

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Military Discipleship:

A Strategy for Discipleship in the U.S. Military Community in the Republic of Korea

A Thesis Project Submitted to
the Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

By

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Military members, their civilian counterparts, and their family members serving in the Republic of Korea face unique challenges that stress their spiritual walk. These challenges include gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, and sexual temptations exacerbated by the stressful work environment, and some married members being unable to bring their family. These factors combine to create an environment where biblical discipleship and accountability, leading to spiritual growth is difficult. The purpose of this study is to develop and implement relational small groups that address the challenges facing military members and their families in the Republic of Korea while focusing on biblical discipleship and mutual accountability that leads to spiritual growth. This research project examines the currently available literature on ministry to the military, military discipleship, discipleship methods in general, and small group ministry practices in an attempt to develop a small group ministry model aimed at combating the challenges while encouraging spiritual growth based upon the practices of studying scripture, prayer, accountability, and serving.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

United States military members and their families, including civilians attached to the military, face unique challenges compared to their civilian counterparts. These challenges are often compounded when the service member is deployed to an overseas location. Additionally, some overseas locations limit the number of families due to shortages of infrastructure or safety concerns. However, even if the family is allowed to accompany the service member, the high stress and long hours present another conflict to military families.¹ In this environment, an individual's spiritual growth faces stiff resistance.

There are three significant challenges military families and some civilian employees of the military face: alcohol abuse, gambling addiction, and sexual temptations. Often two or more of these challenges combine to work in conjunction with each other. Alcohol consumption and abuse are widespread within the military community. Alcohol consumption is pushed at establishments on the military base, and drinking is also glorified at military events. Survey data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, covering the period from 2013 to 2017, noted that military members consume alcohol more days per year than any other job industry. In 2017 the number stood at 130 days per year, an increase of 30% since 2014.² Blankenship noted these observations in his thesis project conducted predominately on the habits of the Navy.³

¹ Amy Reinkober Drummet, Marilyn Coleman, and Susan Cable, "Military Families Under Stress: Implications for Family Life Education," *Family Relations* 52, no. 3 (2003): 279.

² Patricia Kime, "US Military Is America's Heaviest-Drinking Profession, Survey Finds," *Military.Com*, last modified April 11, 2019, accessed March 16, 2020, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/04/11/us-military-americas-heaviest-drinking-profession-survey-finds.html>.

³ Charles B. Blankenship, "Seeking to Glorify God: An Armed Forces Member's Handbook for Discipleship" (DMin diss, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014).

Another temptation military members face is easy accessibility to gambling on the bases. It is common to see slot machines at the Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and lower-ranking enlisted clubs. The opportunity to gamble is only available at locations that encourage alcohol use, contributing to the lack of self-control.⁴ Finally, there are numerous bars outside of military installations where prostitution exists.⁵ Often these establishments serve alcohol or are found near places that serve alcohol, a combination that often results in severe lapses of judgment.

While these challenges exist wherever the military is located, they are exacerbated for those who served in the Republic of Korea (ROK). Military members who serve in the ROK fall into three main categories; those who are single, those who are married but are not allowed to bring their family, and those with their family. The majority of those serving in the ROK fall into the first two categories.⁶ It is against this demographic backdrop these challenges manifest themselves. However, it is not just the military members and families who face these challenges. The military employs two categories of civilians to augment the active-duty force. The first category is civil servant employees⁷, and the second category is contractors.⁸ Both of these employees face the same challenges as active-duty members without many of the legal restraints and consequences for alcohol abuse and gambling.

⁴ Battles, Michael, "New Enlisted Club Rejuvenates Osan Spirit," *Osan Air Base*, accessed June 20, 2020, <http://www.osan.af.mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/3958/Article/405160/new-enlisted-club-rejuvenates-osan-spirit.aspx>.

⁵ "Korea Times Profiles Juicy Girls Working TDC Ville Outside of Camp Casey," *ROK Drop*, October 18, 2018, accessed June 20, 2020, <https://www.rokdrop.net/2018/10/korea-times-profiles-juicy-girls-working-tdc-ville-outside-of-camp-casey/>.

