox"/> B. once per day	4	9
<input type="checkbox"/> C. several times per week	8	6
<input type="checkbox"/> D. once per week	5	1
<input type="checkbox"/> E. several times per month	6	5
<input type="checkbox"/> F. once per month	21	18
<input type="checkbox"/> G. several times per year	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> H. not at all	0	0

28. I know the areas in which my spouse is struggling in his/her sanctification.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	4	3	5	13	10	12
Post	1	1	4	8	16	17

29. I encourage my spouse to have close accountability relationships with other parents.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	2	7	7	13	11	7
Post	2	3	1	6	20	14

30. I encourage my spouse to spend time reading the Bible and to pray.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	2	1	3	9	17	15
Post	3	0	1	5	20	18

31. I seek to serve in the church with my spouse.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	1	2	1	11	16	16
Post	0	0	0	6	23	18

32. I seek to minimize the impediments to my spouse's spiritual growth.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	0	2	6	9	21	9
Post	0	1	2	2	23	19

33. I value my spouse's help in my own spiritual growth.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	0	1	5	5	13	23
Post	0	0	1	2	14	30

34. When I sin against my spouse, I express repentance and ask for forgiveness.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	1	1	3	8	18	16
Post	0	0	0	5	16	26

35. When my spouse and I have conflict, I take the lead in seeking biblical resolution.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	1	3	5	10	16	12
Post	2	3	0	3	17	22

Part 4

36. I understand what the Bible teaches regarding how to raise my children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	0	2	2	6	13	16
Post	0	1	0	2	13	25

37. I am an effective spiritual leader for my children.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	0	2	4	11	11	11
Post	1	0	0	8	15	15

38. I know the areas in which my believing children are struggling in their sanctification.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	3	0	0	9	16	11
Post	2	0	2	4	17	14

39. I use occasions of my children's sin to instruct them with the gospel.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	1	5	3	8	13	9
Post	0	2	1	5	14	18

40. I encourage my children to spend time reading the Bible and praying.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	0	2	3	4	16	14
Post	1	0	1	2	14	20

41. I use everyday situations as opportunities to instruct my children with biblical principles.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	0	1	3	7	16	12
Post	0	0	0	3	17	17

42. When I sin against my children, I express repentance and ask for forgiveness.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	2	1	3	6	13	14
Post	0	0	0	3	17	19

33

43. When my children have conflict with each other, I lead them to seek biblical resolution.

	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	2	2	4	5	15	11
Post	1	0	0	8	16	14

44. I pray with my children (choose only one)

	Pre	Post
___ A. more than once per day	11	14
___ B. once per day	9	15
___ C. several times per week	4	8
___ D. once per week	5	3
___ E. several times per month	2	1
___ F. once per month	7	1
___ G. several times per year	0	0
___ H. not at all	0	0

45. I read the Bible with my children (choose only one)

	Pre	Post
___ A. more than once per day	4	6
___ B. once per day	8	6
___ C. several times per week	9	15
___ D. once per week	6	5
___ E. several times per month	4	3
___ F. once per month	8	3
___ G. several times per year	0	0
___ H. not at all	0	0

46. I read Christian books to/with my children (choose only one)

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. more than once per day	4	6
<input type="checkbox"/> B. once per day	5	9
<input type="checkbox"/> C. several times per week	9	6
<input type="checkbox"/> D. once per week	5	4
<input type="checkbox"/> E. several times per month	3	3
<input type="checkbox"/> F. once per month	13	11
<input type="checkbox"/> G. several times per year	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> H. not at all	0	0

47. I lead in family worship (specific time of Bible-reading and prayer) (check only one)

	Pre	Post
<input type="checkbox"/> A. more than once per day	7	7
<input type="checkbox"/> B. once per day	7	12
<input type="checkbox"/> C. several times per week	7	10
<input type="checkbox"/> D. once per week	5	1
<input type="checkbox"/> E. several times per month	4	3
<input type="checkbox"/> F. once per month	9	4
<input type="checkbox"/> G. several times per year	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> H. not at all	0	0

Personal Identification Number: _____

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, David L. *Hebrews*. The New American Commentary, vol. 2. Grand Rapids: B & H, 2010.
- Allen, Holly Chatterton, ed. *Nurturing Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008.
- Anthony, Michael, and Michelle Anthony. *A Theology of Family Ministry*. Nashville: B & H, 2011.
- Anthony, Michelle. *Spiritual Parenting: An Awakening for Today's Families*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.
- Barclay William. *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*. The Daily Study Bible Philadelphia: Westminster, 1958.
- Barna George. *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champion*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2003.
- Beckwith, Ivy. *Postmodern Children's Ministry: Ministry to Children in the 21st Century*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.
- Block, Daniel L. *Deuteronomy*. The New Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.
- Boa, Kenneth. *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.
- Brown, John. *Hebrews*. The Geneva Series of Commentaries. Philadelphia: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976.
- Brown, Raymond. *The Message of Hebrews*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1982.
- Bruce, A. B. *The Training of the Twelve*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1971.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle of The Hebrews*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Brueggemann, Walter. "The Covenantal Family: A Zone for Humanness." *Journal of Current Social Issues* 14, no. 5 (1997): 18-21.
- Brunner, Emil. *Eternal Hope*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954.
- Buscaglia, F. Leo. *Living, Loving & Learning*. Toronto: Ballantine, 1982.
- Campbell, Ross. *How to Really Love Your Child*. Chicago: Victor, 1988.

