

Liberty University

**Growing a God-Centered Academy in the Church: Developing a Spiritually-Grounded
Teaching Paradigm**

A Thesis Project Submitted to

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by

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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The Sunday schools of some churches of the Mount Olive Baptist District Association, MOBDA, are not well attended. Could effective discipleship teaching and a change in the spiritual formative mind-set of an instructor aid in disciple-making? This thesis will focus on the church's didactic ministries and the presence of God, the Holy Spirit, in those ministries. An examination of the quality of instruction and teaching materials for authentic and God-centered instruction will be studied.

It is necessary that all of the MOBDA church's teachers have a evidential relationship with the Holy Spirit. An instructor who is consistently spiritually grounded as they disseminate, articulate, and exegetically study the Bible and the teaching materials, will spiritually benefit the students. The pastors, teachers and students participating in the teaching ministries of a regional Baptist District Association will be surveyed. The survey will investigate the possible influence of the Holy Spirit within their teaching processes, whether the teaching materials are spiritually adequate, and how a more spiritually sensitive teaching paradigm may be developed for church growth. Quantitative research will also be conducted to provide additional information concerning: (1) The practices present in the current church teaching paradigms, (2) The phenomena of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit necessary for teaching, (3) An instructor's spiritual formational impact on the Christian teaching ministries. And (4) Areas of concern in the Christian teaching environment. Survey results will be tabulated, scored and analyzed, providing information that may effectively impact the methodology of each church's teaching ministries.

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Abbreviations

MOBDA	<i>Mount Olive Baptist District Association</i>
NBCA	<i>National Baptist Convention of America</i>
NBCUSA	<i>National Baptist Convention United States of America</i>

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The two main aspects of the thesis title, *God-Centered Academy* and *Spiritually-Grounded Teaching*, are purposed to direct attention to the state of the didactic ministries of the church. Matthew 28:20 explicitly commands every believer to execute discipleship training through teaching.¹ The text reads, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

MINISTRY CONTEXT

The Sunday school teaching materials, teaching cultures and school environments are similar among the churches of the Mount Olive Baptist District Association of Southern Illinois, MOBDA, which is comprised of ten active churches. These churches are predominately African-American with congregations composed of diverse economic and educational backgrounds. These churches are members of the Illinois National Baptist State Convention of America, which is headquartered in Chicago, Illinois. The Sunday schools of the vast majority of these churches secure their materials for biblical instruction from the same source, R. H. Boyd Publishing Company of Nashville, Tennessee. However, the instructional materials secured for teaching may not define a Sunday school as a paradigm with a Christian focus and a Christian education intentionality based upon Scripture and faith in God. David Smith in his book, *On Christian Teaching, Practicing Faith in the Classroom*, presents four aspects of teaching that may define Christian education: (1) If the topic of instruction is from a Christian viewpoint, (2) if faith is discussed and how it interacts with the subject, (3) if the Bible is interwoven with the topic, and

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the King James Version (B. B. Kirkbridge Bible Company, Inc., 2007).

(4) if Scripture and Christian doctrine is communicated.² The pedagogy may be present but is it Christian? The world's secular teaching paradigms may have various and even intense motivations for teaching but this differs from Spirit led teaching in the Christian church. 1 John 2:27 states, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

The building of the Kingdom of God through Spirit guided teaching is bestowed upon God's church. In the Gospel of Matthew 28:19, Jesus Christ declares, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" This commandment comes with an additional clause that imposes upon the person receiving it that they are not without aid in the commandment's accomplishment. Matthew 28:20 clearly states Jesus would always be with the one executing the commandment and that this kind of teaching is necessary, the Gospel message. The ministry context in which such teaching takes place is not confined or restricted to any one place but has over time become associated with teaching founded in the church settings of today. Within the settings of the Mount Olive Baptist District Association, (MOBDA), prior to the Sunday morning church worship experience is the traditional time for Sunday school. Teaching in this venue usually lasts an hour depending on the individual church, with the subject matter coming from materials purchased from suppliers that may be common among the churches of the MOBDA.

The importance of having Christian teaching from able teachers is vital. The teaching methods should be focused on developing saints to become disciples for Christ. This will be

² David Smith, *On Christian Teaching, Practicing Faith in the Classroom*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 3.

accomplished with the aid of the Holy Spirit that dwells within each saint. This indwelling is recognized in several Scriptures: John 15:7; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19; and John 14:16-17. This God directed teaching may have modes that vary from church to church, but the essence of the ministry must remain the same which is to build the kingdom of God.

The methodology of teaching and the viability of the information is a key ingredient to discipling, building God's kingdom and the enhancement of God's church. This thesis will examine the effectiveness and the spirituality of the teaching environment to ascertain if there is a necessity for a move toward a more God-Centered Academy and Spiritually-Grounded teaching Sunday school, therefore enhancing a church's discipleship experiences.

THE PROBLEM

Growing a church through discipleship teaching has taken a serious set-back. According to *Re: Vision* by Malphurs and Penfold, church growth between 1990 and 2006 has experienced a decline of (-0.2 %), while other religions in the United States have all realized positive growth rates. Beliefs that oppose Christianity such as the Wiccans saw the greatest growth at a (4,173%) increase in the same time span.³ Why is the Christian church not experiencing growth today? Could part of the problem revolve around ineffective teaching that is not God-centered and spiritually-grounded? Christian teaching cannot secure its directives from the secular world's motivations or inspirations but must be guided and inspired by God. 1 John 2:27 explains; "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is not lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

³ Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon E. Penfold, *Re: Vision, The Key To Transforming Your Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014), 24.

The church is primarily known as a place for saints to come, worship and commune with each other, and also most importantly, to teach and to learn from one another. It is a congregation of empowered people for the kingdom of God to declare the theological constructs and realities before the world.⁴ The church is a place where people find friendship and support in times of trouble and discouragement. The church is also the place to learn, to know, and enhance the measure of faith purposefully graced to all believers through Christian discipleship that is encompassed by teaching and living the Word of God. The congregation of the church is demonstrative of God who is worshipped and has provided eternal salvation for the world through the atonement of Christ. However, there is a problem within many learning venues; the reality is that there is a lack of true discipleship immersed teaching in the academy of the church in the Sunday schools.

How are believers supposed to grow in their knowledge, gain a greater understanding of their purpose and value to the entire Body of Christ? If there are no Holy Spirit inspired directives for teaching that enable the absorption of biblical doctrine, then any discipling will flounder. How may the church become more effective and growing in the Sunday school ministries? The Word of God must be provided a teaching environment conducive to learning, proclaiming, and establishing the doctrine of the Gospel. What solutions may enhance and maintain a didactic spiritual academy of discipleship teaching ministries? This thesis will attempt to identify and investigate some of the potential discipling problems mentioned above, which are centered around the teaching constructs and spiritual formation of Sunday school instructors.

⁴ Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd Ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1984), 246.

THE PURPOSE

This thesis will seek to evaluate the contemporary constructs of the teaching and discipleship Paradigm within a rural regional church population of southern Illinois. The active churches of the Mount Olive Baptist District Association of Southern Illinois will be surveyed. The resultant quantitative research and survey will aid in the identification of any problems in their current Sunday schools. The thesis project and its survey results may enable each church's pastor to institute a Sunday school program template to provide their church with information that may facilitate a modification or development of new instructional techniques and teaching sources. In some cases there may be a prerequisite required for a spiritual paradigm shift. Such a shift could entail the reeducation of the teaching staff to fortify them in the dynamics that the Holy Spirit provides in their lives and in the administration of their teaching gifts.

It may be necessary for a shift from what has been traditionally deemed adequate to a more spiritual and impactful methodology. However, before any change can be realized within the Sunday school academy, a change in the mind-set of administration must first take place. This shift in the mind may be referred to as metanoia, a Greek term that means transcendence. Metanoia infers that a person must come to know God in a greater cognitive degree than previously known, therefore imploring that all Christians are to have a greater "awakening" in their thinking and knowing God.⁵

A paradigm shift should be implemented to move away from an inadequate system of teaching and a move into a more spiritually critical and meaningful methodology of presentation and study of the lesson. In addition, a development of lesson materials may be required that will

⁵ Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline, The Art and Practice of Learning Organization*, (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 13.

feed the needs of a student's mind, to counter the influences of false teachings in the world. Scriptures that reveals the presence of false teachings is seen in Titus 1:10-11 and 2 Peter 2:1. Traditional teaching methods that may have been effective in the past may not have the same impact today on a contemporary student. Over many decades an evolution of teaching techniques has occurred in the secular schools. Today there are devices, electronical tools and visual apparatuses designed to gain the attention and engage the thinking of a learner with far greater effect than many antiquated methods. If a paradigm shift in teaching methodology is required, a shift in the make-up of the instructor's mind-set may be necessitated as well.

Malphurs and Penfold state in *Re:Vision*, that there are three "D's" to describe the way leaders, or teachers who are leaders, execute ministry or may enhance a change in the teacher's mind-set: (1) The first "D" represents Design. Design is the understanding of how God desires the teacher to conduct their ministry. (2) The second "D" stands for Direction. Direction is the place where the Design will lead the teacher as they conduct their ministry. And (3) the third "D" is Development. Development is concerned with the on-going preparation that a teacher must undergo to conduct their ministry effectively. Of additional importance is the spiritual quality and God-gifted abilities of uniquely ordained church leaders.⁶

A God-centered academy is defined as every teaching modality within the church that is intended to enhance a disciple's knowledge of the Bible, the knowledge of God and how to live as a Christian for the advancement of the kingdom of God. This academy includes the Sunday school ministries. Such an academy would have to be led by spiritually sensitive instructors who have a deep understanding of the Scriptures, and instructors who are passionate and hungry for a

⁶ Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon E. Penfold, *Re: Vision*, 55-56.

deeper relationship with God, the Holy Spirit. Passion for teaching is a gift from God and He has gifted His saints for particular functions in his church. Passion is the ability to influence or attract others for the teaching moment, to educate them.⁷ Such a passion is needed to grow and develop a God-centered academy, which will require God-people in ministry. Not everybody can go back to formal school; however, using today's electronic capacities, it is possible to enhance one's biblical knowledge base in an effective way that is more accessible for the instructor. Education in this way benefits the teacher and the students, thus growing the church academy spiritually and naturally.⁸

This thesis survey will be compiled and analyzed using quantitative research methodologies. The resultant research survey will present a possible rationale for teaching and training, developing and implementing, a more impactful, meaningful Sunday school program. In addition, an enhancement of biblical discipleship methodology may be realized for the strengthening of all the teaching ministries.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

THE INCEPTION OF THE STUDY

The beginning of this study began with an interesting observation made early in the researcher's ministry. The personal relationship with church and the functionality of the teaching venues were very attractive in this researcher's Christian walk. However, as the grace of time was given, a plateau of learning was realized which was associated with a plateau of impactful teaching by the instructors of the Sunday school. The researcher noticed that during secular

⁷ Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon E. Penfold, *Re: Vision*, 62.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

teaching, when a child progresses through grade school and then on to middle school and then high school, there was a corresponding increase in the complexities of the teaching presentation. Spiritual growth requires spiritual nourishment from the Word of God and if there is no growth in the knowledge base of the teacher, then there will be no growth in the cognitive constructs of the disciple. Ephesians 4:12 clearly states the results of sound biblically based teaching, “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Materials that are segregated according to grade or the class of the student may be purchased, consequently, the Sunday school instructors should also maintain proficiency in presenting this material at the expected level. The assumptions described may or may not be experienced in some teaching venues of the churches. The inception of this thesis project was born from the concern for a more meaningful, impactful, resident and relational teaching paradigm that would attract, inspire and embrace the hearts and minds of the mentees, the disciples.

THE NECESSARY UNINVESTIGATED ASSUMPTIONS

The Mount Olive Baptist District Association of Southern Illinois is composed of ten active churches. It is assumed that all of these churches have a Sunday school ministry. The quantity of students in attendance has not been investigated and the quality of each Sunday school has not been ascertained through direct observation. Any conversations that have taken place concerning the Sunday schools have indicated that there is minimal attendance throughout the District. The level of the imputation of the relevancy of teaching topics within the teaching academy may or may not reflect on the discipleship paradigm of each church. It is assumed that all teachers are Christian and that there is a spiritually positive awareness of the presence of God the Holy Spirit, within every believer’s life. Christ Jesus’ commission as stated in Matthew

28:19-20, must be germane to each church, regardless of their physical size, location and fiduciary responsibilities.

Any comparison between the methodologies and functionalities of teaching in the city and the rural churches of the District is not ascertained. The population of the memberships may differ from city to rural churches which may affect the monetary funds available for an enhanced teaching methods and teaching aids or assets. The thesis will not investigate these supposed instructional variations. The community environments associated with each church's niche may vary economically and ethnically but are not the focus of this thesis.

The educational levels achieved, whether seminary or from a secular teaching institution, of the pastors, administrators, teachers, and students is not investigated. Only the number of years actively ministering in the teaching academy is sought through the research project survey.

THE ASSUMPTIONS PERTAINING TO THE NATURE OF THE BEHAVIOR STUDIED

Discipleship and attendance in the teaching paradigms of the Christian churches may be related and dependent upon the quality of teaching and the desires of Sunday school participants to learn and live the Word of God. There is a crisis in the Christian church, a crisis that entails a lack of studying with a spiritual erudition of Scripture. Kenneth H. Gourley declares that even the basic knowledge of the Bible is critically low. Gourley places the solution for reversing this crisis within the responsibility of the churches' pastors.⁹ Jesus emphasized teaching several times in stating the commission to his disciples. (Matthew 28: 19-20). Teaching in the New Testament usage in the Greek is the verb *didaskontes*' translation indicating Jesus' desire for his disciples to

⁹ Kenneth H. Gourley, "An Assessment of Biblical Knowledge Among Adult Southern Baptist Sunday School Participation," *Christian Education Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2013): 9.

teach in a manner that focuses upon the “way of God.”¹⁰ In the processes of teaching disciples the “way of God” instruction is vital to edification of the church and the kingdom of God. The privation or inadequate teaching and learning Scripture, will cause a mirrored lack of genuine and empowered disciples living effectively for Christ Jesus. Gourlay’s article on *An Assessment of Bible Knowledge*, refers to John McArthur’s *Our Suffering for Christ*, concerning the decline in a didactic instruction environment in the church as, “An irrational and anti-intellectual mysticism that is the antithesis of Christian theology has infiltrated the church.” Thus, inferring that sound biblical doctrine has been replaced by personal experiences and feelings.¹¹ If sound biblical doctrine has been surpassed by the emotional, popular and current religious social trends which attempt to relate to the Word of God in the teaching paradigm, then discipleship will suffer along with the intelligent realization of the purpose for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The degradation of the spiritually guided teaching of Scripture must be countered and reversed toward a more spiritually viable Christian teaching reality. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 4:2).

THE UNDERLYING THEORY OF THE METHODOLOGY

The research instrument, a survey presented to the churches of the MOBDA is the foundational means to ascertain the answers to four questions that are the core to the survey domains: (1) What practices are present in the current church teaching paradigms? (2) How is the phenomena of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit necessary for teaching? (3) How may an instructor’s “Spiritual Formation” impact the teaching ministries? And (4) What are some areas of concern in the teaching environment? The nature of this survey has an asymmetric scale.

¹⁰ Thoralf Gilbrant, Ed., *The New Testament Greek-English Dictionary, Delta-Epsilon*, (Springfield, Missouri: The Complete Biblical Library, 1990), 117.

¹¹ Kenneth H. Gourley, “An Assessment of Biblical Knowledge”, 9.

Unlike a Likert scale that provides an answer of neutrality, this survey will be a forced Likert scale that has no value of indifference.¹² The asymmetric, forced Likert survey model, will present questions to the participants with one of the four following choices: Not Important [0]; Somewhat Important (1) ; Important (2) ; and Very Important (3). The participants' answers will be scaled for examination and interpretation during the later phase of the research. This will provide an understanding of the qualities and character for the MOBDA Sunday schools.¹³

Prior to mailing the surveys, a letter will be sent to the District Moderator seeking permission to conduct the survey within the MOBDA. The survey that will be disseminated to these churches will then be placed in the care of each pastor. It will be their responsibility to ensure that each teacher and student that is presently attending the Sunday school is provided a survey. There will be a pre-stamped return addressed envelope attached to each survey to ensure that the answers remain secure and the participants remain anonymous.

The survey consists of 21 questions. (See Appendix B). To ensure a timely return of the surveys, a time deadline for submission, May 31, 2019, was provided. The thesis project is designed to educate and aid every church's pastor to a possible need for a paradigm shift in their teaching methodology to advance a greater knowledge of the purpose and spiritual heartbeat of their teachers and students. Most teachers know their student's needs, however, there may be underlying, unrealized relational issues that this thesis project may not reveal. The traditional or non-traditional teaching tools may not be a hinderance to growing the didactic ministries. The

¹² Ankar Joshi, et al., "Likert scale: Explained and Explored.", *British Journal of Applied Sciences and Technology*, Vol. 7(4), no. BJUST, (2015): 397-398, accessed April 5, 2019, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276394797>.

¹³ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research, A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 113-115.

survey may provide some indications pertaining to a possible change to the traditional or non-traditional teaching tools. The thesis project is not an adverse criticism or condemnation of any programs that are presently in operation. The results and culmination of the paper will act as an aid to the pastors and the ministry staff and attendees.

Some discussion among various MOBDA pastors has preceded the inception and formulation of this thesis project. Sunday school students, while living in a secular society, have been exposed to a plethora of information that is antithetical to Christian values and teachings. To help combat such oppositional literature, the findings of this research intends to provide information to help build a more spiritually based teaching ministry. This thesis project will attempt to focus on the problem of low disciple-making and discipleship within the Sunday schools which some of the pastors have already voiced a concern. Therefore, it is hoped that each pastor and their Sunday school ministries will consider the research instrument's requests.

Quantitative research will investigate the present state of the Sunday school teaching paradigms within the MOBDA as related to contemporary Christian teaching practices. Quantitative research will explore the context and content of the natural environment of the Sunday schools. The students and the instructors define each Sunday school setting and are the causative components of the Sunday schools' personalities.¹⁴ The spiritual formation of everybody involved in teaching will be assessed to gauge the degree of sensitivity to the indwelling Holy Spirit's guidance that an instructor portrays during the teaching experience. The theoretical and theological validation or invalidation of the necessity of a spiritually-grounded Sunday school teaching within a God-centered academy will be investigated. The knowledge

¹⁴ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theological and Qualitative Research*, 2 Ed., (London, UK: SCM Press, 2016), 43.

acquired through this thesis project may provide the impetus for change within the teaching paradigm through this quantitative research.¹⁵ The results are not expected to reflect on no other churches but those of the MOBDA. The resultant research may aid the pastors of the MOBDA in assessing their Sunday school programs, to engage and benefit a greater paradigm for educating and growing disciples for the kingdom of God.

The survey is one angle of a three-angled study using a triangulation methodology applied in this project. Sensing describes triangulation as, “multiple data-collection technologies designed to measure a single concept or construct.”¹⁶ The external and internal research information revealed through research must be reliable. Triangulation’s three sources of data will aid in ensuring a valid study. There are three areas of concern that triangulation methodology may provide: (1) Reliability, (2) Internal validity, and (3) External validity in presenting a viable thesis project.¹⁷ The processes that are performed within this study should be reproducible by another researcher. This is called “Reliability”. The data collected should lead to similar conclusions when observed from another’s vantage point. Internal validity is concerned with the survey process and methodology that produces the data attained and quantified. External validity is congruent with the ability to reproduce the study on a greater scale and determine the usability of the research for a larger audience of similar composition.¹⁸ The three angles of data collection of triangulation impressed upon this study are Theoretical, Theological and Practical (the researcher’s survey). From these three vantage points, the results

¹⁵ John Swinton, *Practical Theological and Qualitative Research*, 43.

¹⁶ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 72.

¹⁷ Kjell Erik Rudestam and Rae R. Newton, *Surviving Your Dissertation, A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process*, (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 2007), 112, 114.

¹⁸ Kjell Erik Rudestam, *Surviving Your Dissertation*, 113.

will contrast, compare, and expose any tension in the teaching paradigm of the Sunday school.¹⁹ Surveying the internal validity of the church community, the MOBDA, will depend on the validity and the design of the questions presented to the participants and their responses.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS OF THE STUDY

Southern Illinois is composed of small rural communities. Presently, there are ten active churches that are geographically encompassed within an area of 120 miles at the extreme distances. The largest populated city is Carbondale, Illinois with a population of 26,000 residents excluding the university which has an enrollment of approximately 13,000 students. The MOBDA churches range from Centralia to Metropolis, Illinois and is composed of ten churches. The active membership enrollment of each individual District church varies from 30 to 70 members. The employment opportunities for these residents are concentrated in the healthcare, university, small businesses and small industries, including coal mining. It remains difficult for the youth in the MOBDA's communities to obtain employment that is financially significant to maintaining a household.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MINISTRY

The spiritual formation of a teacher is paramount to ministry. Christian teaching, in an effective manner, must impart and aid in the spiritual empowerment of the student. The Sunday school teaching moment, all Christian teaching, must first be concerned with a relationship between God, the Holy Spirit, and the students, which supersedes what some have deemed more important, the physical activities such as the methodologies, presentations and protocols of teaching. (Psalm 119:12; Deuteronomy 6:5-7). Alice R. Cullinan in her article, *The Role of*

¹⁹ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 73-75.

Schooling in Christian Education as Spiritual Formation, sites John Ackerman concerning a quality relationship with God:

Christian spirituality is a specific quality of relationship - loving God, neighbor, and self and receiving love and grace. Perhaps the fullest expression of Christian spirituality in the New Testament is in Paul's prayer that the Ephesians be strengthened in your inner being with power through the Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love and that you know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3 16-19)²⁰

Within the Christian teaching environment there are disciplines that are not only taught to the disciple but are also lived as an example before them. This reality of allowing God to manifest his empowerment within that teacher and then to be an example before the student disciple, is a witness of a new life transformed from an old nature to enhance the kingdom of God.²¹

The Great Commission calls for every disciple to teach: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;" (Matthew 28:19-20). The Sunday school ministry of teaching is vital to the health and growth of a church and its members, the Body of Christ. Elmer Towns stated during a National Christian Education Study Seminar, December 2-4, 1975, held in Itasca, Illinois, that the Sunday school and the church have the same agendas, The Sunday school ministry is the center of the church's existence because it is the source of evangelism, discipling and training for the church's members.²²

²⁰ Alice R. Cullinan, *The Role of Schooling in Christian Education as Spiritual Formation*, *Review and Expositor*, vol. 98, (2001): 396.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Elmer Towns, *The Aggressive Sunday School, The Successful Sunday School and Teacher's Almanac*, *National Christian Education Study Seminar*, Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, (1975): 25.