⁶ Donna Miles, "Korea Tour Normalization," *Www.Army.Mil*, accessed June 20, 2020, https://www.army.mil/article/42904/korea_tour_normalization.

⁷ "United States Forces Korea > Resources > Civilian Employment," accessed June 20, 2020, <https://www.usfk.mil/Resources/Civilian-Employment/>.

⁸ "Overseas Contracting Jobs in South Korea | Military Hire," accessed June 20, 2020, <https://www.militaryhire.com/overseas-contracting-jobs/country/South-Korea/>.

Before the challenges of alcohol, gambling, and sexual temptations are further explored, a brief discussion of work-related stress in the ROK must be presented. Although military members are considered on duty 24 hours per day, there is a workforce standard workweek guideline. Military members stationed anywhere, but the ROK, work a standard 40-hour workweek. However, those stationed in the ROK work a standard 49-hour workweek. When one considers those numbers are the standard, it is not difficult to understand that workweeks are longer than the standard. This factor directly contributes to an increased level of work-related stress, which often spills over into the personal lives of military members.⁹

While alcohol abuse is widespread across most military career fields, it is especially prevalent in the military's aviation community.¹⁰ Air Force fighter squadrons' typical event is to finish their week with a drinking party on Friday afternoon. The aviation community is predominately male, especially in the fighter pilot community, but has also begun to change in the last two decades. Although blatant sexual temptations do not exist at these week-ending drinking events, it is naïve to think they never occur. This behavior is especially true when considering the male-to-female ratio in these environments and the overwhelming pressure to conform to the accepted norms of the fighter pilot culture. This researcher has seen more than one marriage end due to out-of-control drinking habits. In those instances, it was the wife who was the fighter pilot, with one case being an individual who professed to be a Christian and was involved in youth ministry at a previous base. Finally, there are many drinking establishments, often with young women dressed in provocative clothing to lure people inside. These establishments are called

⁹ Jennifer Moss Breen, Haytham Abduljawad, and Jacqueline N. Font-Guzmán, *Running with Scissors: Leading in Uncertainty* (IAP, 2019), 85.

¹⁰ M. Alaric Franzos et al., "Alcohol Abuse or Dependence in the Military Aviator: Guidance for the Non-Flight Surgeon," *Military Medicine* 177, no. 10 (October 2012): 1191.

“juicy bars” as the women ask the patrons to buy them juice drinks, after which the women will sit and talk with the patrons.¹¹ When this occurs, there is often an implied understanding that this will lead to a sexual encounter after a certain amount of juice drinks have been purchased. This activity is a two-pronged trap. The patron is encouraged to consume alcohol while buying the juice drinks for the lady. As the patron consumes increasing amounts of alcohol, they lose control over their judgment, which often leads to them falling for the sexual temptation.

Due to the stressful work cycle and family separation, gambling is another concern for those living in the ROK. As was previously noted, the clubs on base, where alcohol is served, are the only gambling locations. The most common are slot machines, and every club has numerous machines for patrons to use. A recent report noted that the Kadena Air Base's enlisted club in Japan opened a new game room containing over 80 slot machines. In total, overseas military installations contain almost 3,000 slot machines.¹² The slot machines generate income for other base programs with estimates of around \$100 million in profits. Still, none of this money is earmarked for battling gambling addiction among service members.¹³ While going home from work and returning to work the next day, this researcher has personally observed military members spend the entire night gambling at a slot machine. There are also various poker tournaments throughout the month where prizes are offered. Even bingo, a seemingly innocent game, is often on the schedule with the lure of winning a big prize.

¹¹ “Korea Times Profiles Juicy Girls Working TDC Ville Outside of Camp Casey.”

¹² Leo Shane, “Why Gambling Addiction among Active-Duty Troops May Pose National Security Risks,” accessed May 30, 2020, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/07/09/gambling-addiction-remains-a-troubling-problem-among-active-duty-troops-advocates-warn/>.