- _____. *How to Really Love Your Teenager*. Chicago: Victor, 1981.
- Carson D. Arthur. *Exegetical Fallacies*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.
- Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *He That Is Spiritual*. Findlay, OH: Durham 1998.
- Cope, Henry F. *Religious Education in The Family*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1915.
- Craigie, Peter Campbell. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1976.
- Dean, Kendra Creasy. *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Erikson, Erik. *Child and Society*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1950.
- Estep, James R., and Jonathan H. Kim. *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development*. Nashville: B & H, 2010.
- Flowers, Karen, and Ronald Flowers. *The Family: A School of Human Relations*. Doral, FL: Inter-American Division Publishing, 2009.
- Fowler, James W. "Faith Development Theory and Postmodern Challenges." *International Journal of Psychology and Religion* 11 (July 2001): 167-71.
- Geiger, Eric, and Kevin Peck. *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development*. Nashville: B & H, 2016.
- Gillespie, V. Bailey. *Valuegenesis Report*. Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1994.
- Gire, Ken. *Windows of the Soul*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1981.
- Habennicht, Donna J. *How to Help Your Child Really Love Jesus: Practical Suggestions for Instilling Spiritual Values*. Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1994.
- Habenicht, Donna J., and Larry Burton. *Teaching the Faith: An Essential Guide for Building Faith Shaped Kids*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004.
- Hamilton, James M., Jr. "That the Coming Generation Might Praise the Lord: Family Discipleship and Old Testament." In *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*, edited by Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones, 33-43. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011.
- Hobbs, Herchel. *Hebrews: Challenges to Bold Discipleship*. Nashville: Broadman, 1971.
- Hoehner, Harold W. *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
- Holmes, C. Raymond. *Sing A New Song: Worship Renewal for Adventists Today*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1984.
- Jones, Timothy Paul. *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples*. Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing, 2011

- _____, ed. *Perspective on Family Ministry: 3 Views*. Nashville: B & H, 2009.
- Kapic, Kelly M. *A Little Book for New Theologians: Why and How to Study Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2012.
- á Kempis, Thomas. *The Imitation of Christ*. London: Penguin Group, 1952.
- Kittle, G., G. Friedrich, and G. W. Bromiley, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Kostenberger, Andreas J. *God, Marriage & Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004.
- Krych, Margaret A. *Teaching the Gospel Today*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988.
- Leupold, H. C. *Exposition of the Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977.
- Lincoln, Andrew T. *Ephesians*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42. Grand Rapids: Word, 1990.
- Lloyd-Jones, D. Martin. *Christian Unity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980.
- Martin, Ralph P. *Ephesians*. In vol. 11 of *The Broadman Bible Commentary*. Edited by Allen J. Clifton, 155-60. Nashville: Broadman, 1971
- Merrill, Eugene H. *Deuteronomy*. The New American Commentary, vol. 2. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1974.
- Milligan, Robert. *The Epistle to The Hebrews*. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1995.
- Moule, H. C. G. *Ephesians Study*. Harrisburg, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1937.
- Mulholland, Robert, Jr. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2016.
- Murray, Andrew. *Holiest of All: A Commentary on The Book of Hebrews*. Harrisburg, PA: Whitaker House, 1981.
- _____. *With Christ in the School of Prayer*. Harrisburg, PA: Whitaker House, 1981.
- O'Brien, Peter T. *The Letter to The Hebrews*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
- Packer, J. I., and Gary Parrett. *Grounded in the Gospel: Build Believers the Old-Fashioned Way*. Downers Grove, IL: Baker, 1996.
- Parrett, Gary A., and Steve Kang. *Teaching the Faith, Forming the Faithful: A Biblical Vision for Education in the Church*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2009.
- Pearce, Nancy. *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005.
- Piper, John. "The Marks of a Spiritual Leader." *Desiring God*. January 1, 1995.
<http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/articles/themarkofspiritualleader>.