DEFINITIONS

To aid in facilitating clarity and to focus on this study's aims, The terms used within the context of this thesis are provided and defined.

1. *The Church Academy*. The Church academy is the teaching ministries within a church or congregational setting, not a seminary or any institutional organization of learning. The church academy is comprised of the Sunday school ministries conducted on Sundays during the mornings preceding worship services and bible studies and other teaching ministries whenever they may be conducted.
2. *The Teaching Paradigm*. The teaching paradigm is the systematic means of teaching a Sunday school that involves the lesson plans, divisions of classes, the spiritual quality of the teachers, and the spiritual and physical environment of the teaching moment.
3. *Spiritual Formation*. Spiritual formation is, "The grace-driven developmental process in which the soul grows in conformity to the image of Christ."²³ Spiritual formation is required within the context of teaching, spiritually enhancing and focusing a disciple's mind-set as that mind engages the Scriptures. (Romans 8:29-30).
4. *Sunday School*. Sunday school is an important and vital component to the church's didactic disciple-making ministries. The Sunday school classes may be divided into age specific classes or classes that minister to particular needs or concerns of the attendees. The Sunday morning teaching venue is experienced within the context of the local District churches and traditionally precedes the Sunday morning worship service.

²³ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image, Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 515.

5. *The Teaching Environment.* Environments for Christian teaching may vary from church to church and may be differentiated according to a church's financial resources, space availability, the community's culture/needs and spiritual necessities.
6. *Empowerment.* The power that is provided by God through his Spiritual reality to enable a disciple of Christ to live a life that edifies and enhances the kingdom of God. It is empowerment that exudes in the teaching capacities of the Sunday school instructors to instill within the students a greater capacity to live the Christian life.
7. *District.* District refers to the churches of the Mount Olive Baptist District Association of Southern Illinois. The District is composed of ten financially active churches.
8. *Spiritually-Grounded.* Ephesians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19 and John 14:16-17, indicate the truth that Christians have God the Holy Spirit within them. Therefore, a spiritually-grounded disciple is one that yields to the presence and leading of God the Holy Spirit.
9. *God-Centered.* Matthew 22:37-40 describes the heart and mind of a God-centered person. Such a God-Centered individual depends on this centeredness for all aspects of life and the execution of Matthew 28:19-20. Ephesians 3:17-19 describes some of the tenets of a God-Centered life.
10. *Church.* The Church is simultaneously a natural and a metaphysical entity which is constantly growing toward its predestined reality in God. The Church is the center of all the activities of the ascended Christ and of worship for the surrogate family of Jesus Christ.²⁴ In the context of a sentence when capitalized, Church, refers to the great

²⁴ Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 246.

Church of which Christ Jesus is the Head. (Ephesians 2:19-22; Matthew 16:18 and 1 Peter 2:5). Lower case, church, refers to the local churches.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

LIMITATIONS

A limitation of this thesis project is that the researcher has selected churches within a particular niche, the Mount Olive Baptist District Association of Southern Illinois, and has not selected other churches from a mixture of other denominations who may also have study ministries with similar discipleship problems. The researcher also knows many of the participants of the survey and thus may have some expectations as to how the participant may answer the questions. This is the impetus for ensuring that the survey is designed to be strictly anonymous. The researcher must stress that all answers portray true reflection of the mind-set of the survey participants. Additionally, the survey's construction may be a limitation to the body of information collected that will greatly influence the resultant findings. Therefore, the researcher must ensure that the questions that are formulated succinctly satisfy the needs of the thesis.

DELIMITATIONS

A delimitation is that the churches selected for the survey are all African American churches that were originally founded on an average of over 120 years ago . Even though many changes have taken place, much of the source materials for church education stem from traditional sources. Instructional traditions and methods have been ingrained over decades and may be a hindrance to any suggested change. At the time of this writing, the researcher is the First Vice Moderator of the Mount Olive Baptist District Association. The researcher's MOBDA membership, eleven years to date, has been congruent with being pastor of an active District

church. Consequently, consent to perform this survey will not be difficult . However, the consent must be sensitive to the fundamental freedoms of the participants who should answer as honestly as possible without any pressure from their pastors or instructors even though the survey is to be private and anonymous. Another delimitation may be the quantification of the Holy Spirit within the teaching paradigm. Dependence on the participants to answer, subjectively, as they actually relate to the Holy Spirit is key. Objectively answering may state what Scripture reveals but not what is the respondent's actual relationship with the Holy Spirit.

THE THESIS STATEMENT

Christian disciple-making becomes problematic when Christian teaching is subordinated and discounted in comparison to anything in the Christian church. The inspiration of God the Holy Spirit must guide every teacher's efforts to instruct the students, disciples, in ways that are efficacious, empowering and God-centered. The direct results of such didactic Christian instruction will enhance the church in numerical growth and a true love for God, love for people and a love for one's self.²⁵ The instruction of how to live the gospel message is primary. Timothy Keller states in his book *Center Church*:

Most of our problems in life come from a lack of proper orientation to the gospel. Pathologies in the church and sinful patterns in our individual lives ultimately stem from a failure to think the deep implications of the gospel and to grasp and believe the gospel through and through. Put positively, the gospel transforms our hearts and our thinking and changes our approaches to absolutely everything. When the gospel is expounded and applied in its fullness in the church, that church will look unique. People will find it an attractive, electrifying balance of moral conviction and compassion.²⁶

²⁵ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 25.

²⁶ Timothy Keller, *Center Church, Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 51.

For a church to exhibit a true culture of “moral conviction and compassion,” spiritual formation must be an on-going process within the church academy for all attendees of the church’s Sunday schools. The present teaching constructs may have to be altered or set-aside making it possible to teach lessons that are germane to a highly sophisticated, techno-savvy, and anti-Christian world. To challenge the environmental realities of a distracting worldly influence and locally unsaved communities, the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit is the life breath of growing a God-centered academy and developing a spiritually-grounded teaching paradigm. (John 14:26). Therefore, the examination of the spiritual quality of instruction and the dynamics of teaching methods of an authentic and God-centered Sunday school within the MOBDA will be studied.

SUMMARY

Spirit influenced Christian teaching is a foundational aspect for disciple-making and discipleship. Upon this foundation of Spirit led teaching, the Sunday schools of the ten churches who are members of the Mount Olive Baptist District Association of Southern Illinois, may prosper naturally and spiritually. This thesis will examine the God-centeredness and the spiritual aspects of the teaching paradigms of the MOBDA Sunday school teaching academies. Enhancing the dynamics of the Sunday schools may correlate with an enhancement of enrollment and the spiritual vitality of the student disciple.

God, the Holy Spirit, is the operational being that produces the correct dimensions for teaching through every teacher that stands before any disciple with the intentionality of leading a student to a deeper and more fulfilling relationship with God. Jesus graciously states in John 14:16-17, “And I will pray the father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” The

ongoing process of spiritual formation within a Christian teacher is necessary for the church's academy's growth and the internal didactic growth of a disciple. The researcher suggests that a greater attentiveness and intentional move toward a more spiritually-grounded teaching paradigm may aid in the growth of an impactful kingdom edifying church.

Quantitative research through triangulation methodology will be employed. Theoretical, theological and a research survey will compose the three methods of triangulation. The research survey of this thesis is constructed from four questions: (1) What practices are present in the current church teaching paradigms? (2) How is the phenomena of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit necessary for teaching? (3) How may an instructor's "Spiritual Formation" impact the teaching ministries? And (4) What are some areas of concern in the teaching environment? The resultants from the survey may warrant an evaluation of a church's Sunday school dynamics for an enhanced modification if deemed necessary by each District church's pastor. This thesis is designed to be an aid to every church and their pastor for the spiritual enrichment of each District Sunday school.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE DISCIPLE-MAKING MANDATE

The complexities of the right functionalities of a Christian church stem from foundational teachings and the commission stated in Matthew 28:19-20. The operations of the Christian Church, the Body of Christ, have no options to explore when assaying its directives, and mission. Evangelism, seeking those outside the church to become members of the church, is the initial impetus for edifying the kingdom of God. Evangelism must be realized as a germane organ of every Christians life and living. The modes of operation may vary but sharing the message of salvation must be an ingrained identity for all Christians.²⁷ Once an individual becomes a Christian, the process of knowing and growing in the Lord begins with almost seamless fluidity between evangelism and disciple-making. The role of the Sunday school now comes into fruition through a consistent and impactful methodology of teaching.

Foremost, an impactful-methodology, righteous evangelistic and disciple-making methods, must be rational and cognitive, making sense to a disciple of Christ. The church's teaching moderm must penetrate a person's highest perspectives and values system in such a manner as to exact a transformational shift from world values to placing Christ's teaching in the superior position in their lives.²⁸ For the Christian church, disciple-making is a mandate from Jesus Christ to the Church in order to grow the kingdom of God. The phrase disciple-making is

²⁷ David Early and David Wheeler, *Evangelism Is, How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2010), 21.

²⁸ Will McRaney Jr., *The Art of personal Evangelism, Sharing Jesus in a Changing Culture*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2003), 107.

derived from a Greek verb, *matheteusate*,²⁹ meaning to “become a disciple and to make a disciple of Christ.” A clearer definition describes a disciple as becoming a pupil of a mentor. *Matheteusate* encompasses more than teaching. Disciple-making entails a way of living the Christian life by the mentor as an example to the disciple. Therefore, disciple-making requires a training of the will of an individual’s soul and the engagement of their intellect to serve others as Jesus served.³⁰ Teaching within the context of the church must not only define the essence of the Scriptures but must also be evident in the character and outward exhibition of a life committed to Christ. Such a teaching paradigm would significantly aid discipleship.

There are three components to disciple-making that differentiates it from discipleship: (1) Deliverance. (2) Development. (3) Deployment.³¹ Bill Hull states that the deliverance process of evangelism acts through the Holy Spirit and intelligently reversing a soul’s progressive falling away toward eternal damnation and then bringing that soul to a realization of salvation in Jesus Christ. Teaching is a facet to this transformational process that includes baptism as recorded in Matthew 28:19. The development of a mature disciple is the main teaching objective for a Christian teacher. The character and the capacity to endure in a spiritually adverse community centers upon correct Christian doctrinal teaching. Hull also states that deployment is the sending of the disciple into the world once their training has matured equipping them sufficiently to “go” and make other disciples. Discipleship is viewed by Bill Hull as the “ongoing life” that extends beyond the initial disciple-making process and is defined by the consistent living of the Christian

²⁹ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship, On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, (Colorado Springs, CO: Tyndale House Publishers, 2006), 14.

³⁰ Thoralf Gilbrant, International Ed., *The New Testament Greek-English Dictionary, Lambda-Omicron*, (Springfield, MO: The Complete Bible Library, 1990), 98.

³¹ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 14.

life.³² When there is a lack of maturation in a disciple, that disciple’s goals and desires for a whole Christian life may be compromised. A strong church academy should afford every disciple and saint, with a holistic understanding of their Christian goals and aspirations. George Barna in his book, *Growing True Disciples, 2001*, provides the following table that depicts the Christian goals of believers in Christ.³³

Table 1. The Personal Spiritual Goals of Born-Again Adults

Grow spiritually (no specifics)	26
Live a life that's more pleasing to God (no specifics)	19
Be involve in spiritual growth activities (no specifics)	15
Read the Bible more, know more Bible content	14
Attend church more consistently	13
Have a better prayer life	11
Serve other people, have a personal ministry	10
Participate more frequently in church activities	9
Improve the spiritual state of my family	7
Have good feelings about myself	2
Don't remember the goals	5

(Note: percentages add to more than 100% because people were allowed to provide more than one reply.) (N=417)

Even though the believers were allowed to answer more than one category, only (26%) chose to “grow spiritually (no specifics)”. Basically one out of every four Christians were concerned with their spiritual growth. Today the repercussions may be manifested in a low

³² Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 15.

³³ George Barna, *Growing True Disciples, New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ*, (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2001), 37.

attendance in the Sunday schools. Consequently, such low attendance may be the result of an inadequate disciple-making teaching paradigm, that is inclusive of the weak spirituality of instruction and some mis-guided traditional methodologies.

THE CHURCH ACADEMY: THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

During the early nineteenth century, the need for a teaching paradigm was born during the time of the industrial revolution and the socioeconomic conditions that lessened the collectivism ideology of life. The individual became more independent and their thinking became more exposed to alternatives to Christianity.³⁴ Charles Darwin's 1859 book *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, Karl Marx's 1848 *Communist Manifesto* and later in the 19th century the work of Sigmund Freud, challenged some fundamental Christian beliefs. The church-going saint was being confronted with a plethora of socially, economically, and psychologically progressive thinking that, in many cases, ran counter to established Bible doctrine. In addition, people began to seek wealth and comforts that went beyond the bare necessities of living. The traditional methods of Christian instruction, preaching/teaching, on Sundays was not reaching many souls and so the Sunday school was birthed to aid in the religious instruction of the Christian community.³⁵ A God-centered academy and a spiritually-grounded teaching paradigm, the Sunday school, was greatly needed then as it is today, for the disciple-making functionality of the Church. The materials required to teach and grow the Sunday schools' teaching paradigm for the African American community's largest church

³⁴ Justo L. Gonzales, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 2, The Reformation to Present Day*, (New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1985), 283.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 283-285

groups were created in 1895 with the formation of the National Baptist Convention USA, NBCUSA.

The NBCUSA was birth in 1895 in Atlanta, Georgia with the coalescence of three Baptist groups: the National Baptist Educational Convention, the American National Baptist Convention and the Foreign Mission Convention.³⁶ A year later in 1896, within the new NBCUSA the National Baptist Publishing Board was established by Rev. C. H. Clark and Rev. R. H. Boyd who were chairman and the general secretary respectively. All publishing for the churches and Sunday schools was granted by the NBCUSA to the National Baptist Publishing Board, which became the largest black publishing firm in the world by 1898.³⁷ The year 1909 realized not only a rapidly growing black Baptist publication company, but also the establishment of the National Baptist Teacher-Training Service with the Rev. N. H. Pius as superintendent. The National Baptist Publishing Board became the focal point of great unrest between Rev. R. H. Boyd and the NBCUSA over publishing legalities.³⁸

The division and subsequent break from the National Baptist Convention USA, in 1915, gave birth to the National Baptist Convention of America, NBCA, which is the parent body from which the Mount Olive Baptist District Association of Southern Illinois has its affiliation. This division stemmed from a disagreement and court case concerning the ownership of The National Baptist Publishing Board. At the Annual Session in 1951 in Chicago, after much heated debate and litigation, Rev. R.H. Boyd and his followers won their case.³⁹ At the time of this

³⁶ Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptists*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1985), 78-79.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 83.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

writing, the materials purchased and used by many of the MOBDA churches are obtained from the R.H. Boyd Publishing firm located in Nashville.

Around the turn of the century, 1890 to 1910, the unity between the various black church denominations, for the season it did survive, existed during a time of great social persecution in the United States. This denominational unity was a great asset for the black church and its communities. The southern states had passed legislation to discount the humanity of the African American and withhold from them any equal rights, controlling the Black American through Jim Crow laws, lynching and “separate but equal” laws in all social venues. In 1896, the U. S. Supreme Court was responsible for the supporting this oppression by judicating the case of *Plessy versus Ferguson* which upheld constitutionally racial segregation laws.⁴⁰

Today the research community of this thesis, the Mount Olive Baptist District Association, is a church community with a rich history whose date of origin is somewhat in question with a founding date in the 1850’s just prior to the Civil War, to an inception date immediately following the end of the war. The African American church academy experienced dire needs, and various complications of life during a period of American history’s socioeconomic and educational realities of discrimination, segregation and Jim Crow laws. For this community of African American believers the Sunday school became vital.

There is an uniqueness associated with the Sunday schools of the African American church. Historically, the inception of a Sunday school was birthed and grew after the end of the Civil War. The Sunday school would become an agent of change through Christian teaching, not only biblical but also academic instruction. Along with instruction in biblical doctrine and

⁴⁰ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 28.

principles, the Sunday school students learned how to read and write being inspired by their teachers to grow spiritually and academically. Consequently, the Sunday schools for the African American community became vital to a community's growth, social awareness and political activism.⁴¹ Sunday school teachers, in some cases, used their teaching moments as opportunities to advance political agendas, and social issues of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With the prejudicial Jim Crow laws afflicting the church's populace and the lives of so many African American churches, the gathering, the congregations were natural places to effect social change in their communities.⁴² The question may be asked, did Christian instruction and disciple-making as related to African American Sunday schools suffer during those historical times? In the midst of such a social and spiritual persecution, was born an understanding by African American religious polity that righteous preaching and teaching must prevail. William J. Simmons, D.D., Field Secretary, American Baptist Home Mission – *The National Baptist Magazine*, April 1896, stated in the Introduction of *The Baptist Standard Church Directory and Busy Pastor's Guide*:

Our independent church government can be both a hinderance and an advantage. If we fail to use our restrained powers with the proper Bible limitations and allow our independence to be the means in the hands of corrupt men of filling our pulpits with bad materials, or on the other hand permit ignorance to triumph over knowledge, drive the intelligent people from us and disgust the refined and truly moral who would cast their religious fortune with us, we alone are the blame.⁴³

The expressed determination by William J. Simmons for the African American Baptist Church to uphold the highest standards of Christian teaching is timely and appreciated. The multi-faceted

⁴¹ Patricia Haggler, "From the Black Church Basement to Public Pavement: Grassroots Alliances, the Sunday School Organized Youth Activism, and a Public Theology of Education." *Religious Education*, vol. 113, no. 5 (2018): 464.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 464, 465, 475.

⁴³ L. G. Jordan, and A. M. Townsend, et. al., *The Baptist Standard Church Directory and Busy Pastor's Guide*, Nashville, (TN: Sunday School Publishing Board, 1929), vi.

approach of teaching to feed the entire man, spiritually and naturally, was accomplished. A holistic Sunday school of that crucial period in history, that attempted to provide instruction for many secular agendas, initially does not appear to satisfy Matthew 28:19-20. However, such a history gives credence to the early disciple-making growth and the activist nature that may be observed in the African American church today. A more dynamic focus toward disciple-making for the edification of the church body and the glory of God must be realized, and not a total rejection of social activism as long as it advances the Kingdom of God. The teachings of the Bible must continue to be the supreme and a very assertive influence in the church academy, the Sunday schools.

The Aggressive Sunday School article, recalling Elmer Towns when he spoke at a National Christian Education Seminar, stated that the Sunday school is determined to be healthy according to a percentage of the church's demographics. The points presented on the curve depict a breakdown of a Sunday school attendance: Nursery: (7%), Pre-school: (8%), Primary classes: (15%), Junior classes: (18%), Junior High and High school: (12%), and Adult classes: (40%). "Normal churches" follow this curve, however, an unhealthy church does not, which may be an indication of poor leadership.⁴⁴ The education of the disciple through an aggressive Sunday school is critical to the growth of a church. Towns believes that there is a direct correlation between the teaching of correct theology to a disciple and the disciple's correct thinking. A healthy growing church must have leadership and teaching, that primarily believes in the importance of the church. A leader must also promote biblical evangelistic methods that are mentored before a disciple, convincing that disciple of the integrity of the methodology. Towns

⁴⁴ Elmer Towns, *The Aggressive Sunday School*, 31.

also stressed that a growing church must believe and commit to the actualization of the Great Commission.⁴⁵

Reaching every person for the building of the Body of Christ is paramount. Some people may come from other churches and then there are the first-time church attendees, the unchurched. Sunday school plays an important role in reaching and retaining the unchurched. The retention appears to be justified by providing a Sunday program where the entire family may attend at the same time but in various classes. The unchurched also enjoy the flow from the Sunday school classes into the worship service. The ease of transition from school to the worship experience is conducive for growing relationships, spiritually and naturally, within the church body and also for the spiritual edification of the new believers.⁴⁶ Sunday school attendance is noted to have a profound impact upon the unchurched who attend both the teaching academy and the worship services. Those who attend both are five times more likely to be found in church five years later than those that attend only the worship services and no Sunday school.⁴⁷

Retention is also aided by having a well-trained Sunday school staff. The church academy is a ministry that has to be staffed by the right people. God has provided gifted people in his church to fulfill the primary objectives of his plans. People are the greatest resource a church and its ministries possess. Teaching, by discipleship centered methodologies, embodies a teacher's ultimate goal which is to bring glory to God and to edify God's kingdom.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Elmer Towns, *The Aggressive Sunday School*, 35

⁴⁶ Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights From the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 116-117.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁴⁸ Gary L. McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth, How You Can Work with God to build a Faithful Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 63, 111.

THE TEACHING PARADIGM

This thesis is concerned with the validity and spirituality of the teaching process and the instruments of that process, mainly the teachers and the teaching materials. The Bible stands as the standard for all theology, doctrine, and teaching conducted in the school of Christ. The Bible is the “infallible and inerrant truth from God, therefore, all teaching must stem from the Word of God.”⁴⁹ There are arguments concerning the inerrancy of the Bible, that inerrancy should not be a fundamental teaching in the school of Christ. However, in opposition to such an argument, inerrancy is called, “the fundamental of the Fundamentals” of the Christian doctrine. Norman Geisler states in *Systematic Theology, Introduction, Bible*, “. . . the Bible is a fundamental of Fundamentals, and if a fundamental of the Fundamentals is not fundamental, then what is fundamental? The answer is : fundamentally nothing.”⁵⁰

Christian doctrine is central to the teaching that takes place in the Sunday school environment and is the foundational beliefs that is the footing upon which the Church stands and has its bearing. Christian doctrine proclaims the church’s understanding of God, how God relates and acts in relationship with all creation especially mankind, teaching how to overcome the reality of sin, the expression and essence of all that opposes God’s nature. The study of Christian doctrine is also known as theology, and the doctrine of the Christian faith is the study of God.⁵¹

Therefore, within the teaching venues of the Christian church, there must be the study of God. The teaching paradigm is congruent with the teaching of God. First the teaching of God is

⁴⁹ Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology, Introduction, Bible*, Vol. 1., (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2002), 218.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 505.