¹³ Windwardway, “Gambling Addiction Linked to Active Duty Military Personnel,” *Addiction Rehabilitation at Windward Way Recovery Center*, September 27, 2019, accessed May 30, 2020, <https://windwardway.com/blog/military-gambling-addiction/>.

Ministry Context

Undoubtedly, the challenges presented in the introduction have impacted military members serving in the ROK for decades. This researcher witnessed firsthand, while serving three separate times over a combined period of eight years, military members falling victim in each of these areas. Additionally, it was not limited to unbelievers, there were Christians who fell for these same temptations, and in some cases, those were Christians in lay leadership positions.

In the geographical area surrounding Osan Air Base and Camp Humphreys, dozens of churches minister to the military community. These churches run the gamut of denominations as well as demographic focus. Some of these churches have an emphasis on small groups and intentional discipleship and accountability. Others focus on the Sunday service and a mid-week Bible study. There are many different approaches amongst the churches.

Mission Baptist Church (MBC) is the church this researcher aligned with as he settled into ministry after moving to the ROK. MBC is a small, Baptist Bible Fellowship International church with a current membership of around one hundred and fifty members, most of whom are military members or civilians associated with the military. The current pastor has led the church for seven years, and he has recently begun to emphasize small group meetings where Bible study and accountability is stressed. In their article Rynsburg and Lamport emphasize the importance of Scripture in the small group setting, “Without biblically-based learning, Christian friendships alone cannot produce maturity and may, in some cases, simply reinforce prevalent cultural values or unbiblical ideas.”¹⁴ Another of the pastor’s goals is to develop an atmosphere that, from the moment a person enters the church until they leave, they feel like they are part of a loving and

¹⁴ Mary Rynsbarger and Mark A. Lamport, “All the Rage: How Small Groups Are Really Educating Christian Adults Part 1: Assessing Small Group Ministry Practice: A Review of Literature,” *Christian Education Journal* 5, no. 1 (2008): 117.

caring family. Besides this, MBC members strive to discover and use their spiritual gifts to edify the local church body.

A snapshot of the ministry practices of MBC reveals there are several predominant aspects of their ministry philosophy. The central aspect is centered around the single Sunday morning service. As mentioned previously, the pastor desires that a loving and welcoming environment is created during the service. His goal is to create a climate where people come early and leave late to encourage fellowship amongst the congregational members. There is also an adult Bible study before the Sunday service.

MBC attempts to further the spiritual development of members through a Saturday morning program entitled Mission Baptist Bible Institute (MBBI). MBBI is a program through which congregation members attend classes similar to seminary-level classes. Although this is not an accredited program, the thrust is to provide a level of instruction similar to seminary classes. Combined with the recent focus on small groups, MBC demonstrates a commitment to each member's spiritual development while providing a robust relational environment that promotes fellowship and the spirit of the “one another” philosophy contained in many New Testament passages.

The emphasis that MBC has started to place on small group fellowship ties in directly with this research project's focus. From observations of the existing small groups and discussions with the pastor and several members involved in the small group ministry, there is no guiding structure or approval process for how the groups operate and what material they will study. The pastor leads the small group this researcher attends. In the two months of attendance, the group has utilized two RightNowMedia video studies with accompanying books or handouts. One of the studies was “All the Places to Go...How Will You Know?” by John Ortberg and the second was

“Psalm 119” by Matt Chandler. At this point, it is unknown what type of vetting system is in place when choosing and assigning small group leaders as this researcher has not identified any small group leader training program. Thus, the current small group construct would not be prohibitive to a new emphasis. Furthermore, small groups designed to meet military members' needs precisely would align closely with the mission of MBC.