- Ratcliff, Donald, ed. *Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research and Applications*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2004.
- Robertson, Nicoll. *The Expositor's Greek Testament*. Vol. 4. Grand Rapids: Wm. B Eerdmans, 1990.
- Schlier, Heinrich. "Kephale." In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Edited by Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Vol. 3. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974.
- Schorr, Vernie. *Compass: A Guide for Character and Spiritual Formation in Children*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2008.
- Simpson, E. K., and F. F. Bruce. *The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians*. The New International Commentary in the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977.
- Sittser, Gerald. *Water from a Deep Well: Spirituality for Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007.
- Smith, Christian. *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Sproul, R. C. *Ephesians: The Purpose of God*. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2002.
- Stassen, Berger Kathleen. *The Developing Person through the Life Span*. New York: Worth Publishers, 2001.
- Stinson, Randy, and Timothy Paul Jones, eds. *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical and Practical Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011.
- Stonehouse, Catherine. *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a Life of Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.
- Strommen, Merton, and Richard A. Hardel, *Passing on the Faith: A Radical New Model for Youth and Family Ministry*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press and Christian Brothers, 1989.
- Swenson, Richard A. *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992.
- Tigay, Jeffery H. *Deuteronomy*. The JPS Torah Commentary. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996.
- Vogt, Peter T. *Deuteronomical Theology and the Significance of the Torah: A Reappraisal*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- Weavers, John Williams. *LXX Notes on the Greek Texts of Deuteronomy*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995.
- Westerhoff, John H. *Will Our Children Have Faith?* New York: Morehouse, 2012.
- White, Ellen G. *Child Guidance*. Hagerston, MD: Review and Herald, 1982.
- _____. *Education*. Nampa, IN: Pacific Press Publishing, 1952.

- White, James Emery. *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017.
- Whitney, Donald S. *Family Worship*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016.
- Wilhoit, James C., and John M. Detain, eds. *Nurture That Is Christian: Developmental Perspectives on Christian Education*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.
- Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*. New York: HarperCollins, 1997.
- _____. *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes People*. New York: HarperCollins, 1998.
- Wilson, Rodney, Shelma Wilson, and Scott McConnell. *The Parent Adventure: Preparing Your Children for a Lifetime with God*. Nashville: B & H, 2008.
- Winfield, Moshe. *Deuteronomy 1-11*. The Anchor Bible, vol. 5. New York: Doubleday, 1991.
- Wright, Christopher. *Deuteronomy*. New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996.
- Yust, Karen Marie, Aostre N. Johnson, Sandy Sasso, and Eugene Roehlkepartain, eds. *Nurturing Child and Adolescents Spirituality: Perspectives from the World's Religious Traditions*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.
- Zuck, Roy B. *Precious in His Sight: Childhood and Children in the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.

ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE SOUTH BAHAMAS CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST, NASSAU, BAHAMAS

Peter Joseph, DEdMin
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Danny R. Bowen

The purpose of this project was to equip parents in South Bahamas conference of Seventh-Day Adventist to be spiritual leaders in their homes. Chapter 1 presents the purpose, goals, context, rationale, definitions, limitations, delimitations, and research methodology of the project.

Chapter 2 explains the biblical and theological basis for spiritual leadership in the home. First, the chapter presents evidence that the home is the primary place for the replication of faith, and that parents are called by God to be the primary spiritual care givers of their children. Second, it shows that God instituted the church with the capacity to include in its role the work of equipping parents to be the primary spiritual care givers of their children by utilizing the spiritual gifts resident in the church. Third, the chapter demonstrates that God's church sets the tone for the primacy of spiritual leadership in the home by showing how the church provides a climate of encouragement and enlightenment for its role of equipping parents. Finally, chapter 2 discloses that God's Word sets the foundation for mutual submission by establishing that spiritual leadership is effective when there is mutual submission.

Chapter 3 addresses theoretical, practical, historical, and developmental elements related to engaging and equipping parents for the task of faith development in a partnership that should exist between the church and the home. It demonstrates that for

the church to equip parents, gifted leaders must know the goal, employ a strategy, understand a framework of home-church partnership, and articulate a vision of discipleship that addresses the whole person.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide details of implementation of the project, as well as evaluations of the project.

VITA

Peter Joseph

EDUCATION

B.A., Northern Caribbean University, 1991

M.A., Andrews University, 1996

MINISTERIAL

Ministerial Internship, St. Johns Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Antigua,
West Indies, 1991-1993

District Pastor, and Director, North Caribbean Conference of Seventh-Day
Adventist, St. Croix, U.S.V.I, 1993-2002

Pastor and Director, South Bahamas Conference of Seventh-Day Adventist,
Nassau, Bahamas, 2002-

PUBLICATIONS

Ministry at the Altar. Mustang, OK: Tate Publishing, 2016

Possibility Praying. Mustang, OK: Tate Publishing, 2016

ORGANIZATIONS

Ministry of the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-
Day Adventist

National Council of Family Relations