⁵¹ Millard J. Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 16.

biblical, taken from the entire counsel of God primarily the Old and New Testaments, inclusive of the creation of God that teaches additional doctrinal essences of God.⁵² In Romans 1:19-20, the Apostle Paul states:

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

The psalmist in Psalm 19:1 also bears witness to the teaching of the doctrine of God, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.” Secondly, doctrinal teaching is theological holistic and is conclusive in its interpretation of all Scripture. Third, the teaching of Christian doctrine is related to human culture in all of humanity’s realities, the living and historical aspects of man’s culture. A fourth aspect of doctrine is the timeliness and truthfulness of the Word of God for the people of every generation. And last, Christian doctrine is usable and practical for mankind inspiring a faith-filled hope for tomorrow.⁵³

The teaching paradigm of every Christian church is the heartbeat of that church and the core of that church’s evangelistic and disciple-making endeavors. The methodologies that comprise the heartbeat of that church, the teaching paradigm, may vary from church to church being predicated upon that church’s niche and the community’s cultural reality. The apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, tells the church to be flexible in the presentation of the Gospel before a diverse community of the unsaved without compromising the Word of God:

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that

⁵² Millard J. Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*, 16.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

The culture of a community may be segregated according to economics, ethnicity, social-geographical, and educational strata. The diverse teaching environments within which to minister the Gospel were understood and mandated before the early disciples and also the disciples today being stated in Acts 1:8, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth.” Teaching in this context is done only when a teacher, a disciple, is empowered by God to teach, to make disciples for the edification of the kingdom of God and to glorify him. In 1 Corinthians 12:28, “and God hath some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, and after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” The Apostle Paul explains that there are different gifts within the church and not every person has been called by God to teach. The importance of such a calling to teach and the receptivity to a calling to teach is profoundly significant to the body of Christ.

The Christian must be influenced by Christian teaching in two ways: (1) The Christian must have their minds persuaded by the Word of God, effecting their intellect, their consciousness and their self-consciousness. The whole man must come under the influence of godly teaching therefore effecting every facet of a Christians life. (Ephesians 4:11-12). (2) The heart that composes the will, desires, emotions and the seat of the actions of a saint also and equally as the mind, must be subjected to the same influences of godly teaching. (Matthew 22:37-38). The Apostle Paul speaks of this influencing, impactful and persuasive edifying

teaching processes in Ephesians 4:11, “And he gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” To think, to be or do anything for God is only eventful if the heart and mind, the will, the desires, emotions, and actions of a believer are spiritually tied to the knowledge of God’s Word. This only comes through the inspiration of God, the Holy Spirit, in an edifying relationship with Him. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, and John 15:5).

Murray Capill wrote in the *Christian Teacher’s Journal* an article titled “Shaping Hearts”, provides a rich insight into the Christian teaching environment of today. “Great teaching reaches not only the minds but also the hearts of students. Teaching, at its best, is never a purely intellectual activity but a pursuit of knowledge that has the potential to impact the very centre (sic) and soul of a person’s being. Of course this is often not the case.”⁵⁴ Teaching in the church must go well beyond embedding biblical information into the hearts and minds of a believer, teaching must be transformational. The teaching described by Capill encounters the mind and the heart bringing a passion and commitment to God that is unique and positive to biblical doctrine.⁵⁵

Capill calls for a shaping of the consciousness of the disciple engaging the thinking processes by the Word of God. In addition to a change of consciousness, a change in a believer’s passion has to be manifest in a love for God that is led by the Holy Spirit. A passionate believer places the theoretical information into action. The passion of the Christian teacher reaches into the soul of the learning saint, and the Gospel consequently becomes paramount in their living. Capill succinctly describes this transformation saying, “The work of the gospel is to change our

⁵⁴ Murray Capill, Shaping Hearts, *The Christian Teacher’s Journal*, vol. 23, no. 3, (August 2015): 25.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

passions so that we are no longer driven by worldly and godless desires, but by a passion to love and serve God.”⁵⁶

Cognitive understanding of the Word of God begins the learning development stage of a Christian but must never be viewed as an end in itself, not in the church. An adoration for the Scriptures is demonstrated not only through a mental exercise of knowing, but through living the tenets of the Bible. The character of a disciple will reflect what they have been taught. Therefore, teaching must spiritually improve the life of a soul. The doctrine of Christ is solid, the way of Christ is sure, but teaching with a true love and a passion for instructing with an impactful and transformational purpose is quintessential. Knowing right from wrong is not enough, living a moral life with passion transforms a disciple of Christ.⁵⁷ Spiritually passionate teaching within the church academy should aid the predestined life of a believer to become closer to fulfilling Romans 8:29, “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren.” James said it clearly in James 1:22, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” The empowerment of the Holy Spirit to impact a soul for the edification of the kingdom of God and his glory is without measure. The continuing spiritual formation of a teacher in God’s church is a compelling, irresistible prerequisite for a righteous character-building teaching paradigm.

⁵⁶ Murray Capill, Shaping Hearts, *The Christian Teacher’s Journal.*, 27.

⁵⁷ Neil Cole, *Church 3.0, Upgrades for the Future Church*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 228, 232.

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

THEOLOGICAL CHRISTIAN TEACHING PRACTICES

Galatians 6:6, “Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.” Teaching in this context, may be viewed as an act of sharing. The Word of God that has been taught to one person should be shared with others so they too may teach and share the Gospel. The Christian practice of teaching is sharing.⁵⁸

Teaching practices that have endured in the Church are not the result of some theological conference, human ideology concerning church growth, or some philosophical expertise from ancient times. Teaching is a God given commandment. The Old Testament scripture found in Deuteronomy 6:7 commands the men and women of Israel to teach God’s commandments to their children and to teach them in the home. Teaching and learning are not contagious, however, teaching is intentional and purposeful. Psalm 1:3 tells the reader that the faithful should meditate upon the law of the Lord day and night. Today, in the Church, teaching goes forth with the same impetus. (2 Timothy 4:1-2). In the Old Testament the psalmist announces and expresses a desire that must be present in every student and teacher of the Word of God, in Psalm 143:8-10, “Cause me to hear thy loving kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee. Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.”

Christian teaching appears in the New Testament as directives and encouraging admonishments to gain a closer relationship with God. The teacher is the operative that greatly aids in the disciple-making and discipleship efforts of the church. There are three characteristics

⁵⁸ Thoralf Gilbrant, Int. Ed., *The New Testament Study Bible, Galatians – Philemon*, (Springfield, MO: World Library Press, 1992), 87.

that every teacher should have in their spiritual possession that will foster effective ministry: (1) Every teacher must be born-again and know Jesus through salvation. The Holy Spirit anoints a teacher with the gift to teach and if salvation has not been realized in that teacher, there is no anointing to teach God's Word. (1 John 2:27). (2) As a teacher grows through discipline and study of the Scriptures, a congruent love for God also develops and continues to be evident through the teaching moments and the life of that teacher. (Luke 10:27, John 14:15-23). (3) A teacher must desire to understand God's Word. Challenges arise within the teaching context through questions from the genuinely spiritually hungry students that must be effectively and rightly answered.⁵⁹ (Psalm 1:1-3; 1 John 2:5). Paul also encourages and implores the teacher and all saints to diligently study. 2 Timothy 2:15 states, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Throughout the Pauline epistles, it appears that the Apostle Paul surmised that there were several important relational qualities that a teacher should exhibit. Paul believed that it was vital to be present, as much as possible, before those he would teach. Also being present among the recipients of instruction, would lead to better relationships, building trust, love, and understanding by being an example of Christian living before the people.⁶⁰ In 1 Corinthians 4:16, Paul asks the Corinthian church to follow his examples. Once again in Philippians 3:17, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." Paul's admonishments continue to the church of Philippi as witnessed in Philippians

⁵⁹ Terence D. Linhart, *Teaching the Next Generation: A Comprehensive Guide for Teaching Christian Formation*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2016), 8.

⁶⁰ Terence D. Linhart, *Teaching the Next Generation.*, 15.

4:9, “Those things which ye have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”

Matthew 28:19-20 is the Great Commission for the edification of the Church, the kingdom of God, and his glorification. Disciple-making is a process that requires discipline and obedience to the teacher/mentor. Luke 6:40-41 cautions the disciples to focus inwardly and to be more concerned about their growth and obedience than to be critical of the growth of another’s soul. Such teaching that is commissioned by God the Son will lead to fully trained disciples that will teach others in the same manner as they were taught exacting a change in the eternal destination of would-be lost souls.⁶¹

THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit allows every believer the opportunity to know the crucified Christ by an intentional parsing of the Word of God. There is no other way to know God but by the Holy Spirit imparting to His disciples the values, doctrine and constructs for holy living. Revelation of the Scriptures is learned from the Scriptures.⁶² The Holy Spirit is “God’s ecclesiastical gift to man”.⁶³ Known as God’s Holy Spirit, the power of the Most High, the Spirit of God, the Spirit, the New Testament depicts the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of power and the Spirit of prophecy.⁶⁴ The understanding of the Word of God is facilitated through the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who manifests faith in every believer and aids them in their spiritual walk. The Holy Spirit is the power essence of God, being the third person of the Trinity. (2 Timothy 1:7). Without the Spirit,

⁶¹ Terence D. Linhart, *Teaching the Next Generation*, 10.

⁶² Jack Levison, “The Holy Spirit in I Corinthians.” *A Journal of Bible and Theology*, vol. 72, no. 1 (2018): 32.

⁶³ Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 569.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

it is not possible to live a holy and perfect life. The indwelling of the Spirit of God makes living such a life possible. Teaching the Word of God becomes very achievable when a teacher has God dwelling within them through the reality of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵

Christ Jesus declares in John 15:7, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” The dynamics of the duality of this indwelling are so profound that the Scriptures reiterate this phenomena throughout the New Testament. The indwelling of God, the Holy Spirit, satisfies the request that Christ made unto His Father that the Father would send unto the children of God “another Comforter”. (John 14:16-17). The “another” mentioned in this Scripture refers to another Comforter, Helper, that is of the same kind as Christ was. The word *paraclete*, the personification of the Holy Spirit, defines a person that comes to be at the side of a person to advise, guide, and to be an advocate for them. The *paraclete* would be with the disciples internally and manifested externally after the ascension of Jesus. The post-Pentecostal church would experience the indwelling of God which is different from the Holy Spirit’s reality with the Old Testament saints upon whom the Spirit of God rested.⁶⁶ The theological foundations concerning the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit are indisputable. John 14:26 declares, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you.”

Upon a person receiving Jesus Christ as their Savior, they are sealed with the Holy Spirit that was promised. (Ephesians 1:13-14). The soul must be impacted by the Spirit to facilitate the

⁶⁵ Ronald F. Youngblood, Gen. Ed., *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), 573.

⁶⁶ Ralph W. Harris, Ed., *The New Testament Study Bible, John*, (Springfield, MO: World Library Press, 1988), 401.

spiritual formation of a believer, and a disciple. The sealing of a believer is unbreakable and endures throughout the believer's natural life. A believer can grieve the Holy Spirit, and a believer can quench the Holy Spirit, but the sealing of the believer by God the Holy Spirit is unbreakable. (Ephesians 4:30; I Thessalonians 5:19). Paul describes the sealing of the believer as, "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." Every Christian teacher must be "born again". Therefore, every Christian teacher has the indwelling of God abiding within themselves. The power of the Holy Spirit then is the teacher that teaches through a willing and receptive teacher and student disciple.

There are two instances that may frustrate the teaching paradigm: (1) the grieving of the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 4:30, and (2) The quenching of the Holy Spirit. (1Thessalonians 5:19). Grieving the Holy Spirit is a tragedy that is fostered by consistently giving way to attitudinal sins. Unrepentant sins will harness, restrain and detain the ability of righteous teaching within the Sunday school. Quenching the Holy Spirit also speaks to the malady of "putting out" the fire of the Spirit of God.⁶⁷ Paul is very succinct in 1 Corinthians 3:16, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" In 1 Corinthians 6:19 the Apostle Paul reiterates the importance of knowing the dynamics of the indwelling of the Spirit, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

Everything that emanates from a Christian teaching paradigm comes from an obvious love for God and his Word, and Jesus Christ. The indwelling of God in the teacher during a

⁶⁷ Ralph W. Harris, Ed., *The New Testament Study Bible, Galatians – Philemon*, (Springfield, MO: World Library Press, 1992), 147, 337.

Sunday school experience must display love. This love is manifested unto the student in such a way as to compel that student to desire a greater love for God. 1 John 4 teaches and demonstrates this indwelling concept of God's love. In verse four, the Scripture declares that greater is God who indwells the saint than the spirit of the enemy that is in the world. This foundational aspect of God's empowering the saint is vital to teaching and living the Word. God is love and love is maturing as we love each other in the reality of this indwelling, therefore, Christian teaching teaches from a divine posture of love for all. (1 John 4:11-16).

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Spiritual formation is a process that may also be termed as Christian formation, and both terms are defined as the process of being conformed into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. "Spiritual formation is often understood as a dynamic process, involving intentionality, structured discipline, and congruence between outward communal activity and one's interior spiritual life."⁶⁸ A Sunday school should view spiritual formation as a means to teach and train the students in the paradigm of living as a Christian in a secular world. Spiritual formation should be a life-long learning reality where the student actualizes their on-going relationship with God the Holy Spirit that fosters a growing conformity to the likeness and image of Jesus Christ.⁶⁹

The Catholic religion provides a perspective on spiritual formation that is not unlike the Protestant understanding. Both views have a focus on knowing God and living a life in an "inner journey" with a relationship with God that affords spiritual growth. The Catholics also

⁶⁸ Alexis D. Abernathy, et. al., "Corporate Worship and Spiritual Formation; Insights from Worship Leaders." *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, vol. 34, no. 3 (2015): 267.

⁶⁹ Anne Puidk, "Fostering Spiritual Formation of Millennials in Christian Schools." *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, vol. 26, no. 1 (2017): 56.

understand the necessity for teachers to “facilitate and nurture” a relationship with God.⁷⁰ There are nine principles for effective spiritual formation according to the Catholic teaching paradigm: (1) There must be a respect for the autonomy of the disciple; (2) There must be a deeper relationship with God that is founded upon church traditions; (3) Spiritual formation must involve the community, the church and others; (4) There must be a study of contemporary theological scholarship of the Scriptures; (5) Spiritual formation is a graduated process which has its dependency upon the individual; (6) An awareness of the disciple’s ministry and vocation must be considered; (7) Spiritual formation is provided through the Catholic teaching paradigm; (8) Spiritual formation encompasses taking advantage of time and the correct opportunity for learning; and (9) Spiritual formation rests upon an understanding of the soulful compositions of the disciple.⁷¹

Spiritual formation is spiritual and is a vital element to the composition and development of every Christian. Every Christian is unique in regards to the way God has created them and how He is transforming them into the image of His Son. Spiritual formation, the transformational process, is facilitated by God the Holy Spirit and may have its roots in historical theology that is surrounded by believer’s church’s history. Spiritual formation, depending on the teaching context, may be shallow in regards to the academy of thinking or it may require a deeper understanding of pre-church history. A correct teaching of spiritual formation should flow from a mind that is seeking a greater intellectual, foundational understanding of the historical

⁷⁰ Tony Bracken, et. al., “Critical Leadership Challenge, Spiritual Formation in the Contemporary Context.” *COMPASS*, vol. 50, no. 3 (2016): 8.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

theological impacts made upon such a formation. Christian teaching is spiritual and is encompassed by the dynamic of spiritual formation.⁷² (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:15).

Additionally, fortifying the importance of spiritual formation, there is the evidence provided by those who study the theological aspects of sanctification and justification that there is a need also for Spiritual Formation. Consequently, the need for spiritual formation has an equivalent need for studying the processes of sanctification and justification. Today's church culture may be too centered on converting people to Christ and leaving out the spiritual formative components of disciple-making and discipleship.⁷³ In the journal, *Spiritual Formation in the Church*, Steven L. Porter cites Judy TenElshof as stating that spiritual formation is one of the main reasons for the existence of the church. Porter also cites Siang-Yang as also stating that spiritual formation should be the center, the focal point of the local church. The goal is to mature believers through the Scriptures, for preparation for Christian service.⁷⁴

The value of spiritual formation for a Christian is without measure. Jesus makes a continued contrast between the ways of the Gentile and the behavior of a saint. One Scripture that provides an example of spiritual formation as taught by Christ is seen in Matthew 6. Prayer was used by the carnal Gentile to express a sense of religiosity before onlookers. Jesus admonishes his disciples not to be conformed to the manner by which the "religious" Gentile prays. This spiritual formational teaching was designed to bring a disciple into a more genuine relationship with God. Jesus was giving the disciples an understanding that by our own human

⁷² Greg Peters, "Historical Theology and Spiritual Formation: A Call." *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2014): 207-209.

⁷³ Steven L. Porter, "Is the Spiritual Formation Movement Dead?" *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2015): 4-5.

⁷⁴ Ruth H. Burton, et al., "Spiritual Formation in the Church." *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care*, vol 7, no. 2 (2014): 293.

devices a person cannot achieve a right and divine relationship with God. Jesus wants his disciples to learn from him and understand why they are instructed in such a method to live. In the journal, *Christian Education: Research on Educational Ministry*, Dallas Willard used the term, “Meaningful Intentionality,” as a way to describe the mental efforts made by a disciple to understand what must take place in the spiritual formative process. Spiritual formation is a process that continues for a lifetime, it is the conforming of man’s will to align with the will of God. Every disciple must know why they are doing, and not just doing something without purposeful knowledge. Therefore spiritual formation is not only doing but it is the knowledge as to why one is doing.⁷⁵

Knowledge of what is right and wrong resides in the mind where spiritual formation takes residence. The composition of the human intellect is divided into two scopes of understanding: (1) Schema, and (2) Thema. Schema is the rational aspect of the mind that is the cognitive and the authentication of critical complex knowledge. Schema is said to be the germ of knowing and the essence of a person’s character and mental composition. As a Christian assimilates the Word of God into the mind, the metabolism of this information infers a change of mind toward God by faith.⁷⁶ Therefore, the mind is the beginning of spiritual formation. Thema, is that aspect of the mind that functions to intelligently rationalize the relational being of a person. This relationship is seen through man’s relationships with God, other men and creation. The relational praxis (thema) and the rational praxis [schema] together form the bedrock for spiritual formation in a

⁷⁵ Steven L. Porter, “Will/Heart/Spirit: Discipleship that Forms the Christian Character.” *Christian Education Journal: Research on Educational Ministry*, vol. 16, no.1 (2019): 81.

⁷⁶ James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim, *Christian Formation, Integrating Theology and Human Development*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2010), 64-65.

believer.⁷⁷ 1 Corinthians 13:11, “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” This Scripture speaks to the spiritual formation of a saint due to a growing development of their mind-set through the study and obedience to the Word of God.⁷⁸ The United Negro College Fund once ran a commercial that stated, “A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste.” Turning that saying inside-out says, a wasted mind is a terrible thing. Truly spiritual formation, Christian formation, must engage the mind of a teacher and effectively impact the minds of the student disciple and the disciple-making processes. Romans 12:2 states that a believer must not subject their mind to the ways of the world, but that the mind has to be spiritually transformed, renewed by God through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Kenneth Boa in *Conformed to His Image*, calls the concentration of the heart and the mind of an individual upon Christ as “Holistic Spirituality.” The orientation of the believer is progressively focused on Jesus Christ. Matthew 6:33 commands a believer to first seek God’s kingdom and God’s righteousness. There is no area of life and the soul that has independence from Christ Jesus. All Christian relationships begin with an alignment and with the positioning of that relationship to the Scriptures according to biblical doctrine. Consequently, Christian growth and development is always on-going.⁷⁹ Sin, which is the antithesis of growth in Christ, occurs when any aspect of the believer’s life is diverted from obedience to God. (Proverbs 9:10). The consummation of spiritual formation is defined as loving God completely, loving ourselves correctly and loving others compassionately, in so doing, a disciple will demonstrate and be a

⁷⁷ James R. Estep, *Christian Formation*, 65-66.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁷⁹ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 202.

witness to the community of humanity for the edification of the kingdom of God and his glory.⁸⁰
This is the core of Christian teaching in the Sunday school.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

THEORETICAL CHRISTIAN TEACHING PRACTICES

The theoretical foundations for Growing a God-Centered Academy in the Church: Developing a Spiritually-Grounded Teaching Paradigm are being discussed by clergy and non-clergy in very significant ways. It appears that Christian teaching is being called to adjust from a biblical foundation to a mixture of secular organizational methodologies.⁸¹ The aim among some in this conversation is the natural growth of the church. For them, this may be accomplished by adhering to a more secularly attractive teaching paradigm, but it may not be biblical in nature. (Romans 12:2). The criteria for any church teaching venue should be inseparably interconnected to the Scriptures. In several cases in the New Testament church, the numerical size of a congregation was not important. The quality and not the quantity of believers, those filled by God the Holy Spirit, was principal.⁸²

Donald McGravran, in his book *Understanding Church Growth* (1970), noted a conversation among the clergy concerning church growth.⁸³ As the conversation spread into the evangelistic disciplines, some antagonism became more evident between a modern and traditional means of reaching the unsaved. McGravran quotes Glenn Huebel as saying, “doctrine

⁸⁰ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 27.

⁸¹ David F. Wells, *God in the Wasteland, The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams*, (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994), 71-72.

⁸² Gene A. Getz, *The Measure of a Healthy Church, How God Defines Greatness in a Church*, (Chicago, IL: Mood Publishers, 2007), 12-14.