Small groups are an optimal model for discipleship and also provide accountability for congregation members. Additionally, classes through MBBI open up an additional vehicle through which discipleship and accountability methods could be taught. A third means of imparting tools for discipleship is through small group leader training sessions. A recent study in the *Christian Education Journal* found that actively coaching and providing training to small group leaders resulted in positive growth in the leader's prayer life, evangelistic focus, fostering caring relationships, and empowering leaders within each group.¹⁵ The focus here is not on a cookie-cutter approach where each group follows the same methodology, but rather on educating leaders on proven methods to adapt and apply to their particular group. Since the groups will comprise military members from varying backgrounds and differing work schedules, it is essential to have flexibility within any given system.

Although levels are currently unknown, it is likely to be discovered that individuals within the congregation of MBC struggle with one or more of the challenges previously identified. One article, written by a hospital clinical team member specializing in counseling, noted that 10% of civilians have a pornography addiction among the United States population. At the same time, the

¹⁵ Jim Egli and Wei Wang, “Factors That Fuel Small Group Growth,” *Christian Education Journal* 11, no. 1 (2014): 134–151.

percentage among military personnel is twice that amount at 20%.¹⁶ This prevalence is relevant because the Apostle Paul warns against sexual sin. For example, 1 Corinthians 6:18 says, “Run from sexual immorality! ‘Every sin a person can commit is outside the body.’ On the contrary, the person who is sexually immoral sins against his own body.”¹⁷ Another example is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:3–5, “For this is God’s will, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality, so that each of you knows how to control his own body in sanctification and honor, not with lustful desires, like the Gentiles who don’t know God.” Paul is warning sexual sin harms the believer’s body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and by acting in this manner, there is no difference between a believer and someone who does not know Christ.

Two sources on alcohol abuse among the military, one a veteran’s organization and the other being the official newspaper of the US military, discovered between 33 to 43% of active-duty military members reported binge drinking in the month before being surveyed.¹⁸ Paul addresses this issue in Ephesians 5:18, “And don’t get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless actions, but be filled by the Spirit” and Proverbs speaks to the folly of alcohol abuse in Proverbs 20:1, “Wine is a mocker, beer is a brawler, and whoever staggers because of them is not wise.”

A recent study by the Veterans Administration noted that the rate for gambling addiction among the U.S. population is 1%, while gambling addiction among military veterans is 5.9%.¹⁹

¹⁶ Erica Smith, “Pornography and Sex Addiction in the Military - How Is This Addressed?,” *Addiction Hope*, n.d., accessed May 30, 2020, <https://www.addictionhope.com/sexual-addiction/pornography-sex-addiction-military/>.

¹⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references in this thesis project will be from the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*.

¹⁸ “Active Duty & Military Veterans: Treating Alcohol Abuse,” *Alcohol.Org*, accessed May 30, 2020, <https://www.alcohol.org/professions/military/>.

¹⁹ VAantagePoint Contributor, “VA Releases New Findings on Problem Gambling,” VAantage Point, January 7, 2019, accessed May 30, 2020, <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAantage/55375/va-releases-new-findings-problem-gambling/>.

Although Scripture may not address gambling directly, Proverbs 13:11 does talk about money obtained through fraudulent actions, which could be applied to gambling. Paul addresses the issue of money in 1 Timothy 6:9–10, “But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.” Also, gambling, like other addictions, often leads to a downward spiral in an individual’s life. James addresses this in James 1:14–15, “But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his evil desires. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death.”

Since the congregation represents a cross-section of the military population, it would be prudent to conclude that some members struggle with pornography/sexual sin, gambling addiction, or alcoholism.²⁰ Often these issues do not come to light unless a problem arises in the life of an individual or through a strong relation that exists between an individual struggling with a problem and another Christian. Therefore, it is vital to encourage the building of strong relationships between members that develops trust and understanding, which leads to transparency resulting in the struggling member asking for help.²¹ This researcher contends that a small group setting will be the ideal environment for this type of relational accountability that will lead participants away from the previously described dangers.²²

²⁰ Charles B. Blankenship, “Seeking to Glorify God: An Armed Forces Member’s Handbook for Discipleship”, 34–35.

²¹ John Wagner, “Open Bible Ministries: A Home Away From Home for Military Men and Women: A Case Study” (DMin diss, Regent School of Divinity, 2008), 66.