⁸³ David F. Wells, *God in the Wasteland*, 68.

is not a vital ingredient of a flourishing and growing church.”⁸⁴ Huebel goes further to explain that it is just logical that a church should adopt business organizing principles to enhance their growth.⁸⁵ Interestingly, McGavran promotes the implementation of business methodologies such as marketing techniques, the behavior sciences and also borrowing from the disciplines of psychology. McGavran says that the church had become too inward focused, overly concerned with seeking to maintain the believers who were faithful. Perceived barriers to church growth, conversion of the unsaved, was not looked upon as “sin”. The perceived barriers were, “social, such as class and ethnicity, and that they were not theological in nature at all; remove these barriers and conversions should follow as naturally as water running downhill.”⁸⁶ Christian doctrinal teaching is necessary in the church of God. The necessity of Bible doctrine in relationship to Christian teaching would appear to be without question. However, some instructors of the Holy Word have been deceptively influenced by the ever-increasing paradigms of the worldly, therefore quenching the influence of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The conversation, biblical growth versus secular growth, continues among the church, examining the ways in which a church should teach, and what is beneficial for the church’s growth. The church is a unique entity that has its inceptions in eternity, therefore, its methodologies should also have their inceptions in the same source, the Word of God. (Ephesians 2:20-21). Within a God-centered church academy that is teaching spiritually founded lessons for a disciple-making ministry, there is some speculation as to the perceived uniqueness

David F. Wells, *God in the Wasteland*, 71.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 70.

of Christian teaching. The goal should be to educate, and to bring into fruition a mature disciple, the methodology is in question. Christian education may be described by examining five foundational concepts: (1) Context, (2) Content, (3) Approach, (4) Outcome, and (5) Methodology.⁸⁷

The “Context” of the teaching environment is the body of Christ, the family of believers. This is the church. Within the church context, people are “born again” and taught the Scriptures pertaining to their living and experiencing a greater relationship with the Lord. The basic extent of the “Content” of the Christian education is bounded by the Word of God, the Bible. Teaching from a Christian posture ultimately engages the teaching of peace. Peace in relationship with God, and peace in relationship with man. Nicholas P. Wolterstorff, in *Educating for Life*, describes this peace as “Educating from Shalom”.⁸⁸ This peace is not an absence of hatred and evil intent, but it is the presence of peace that instills loving relationships. Educating to instill Shalom culminates in the teaching of the Gospel. Regardless of life’s situations this Shalom must be present in the living of a disciple. But this peace must be taught. First this teaching of peace seeks to understand a loving relationship with God. Secondly, this teaching of Shalom regards all people as God’s creation and that all of humanity is the recipient of a disciple’s love as they are of God’s love. Third, teachers must educate in the Shalom with nature.⁸⁹

The personification of Jesus Christ encapsulates the attention of a Christian teacher and the students through love. From Genesis through Revelation a teacher is trained to expose and

⁸⁷ Israel Galindo, *The Craft of Christian Teaching, Essentials for Becoming a Very Good Teacher*, (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1998), 14.

⁸⁸ Nicholas P. Wolterstorff, *Educating for Life: Reflections on Christian Teaching and Learning*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 101.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 101-103.

expound upon that which will direct a soul for the edification of the kingdom of God. The “Approach” to Christian teaching is not only to teach materials and to memorize texts, but it is to instill within the disciple a passion and love for the focal point of all Christian teaching, Jesus Christ, and to realize an ongoing learning experience concerning the Lord Jesus.⁹⁰ A Christian teacher is guided by the Holy Spirit to mentor a disciple to bring into manifestation Romans 8:29. The Apostle Paul places in a very concise and clear tone what God has intended for his children to become, their “Outcome”, that is to be achieved; “For whom he did foreknow, he did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” The “Methodology” of how the preceding four points are to be accomplished is vital to the life of the Church. Israel Galindo’s *The Craft of Christian Teaching*, states, “But a Christian education that has a person for its content and being-in-relationship as its driving dynamic approach cannot function within the boundaries of a schooling model.” See the table 2 below.⁹¹

Table 2. Traditional versus Christian Teaching

	Traditional Schooling	Christian Education
Context	Schooling or Classroom	Community of faith
Content	Text and creed	Person of Christ
Approach	Didactic or instructional	Relational
Outcome	Mastery of content	Becoming in relationship
Methods	Schooling or laboratory	Dialogical

⁹⁰ Israel Galindo, *The Craft of Christian Teaching*, 15-17.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

There must be the presence of God the Holy Spirit, God, that driving dynamic, to teach, guide and bring to remembrance, for the teacher and student, everything that Christ Jesus has taught the Church. (1 John 2:27).

The Physical Teaching Venue

Teaching takes place within a physical medium. The condition of this medium plays a definite role in the perception and attendance of a church and its ministries, the Sunday school. Aubrey Malphurs discusses “Four Guiding Principles” that will enhance the appearance and attractiveness of a church: (1) The form of a ministry first follows the perceived function of that ministry. Ministry planning based upon the goals and needs of the Sunday school must precede the teaching or ministry function. The ministry must understand where it is going and to whom the ministry is serving. Planning is vital to a Sunday school. (2) How the building being maintained is a matter of how much of their time and energy people are willing to invest to maintain the facilities. The church members must take ownership in their church and that includes the physical aspects of the building. (3) Maintaining a nice environment for ministry announces to the community that the church cares not only about their church but also about the community within which it ministers. When this care is witnessed among the surrounding community it shares a message, a testimony that honors the church. (4) Neglect of the physical environment must be attacked through educating the church attendees that people on the outside do care about the church’s appearance even though they may not attend that church. Attendees must not become lax in maintaining the upkeep of the church.⁹²

⁹² Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning, A 21st Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books 2013), 250.

The Social Teaching Venue

Today, the local church may face litigation due to an unsafe environment or when people in the employ of the church are not vetted or trained properly when it comes to social relationships with young people. Churches should be aware of the growing potential problem of Child Abuse. Scrutiny of all volunteers, teachers and church leaders must not be a casual, but an intentional ongoing administrative duty. A church may want to secure legal and insurance support in the event that such abuse may arise.⁹³

Teachers are leaders. Christian teachers are called to persuade their students to a higher relationship with Christ Jesus. Having been called to a leadership position in a church, the Christian teacher must realize the influence they have within the teaching venue. Henry and Richard Blackaby in *Spiritual Leadership*, quotes Oswald Sanders as defining leadership as, “Leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others.”⁹⁴ Regardless of where a teacher serves, the character of a Christian teacher must not change due to the calling that God has placed upon their lives.⁹⁵ In addition, the Fruit of the Holy Spirit must be exuded during every facet of a Christians teaching experience to reveal the essence of godly living before those that have been denied a loving relationship with God. This would be the summation of the social teaching venue of a Christian teacher. (Galatians 5:22-23).

THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ON CHRISTIAN TEACHING

Christian disciple-making should have its inception from the Scriptures. The Word of God must be central to all teachings of the Sunday school. In a post-modernistic age the

⁹³ David R. Pollock, *Business Management in the Local Church*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1995), 51-52.

⁹⁴ Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership, Moving People on to God's Agenda*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2011), 32.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

methodologies of teaching within the church have been challenged by a desire to gain numerical rather than spiritually qualitative followers of Jesus Christ. This is a ploy of Satan to trap the church within its own mechanisms of the administration of “doing” without actually laboring, “doing” the true work of the Lord.⁹⁶ Spiritual instruction must therefore adhere to Christ’s teachings regardless of the secular demands to introduce, to conform to, a more social-business oriented philosophy for increasing church membership. Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:12-13, admonishes the church of Corinth to rely on the Holy Spirit’s teaching and guidance:

Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words of man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

The influence of the Holy Spirit to grow, disciple the church, far out-weighs any competing worldly influences whether they be, political, social-economic, geographic, racial or otherwise. (Romans 12:2; 1 John 2:15-16).

The capable and credible personality of a teacher enters into the matrix of instruction in such a way that it impacts a student’s thinking and emotional being, their life and living. Christian teaching is not sterile and devoid of any theological, social-economical and ideological influences. However, these influences must be directional, leading to biblical edification of the souls of disciples irrespective of social environments.⁹⁷ Therefore, the spiritual personality and foundational beliefs of an instructor are of great importance to a church’s Sunday school teaching paradigm. God, the Holy Spirit, facilitates all learning for the Christian teacher. The

⁹⁶ Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 1990), 132.

⁹⁷ Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders, The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 10, 13.

Scripture teaches; “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, ye shall abide in him.” (1 John 2:27). The apostle John is teaching the recipients of this epistle that in the environment of false teaching, a Christian teacher must be taught by the Holy Spirit of God so enabling them to detect what is truth and what is a lie. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit and a yielding to the anointing of the Spirit is vital for Christian teaching.⁹⁸ The spiritual formation of a teacher, the consistent yielding to the Holy Spirit’s teaching and guidance, is an ongoing process that enhances the disciple-making efforts of a Sunday school.

Teaching in the Church is not to be completely equated with teaching in the secular school’s systems. Teaching is a gift from God to reveal and teach the revelation of God to others. The teaching gift may stand alone in the ministry of an individual or the gift may be conjoined with the gift of pastoring as is noticed in Ephesians 4:11. The teaching gift comes from God as a gift that requires the teacher to delve into the investigation of Scriptures, studying and consistently disciplining oneself in the doctrine of the Word of God.⁹⁹

The glorification of the Lord and the growing of the disciples of the Lord are the main missions of the Holy Spirit’s teaching. The Holy Spirit inspires the human teacher to instruct the students from the Scriptures not adding or detracting from the Word. Teaching is uniquely provided from a personal human perspective from a relationship with the Lord and the living experiences of knowing God, thus providing a teaching platform from which to grow and edify a

⁹⁸ Thoralf Gilbrant, Int. Ed., *The New Testament Study Bible Hebrews- Jude*, (Springfield, MO: World Library Press, 1986), 385.

⁹⁹ Charles C. Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1997), 136.

student. There are two realities that will thwart Christian teaching: (1) A person that has not had a saving relationship with the Lord cannot receive any teaching from the Holy Spirit, and (2) A Christian that is walking in disobedience, in carnality and immaturity will hinder the teaching of the Holy Spirit. They are both dangerous to sound disciple-making, by not being able to impart teaching that edifies the kingdom of God and the Church.¹⁰⁰

In *Spurgeon's Teaching On The Holy Spirit*, Spurgeon explains that teaching inspired by the Spirit edifies God's kingdom with instruction that emanates from a heart that is dedicated and passionate for learning and living according to the Scriptures. A teacher must be desirous to allow God, the Holy Spirit, to give them an understanding and knowledge of the Lord's Holy Word. The knowledge of the truth and the wisdom to practice this truth, this biblical knowledge, must be developed within a Christian causing a hunger and thirst for a greater knowledge of God. The characteristic of every Christian should exhibit a desire to "bury his ignorance and receive wisdom".¹⁰¹ Today the Church has the same age-old options as the early church, to either teach the Gospel according to the Scriptures or to conform to the methods of the secular. The answer resides within the soul of the Christian teacher.

SUMMARY

Chapter two is divided into three sections: (1) Literature Review, (2) Theological Foundations, and (3) Theoretical Foundations. All three sections will comprise two thirds of the triangulation method of quantitative research. The remaining one third of the triangulation methodology is the research survey.

¹⁰⁰ Charles C. Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit*, 170-171.

¹⁰¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Teaching on the Holy Spirit, The Expansive Commentary Collection*, (Columbia, SC: N/A, 2017), 337-338.

Spiritual growth to enhance Christian disciple-making and discipleship is the focal point of the materials gathered and researched within the literature review in an effort to determine if there is evidence to support or not support the aims of this thesis. The inception of the Mount Olive Baptist District Association of Southern Illinois, MOBDA, is cited along with the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America, NBCUSA, and chronologically later the birth of the National Baptist Convention of America, NBCA, of which the MOBDA belongs. The Sunday school teaching materials used by the MOBDA churches has its roots in the publishing agency of the NBCUSA. The NBCUSA and the NBCA were highly concerned with the spiritual education of its predominately African American congregants.

Literature supporting the importance and criticality of all Sunday school teaching paradigms which should be associated with critical thinking with an intentional purpose of spiritual kingdom building is cited. The literature, through Theological Foundations, explains the dynamics and importance of engaging the student's mind and heart and to impact the character of a Christian disciple through proper teaching in association with Scripture. The Theoretical foundations engages the secular teaching methodologies compared to the church's methodologies. Teaching in the Sunday school is compared with secular teaching in an effort to differentiate the two systems, the Sunday school teaching being supported by God's influence upon righteous teaching by the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This Thesis Project, *Growing a God-Centered Academy in the Church: Developing a Spiritually-Grounded Teaching Paradigm*, will seek to evaluate the contemporary constructs of the teaching and discipleship paradigm within a rural regional church population of southern Illinois. The small attendance in a church's Sunday schools may reflect upon teaching that does not touch the soul to bring in fruition a righteous relationship with God. Teaching rightly through the guidance of God, the Holy Spirit, will impact a student with a love for God that moves them to obey and execute the Great Commission, as commanded in the gospel of Matthew 28:19-20. The growth of every church that is God's is done through trusting in the presence and sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit, there is no other way.¹⁰² The problem that is the target of this thesis project, centers on the perceived spirituality of a Sunday school teacher and their effectiveness in the disciple-making constructs of their teaching.

Upon becoming a pastor of a small Baptist congregation in Marion, Illinois, the researcher also became a member of the Mount Olive Baptist District Association of Southern Illinois. This opportunity could not have presented itself earlier due to the researcher's previous church's non-participation. At the time of this project's writing, the researcher holds the position as the First Vice Moderator of the MOBDA. Many meetings and celebrations that fostered a growing relationship with the pastors of the ten active churches in southern Illinois have taken place within the District during the last eleven years. Familiarity with these churches and their congregations allowed the researcher to gain knowledge and some understanding of the

¹⁰² Gary L. McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth*, 81-82.

commonalities of the researcher's church and the other District member churches. In many casual conversations among the leaders of the churches, Sunday school attendance and teaching methodologies arose. The researcher learned that the Sunday schools were very similar in teaching styles, curriculum, and the student's cultural populations.

The MOBDA is composed of African Americans that are similar in age, political views, economics, and education. Southern Illinois has a historically racially divisive culture that has been growing more inclusive over the recent decades. Many church traditions such as the time of services, the order of worship services, and the means and ways of performing the two ordinances of the churches, one being 'Baptism' and the other is the "Lord's Supper" which is Communion, make it possible to maintain growing relationships among the District churches, pastors, deacons and laypeople. Established either prior or after the Civil War, the MOBDA has been an important part of the lives of the senior members throughout its history but there is a noticeable drop in participation among the young adults and youth in many of the churches. Could a revisioning or a gaining of a greater spiritual awakening with intentionality and a sense of spiritual urgency concerning disciple-making constructs within the teaching paradigm help improve the church's teaching academy?

There are four investigative areas or pillars that will aid in forming a foundation for the evaluation of the practices of the Sunday schools of the MOBDA and its teachers. First the Current Praxis will be investigated. The current practices may or may not be healthy for the current community that the churches of the District serves. The primary issue is the spirituality of the teacher and how spiritual formation impacts an instructor. Another important praxis is the materials employed in the teaching process. The research questions are intended to reflect upon the possible validity of these concerns and expose an answer to support or deny a need for

change.¹⁰³ Second, this thesis seeks to define the Culture/Contextual Analysis of the teaching environment from an African American ideology involving the Sunday school. The research survey may produce results that support a problematic teaching paradigm or there may be insufficient data to conclude that spiritual formation is not the problem that fosters poor disciple-making. Regardless, a knowledge base will be established from which to compare on-going practices within the church academy.¹⁰⁴ Third, the Theological Reflections of this research may reveal areas that must be undertaken to bring disciple-making into congruency with Scripture. There are other dimensions of this post-modern culture that may act upon disciple-making that are beyond the scope of this thesis. Consequently, this suggests that the current teaching praxis may not be the whole problem.¹⁰⁵ The fourth and last pillar in forming a foundation for evaluating data results is Formulating Revised Forms of Practice. Obtaining valuable conclusions that are true and honest are the results of combining the Cultural/Contextual results and the Theological Reflections to produce an end product that enhances and promotes a greater consciousness toward Christian education, the Sunday school.¹⁰⁶

THE INTERVENTION DESIGN

THE RESEARCH SURVEY

Before the survey could be distributed to the churches of the MOBDA, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University at Lynchburg, Virginia had to approve its methodology and intentions. Consent Forms, Recruitment Forms, and a Permission Letter from the Moderator of the MOBDA, and a copy of the entire research survey had to be approved by

¹⁰³ John Swinton, *Practical Theological and Qualitative Research*, 90-91.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 91-92.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

the IRB. See Appendix A. Once approval was granted, the research instrument could be mailed to the participant churches to be distributed to the pastors, teachers, and students.

The methodology to ascertain a degree of the spiritual formation, a Sunday school lesson's effectiveness, and the influence of the Holy Spirit on Christian teaching, is conducted by a 21-question survey. The research survey has five aims: (1) To aid the pastors, (2) To provide an opportunity for spiritual formational change, (3) To promote a disciple-making environment, (4) To engage every student-disciple with impactful teaching, and (5) To increase a passion for a righteous teaching paradigm. There are four question Domains or groupings, outlining the main survey questions. The survey is intentionally anonymous to reassure the survey respondents that their answers are untraceable. The anonymity may provide a sense of liberty and security to answer honestly without any outside influences. There are several pre-survey demographic questions that define the office of the person taking the survey: the duration of time invested within the ministry, and the number of years in attendance at that particular church. All of the questions are in the form of a "Closed-Response" or a forced Likert scale. A closed-response survey forces a participant to concentrate on the choices presented and not escape by obliquely answering a question. There are no chances for the person surveyed to answer undecidedly. However, a disadvantage of a closed-response survey restricts the survey participants ability to answer according to their desires.¹⁰⁷ See table 3, for an example of a closed-response survey and an open-response survey.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Robert L. Johnson and Grant B. Morgan, *Survey Scales, A Guide to Development, Analysis, and Reporting*, (New York: The Guilford Press, 2016), 2-4.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

Table 3. Example of a Closed-Response Survey Item

Academic skills and preparation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I received the help I needed to improve my academic skills this year.	1	2	3	4

Example of an Open-Response Survey item

As a senior, what advice would you give eighth graders that would make their move into ninth grade easier?

The research surveys were mailed to the District churches on April 29, 2019 with a deadline to return surveys by a self-addressed envelope, to maintain anonymity, to the researcher by May 31, 2019. A total of one hundred surveys were disbursed by mail among the MOBDA churches. Forty-three surveys were received by May 31, 2019. A computerized data base was used to gather and collate the returned surveys. See Appendix B to view the research survey.

There are four Domains, each with a set of questions. Within Domain I the first set of questions are concerned with the present teaching practices in the church’s teaching paradigm. Before there is any considerations for answering other questions, the researcher wants to know if Sunday school is important. This foundational question’s answer will serve as an interesting barometer for the impetus for Sunday school existence. The second question in this domain pertains to the satisfaction of the pastor, teacher and student with the present paradigm within which lessons are taught. Is there room for change or should the status quo be maintained? If there are any dissatisfactions, the next questions may reflect the participant’s desire for better teaching/lesson materials. Any dissatisfaction with the teaching materials may cause a diminished desire to teach and learn effectively. A Sunday school teacher should enjoy the

lesson and the processes of teaching that lesson. Liberty to teach in a manner consistent with spiritual guidance, without any unwarranted traditional restraints, is important for the teacher to display their style of teaching as it has been gifted from God. (2 Timothy 4:1-2). Teaching must remain biblical and filled with the passion of a passionate teacher. This liberated teaching is the core of the fourth question in this domain. The fifth and last question focuses on the importance of a socially pertinent lesson. The churches exist within their communities and are conjoined with the issues of their town, city, state and nation. A lesson that deals with matters that do not run tangent to the problems of today, will not benefit a disciple as they attempt to walk rightly in the midst of an adverse secular world.

The second set of questions in Domain II, involves surveying the respondents concerning their understanding of the spiritual indwelling of God the Holy Spirit. As the research has revealed, the biblical evidence, the presence of the Holy Spirit within a Christian is germane to a sound Sunday school teaching academy. Question one again provides the researcher with an understanding of a teacher's positioning, knowledge and relevance of God's presence in the teaching paradigm. God's presence is exceedingly critical. If God's presence is not required, then God may be considered not necessary within a larger constructs of the church's worship experiences. The Gospel of Matthew 18:20 states, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Question two in this domain investigates this reality. Many of the churches of the District have printed lesson plans from outside sources. Question three examines the sensitivity of the participant to the presence of the Holy Spirit's influence within the context of these printed teaching materials. Likewise, in question four and five, the presence of the Spirit within the Sunday school classes and the teaching material is

quantified. The Sunday school teaching experience should educate with a goal to facilitate the process of spiritual formation in a disciple's life.

Domain III's questions focus upon the teacher's spiritual formation, the first three out of the five questions concentrate on the importance of a dynamic that is foundational to an inner prerequisite for teaching others: (1) Loving God completely, (2) Loving yourself correctly, and (3) Loving others compassionately. Kenneth Boa explains, "One of the purposes in God's creating humankind is for his creation to display the glory and attributes of intelligent moral creatures who are capable of responding to God's relational initiatives."¹⁰⁹ A teacher becomes a profound spiritual dynamo for the glory of God when they are leading and teaching from a position of righteous love for God, self and others.¹¹⁰ The next two questions reveal the character influence of a teacher upon those that are being mentored. A Christian teacher should not be a novice but a seasoned saint that has a witness for Christ that intersects with the Sunday school lesson. Having secular teaching credentials is admirable but a "Born again" teacher has the gifted teaching ability from God to grow a disciple for Christ through and in the Word of God. (1 John 2:27). Character developmental teaching must have residence in the Sunday school. However, a most damaging aspect to teaching is present when a teacher instructs a disciple the lessons of living a godly life, and yet they live contrary to those very lessons. Spiritual formation of an instructor in God's church must be seen as well as taught. (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 4:1-2).

¹⁰⁹ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 27.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

In this last set of survey questions, Domain IV, the researcher examines some of the environmental qualities of the teaching paradigm. Questions a and b connect the respondent to two environmental conditions that are well within the control of church leadership: safety and friendliness. The physical appearance of the church has much to say about what is going on inside the church. Dr. Frank J. Schmitt in his 1991 writing for Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, *A Practical Introduction to Church Administration*, stated, “Inadequately maintained, church buildings, equipment, and grounds make a poor appearance, hardly in keeping with the importance of the church function.” A church that is poorly maintained physically, may indicate that the church is also poorly maintained in other areas that are important to a Christians growth. The impact on the local community is unfortunate; it sometimes eventuates in a loss of prospective and actual members.¹¹¹

Because some churches use purchased Sunday school lessons, the timeliness of these lessons may fail to connect with the social, political and economical circumstances of the church’s community. The researcher probes the thoughts of the participants in order to evaluate the importance of purchased Sunday school lessons and how it pertains to spiritually growing a disciple-making class. The instructional freedom of the Sunday school teacher is important. When a case of irrelevant materials, not touching on vitally important social issues, arise, a teacher should be willing and able to allow the Holy Spirit to take that lesson and make it relevant to the students, disciples. The researcher’s last question in this series wants to know the respondent’s thoughts on Sunday school growth in relation to the Church body at-large. The

¹¹¹ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 240, 251.

research survey is now closed with instructions for mailing the anonymous survey to the researcher, followed by an appreciative thank you.

TO AID THE PASTOR

This Thesis will seek to assist pastors as they forge through many obstacles in order to feed the sheep. Pastors need help. Some are very overwhelmed by ineffectiveness for whatever reasons. Joseph H. Hellerman suggests that good pastors, leaders, are at a premium. And this is expressed in Hellerman's book, *When the Church Was a Family*, stating, "The leadership vacuum is filled not by mature believers who qualify for the task of shepherding the people of God but by dysfunctional individuals who lead out of emptiness rather than out of a deep well of spiritual resources that only years in the Lord can provide."¹¹²

Pastors are leaders of the church that God has entrusted to their authority and responsibility. There may be times when a pastor does not understand the authoritative power gifted unto them by God.¹¹³ Pastoral leadership can entail many different tasks that go beyond the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. Making critical decisions in the times of trouble or indecision by subordinates may place too much weight on a pastor. There must be a team of leadership to aid the pastor through arduous situations.¹¹⁴ This thesis project will attempt to assist the pastor in making better decisions in regard to the teaching paradigm of their church. It is the purpose of this writing to bring about a possible visionary plan for the future of the present

¹¹² Joseph H. Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family, Recapturing Jesus' Vision for Authentic Christian Community*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009), 185.

¹¹³ Warren W. and David W. Wiersbe, *Ten Power Principles for Christian Service, Ministry Dynamics for a New Century*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 75.

¹¹⁴ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 28-29.

Sunday schools. Having a strategic plan for the future of our churches and all that transpires within that context requires an “envision and re-envision.” Envision pertains to the present mission, Matthew 28:18-20, reaching into the future of disciple-making as it grows the kingdom of God and simultaneously re-energizes the church today.¹¹⁵ To aid the pastor of the MOBDA, each church will receive a copy of the completed research. The results of this research may cause a shift in the present course of the teaching environment or an encouragement to continue in that churches present course of endeavors.

The data and tables depicting the survey results will provide a visual means by which to gain an understanding of the pastor’s/minister’s position, teachers and students of the MOBDA’s concerns about their church academies. Growing the Sunday school by teaching what inspires and prepares a saint for the continued witness of a Christian life, is not without problems. However, it is the intent of this thesis paper to illuminate to some degree the conditions of the teaching paradigm to better the position of the church and its efforts to reach its community. The researched material will offer a theological and a theoretical foundation to support the pastor as they lead and direct the teaching staff.

The teaching materials should touch the souls of the students who will then touch the souls of the church’s community. The context of the Christian church is very diverse and the teaching that touches and excites the inner man should be Bible based and effective for living today. To maximize the effectiveness of Christian teaching, the community must be impacted by the church. The church should be noticed, positively, by the community within its niche. Therefore, an assessment of the churches setting must be more critically attained.¹¹⁶ The 21

¹¹⁵ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 29.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 236-237.

questions of the research survey are designed to illuminate some areas of ministry that may be more impactful community-wide if deployed effectively.

TO AID SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Spiritual formation is a key issue of this research. The Holy Spirit makes spiritual formation possible and the Holy Spirit is at the center of all teaching that occurs within the Christian church. (Romans 12:1-2; 1 John 2:27). The research may also discover that there is a need to secure relevant teaching material and aids to instruction depending on the dissatisfaction or satisfaction of the Sunday school participants. According to a survey in 1999, the Great Commission, Matthew 28:18-20, was not being executed by the churches. Only 5% to 10% of Christians had shared their faith testimony during a twelve-month period. Churches are suffering due to a lack of disciple-making. Christians are not sharing the Gospel. This is a spiritual problem.¹¹⁷

The researcher has a concern that in some church's Sunday school ministries, some ministries have lost their importance while spiritual leadership is being pulled aside by administrative tasks and responsibilities. The survey may indicate that the church academy must be revitalized and supported spiritually by the members of leadership and the entire church. Spiritually teaching is at the pivotal position in the disciple-making efforts of the church. (Matthew 28:18-19). The group of questions in Domain Two, the phenomena of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit necessary for Christian teaching, is important to gauge the spirituality of not only the teachers but all involved in the instructional moment. Foundational to any teaching in the church is the awareness of the Holy Spirit in every believer. (Ephesians 1:12-14; 1 John

¹¹⁷ William Fay, *Share Jesus Without Fear*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 1999), 6-8.

2:27). The teacher and every Christian must allow the Holy Spirit to guide them through every step of evangelism.¹¹⁸

In addition, the study materials should also engage the student and faculty spiritually, having been prepared by the same anointing that will ultimately teach the prepared lessons. Domain Two's questions focus upon the phenomena of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit necessary for Christian teaching. The first question in this series is key. How important is the Holy Spirit's presence during the teaching experience? The answer may be derived from the following Scriptures. The Apostle Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 3:16, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? In 1 Corinthians 6:19, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own." Also in John 14:17, "Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth in you, and shall be in you."¹¹⁹

TO AID TEACHERS

Teachers may find the survey beneficial as the answers to the questions reflect the attitudes of the student respondents. Questions in Domain One, the teaching practices present in the current church teaching paradigm, focuses on the presupposition that traditional teaching materials may not achieve the goal of disciple-making, intelligent and truth bearing, living Christian disciples. Teachers are leaders in the church. In the church, the Sunday school teacher may be the first authoritative person with whom a student, often times a child, may have an

¹¹⁸ William Fay, *Share Jesus Without Fear*, 49.

¹¹⁹ Darrell W. Robinson, *Total Church Life, How to Be a First Century in a 21st Century World*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 1997), 185.

extended relationship. The passion that emanates from the classroom is congruent with the passion and spiritual intellect of a that teacher.¹²⁰ This thesis aims to bring attention to the present quality of the teaching environment.

Pastors may be required to examine the teaching effectiveness of the instructors more closely. Every Sunday school needs teachers who are evangelistic in nature. Mentoring the student and equipping them for disciple-making is at the center of Christian teaching. The responsibilities of a teacher extend well beyond lesson preparation, they must live a life that is a witness for the kingdom of God.¹²¹ The character of the teacher is critical to shaping the minds and hearts of the students. How many of the teachers actually have been vetted to teach? Phillips Brooks in a series of lectures in 1876-1877, described the preparations necessary for ministry that applies even in today's Sunday schools. Brooks explains, "It cannot be the mere training to certain tricks. It cannot be even the furnishing with abundant knowledge. It must be nothing less than the kneading and tempering of a man's whole nature till it becomes such a consistency and quality as to be capable of transmission."¹²² It is this character of a mentor that impresses the student to emulate their mentor. Brooks went further to define the "the great purpose of life" as "the shaping of character by truth."¹²³

¹²⁰ Richard E. Rusbuldt, *Basic Teacher Skills, Handbook for Church School Teachers*, (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1997), 16-17.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹²² Warren W. Wiersbe, *Ten Power Principles for Christian Service*, 19.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DESIGN

THE SURVEY'S ANALYTICAL DEVELOPMENT

The results of the survey will provide and will ascertain to what degree there are significant differences, correlations and congruences of the respondent's answers. The analysis of the survey questions will be calculated according to standard statistical protocols. The data accumulated for this thesis survey is called "ratio level data," which is used to show the "relationship between demographic or personal characteristics, variables and phenomenon of interest as measured by the survey scale."¹²⁴

The survey will be compiled into multiple tables, each depicting a specific category of responses. The first set of categories, demographics, will be examined according to the positions held in the church: Pastor/Minister, Teacher and Student. In some cases a person may have selected two but their answer will be correlated for only the most influential position. The position of Pastor and Minister will be combined into one position. There will be cross referencing within the survey's Domains (I, II, III, IV) and the ministerial categories. Such cross referencing will depict any similarities or differences depending on ministry status. Numerical depictions and analytical statistical conclusions will be tabulated, charted, and cross referenced with related data.

Tables are constructed from the survey data and are divided into the respondent categories: Pastor, Teachers and Students. Within each category, the question's ranking score is listed: 0 = Not Important, 1 = Somewhat Important, 2 = Important, and 3 = Very Important. The survey results are recorded under each category for every question of that particular series. There

¹²⁴ Robert L. Johnson, *Survey Scales*, 102.

were six participants for the Pastor category, 13 participants for the Teacher category and 23 participants for the Student category. The table below, depicts an example of the five questions of Domain One and how the 24 student participants answered each question.

Table 4. Domain I. Students n=24

Score	0	1	2	3
Ques. a	0	0	0	24
Ques. b	2	0	7	15
Ques. c	4	4	9	7
Ques. d	7	5	4	8
Ques. e	0	2	3	19

Selection of the Analytical Methodology Designed for Data Interpretation

The first tool in the methodology of the survey analysis to be determined is called “Frequency” designated by the letter “f”. The frequency of the answers provided by the various participants is recorded and reveals the distribution in five columns in this paper: (1) one column for the respondents, (2) the four columns of each question’s score, and (3) the frequencies under each score which are percentages of the total response.¹²⁵ Such a frequency distribution table is appropriate for coinciding each question with the frequency that it was selected.¹²⁶

“The measures of central tendency” are comprised of some of the most well-known statistical tools. The survey data may now be expressed by a number and not necessarily charts and diagrams. The three expressions to measure the central tendencies of a survey are: (1) the mode, (2) the median, and (3) the mean. The mode reveals the value most frequently provided by

¹²⁵ Robert L. Johnson, *Survey Scales*, 103.

¹²⁶ Robert Johnson, *Elementary Statistics*, 7th Ed., (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1996), 53-54.

the survey participants. If there are two responses that equally are provided, this would be a bi-modal response. The frequency distribution chart is helpful in determining the mode.¹²⁷

The second measure of central tendency that will be applied in this analysis is to calculate the median. Within the context of a list of values, the median value would be located exactly in the middle of that list. The listing of the values ranges from the lowest to the highest scores. The median is the middle value unless the listing has an even number of results. In such a case the two results are added and divided by two. Therefore, the median would be a decimal. The median is a good measurement because it negates the presence of extreme values which may be included in the list.¹²⁸

The third measure of central tendency is the most widely used measurement, the Mean. This is sometimes referred to as the average. All of the data results are added and divided by the total number of scores. The mean uses all of the scores unlike the Mode and the Median, and thus provides more information, however, the Mean will be affected by low and high extreme values.¹²⁹

When comparing data it is important to gauge how the data within its context relates to the overall information provided. This is called “the measures of variability”. The variability is measure by calculating the range and the variance of the data. The range will determine how wide the answers differ within that question’s framework. The range may be reported when it is

¹²⁷ Robert L. Johnson, *Survey Scales*, 104.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

very low and then correlates with the mean. The researcher then knows that there is a strong perception concerning that question.

To describe the amount of spread among the data, the variance is calculated. Data that is group tightly together will have smaller variances than data that has a greater amount of dispersion or variance.¹³⁰ The variance is calculated by subtracting the mean from each question's score. This produces the deviation. Next, the difference is squared providing the squared deviation. Then every squared difference is added together. The resultant is then divided by the number of scores minus one (1).¹³¹

The standard deviation, the most used tool for variability, is calculated by taking the square root of the variance of a set of data. This result indicates how much deviation a result has from the Mean score. Usually, for a normal distribution, (68%) of data is dispersed within the standard deviation of the mean.¹³²

The example, table 5, obtained from Robert L. Johnson's book, *Survey Scales*, is a table of Variance.¹³³ This table illustrates the scores from 10 student test results from a grade school.

¹³⁰ Robert Johnson, *Elementary Statistics*, 72.

¹³¹ Robert L. Johnson, *Survey Scales*., 106.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 107.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

Table 5. Example of the Calculation of Variance

Student	Score	Mean Score	Deviation (score - mean)	Squared deviation
1	1	2.4	-1.4	1.96
2	1	2.4	-1.4	1.96
3	2	2.4	-0.4	0.16
4	2	2.4	-0.4	0.16
5	2	2.4	-0.4	0.16
6	3	2.4	-0.4	0.36
7	3	2.4	0.6	0.36
8	3	2.4	0.6	0.36
9	3	2.4	0.6	0.36
10	4	2.4	1.6	2.56
Sum				8.4
Variance				0.93

The objectivity designed into the research survey will be enhanced by subjecting the four question's Domains to statistical analysis: Domain I: The Teaching Practices Present in the Current Teaching Paradigm, Domain II: The Phenomena of the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit Necessary for Christian Teaching, Domain III: The Importance of an Instructor's "Spiritual Formation" as it Impacts the Sunday School, and Domain IV: The Following Areas of Concern for Teaching and Growing of your Church. The statistical tools, frequency, the measures of central tendency (mode, median and mean), and the measures of variability (range, variance and standard deviation), will aid significantly in objectively comparing the research data within its context to ascertain, discuss and to develop conclusions concerning any variations of significance regarding the four Domains of questions. A table for the Measures of Central Tendency and the Measures of Variability will be provided for each question within the research analysis portion of the paper.

TRIANGULATION

This Thesis will seek to evaluate the contemporary constructs of the teaching and discipleship paradigm within a rural regional Illinois church population. The evaluation may initiate a discussion within the teaching venues of each church to investigate their teaching practices and to maintain or seek to modify such practices to ensure a growing church academy. This research may only affect the participating church's Sunday schools as warranted by their leadership.

Triangulation will be the central method of implementation. Triangulation by using multiple sources of information provides an greatly enhanced picture of the research far better than a single source of statistics. The multiple sources brings more into the conversation of producing a more viable church academy. However, there may be tension between some sources and the results of the analytical results that will also be beneficial to the implementation of this research. The importance of the voice of the respondents of the research survey is vital and central to this triangulation methodology.¹³⁴ The researcher also has a voice that cannot be over-looked and may not be overcome. This voice is called reflexivity, which is the knowledge that it is not possible for the researcher to have no input into the research conversation. This input into the conversation is manifested “through knowledge creatively and effectively.”¹³⁵

Triangulation methodology provides the researcher with three areas of concern paramount to research veracity: (1) Reliability, (2) Internal validity, and (3) External validity in presenting a viable thesis project.¹³⁶ Triangulation tests the reliability of research by bringing

¹³⁴ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 73-76.

¹³⁵ John Swinton, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 56-57.

¹³⁶ Kjell Erik Rudestam, *Surviving Your Dissertation*, 112, 114.

together information on this theses subject from multiple sources. Data Source Triangulation will be implemented into this research. There are four types of triangulation: (1) Method, (2) Investigator, (3) Theory, and (4) Data Source Triangulation. The collection of data from interviews for the study of individuals and groups, such as this research survey's design, along with the theoretical and theological research gained will be analyzed using Data Source Triangulation.¹³⁷ The components of this data source triangulation are: (1) the Research Survey and its analysis, the Literature Review which comprises the next two legs of triangulation: (2) The Theoretical Reviews, and (3) the Theological reviews. From these three conversations may be derived a conclusion to the research problem.

THE ANALYTICAL METHODOLOGY DESIGN FOR INTERPRETATION

Within the research survey there are four Domains. The construct of the survey domain's questions are a composition of the researcher's ideas, based upon abstract concepts, that the researcher has theorized. The Domains are composed of subscales, survey questions, that will attempt to reveal the attitudes and the engaging of each survey respondent's answer.¹³⁸

The demographic portion of the research survey includes the Pastor/Ministers, Teachers, and Student populations. Additionally, the length of time in ministry and duration of church attendance at the church presently being attended are also quantified. The Domains according to all three demographic groups and their scores will be analyzed to determine their impact upon the research problem. These demographics of the ratio level data collected will be excluded from the Measures of Variability and the Measures of Central Tendency. The demographic data will

¹³⁷ Nancy Carter, et.al., "The Use of Triangulation in Qualitative Research, *Oncology Nursing Forum*, vol. 41, no. 51 (2014): 545-547.

¹³⁸ Robert L. Johnson, *Survey Scales*, 6-9.

be subject to “Frequency” analysis only. The remaining data of the four domains series, 21 questions in total, will be maintained within their domains to critically ascertain which questions will be examined by the full measure of analysis. All results, questions, and answers will be communicated to the District churches upon completion of the research project.

SUMMARY

A triangulation research methodology is applied to the research with three angles: (1) the Theoretical, (2) the Theological, and (3) the Research Survey, comprise the core of this thesis project. The setting of the research population is derived from the ten active churches of the Mount Olive Baptist District Association of Southern Illinois. The spiritual quality of the Sunday school teachers and their teaching materials implemented by the District teachers is investigated to ascertain their impact on the Sunday school populace and the spiritual growth of the attending students.

The interventional design is a research survey that when quantified and studied, is intended to be an aid to the pastors, teachers, and the spiritual growth of each church. The survey is a composite of four Domains each Domain is composed of five questions with the fourth Domain having six questions. The survey was submitted to the Internal Review Board of Liberty University for approval before dissemination could be made to the District churches. The survey is completely anonymous and is conducted by mail using pre-addressed envelopes to be returned to the researcher by May 31, 2019. The survey’s design is a forced Likert scale survey. The surveys intended target are pastors, teachers and students. One hundred surveys were mailed with 43 surveys returned by the due date.

The implementation of the survey design first underwent mathematical analysis to determine the result’s Measures of Central Tendency comprised of the frequency, mode, mean,

and median of each answer. Also, the Measures of Variability, the range, the variance, and the standard deviation from the mean were also calculated. The results were tabulated and represented by two tables for each question. One table depicts the frequency results and the other table will reveal the measures of variability.

CHAPTER FOUR

EVALUATION OF THE FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The Mount Olive Baptist District Association of Southern Illinois comprised of at least ten active churches was the recipient of the research surveys. One hundred surveys were mailed, ten to each church, and a total of 43 surveys, 43 percent, were returned to the researcher by the desired date of May 31, 2019. The findings shall be predicated upon the tabulation and analysis of the survey results through graphic interpretation and examination. The surveys were received with complete anonymity of the sender. Only the demographic questions will indicate any personas associated with the respondents. All twenty-one survey questions within the four Domain categories shall be examined.

THE DEMOGRAPHICS

The research survey instrument was mailed to the ten churches of the MOBDA at the end of April 2019. Several surveys were received after the due date, May 31, 2019, but were not used in the analysis for the thesis. There are three questions concerning the demographics of the pastors, teachers and students that may impact the answers provided: (1) What is your position in the church? (2) How many years have you been attending this church? and (3) If you are a teacher, how many years have you been in the teaching ministry?

Twenty-four surveys, (55.83%), were from student respondents, 13 surveys, (30.22%), were received from the teachers, and six surveys, (13.95%), from pastors/ministers, altogether comprising 43 respondents. Seventy-nine percent of the student respondents have been attending their present churches for more than ten years. Ninety-two percent of the teachers and (66%) of the pastors have been attending their present churches for more than ten years. The totals for

attendance are depicted in Table 6. Table 7 depicts the number of years the teachers and pastors served in the teaching ministries.

Tables 6. Present Church Attendance

	<u>Students</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Pastors</u>
1 - 5 yrs.	3	0	0
6 - 10 yrs.	2	1	2
> 10 yrs.	19	12	4

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 7. Years Teaching

	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Pastors</u>
1 - 5 yrs.	3	1
6 - 10 yrs.	1	1
> 10 yrs.	9	4

Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

EVALUATION OF SURVEY AND REPORTING THE FINDINGS

The thesis is researched by surveying 10 churches of the MOBDA. The church Sunday school memberships are asked to complete a 21 question survey that is divided into four Domains: Domain I, The teaching practices present in the current church teaching paradigm, Domain II, The phenomena of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit necessary for Christian teaching, Domain III, The importance of an instructor’s “spiritual formation” as it impacts the Sunday school, and Domain IV, The following areas of concern for teaching and the growing of your church. There were four possible survey responses: (0) Not Important, (1) Somewhat Important, (2) Important and (3) Very Important.

Four domains encompass the survey questions and each domain has five questions to be answered by the respondents except for the fourth domain which has six questions. The statistical frequency, and the measures of central tendency, the mean, mode, and median, are

calculated for each question and listed according to their respondent groupings: Student, Teacher and Pastor [pastor/minister]. All frequency results are intentionally not rounded up to equal 100% but are provided as purely calculated. In Addition the measures of variability (range, variance and the standard deviation) are also provided for every question and listed according to the respondent groups. Tables with the resultant data will follow an explanation of the results for each question. The letter “n” represents an abbreviation for a particular number of respondent participants. There were n=24 student respondents, n = 13 for the teachers, and n = 6 for the pastor group. Calculations for the three respondent groups are based upon their “ n” values when mathematically required. Below every question are tables of statistics for referencing.

DOMAIN I

Domain I, the teaching practices present in the current church teaching paradigm or teaching system, is composed of five questions: [a] How important is a Sunday school program to your church? [b] How important to you is the necessity to maintain the present teaching system? [c] How important to you is it to find new sources of teaching materials? [d] How important to you is it to remain tied to a particular Sunday’s lesson plan without any deviation? And [e] How important to you is it to teach a lesson that is meeting the social and spiritual needs of the students?

The frequency scores for Domain I question [a]: Students 100% “Very Important,” the teacher’s Frequency scores: (23.07%) “Important” and (76.92%) “Very Important.” The pastor’s Frequency scores: (100%) “Very important.” The mode and the median also reflected a results for choice (3). The variance equals zero with no deviation from the mean for the student and pastor groups. The standard deviation is also zero. The teacher had a mean score of 2.76. The

mode and the median scores were also 3. The teacher variance from the mean was very low, 0.09 with a standard deviation of 0.30. All pastors scored a mean of 3.00.