²² Jim Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches That Make Disciples* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010), Kindle Location 230.

A vital component of any organization is leadership. Leaders must stress the importance of accountability, which is done both from the pulpit and small group settings.²³ A critical factor in promoting the concept of accountability is leaders stressing that accountability is a biblical concept. It is challenging to create an environment of discipleship without holding one another accountable.²⁴ It is in this area the leadership of MBC exhibit strong characteristics. Although ministry efforts often focus on corporate accountability to one another, leaders should always stress that individual accountability to God should be every believer's primary focus. Paul stresses this in Rom 14:12, "So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God." Jesus also stresses the concept of accountability in several of the parables He told. The parable of the talents is an illustrative example of how each believer will be held accountable.²⁵

Problem Presented

Military members face different challenges than their civilian counterparts. This challenge is authentic for those serving overseas, specifically in the ROK. Often the work hours are longer, and the infrastructure is not what families are used to when living in the United States. Additionally, a significant portion of married members who serve in the ROK cannot bring their families with them. Finally, alcohol abuse, gambling addictions, and sexual sin are a constant threat. These challenges exacerbate the strain for family members who are separated from each other. It is against this backdrop of challenges that makes it critical to create an environment of healthy discipleship that stresses spiritual growth and mutual accountability; a healthy

²³ Francis Chan, *Letters to the Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2018), 90.

²⁴ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: The Handbook to Studying the Bible* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 30.

²⁵ Glenn E. Schaefer, "Responsibility" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 673.

environment will enable individual Christians to overcome the temptations and grow in their walk as well as be light in their workplace and to those around them. This project will address the problems of alcohol abuse, gambling addiction, and sexual sin that challenges the military community by designing and implementing a small group ministry model based on Bible study, prayer, accountability, and outreach activities to promote spiritual growth and build boundaries to protect congregational members from them while serving and living in the ROK.

Purpose Statement

This researcher served for twenty-four years in the military, with eight years in the ROK. During this time, firsthand observation and knowledge of the struggles of living in an unfamiliar culture, long work hours, family separation, alcohol abuse, gambling addiction, and sexual sins were noted. In some cases, marriages and families were torn apart. The purpose of this study is to develop and implement relational small groups that address the challenges facing military members and their families in the Republic of Korea while focusing on biblical discipleship and mutual accountability that leads to spiritual growth.

Basic Assumptions

In general, the first assumption is that the churches located outside the military installations, which are predominately comprised of military members, have not successfully dealt with the issues discussed above. During this researcher's first assignment to the ROK in the mid-80s, these challenges were commonplace. During this researcher's second assignment to the ROK in the mid-90s to early 2000s, the same challenges were noted. Discussions this researcher has had with pastors in the fall of 2019 and early 2020 indicate little has changed.

The second assumption is that the churches noted in the previous paragraph have not emphasized small groups and accountability processes to engage these challenges. A quick survey

of church websites in the local area indicates very few have or promote any small group activity. All have regular Sunday morning services, some have a mid-week service, but outside of those two standard meeting times, there is a shortage of activities to meet the challenges military members face.

The third assumption is that rank relationships can hinder confronting activity or habits that face military members. When a lower-ranking person is knowledgeable of a higher-ranking person's involvement in behavior, contrary to the Christian life, it can be challenging to confront them as there can be a high likelihood of retaliation against the lower-ranking person's career. This is especially true if the two individuals are in the same unit or, even worse, the same supervisory chain. In these situations, the lower-ranking person will often be silent to avoid repercussions.

The fourth assumption is that the transitory nature of military service in the ROK creates a significant hindrance in developing in-depth relationships. Those who are single or are unable to bring their families to the ROK only spend one year on location before reassignment. Married individuals who bring their families live in the region for two or three years at most. In those cases where a more extended period is spent in the ROK, it is easier to develop deeper relationships. However, it is in the first group where the majority of the issues occur.