How important is a Sunday school program to your church? This is the first and foundational question upon which the research instrument is based. If it is deemed that the Sunday school has no importance to the respondent’s church, then the respondent’s remaining survey is deemed weakened by the researcher. The students and the pastors agreed 100% that Sunday school is “Very Important.” Seventy-six percent of the teachers selected that Sunday school was “Very Important” while (23.07%) selected that it was “Important.” Overall all respondents have highly agreed that the Sunday school programs are important to their churches.

Table 8. Frequencies: Domain I Question a

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	0.00	0.00	0	100.00
Teachers	0.00	0.00	23.07	77.00
Pastors	0	0	0.00	100.00

Note: all #'s are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 9. Domain I Question a, The Importance of Sunday School

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.00	0.09	0.00
STD Dev	0.00	0.30	0.00
Mean	3.00	2.76	3.00
Mode	3	3	3
Median	3	3	3

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Question [b]: The Frequency for the student’s response was (8.33%) “Not Important” (29.16%) “Important” and (62.5 %) “Very Important.” Frequencies for the teachers: (15.38%) “Important” and (84.61%) “Very Important.” The pastor’s frequency scores: (16.66%) “Not Important,” (16.66%) “Somewhat Important”, and 66.66% “Important.” The second question [b]

of Domain I had a range for the scores: students, 2 - 3, teachers 0 - 3 and pastors 0 - 3. The mean scores were 2.38, 2.76 and 2.16 respectively. The teachers responded with the smallest variance of 0.10 and a standard deviation of 0.32 indicating a strong tendency toward “Very Important” as compared to the students and pastors. The pastors had the lowest Mean score, 2.16 of the three groups.

How important to you is the necessity to maintain the present teaching system, seeks to challenge the traditional means of teaching in the church for viability and applicability. Teachers believed that having or maintaining the same practice of teaching is “Very Important,” (84.61%) of the teachers agreed that it was “Very Important” and (15.38%) believed it was “Important.” Pastors also believed at (66.66%) that maintaining the present teaching system is “Very Important.” The students also concurred with a (62.5%) response that maintaining their present teaching system is very important. A small portion of the students and pastors chose that it was “Not Important” to maintain the present teaching paradigm at (8.33%) and (16.66%) respectively.

Table 10 Frequencies: Domain I Question b

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	8.33	0.00	29.16	62.5
Teachers	0.00	0.00	15.38	84.6
Pastors	16.66	16.66	0.00	66.66

Note: #'s are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 11. Domain I Question b, Maintaining the Present System

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	1.02	0.10	1.76
STD Dev	1.01	0.32	1.32
Mean	2.38	2.76	2.16
Mode	3	3	3
Median	3.00	3.00	3.00

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Question (c) of Domain I, as seen in table 12, depicts a greater distribution of scores with “Very Important” gaining the majority of the respondent’s choice. The frequency, (69.23%), of the teachers reflected a far greater response for choice (3) “Very Important” than the other respondents. The student and the pastor had a Frequency score of (29.16%) and (50%) respectively. The mean scores, students (1.92), teachers (2.38) and pastors (2.00) reflect a congruency with the teachers who had the smallest variance and standard deviation. The ranges were: students 0–3, teachers 2–3 and pastors 0–3. The mode and median are listed in table 13.

The importance of maintaining a particular teaching paradigm has been established and now question [c] investigates the importance of obtaining new sources of teaching materials. The answers are more diverse than the above results for maintaining a teaching protocol. While maintaining the same teaching paradigms, the results show that all respondents are open to obtaining new sources of teaching materials. Teachers had the highest percentage at (69.23%), pastors at (50%) and students at (29.16%) ascertaining that it is “Very Important.” Students were diverse in their answers. Sixteen-point sixty-six percent said it was not “Important,” (16.66%) “Somewhat Important” and (37.5%) of the students believed that it was “Important.” Interestingly, (7.60%) of teachers and (16.66%) of pastors determined that it was “Not Important.”

Table 12. Frequencies: Domain I Question c

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	16.66	16.66	37.50	29.16
Teachers	7.60	15.38	7.69	69.23
Pastors	16.66	16.66	17.00	50.00

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 13. Domain I Question c, Finding New Teaching Sources

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.95	0.56	0.80
STD Dev	0.97	0.74	0.89
Mean	1.92	2.38	2.00
Mode	2	3	3
Median	2.00	3.00	2.50

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Question [d]: The Frequency table 14 below reveals that: 46.15% of the teachers chose “Somewhat Important” while (30.76%) chose “Important.” Additionally, (15.38%) chose (3). The pastors scored (50%) for (2), (16.66%) for (3) and (33.33%) for (0). The students scored (29.16%) for (0), 20.83% for (1), (16.66%) for (2) and (33.33%) for (3). The Mean scores for Domain I question [d], are very similar: Students 1.62, Teachers 1.61 and Pastors 1.66. This indicates that “Somewhat Important” (1) and “Important” (2) are the central tendencies.. The Variance, 0.22, and the Standard Deviation of 0.46 for the Teachers indicates a more compressed scoring around the Mean of 2.38. This is also indicated by the teacher’s standard deviation of 0.46 as compared to the standard deviation of the Pastors (1.36) and the Students (1.24).

The mean scores for the three respondent groups, students 1.62, teachers 1.61 and pastors 1.66, indicate that it is not so important to remain restricted to a particular Sunday school lesson plan. The pastors had more deviation from their mean score with a standard deviation of 1.36. Pastors chose (16.66%) as “Very Important,” (50%) as “Important,” and (33.33%) as “Not

Important,” to remain tied to a particular lesson plan. The majority of the teachers said it was “Somewhat Important” at a rate of (46.15%), while (30.76%) said it was “Important.” Overall, there is no consensus on the question of the importance of remaining tied to a particular lesson plan.

Table 14. Frequencies: Domain I Question d

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	29.16	20.83	16.66	33.33
Teachers	7.69	46.15	30.76	15.38
Pastors	33.33	0.00	50.00	16.66

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 15. Domain I Question d, No Deviating from a Lesson Plan

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	1.54	0.22	1.85
STD Dev	1.24	0.46	1.36
Mean	1.62	1.61	1.66
Mode	3	1	0,2
Median	2	1	3

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Question [e]: In this last question, the Frequency table below, provides a consensus depiction that all three respondent groups reflect a high percentage of scores for the “Very Important” category. The Frequencies are: students (75%), teachers (84.61%), and pastors (83.33%). Notice: all the standard deviations are narrow: students 0.54, teachers 0.26 and pastors 0.51. The mean scores for the students, teachers and pastors: 2.70, 2.84, and 2.66 respectively, likewise the mode scores are 3.00, all reflect a concentration of scoring.

The results overwhelmingly support the Sunday school lesson meeting the social and spiritual needs of the students. The mean scores for the students, teachers and pastors are: 2.70,

2.84 and 2.66 respectively. Seventy-five percent of the students answered by selecting “Very Important,” likewise teachers (84.61%) and pastors (83.33%). The teacher’s variance, a measure of variability, was the narrowest of the three respondent groups at 0.07.

Table 16. Frequencies: Domain I Question e

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	0.00	8.33	12.50	75.00
Teachers	0.00	0.00	15.38	84.61
Pastors	0.00	0.00	16.66	83.33

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 17. Domain I Question e, Meeting Social and Spiritual Needs

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.30	0.07	0.26
STD Dev	0.54	0.26	0.51
Mean	2.70	2.84	2.66
Mode	3	3	3
Median	3	3	3

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

DOMAIN II

The phenomena of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit necessary for Christian teaching is the source statement for the questions in Domain II. There are five questions associated with Domain II: [a] How important is the Holy Spirit’s presence during the teaching experience? [b] How important is the Holy Spirit to the overall instruction in the church? [c] How important is the possible diminishment of the Holy Spirit’s influence within the teaching materials? [d] How important is teaching in relationship with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in your classes? And [e] How important are the pre-determined and prepared teaching materials for today’s student’s spiritual formation?

The frequency scores for Domain II question [a] for the three respondent groups associated with answer (3) were: student (79.16%), teacher (100%) and pastor (100%). Question [a], has variances and standard deviations of 0.00 for the teacher and pastor respondents indicating a 100% response for score (3). The mean scores were 3.00 for the teacher and pastor. The mode and medians are (3) which correlates with the previous findings. The student Mean score was 2.75 with a standard deviation of 0.33 from the mean.

The Holy Spirit’s presence within the teaching experience was chosen by all three respondent groups as being “Very Important.” The mean scores were very high with the students mean as 2.75, teachers 3.00 and pastors 3.00. The standard deviation from the mean score was 0.33 for the student respondents. The frequency of response was 100% for pastors and teachers while the students were (79.16%) for “Very Important.” It was realized that the teaching paradigm was dependent on the Holy Spirit’s unique and qualitative presence within a teacher’s methodology. The MOBDA teachers and pastors unequivocally agreed upon the Holy Spirit’s influence on Christian teaching as vital.

Table 18. Frequencies: Domain II Question a

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	0.00	4.16	16.66	79.16
Teachers	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Pastors	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 19. Domain II Question a, Holy Spirit’s Presence

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.11	0.00	0.00
STD Dev	0.33	0.00	0.00
Mean	2.75	3.00	3.00
Mode	3	3	3
Median	3	3	3

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Question [b] of Domain II’s results once again were significantly grouped with a Frequency of 100% for teacher and pastor with means equaling 3.00 and a frequency for the students of (87.5%) as seen in tables 20 and 21. The variances and standard deviations are 0.00 for the pastors and teacher respondents. The students reflected a variance and standard deviation of 0.11 and 0.33 respectively with a mean of 2.87.

Questions [a] and [b] of Domain II, correlate very well in maintaining a belief that the overall instruction in the church is foundationally supported by the Holy Spirit’s presence. One hundred percent of the pastors and teachers of the District selected “Very Important” as pertaining to the magnitude of the Holy Spirit’s impact on the overall teaching academy of its churches. Very close in their results, the students selected “Very Important” (87.50%) of the time and selected “Important” at a frequency of (12.50%). Overall, there is a very strong belief that God the Holy Spirit must preside over and among the teaching experiences of the church.

Table 20. Frequencies: Domain II Question b

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	0.00	0.00	12.50	87.50
Teachers	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Pastors	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 21. Domain II Question b, The Holy Spirit and Teaching

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.11	0.00	0.00
STD Dev	0.33	0.00	0.00
Mean	2.87	3.00	3.00
Mode	3	3	3
Median	2.5	3	3

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Domain II question [c], has a more dispersed scoring among the three respondent groups. The frequency response for answer (2) was teachers (35.46%) and pastors (33.33%) with the majority scoring answer (3) “Very Important” at (61.53%) for teachers and (50%) for pastors. Students trended close with (33.33%) for answer (2) “Important” and (45.83%) for answer (3) “Very Important,” (16.66%) of the pastors scored (0) “Not Important.” The mean scores for student, teacher and pastor were 2.25, 2.61 and 2.16 respectively. The pastors had the widest variance of 1.35, a mean of 2.16, and a standard deviation of 1.16 due to a (0) score where 16.66% answered, “Not important.”

It appears that some Sunday materials are absent of or have little mentioning of God the Holy Spirit within its context. How important is the possible diminishment of the Holy Spirit’s influence within the teaching materials? Teachers have answered in the majority for answer (3), “Very Important” by (61.53%). Additionally, (35.46%) checked that it was “Important.” The pastors also answered with a majority selecting answer (3) at (50%) and (33.33%) for answer (2) “Important.” All of the District’s Sunday school respondents determined that including the Holy Spirit within a Sunday school’s lesson as very important to the lesson process. The mean scores were: student 2.25, teachers 2.61 and pastors 2.16. Also note that 16.66% of the pastors believed that it was not important if the Holy Spirit’s influence was diminished.

Table 22. Frequencies: Domain II Question c

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	5.33	4.16	33.33	45.86
Teachers	0.00	0.00	35.46	61.53
Pastors	16.66	0.00	33.33	50.00

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 23. Domain II Question c, Diminishment of the Holy Spirit

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.80	0.21	1.35
STD Dev	0.89	0.46	1.16
Mean	2.25	2.61	2.16
Mode	3	3	3
Median	1	3	2.5

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

In Domain II question [d], the “Very Important” score (3), had the highest frequency: students (70.83%), teachers (92.31%) and pastors at (83.33%), as noted in table 24. The students also had a significant score of (20.83%) for answer (2) the “Important” option and (91.66%) of the students were correlated around the Mean, 2.66, with a standard deviation of 0.56. The student, teacher and pastor, mean scores were 2.66, 2.92 and 2.83 respectively. Close variances and standard deviations for teachers 0.07 and pastors 0.06 indicates a very strong consideration for score (3) with the mode and median results of 3.

How important is teaching in relationship with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in your classes? The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in relationship with Christian teaching was selected very highly among the respondents. Only (4.16%) of the students selected the score (1), “Somewhat Important.” See table 24. The mean scores were high for teachers and pastors at 2.92 and 2.83 respectively. The standard deviations also showed that the teachers and pastors had a narrow variance, mean scores showing a strong consensus that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a relationship with a Christian teacher that is imperative to maintain.

Table 24. Frequencies: Domain II Question d

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	0.00	4.16	20.83	70.83
Teachers	0.00	0.00	7.69	92.31
Pastors	0.00	0.00	16.66	83.33

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 25. Domain II Question d, The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.31	0.07	0.06
STD Dev	0.56	0.26	0.24
Mean	2.66	2.92	2.83
Mode	3	3	3
Median	3	3	3

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

The final question [e] in Domain II resulted in all respondents mirroring in their results for answer category (3). Teachers answered (3) “Very Important” at (69.23%) compared with (66.66%) for both the student and pastor respondents. In addition, the (2) “Important” answer option depicted a similar congruency with students at (20.83%), teachers at (23.07%) and pastors at (16.66%). The student’s scores, mode of 3 and median of 2, suggest that the variance of 0.60 was wide enough to depict a (0) “Not Important” answer at (4.16%) and a category (1) “Somewhat Important” answer at (4.16%). Also the standard deviation for the pastor respondents was 0.83 from the mean of 2.50. indicating that (16.66%) were below the mean for answers (1) and (2).

How important are the pre-determined and prepared teaching materials for today’s student’s spiritual formation and growth? The answers provided by the respondents were very similar for answer “3” “Very Important.” Students selected “3” (66.66%), teachers (69.23%) and pastors (66.66%). Combining the “Important” and the “Very Important” results, yielded scores: students (87.49%), teachers (92.30%) and pastors (83.32%), indicating a consensus that

predetermined prepared instructional Sunday school materials are strongly needed for the spiritual formation of the students. The mean scores also reflect the strong tendency to maintain purchased teaching materials for the Sunday schools: the mean for the students was 2.52, teachers 2.61, and the pastors 2.50. The standard deviations were also narrow at 0.77, 0.65 and 0.83 respectively.

Table 26. Frequencies Domain II Question e

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	4.16	4.16	20.83	66.66
Teachers	0.00	7.69	23.07	69.23
Pastors	0.00	16.66	16.66	66.66

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 27. Domain II Question e, Teaching Materials – Holy Spirit

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.60	0.42	0.70
STD Dev	0.77	0.65	0.83
Mean	2.54	2.61	2.50
Mode	3	3	3
Median	2	3	3

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

DOMAIN III

Question [a] will focus upon the importance of an instructor’s “Spiritual Formation” as it impacts the Sunday school and how it may have a direct result on the discipleship and disciple making efforts of that Sunday school. The answers within Domain II and Domain III are inseparable in their foundations and constructs for a viable Sunday school. There were no deviations from the mean score of 3.00 for all three respondent groups. Variances and standard deviations were calculated to be zero.

How important is loving God to the teaching experience? The answers were unanimous, All respondents answered (100%) for answer (3) “Very Important.” The link between the Christian teaching experience and loving God has been determined essential. The impact is a result of apparent spiritual formation teaching in the Sunday school. All means scores were 3.00 with no variances and no standard deviations from the mean scores.

Table 28. Frequencies: Domain III Question a

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Teachers	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Pastors	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 29. Domain III Question a, Spiritual Formation – Loving God

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.00	0.00	0.00
STD Dev	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mean	3.00	3.00	3.00
Mode	3	3	3
Median	3	3	3

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

In Domain III question [b], the pastors exhibited a diverse set of answers. For answer option (3) “Very Important” the pastors chose (50%), for answer option (2), (33.33%), and for answer option (0) “Not Important” (16.66%). The students chose answer option (3) “Very Important” at (87.50%) and answer option “2”, “Important” at (33.33%). The variance for the students was only 0.11 with a standard deviation from the mean of 0.33 which was the lowest of the three respondents. The median score for the pastors was 2.5 with a mode of 2.00 which is reflected in the mean being 2.00. The students reflected the highest mean at 2.87 with a mode and median of three “3”.

How important is loving yourself to the teaching experience? The answers are not as strong toward “Very Important” as in question [a], however, loving yourself is important for an instructor as they teach and mentor a student, disciples for Christ. Interestingly, (16.66%) of the pastors do not believe it is important for a teacher to love themselves in relationship to the teaching experience. The “Very Important” (3) answer was selected by students with a frequency of (87.50%), teachers at (69.23%) and pastors at (50.00%). The pastor’s mean scores at 2.00 also indicate a weaker belief that loving yourself is important. The student mean score was 2.87 with a standard deviation of 0.33 suggesting a close correlation to the mean. Overall, loving yourself, as a Christian teacher, is important to the teaching experience, but not as important as the researcher would have anticipated.

Table 30. Frequencies: Domain III Question b

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	0.00	0.00	12.50	87.50
Teachers	0.00	0.00	30.76	69.23
Pastors	16.66	0.00	33.33	50.00

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 31. Domain III Question b, Spirit Formation – Loving Yourself

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.11	0.19	1.20
STD Dev	0.33	0.43	1.09
Mean	2.87	2.69	2.00
Mode	3	3	2
Median	3	3	2.5

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Question [c] for Domain III, provided a frequency results for category (3): students and pastors (83.33%), and teachers (92.31%). For the “Important” choice (2) the frequency was teachers (7.69%) and the student and pastors both resulted in (16.66%). Tables 32 and 33 below

statistically reports the mean distribution for the student as 2.83, the teacher as 2.92 and the pastor as 2.83. The standard deviation from the mean scores for the teacher is the narrowest at 0.28 with a variance of 0.08 from the mean. The range for all respondents is 2–3.

How important is loving others to the teaching experience? Teachers selected “Very Important” in loving others as related to Christian teaching at a frequency of (92.31%) and (7.69%) for “Important.” Such a strong response from the teachers may indicate a subjective understanding that Christian teaching is an act of love. Both students and pastors also responded the same as teachers with a frequency of (83.33%). Mean scores were high: students 2.83, teachers 2.92 and pastors at 2.83. All respondents strongly believe that loving others compassionately is key to Christian teaching, consequently leading to a greater basis for disciple-making which should be an objective to a Sunday school ministry.

Table 32. Frequencies Domain III Question c

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	0.00	0.00	16.66	83.33
Teachers	0.00	0.00	7.69	92.31
Pastors	0.00	0.00	16.66	83.33

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 33. Domain III Question c, Spirit Formation – Loving Others

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.14	0.08	0.16
STD Dev	0.37	0.28	0.40
Mean	2.83	2.92	2.83
Mode	3	3	3
Median	2.5	3	3

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Research question [d] of Domain III shows the student group answering as the most diverse of the three respondent groups. However, the frequency for the pastor respondents for

answer (1) is (33.33%), for (2) is (50%) and (3) is (16.66%). The student and teacher’s frequency scores for answer (3) are (66.66%) and (69.23%) respectively. The range for the student group is the widest at 0-3. The student group has a more diverse frequency than the other respondents with the mean as 2.54 and with a higher variance and standard deviation of 0.60 and 0.77. The pastor’s mean is 1.83 with a range of 1–3 and a mode and median of 2.

How important is it to have a “spiritually seasoned” instructor teach Sunday school classes? (16.66%) of the pastors selected “Very Important” compared with (66.66%) of the students and an even greater (69.23%) of the teachers. However, (50%) of the pastors selected “Important” concerning having spiritually seasoned Christian teachers instruct their Sunday schools. The mean score for the pastors was 1.83 with a standard deviation of 0.74 from the mean. It appears that pastors were somewhat less concerned about the spiritual quality and spiritual maturity of the Sunday school teachers.

Table 34. Frequencies Domain III Question d

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	4.16	4.16	25.00	66.66
Teachers	0.00	7.69	23.07	69.23
Pastors	0.00	33.33	50.00	16.66

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 35. Domain III Question d, Spiritually Seasoned Teachers

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.60	0.42	0.56
STD Dev	0.77	0.65	0.74
Mean	2.54	2.61	1.83
Mode	3	3	2
Median	3	3	2

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Upon examining question [e], all respondent’s answers were concentrated between answers (2) and (3). The frequencies for answering (2) are: student (20.83%), teacher (23.07%)

and pastor at 50%. The frequencies for answering option (3): students at (79.16%), teachers at (76.92%) and pastors at (50%). The pastors' mode and median scores were 2,3 and 2.5 respectively with a mean score of 2.50. The mean scores for the student and teacher groups were very close at 2.79 and 2.76 with standard deviations of 0.40 and 0.43.

Is it important for instructors to live in a manner that supports and edifies biblical doctrine? Once again, as in question [d], the pastors selected choice (3), "Very Important" at a lower percentage, (50.00%), than that of the students, (79.16%) and the teachers (76.92%). The frequencies for the remainder of the question selections: for choice (2) students (20.83%), teachers at (23.07%), and (50.00%) of the pastors. Living a life reflective of Christian beliefs edifying biblical doctrine is important to all respondents but that level of importance is interestingly diverse.

Table 36. Frequencies Domain III Question e

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	0.00	0.00	20.83	79.16
Teachers	0.00	0.00	23.07	76.92
Pastors	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 37. Domain III Question e, Spiritual Formation's Impact

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.16	0.19	0.30
STD Dev	0.40	0.43	0.54
Mean	2.79	2.76	2.50
Mode	3	3	2,3
Median	2.5	3	2.5

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

DOMAIN IV

Domain IV's set of questions investigates the environmental concerns for teaching and the growing of the church. The spiritual aspects of the Christian teaching paradigm have been viewed. The following questions will view the physical and natural aspects of Christian teaching.

For question [a], The teacher group responded with a frequency of 100% for answer (3). The frequencies for the student and pastor groups were also high for answer (3) at 79.16% and (66.66%) respectively. The same groups, students and pastors, had answered option (2) "Important" with frequencies of (20.83%) and (33.33%), respectively. The mean scores for students, 2.79 and for pastors, 2.66, with standard deviations of 0.40 and 0.51 respectively. All modes and medians are 3 with no variance and standard deviation for teacher respondents.

How important is the safety of the teaching environment? It is reasonable to understand why the teacher's response is 100% when compared to the student response of 79.16% and the pastor's response of (66.66%), when it is seemingly a teacher's responsibility for the safety of their classroom. Some pastors, 33.33%, believed that the importance of the teaching environment did not warrant a "Very Important" response but only an "Important" selection. The mode and median scores were all three respondent groups was 3.

Table 38. Frequencies: Domain IV Question a

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	0.00	0.00	20.83	79.16
Teachers	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Pastors	0.00	0.00	33.33	66.66

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 39. Domain IV Question a, Environmental Safety

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.16	0.00	0.26
STD Dev	0.40	0.00	0.51
Mean	2.79	3	2.66
Mode	3	3	3
Median	3	3	3

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Question [b]’s answers reflect a concentration of scoring for option (3) with frequencies of (66.66%) students, (76.92%) teacher and (66.66%) pastor. Question [b]’s answer for the (2) choice was (29.16%) student, (23.07%) teacher and (33.33%) pastor. Students also answered (1) at (4.16%). The range for the student group was 1–3 with a median score of 2.50. The teacher and pastor respondents had modes and medians of “3.” Variances for all respondents were narrow with variances/standard deviations: student 0.22/0.46, teacher 0.18/0.42 and pastor 0.26/0.51.

How important is the friendliness of the teaching environment? Friendliness in a Christian classroom may affect the receptivity of a student’s learning. Teachers scored the highest percentage, (76.92%) for the “Very Important” question option. Both the student and the pastor respondents chose “Very Important” at a frequency of (66.66%). Combining the scores for question options (2) and (3), the importance of providing a friendly teaching environment is significantly important.

Table 40. Frequencies: Domain IV Question b

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	0.00	4.16	29.16	66.66
Teachers	0.00	0.00	23.07	76.92
Pastors	0.00	0.00	33.33	66.66

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 41. Domain IV Question b, Environmental Friendliness

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.22	0.18	0.26
STD Dev	0.46	0.42	0.51
Mean	2.66	2.76	2.66
Mode	3	3	3
Median	2.5	3	3

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Answer (2) “Important” for question [c] Domain IV is the primary choice among the survey respondents. The pastors had a frequency score of (66.66%) for “Important” and (33.33%) for answer (3) “Very Important.” Half of the student group selected “Important” and 37.50% for answer “Very Important.” Teachers scored: (7.69%) for (1), (35.46%) for (2) and (53.84%) for “Very Important” answer (3). Teachers had the highest mean at 2.46 and the widest standard deviation at 0.65. The statistical range for teacher and student groups was 1–3. Teachers also had the highest variance at 0.43 with a median and mode of 3. The student and pastor had median and mode scores of 2 and 2.5 respectively.

How important is the social timeliness of the teaching materials for spiritually growing the class? Social timeliness of a Sunday school’s teaching materials is highly important to the pastors, with a combined scores, of options (2) and (3), of a frequency of 99.99%. The mean score is 2.33 and the mode is 2. Teachers also followed behind the pastor group with a score of (53.84%) as “Very Important” and (35.46%) “Important.” Combining these results, a frequency of (89.30%), also indicates a very strong desire for the teaching materials to reflect current timely lessons. The pastors may have a slightly greater sense for their Sunday school lessons to reflect social issues and their importance over the teachers and students. As pastor/leaders, they may desire well-rounded pertinent lesson materials more than other leaders.

Table 42. Frequencies: Domain IV Question c

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	0.00	12.50	50.00	37.50
Teachers	0.00	7.69	35.46	53.84
Pastors	0.00	0.00	66.66	33.33

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 43. Domain IV Question c, Teaching & Social Timeliness

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.20	0.43	0.26
STD Dev	0.44	0.65	0.51
Mean	2.29	2.46	2.33
Mode	2	3	2
Median	2.5	3	2.5

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

In Domain IV question [d], pastors scored the highest with a (83.33%) frequency for answer (2) and a (16.66%) for answer (3). The teacher group was the highest frequency for answer (3) at (76.92%), followed by the student group scoring a frequency of (62.5%). Teachers had the smallest variance at 0.13 with a mean and mode of 3. The standard deviation for the teachers from the mean, 2.84, is 0.36. The lowest mean score was the pastor respondents at 2.16 with a standard deviation of 0.62 from that mean.

How important is the support from your supervisors to facilitate a growing teaching ministry? The students, even though they are not under administrative supervision, scored very high for “Very Important” at a frequency of (62.50%). This may indicate that the students are concerned about the management of their Sunday school’s support system. Pastors selected “Important” (83.33%) of the time and teachers selected “Very Important” (76.92%), for having support to grow a viable Sunday school ministry. Teachers had a mean score of 2.84 with a standard deviation from the mean of 0.36 which is a tight correlation for desiring administrative support for the teaching ministry.

Table 44. Frequencies Domain IV Question d

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	0.00	4.16	33.33	62.50
Teachers	0.00	0.00	15.38	76.92
Pastors	0.00	0.00	83.33	16.66

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 45. Domain IV Question d, Supervisory Support

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.33	0.13	0.39
STD Dev	0.57	0.36	0.62
Mean	2.58	2.84	2.16
Mode	3	3	2
Median	2.5	3	2

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

The students had the greatest range of 0-3 for question [e] of Domain IV. How important is the adequacy of the teaching room/space provided? The student frequency was (4.16%) for (0) “Not Important,” (20.83%) for (1) “Somewhat Important,” and (37.50%) for both answers “Important and Very Important.” The greatest frequency was noted in the pastor’s score of (66.66%) for answer (2) “Important.” Teachers plotted the second largest frequency of (53.84%) for answer “Very Important.” Even though the range for the student respondents was 0–3, the mean was 2.08 resulting in a standard deviation of 0.87. The respondent scores for mode and median were 2, with the student’s mode at 2 and 3. The teachers had the narrowest standard deviation at 0.51 of a mean of 2.46 and variance of 0.26.

Interestingly, the students did not show a very strong concern for the physical teaching environment, (20.83%) thought it was “Somewhat important,” (37.50%) believed that it was “Important” and the same percentage selected “Very Important.” Teachers scored (46.15%) for “Important” and (53.84%) for “Very Important.” Pastors believed that it was “Somewhat Important” at a frequency of (16.66%) and (66.66%) ,“Important.” The space and room

adequacy concerns were less important than the social timeliness of the school’s lesson and especially among the MOBDA Sunday school student and pastor respondents. The District teachers responded with a combined frequency score, after adding their scores for “Important and Very Important,” it yielded scores of (99.99%).

Table 46. Frequencies Domain IV Question e

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	4.16	20.83	37.50	37.50
Teachers	0.00	0.00	46.15	53.84
Pastors	0.00	16.66	66.66	16.66

.Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 47. Domain IV Question e, Teaching Room & Space

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.77	0.26	0.40
STD Dev	0.87	0.51	0.63
Mean	2.08	2.46	2.00
Mode	2,3	2	2
Median	2	2	2

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

The last question of the research survey, Domain IV question [f] presented a range for all respondents of 2-3 reflecting the greatest frequency of answers for (3), “Very Important.” Students scored the highest frequency for “Very Important” at (91.66%), followed by the teachers and pastors at (84.61%) and (83.33%) respectively. A small cluster of respondents focused on answer (2) “Important.” Students at (8.33%), teachers scored (15.38%), and pastors recorded a (16.66%). All mean scores were very similar: student 2.91, teacher 2.92, and pastor 2.83. The highest standard deviation was recorder for the pastor respondents at 0.64. All groups recorded the same numbers for the statistical mode and median with a score of 3.

How important is the overall growth of the Sunday school to the Body of Christ? All respondents scored high, “Very Important.” A concern for the growth of the Sunday school and

its importance to the entire Body of Christ was reflected in the high scores: students (91.66%), teachers (84.61%), and pastors (83.33%). There is a healthy consensus among the surveyed MOBDA respondents that the Body of Christ Jesus, the Church and its growth is closely related to a church's Sunday school ministry. This last question in Domain IV [f] of the research survey, correlates very well with the first question of the research survey Domain I [a]. How important is a Sunday school program to your church? Compare tables 8 and 48 to consider this correlation.

Table 48. Frequencies: Domain IV Question f

Scores	0	1	2	3
Students	0.00	0.00	8.33	91.66
Teachers	0.00	0.00	15.38	84.61
Pastors	0.00	0.00	16.66	83.33

Note: all numbers are percentages; Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

Table 49. Domain IV Question f, Sunday School Growth

	Student	Teacher	Pastor
Variance	0.04	0.07	0.41
STD Dev	0.2	0.26	0.64
Mean	2.91	2.92	2.83
Mode	3	3	3
Median	3	3	3

Student n=24, Teacher n=13, Pastor n=6

SUMMARY

The District respondents to the research survey were comprised of six pastor/ministers, thirteen teachers and twenty-four students for a total of forty-three responses. The demographical questions were: (1) What is your position in the church? (2) How many years have you been attending this church? and (3) If you are a teacher, how many years have you been in the teaching ministry? There are two tables, tables 6 and 7, that depict the number of years of attending their present church and if they were teachers, the years in the teaching ministry.

Every research survey question was subjected to the same analysis to calculate the statistical Measures of Central Tendency and the Measures of Variability. Two tables were formulated for all twenty-one questions which provide a report of the results for the central tendencies and variabilities of the survey's numerical data. Each survey question has a brief explanatory paragraph that provides a summation of the frequency data and a second paragraph with an explanation of the findings and a short description of various tendencies: the variance, standard deviation, mean, mode, and median.

Four Domains comprise the four core categories of the research survey questions: Domain I, The teaching practices present in the current church teaching paradigm, Domain II, The phenomena of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit necessary for Christian teaching, Domain III, The importance of an instructor's "spiritual formation" as it impacts the Sunday school, and Domain IV, The following areas of concern for teaching and the growing of your church. The results of the four Domains are discussed in greater detail in the Conclusion section of the thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

THE RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATIONS

Every church and pastor of the MOBDA that receives the results of this thesis project may determine in what ways, if at all, the culmination of the research data and the interpretation of the data affects their Sunday school ministry. The significance and relevancy of a Sunday school is determined by the leadership. This study may engage the ministry leadership to investigate the potentiality of developing a “Spiritual Formation” growth program for their teaching paradigms. The goal is to cause an engagement of ideas and philosophies for Christian teaching to develop Christian disciples for the growth of the kingdom of God.

THE RESEARCH RESULTS COMPARED TO THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Domain I Summary

The importance of a Sunday school program may have a direct result on the disciple-making processes and the discipleship character building of a churches ministry. Domain I focuses on some of the components that are important to a viable Sunday school. The surveyed District respondents believed that Sunday school is important and that the present teaching platform is adequate to maintain in its present state. However, the thirteen District teachers reserved the possibility to explore obtaining alternative study materials. The sensitivity to the social and cultural needs of a community are very important to the respondents. The Sunday school must remain contextually free to conform a lesson to the spiritual and natural needs of the students.

Domain I and the Literature Review

The teaching practices present in the current church teaching paradigm are the general topic for the research questions of Domain I. The importance of the Church Academy, the Sunday school, and the teachers that facilitate a Christian learning environment is at the heart of this thesis. The pastors, teachers and students agreed that Sunday school is a very important academic ministry in the MOBDA churches. The history of the National Baptist Convention USA and the National Baptist Convention of America's concerns for a true didactic intentional ministry during the turn of the century was reflected by William J. Simmons, D.D's statement. Simmons implied that caution must be exercised to maintain quality leaders who will ensure quality teaching and reject ignorance, otherwise the failure to do so rests within the responsibility of the gatekeepers of the churches, the leadership. The inclusiveness of the church leadership, pastors and teachers, supporting a strong stance in favor of Sunday school today is yet a continuance of a historical tradition.¹³⁹

The systems and traditional ways of Christian teaching may require adjustments or renovation to maintain a Sunday school that is applicable and viable in today's culture. The majority of respondents determined that maintaining the present teaching paradigm is very important to the viability of their Sunday school. The Sunday schools are very important and the present methods by which instruction is implemented is deemed important and correlates well with Elmer Town's belief that growth within the Church Academy is dependent upon an intentional and aggressive Sunday school. Additionally, church leadership must strongly believe in the actualization of the Great Commission as stated by Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁰ (Matthew 28:19-20). If

¹³⁹ L. G. Jordan, *The Baptist Standard Church Directory*, vi.

¹⁴⁰ Elmer Towns, *The Aggressive Sunday School*, 35.

there are no reasons to modify the Sunday school's system of teaching, as is reflected by the respondent's answers, then the methodologies for reaching the ultimate goal of bringing glory to God and to edify his kingdom are being satisfied through equipping "people to reach people".¹⁴¹

The evolution of the MOBDA's culture may require a change in the sources or materials implemented in the Sunday school teaching process. Teachers of the MOBDA believe that it is very important to have the freedom or option to secure teaching materials that are beneficial to growing their Christian Sunday school program. The materials associated with Christian teaching should expound upon Christian doctrine. Sunday school teaching materials and lesson plans should be biblically rooted as a standard for principles, doctrine and the theology taught.¹⁴²

Commercially prepared lessons that are purchased may not always relate to events that are current and important to the Christian student body. Therefore, a shift in the teaching may be necessary to equip the student to live and be effective in society. The respondents of the MOBDA overwhelmingly support lessons that are current and relevant to the social and spiritual needs of the students. Murray Capill stated that Christian teaching must affect the soul of a person. Christian living among believers and non-believers must reveal the passion and love for God in all social and spiritual encounters.¹⁴³

Domain II Summary

The researcher's presupposition is that the Holy Spirit is not at the center of influencing Christian teaching, but must be. Domain II investigates the importance of the Holy Spirit in impacting the teaching of a Sunday school ministry. The reality of the indwelling of the Holy

¹⁴¹ Gary L. McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth*, 111.

¹⁴² Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology, Introduction, Bible*, 218.

¹⁴³ Murray Capill, *Shaping Hearts*, 25.

Spirit was greatly realized, in this study, as vital for Christian teaching. The presence of the Holy Spirit during the teaching processes of a District Sunday school is highly significant and necessary. The surveyed District students, teachers and pastor/ministers were recognizing the possible diminishment of God the Spirit in the teaching materials, but at a lower significance than the researcher had anticipated. The respondents determined to continue with the present purchased teaching materials, and as recorded in Domain I they reserved the privilege to seek other teaching aids as necessary.

Domain II and the Literature Review

Christian teaching is correctly predicated upon the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit in a teacher's life. The base of questions in Domain I ascertain the importance of the Holy Spirit's necessity in the Christian teaching process. (Acts 1:8). All MOBDA respondents graded their responses concerning God being present, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, during the Christian teaching moments as very important. A consideration of 1 John 2:27 appears to be understood: "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." In addition, Jesus informs his disciples as noted in John 14:16-17:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

In some of the literature used for instruction in the Sunday school, the researcher noticed a diminishment of the presence, consideration and operation of the Holy Spirit. The researcher surveyed the respondents of the MOBDA and revealed a diverse response from the pastors,

teachers and students. Teachers thought it was very important to infuse the operation and importance of the Holy Spirit throughout the Sunday school lessons. Interestingly, a small percentage of the surveyed pastors felt that inclusion of the Holy Spirit within the framework of a lesson was not important, and half, (50%), believed the Holy Spirit was very important. The ability to live a holy and perfect life is not afforded the disciple outside of the influence of the Holy Spirit. Living a godly life is attainable through God's Spirit and this attainability must be taught in the Christian teaching paradigm.¹⁴⁴

The ministry of Christian teaching in the Sunday school, as a teacher abides in God's Word, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, is seen as extremely vital by all respondents. A right relationship with Christ Jesus through the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of God, must be lived and maintained by abiding in God's Word. (John 15:1-9). Maintaining a right relationship with the Holy Spirit, not grieving the Spirit, Ephesians 4:30, and not quenching the Holy Spirit, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, is the epicenter of the character of a Christian teacher. Growing in this environment of holiness is the essence of discipleship, disciples who are being fully trained.¹⁴⁵

Domain III Summary

Character enters the relationship constructs between a teacher and a student within a Sunday school environment, as good character is a key to Christian discipleship. (Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Peter 1:5-8). The process of spiritual formation aids in the development of spiritually sound disciples for the edification of the kingdom of God. All District respondents felt that love for the Father, your brothers and sisters and your-self were foundationally important to a disciple's

¹⁴⁴ Ronald F. Youngblood, Gen. Ed., *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 573.

¹⁴⁵ Terence D. Linhart, *Teaching the Next Generation*, 15.

spiritual growth. Having a teaching staff that is “spiritually seasoned” was important to the surveyed respondent pastors of the District but not at the very important level that was anticipated by the researcher.

Domain III and the Literature Review

Spiritual formation must be intentional and a reality, especially in the Christian teaching ministry. Dallas Willard’s uses a term called, “Meaningful Intentionality”, to describe spiritual formation as a way to define the mental efforts made by a disciple to understand what must take place in the spiritual formative process. Spiritual formation is a process that continues for a lifetime, it is the conforming of man’s will to align with the will of God.¹⁴⁶ Christian teachers should compel disciples to know why they are living a life for Christ. Living a life for Christ without having any knowledge as to why, is not beneficial to Christian growth and healthy disciple-making.¹⁴⁷

Spiritual formation is an important process of spiritual growth within which a Sunday school instructor should be in a continual experience of loving God completely, loving yourself correctly and loving others compassionately.¹⁴⁸ All MOBDA respondents answered in complete agreement that loving God is critical to effective Sunday school teaching and to the spiritual health of the teacher. When asked the question concerned with the importance of a Christian teacher loving themselves correctly, a few of the pastors of the MOBDA did not feel that it was important. However, the majority of the students and teachers, (87.50%) and (69.23%) respectively, believed that a Christian teacher should love themselves correctly in relationship to

¹⁴⁶ Steven L. Porter, *Will/Heart/Spirit*, 81.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 27.

God and mankind. Very clearly, Jesus Christ teaches his disciples in Matthew 22:39, that a correct love for self is reflective of the love a man should have for his neighbors. All respondents believed that it is very important to love others as relating to the Christian teacher. In teaching the Christian doctrine from a position of genuine love for others, God provides the ability to aid in the healing of loneliness, insignificance, and meaninglessness within the student populace, thus affording the opportunity for spiritual growth and obedience to the Word of God.¹⁴⁹ In completing this trilogy of questioning, on loving God, loving yourself, and on loving others, the teachers of the District very strongly believed that loving others is crucial to teaching effectively within the teaching paradigm.

Experienced instructors or teachers knowledgeable in the Scriptures should be important to the church academy. The surveyed pastors of the District were split in their stance for “seasoned” Christian teachers, concluding that it was not very important to have “seasoned” teachers instructing the students. Interestingly, exactly half of the pastors did believe it was very important to have “good” teachers stand before their student congregations. Conversely, the teachers and the students of the Sunday schools felt that “seasoned teachers” were very important to afford correct biblical teaching, to aid in the facilitating of biblical living, and not only in the knowledge of the Word of God, but also in helping to facilitate a growing love and passion for learning and knowing more of God is a great attribute of a Christian teacher.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 45.

¹⁵⁰ Israel Galindo, *The Craft of Christian Teaching*, 15-17.

Living in a manner consistent with biblical principles and doctrine is facilitated by God the Holy Spirit. A Christian teacher should lead from a standpoint of being an example of living as a Christian should, as well as teaching the principles of a Christian life. (James 1:21-22).

Domain IV Summary

Concern for the physical safety of a Sunday school classroom was of great importance from the vantage point of the teachers more than the other respondents, however, the importance of the size and space allotted to the teacher's rooms ranked lower overall. Coinciding with safety is the social friendliness exhibited by the teaching staff toward the students. Interestingly, the social timeliness of teaching was lower than a similar question [e] in Domain I, which resulted in responses which were significantly higher. All District staff surveyed, believed that the Sunday school is very important for the growth of a church. The results coincide with the answers provided in Domain I question [a], that questions the importance of Sunday school to the church.

Domain IV and the Literature Review

In Domain IV, there are six questions that focus on the possible physical and social needs of a Sunday schools teaching environment. In assessing the setting for a Sunday school, the safety of all participants is paramount, and it must be a matter of concern for the church leadership and lay members. Safety, security, cleanliness, appearances and the physical accommodations are some factors that aid in growing not only a church membership but also a Sunday school ministry.¹⁵¹

The physical appearance of the church has much to say about what is going on inside the church. Dr. Frank J. Schmitt in his writing for Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary (1991), A

¹⁵¹ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 251.

Practical Introduction to Church Administration, stated, “Inadequately maintained, church buildings, equipment, and grounds make a poor appearance, hardly in keeping with the importance of the church function.” A church that is poorly maintained physically, may indicate that the church is also poorly maintained in other areas that are important to a Christians growth. The impact on the local community is unfortunate; it sometimes eventuates in a loss of prospective members and actual membership.¹⁵²

Church maintenance is a key issue that ensures and aids in providing a safe environment for the attendees of a church, inclusive of the classrooms where ministry teaching is conducted. Considerations must be made and adjusted as time may warrant additional attention to various safety concerns. A safety issue that may escape attention is the size of the rooms where teaching ministry is conducted. Room space and adequacy was an important issue among the surveyed District respondents but only the majority teachers of the District deemed it a very important subject.¹⁵³

The survey respondents agreed that the social essence of providing a friendly atmosphere for Christian teaching is very important to growing a Sunday school and the church. Having a sensitivity toward teaching a socially current lesson was important but was not of a primary value. Supervision in support of the teaching ministry was recorded as very important among the District teachers. Even though the pastors believed supervisory support is important, it was not at the level that the teachers exhibited. Supervision not only supports the teaching paradigm but also ensures the physical and social well-being of the students and everybody involved in the

¹⁵² Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 240.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 250.

Sunday school.¹⁵⁴ Friendliness exhibited by the church teaching staff and the social aspects associated with supervision from the position of church administration, especially the pastor is important to church growth. The facilitation of a socially correct and beneficial teaching paradigm cannot be accomplished without the exhibition and true reality of the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance...” (Galatians 5:22-23).

POSSIBLE FUTURE STUDIES ON THESIS TOPIC

In this present, post-modernistic culture, interests have changed negatively towards Christianity. Disciple-making today seems to be more difficult among the young people than in past years.¹⁵⁵ It appears that a concern in the churches for a positivity toward Bible doctrine and an enhanced Christian student’s mindset has also changed. (2 Timothy 4:3) Secular Humanism is driving the spirit of the country into realms of study and interpretation of life that oppose the Church of God.¹⁵⁶ The children of the Christian churches are being subjected to philosophies and doctrines that appear to go unchallenged by the Christian teaching ministries. In the environment of some of the churches in southern Illinois, the researcher has noticed a lack of spiritual fortitude among the saints to stand for Christian principles regardless of the cultural attractiveness to blend in and to accommodate unholy days and celebrations that are an antithesis to the Gospel. There must be teaching of the Gospel Truth to the young people of the church. Truth will cause them to question practices that run counter to their faith. The televised media, the secular schools, homes that are divided on the grounds of faith, and sadly some churches, are

¹⁵⁴ David R. Pollock, *Business Management in the Local Church*, 50.

¹⁵⁵ Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders*, 13.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

sanctuaries for teaching that counters and attempts to undermine the foundations of the Christian faith, the teachings of the Bible. 1 Peter 1:15 states, “But as he which hath called is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation:”. This conversation extends to Christian teaching. The impact of such a faithless intentional diversion from Christian teaching may be a subject for future research.

FINDINGS APPLICABLE TO OTHER SETTINGS

Overall the statistical results reflected the researcher’s presuppositions concerning the thesis project. A true desire to see discipleship and disciple-making take place within the context of the church must reside in the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. A deep examination of the calling upon a servant of God should take place in a continual and in a consistent yielding to the Great Commandments, Matthew 22:37-40, and the Great Commission of the Lord, Matthew 28:18-20. The findings should be applicable to other settings and especially the teaching ministries irrespective of social cultures.

The Sunday school is one ministry of the church. Every ministry in a church should have servants yielding to the Holy Spirit to effectively carryout the mandates of God for the edification of the Church, the Body of Christ. Church leadership should be concerned with the spiritual growth and living of a Christian life. Leading, living, and teaching that compels all of the students of the Word and all of the saints to live holy lives through spiritual formation and being Christ-like is the nucleus to disciple-making. (Romans 8:28-29, 12:1-3; 1 Corinthians 5:17).

AREAS OF STUDY THAT NEED ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATION

How valuable to a Sunday school are good, timely, and spiritually study materials, or should a church develop its own study resources which would be germane to that church’s

unique niche? In an attempt to enhance the researcher's church's teaching ministry, the researcher is considering transitioning from Sunday school books purchased from the R. H. Boyd Publishing Corporation which has been the church's supplier for many decades. The new supplier appears to provide a library of study materials that may enhance the teaching ministry with a wider range of culturally sensitive and spiritually pertinent materials. The *Comprehensive Review of Sacred Scripture* is just one of the new resources for the Sunday school that may be purchased from the National Baptist Convention of America's own publishing agency.

There are many commercial vendors of Christian study resources that are vying for the church's business. Such a market of Christian books and literature may be a topic for additional research. This research could greatly increase the Christian knowledge base of the pastors and also the teaching staffs. Churches would be benefited by knowing their options when accessing ministry supplies. Such research may benefit a church audience that not only could assist the Christian community but also cause an inspiration for suppliers to inspect, and reassure that the materials presented to the churches is of the best quality.

THE IMPACT OF THE THESIS UPON DISTRICT MINISTRIES

The Mount Olive Baptist District Association of Southern Illinois provided a possibility of nine pastors, excluding the researcher, but his Sunday school staff did participate, to contribute in the research of this thesis. However, the total number of pastors, three and ministers, three, comprised the six respondents for the pastor/minister category. Even though the representation was low, all nine pastors of the District to whom surveys were mailed will receive a copy of the thesis. The MOBDA and the Illinois National Baptist Convention of America recognize the autonomy of every church within its jurisdiction. The researcher also recognizes and is a supporter of this autonomy of each church and their pastor, concerning the manner in which church administration is conducted. All research surveys were anonymous and along with

the autonomy of the pastors and churches, this perceived freedom precludes any enforced compliance, but warrants a liberty to participate in the research process that is greatly appreciated.

The thesis is not intended to have a negative influence upon any ministry, but the thesis is designed and presented in such a way as to aid the pastors and teachers in their didactic ministries and to enhance the spiritual growth of the surveyed church's Sunday schools. This research may enable each church's pastor to institute a Sunday school program or adjust an existing program to provide their church with some essential information that may facilitate a modification or development of some Sunday school instructional techniques.

The research survey is composed of twenty-one questions which are divided into four groups or Domains. Each pastor may examine a Domain as a separate entity but for the benefit of continuity, all four groups should be considered as a whole. Domain I is concerned with the teaching practices present in the current church teaching paradigm. Domain II considers the phenomena of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit necessary for Christian teaching which is closely related to Domain III that surveys the importance of an instructor's "spiritual formation" as it impacts the Sunday school. Domain IV relates to the environment and the physical aspects of teaching by investigating some non-spiritual areas of concern for teaching and the growing of the church. During the process of studying the thesis, correlations and differences between the respondent's answers may be realized by the pastors, that were not mentioned by the researcher. Such a case of seeing additional properties and aspects of this research through another's conversation, is an intentional desire of the researcher. Therefore, a greater insight into a method of growing a God-centered church Sunday school academy, disciple-making and a discipleship reality may come to fruition.

The fulfilment of Romans 8:29 for every saint of every church will be enhanced through spiritual formational teaching. Every pastor, teacher and every teaching ministry of a church should be sensitive to the conforming of every soul to the image of Jesus Christ. District pastors may be required to make changes to their present programs. In some cases there may be necessitated a spiritually guided teaching paradigm shift in the reeducation of the teaching staff. Consequently, fortifying all teachers with an understanding of the dynamics that the Holy Spirit through whom all Christian teaching emanates, may transform and institute quality instruction that serves the purposes and principals of God. Spiritual formation is key for the District churches to produce teachers and students who are empowered by God to grow strong disciples for Christ.

District pastors should consider infusing spiritual formational teaching into every teaching paradigm, whether it is Bible study, vacation bible school, conferences, special holiday worship services or general services. Teaching in this manner is an ongoing process. Spiritual growth within the church requires spiritual nourishment afforded through the Word of God. But there must be first a continued growth within the entire knowledge base of a Sunday school teacher. The Apostle Paul instructs the saints in Ephesians 4:12 by stating the reasoning for sound biblically based teaching, “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” District pastors may want to set aside a special time to concentrate on spiritual formational teaching. Several books that the researcher has found helpful is Kenneth Boa’s *Conformed to His Image* and *Christian Formation* by James Estep and Jonathan Kim. The thesis’ literature review may also assist the District pastors by providing a number of sources, theoretical and theological, to facilitate and continue a knowledge base for an ongoing study of the Christian teaching paradigm.

The researcher suggests some adjustments for the MOBDA pastors that may be employed: (1) Assess your present teaching methodology of the Sunday school. The District pastor may want to determine if there is a need to enhance the teaching paradigm to move toward and ensure a more dynamic spiritual instructional experience. (2) Changes may have to be made to ensure that teaching is spiritually viable and inspired by God. Unfortunately, a change in the teaching staff may be required but finding new teachers may be a real problem due to the size of the church's congregation. Some well-meaning people have been in the teaching positions for many years and have not grown in their knowledge and relationship with God. Sensitivity for the emotional aspects of such instructors is warranted when instituting any changes. Seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit will preclude a difficult transitioning experience. Remember that growing a God-centered church academy will not be without growing pains. (3) District pastors must labor with and for the teaching staff. Love and encourage every teacher as they grow and manifest the gifts of becoming dynamic instructors for the building of God's kingdom. (4) MOBDA pastors must teach teachers to duplicate themselves. The goal is to grow saints in order to grow other disciples for Christ. This process will expand the Sunday school's natural growth and will lessen the demands on the District pastor and free him to attend to other pastoral matters. (5) It will take time for the results of your labor to come to fruition. The present conditions were not realized overnight, but they will be overcome in the Lord's time. Apostle Paul encourages us in Galatians 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Psalm 1:3 also encourages the District pastor, "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

The results of this thesis' research may aid a District pastor to envision a greater value in what the Apostle Paul states in Romans 12:2, that every believer must possess a transformational mind for the glory of God. In addition, this thesis may aid not only the pastors of the District but also "The Congress of Christian Education" which is the educational dimension of the MOBDA. The Congress of Christian Education is designed to train the teachers of the District in biblical knowledge and Baptist history and doctrine. Prayerfully, it is the researcher's desire that this research may become useful and assist all teachers and administrators of every church and the District.

Every person involved in teaching Christian truths must also be lovers of that truth. Biblical teaching coupled with an experiential testimonial for the glory of God will impact a Christian student with living examples of faith. The entire church is responsible for disciple-making and the continued growth of disciples for Christ. The spiritual formation processes have no time limitations or constraints. Therefore, some spiritual formative teaching must begin in earnest if not already implemented by the District pastors. Any degradation of teaching the Scripture must be reversed and the establishment of a spiritually viable Christian teaching reality must be enhanced. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 4:2).

The MOBDA churches and their pastors must create an atmosphere for teaching that is a mental exercise in growing and sustaining right living and learning in the District that supersedes any social constructs that may mis-direct and hinder Sunday school growth in this twenty-first century. The goals of disciple-making remain the same for all churches. These goals are anchored in the Scriptures as they have been for many centuries. Regardless of ethnicity issues, political and social struggles, academic and poverty concerns that are manifested within the MOBDA communities, the churches must maintain a ministry focused upon who they are and

whose they are. The Church belongs to Jesus Christ and is a physical and spiritual manifestation of the Body of Christ with a mission that is clear and unchanged. Matthew 28:19-20, the Great Commission, states, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

THE IMPACT OF THE THESIS UPON THE RESEARCHER

The presuppositions in relationship with this thesis paper have been generally supported and enhanced from the research performed and the research survey results received from the MOBDA. The researcher’s reflexivity attempted not to directly impose or lead the research in a predetermined path, but was premeditated to allow the results to reflect its findings without prejudice.¹⁵⁷ The theoretical and theological findings provided an academic foundation on Christian teaching and spiritual formation that the researcher did not possess. The researcher had a way of thinking, or doing, but did not understand the whole historical archetypical design that had already preceded the thesis project. The historical design conversation has impacted the researcher with a vocabulary from which to gain a better understanding of the topic and to join the ongoing conversation of *Growing a God-Centered Academy in the Church: Developing a Spiritually-Grounded Teaching Paradigm*. The researcher realized that he was joining a work already in progress by others who had an even greater intentional desire to see a Christian teacher enhanced by the Holy Spirit and truly liberated from secular strategies for the advancement of the kingdom of God.

¹⁵⁷ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 43.

The researcher has implemented several changes in administration and the teaching materials of the church he pastors. Sunday school attendance was stagnant and there appeared to be no demonstrative concern from the staff. There has been an on-going submission to the Holy Spirit to determine the direction for the Sunday school that would facilitate genuine growth and commitment by the teachers and students. Traditional teaching means and ideas were not benefiting the church teaching ministry, and there are times when tradition is difficult to change. However, the staff of the Sunday school understood the researcher's desires to realize a Sunday school that is intentional and impactful for the kingdom of God and to glorify Him.

The teaching staff is small but committed. The staff understands that the character of a Sunday school teacher is just as important and maybe more important than the lesson preparation.¹⁵⁸ The children are watching them, sometimes very intentionally, to see if the "walk reflects the talk." Quoting Phillips Brooks again, "It cannot be the mere training to certain tricks. It cannot be even the furnishing with abundant knowledge. It must be nothing less than the kneading and tempering of a man's whole nature till it becomes such a consistency and quality as to be capable of transmission."¹⁵⁹ Additionally, new teaching materials are being considered for purchase that appear to have a more relevant and attractive presentation for the adults and youth ministries.

Teaching that emphasizes spiritual formation has been on-going, therefore, aiding in a smoother transition from traditional practices. The research has afforded the researcher an opportunity to grow and gain a deeper understanding of Sunday school and God's purposes for His Church.

¹⁵⁸ Richard E. Rusbult, *Basic Teacher Skills*, 149.

¹⁵⁹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Ten Power Principles for Christian Service*, 19.

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APPENDIX A

IRB LETTERS

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

April 2, 2019

Virgil M. Walton Jr.
IRB Exemption 3716.040219: Growing a God-Centered Academy in the Church: Developing a Spiritually-Grounded Teaching Paradigm

Dear Virgil M. Walton Jr.,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):


(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if . . . the following criteria is met:

(i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,


G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

LIBERTY

IRB Consent Form

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
4/2/2019 to --
Protocol # 3716.040219

CONSENT FORM

**Growing a God-Centered Academy in the Church: Developing a Spiritually-Grounded
Teaching Paradigm**
Virgil Melvin Walton Jr.
Liberty University
Department of Doctoral Ministry; Rawlings School of Divinity

My name is Virgil M. Walton Jr., a Doctoral student in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University of Lynchburg, Virginia in pursuit of a Doctoral of Ministry degree (DMIN) with an emphasis in Discipleship, and I am conducting this study.

You are invited to be in a research study concerning the teaching academy of the church, the Sunday school. You were selected as a possible participant because I am asking all the churches of the Mount Olive Baptist District Association of Southern Illinois and their respective Sunday school departments to aid in this study. Participants must be 18 years of age and older. Pastors, administrators, teachers, and students are welcome to participate. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to examine the reason why the Sunday schools of many churches are not well attended. Could effective discipleship teaching and a change in the spiritual mind-set of instructors solve this problem? This thesis project will focus on the church's didactic ministries and the presence of God, the Holy Spirit, aiding those ministries. An examination of the quality of instruction and teaching materials for authentic and God-centered instruction will be studied to ascertain how teaching in the church's academy affects discipleship in the Sunday school.

This survey will provide information covering four areas of concern: [1] What practices are present in the current church teaching paradigm [system]? [2] How is the phenomena of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit necessary for spiritual teaching? [3] How may an instructor's "Spiritual Formation" impact the Sunday school? And lastly, [4] How important are the following areas [as sited in the survey] of concern for teaching and the growing of your church?

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete the attached survey. The survey should take between 16 to 21 minutes to complete.
2. Once the survey is completed, a pre-stamped and addressed envelope is provided to return the survey to me. I am graciously asking that the survey be completed and returned by May 31, 2019.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

IRB Consent Form, Continued

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
4/2/2019 to --
Protocol # 3716.040219

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from participating in this study.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Participant responses are anonymous. Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time, prior to submitting your survey, without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please discard your survey prior to returning it to the researcher. It is not necessary to contact the researcher by any means if you withdraw.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Virgil M. Walton Jr. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact me at 618-203-0100 or rev_skipvw@msn.com. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Jacob Dunlow, at jdunlow@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Research Survey Recruitment Letter

RECRUITMENT FORM

Growing a God-Centered Academy in the Church: Developing a Spiritually-Grounded Teaching Paradigm; Virgil Melvin Walton Jr.

Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity

Date: April 27, 2019

Title: Pastor of Paul's Chapel Missionary Baptist Church; Marion, Illinois.

Home Address: 1000 North Hunter Woods Ave., Carbondale, Illinois 62901

Pastor and Sunday school participants of *Church Name* Missionary Baptist Church
Church's address

Dear Pastor and Participants:

As a graduate student in the Department of Doctoral Ministry; Rawlings School of Divinity of Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree (DMIN) with an emphasis in Discipleship. The purpose of this study will be to provide information covering four areas of concern: [1] What practices are present in the current church Sunday school teaching paradigm [system]? [2] How is the phenomena of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit necessary for spiritual teaching? [3] How may an instructor's "Spiritual Formation" impact the Sunday school? And lastly, [4] How important are the following areas [sited within the survey] of concern for teaching and the growing of your church? I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are 18 years of age or older, are a pastor, teacher, or student in a Sunday school class of a church within the Mount olive Baptist District Association of Southern Illinois, and you are willing to participate, you will be asked to complete the enclosed survey.

The survey will take between 16 to 21 minutes to complete. Once the survey is completed, a pre-stamped and addressed envelope is provided to return the survey to me. I am graciously asking that the survey be completed and returned by May 31, 2019. Your participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

A consent document is attached to this letter and contains additional information about my study, but you do not need to sign and return it. To maintain strict anonymity, your name is not required on the survey form. This is an anonymous survey.

Thank You Sincerely,

Rev. Virgil M. Walton Jr.

Pastor of Paul's Chapel Missionary Baptist Church; Marion, Illinois.

Mt. Olive Baptist District Association

Rev. K. Donnell Wilson, Moderator
Carbondale, Illinois 62901

Rev. Virgil M. Walton Jr., Pastor
Paul's Chapel MB Church
P O Box 642
Marion, IL 62959

Dear Rev. Walton,

We are excited to see that you are pursuing a doctorate of divinity degree. Your research proposal looks very interesting and could be of benefit to our district churches.

Therefore I am giving my consent for you to utilize the district churches as part of your research. I understand that participation is completely voluntary.

Furthermore once your research project is complete, I hope that you will share your findings with the district churches. We pray that God will use you in a might way with this endeavor.

Sincerely,

K. Donnell Wilson
Moderator
Mount Olive Baptist District Association

**APPENDIX B
RESREARCH SURVEY QUESTIONS**

DMIN Thesis Project: Virgil M. Walton Jr.. Topic: Growing a God-Centered Academy in the Church: Developing a Spiritually-Grounded Teaching Paradigm.

To all participants: I want to thank you beforehand for your assistance in the completion of my Thesis project for the candidacy of Doctor of Ministry “DMIN” at Liberty University’s Rawlings School of Divinity. As we are all part of the Church, the Body of Jesus Christ, we aspire to grow and develop into disciples of Christ, to edify the kingdom of God. Your prayers are greatly needed and appreciated. God be with you all.

This survey is to be dispensed by the pastor to the instructors and students of each church Sunday school at a time to be determined by the pastor. However, the participants are responsible for retuning the completed survey to the researcher’s address in the envelopes provided. Please return surveys by May 31, 2019.

Do not place your name on this survey. Consent to taking this thesis project survey is without any duress and without any compensation. **A pre-stamped return envelope is supplied with my address with every survey to ensure and maintain anonymity.** Please return to the researcher upon completion or by the above requested date. I thank you in advance.

What is your position in the church? Please Check one or two positions.

Pastor [] Minister [] Instructor [] Student []

How many years have you been attending this church?

1-5 yrs. [] 6-10 yrs. [] Greater than 10 yrs. []

If you are a teacher. How many years have you been in the teaching ministry?

1-5 . yrs. [] 6-10 yrs. [] Greater than 10 yrs. []

LET’S GET STARTED.

To answer the following questions, please place the number associated with your answer inside the bracket [] that follows the question.

Not important [0] Somewhat Important [1] Important [2] Very Important [3]

- 1. The teaching practices present in the current church teaching paradigm [system].**
 - a. How important is a Sunday school program to your church? []
 - b. How important to you is the necessity to maintain the present teaching system? []
 - c. How important to you is it to find new sources of teaching materials? []

Research Survey Questions, Continued

- d. How important to you is it to remain tied to a particular Sunday's lesson plan without any deviation? []
- e. How important to you is it to teach a lesson that is meeting the social and spiritual needs of the students? []

To answer the following questions, please place the number associated with your answer inside the bracket [] that follows the question.

Not important [0] Somewhat Important [1] Important [2] Very Important [3]

2. The phenomena of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit necessary for Christian teaching.

- a. How important is the Holy Spirit's presence during the teaching experience? []
- b. How important is the Holy Spirit to the overall instruction in the church? []
- c. How important is a possible diminishment of the Holy Spirit's influence within the teaching materials? []
- d. How important is teaching in relationship with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in your classes? []
- e. How Important are the pre-determined and prepared teaching materials for today's student's spiritual formation and growth? []

To answer the following questions, please place the number associated with your answer inside the bracket [] that follows the question.

Not important [0] Somewhat Important [1] Important [2] Very Important [3]

3. The importance of an instructor's "Spiritual Formation" as it impacts the Sunday school.

- a. How important is loving God to the teaching experience? []
- b. How important is loving yourself to the teaching experience? []
- c. How important is loving others to the teaching experience? []
- d. How important is it to have a "spiritually seasoned" instructor teach Sunday school classes? []
- e. Is it important for instructors to live in a manner that supports and edifies biblical doctrine? []

Research Survey Questions, Continued

To answer the following questions, please place the number associated with your answer inside the bracket [] that follows the question.

Not important [0] Somewhat Important [1] Important [2] Very Important [3]

4. The following areas of concern for teaching and the growing of your church.

- a. How important is the safety of the teaching environment? []
- b. How important is the friendliness of the teaching environment? []
- c. How important is the social timeliness of the teaching materials for spiritually growing the class? []
- d. How important is the support from your supervisors to facilitate a growing teaching ministry? []
- e. How important is the adequacy of the teaching room/space provided? []
- f. How important is the overall growth of the Sunday school to the Body of Christ? []

THIS IS THE END OF THE SURVEY.

**PLEASE PLACE THIS SURVEY IN THE ADDRESSED AND PRE-STAMPED EVELOPE
AND RETURN TO RESEARCHER.**

GOD BLESS YOU AND THANKS ONCE AGAIN.

Rev. Virgil M. Walton Jr.