The final assumption is that the result of this project will show an improvement in two areas. First, individuals will exhibit a reduction in alcohol and gambling addiction incidents and an increased resistance to sexual temptation. Second, during their time in the ROK, individuals will exhibit an increase in spiritual growth in their lives.

Definitions

Many words or phrases unique to the military are used in this project. The reader may be familiar with these phrases. However, to avoid any confusion, those words are presented in this section. Throughout the research project, the definitions below are understood to apply to the word or phrase in question.

Accountability – the quality or state of being accountable, an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility, or account for one’s actions.²⁶

Camp Humphreys – the central U.S. Army installation in the ROK and home to the commanding general of all U.S. forces in the ROK, located approximately 45 miles south of Seoul.

A Commissioned Officer is an officer of the armed forces holding by a commission a rank of second lieutenant or ensign or above.²⁷

Fraternization describes a situation where a commissioned officer is in a romantic or sexual relationship with a non-commissioned officer or junior enlisted person; such relationships are contrary to good order and discipline within a military organization.

Human trafficking – organized criminal activity in which human beings are treated as possessions to be controlled and exploited (as by being forced into prostitution or involuntary labor).²⁸

Idolatry is the worship of a physical object as a god, immoderate attachment, or devotion to something.²⁹

²⁶ *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “Accountability,” accessed March 24, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/accountability>.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, s.v. “Commissioned Officer”.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, s.v. “Human trafficking”.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, s.v. “Idolatry”.

Juicy bars describe bars employing women in provocative clothing to entice individuals to enter and buy juice drinks for the women and alcoholic drinks for themselves. Often a sexual encounter is an implied activity after a certain amount of drinks are purchased.

Junior Enlisted – enlisted members below the rank of a non-commissioned officer are usually those in the first few years of their military service.

Military chaplain is a clergyman officially attached to a branch of the military.³⁰

Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) is an individual with leadership responsibilities subordinate to a commissioned officer.

Osan Air Base is the main U.S. Air Force base in the ROK, located approximately 40 miles south of Seoul.

PTSD – post-traumatic stress disorder, often associated with combat-related activities.

ROK – Republic of Korea.

Small group – a group of approximately twenty individuals or less who meet for Bible study, accountability, or other Christian ministry focused activities.

Small group leader is the individual who leads a small group.

UCMJ – Uniform Code of Military Justice, the legal system under which military members operate.

Unaccompanied military members describe military members with families who cannot bring the family on an overseas assignment.

Limitations

There are limitations to this project. Research for this project will be accomplished in a four-fold manner: 1) An anonymous survey of church attendees within the specified demographic

³⁰ *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “Military chaplain”.

group; 2) An interview within the demographic group who attend small group sessions; 3) A survey of pastors who minister to the demographic group, which is the third phase of the project; 4) The student-researcher will collect data from small group leaders.

The anonymous surveys will be conducted online. The target audience for both surveys and interviews is the active-duty military community and their family members, and civilians working for the military and their family members. Because of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) ramifications, anonymity is a crucial factor to consider when gathering data from military members. If anonymity is not ensured, the number of survey participants will likely be dramatically reduced. Even within this construct, there is the possibility of incomplete surveys or false data being supplied.

Interviews for the target demographic audience identified above is the second method for collecting data. Because of the nature of the research, the sample size may be small. If this is the case, the data may not accurately represent the overall picture within the identified demographic group. However, it is possible that during interviews, there may be enlightening information provided, which is beneficial to the research.

Providing surveys and conducting interviews with pastors leading the various churches serving the military community is the third area. This procedure may be the most challenging method of data collection. While it should not be difficult to survey or interview the pastor of the church this researcher is connecting with, it may prove more challenging to gather data from other churches in the local area if they do not benefit their ministry context. It will be essential to communicate with the other pastors that the research results will be shared with the other churches to benefit from the research.

Within the small group construct, it will be essential to enlist each small group's leader's cooperation. Without their support and cooperation, it will be challenging to gather the information, which is critical in assessing whether or not the process to address the problem statement is valid. Here, having the support and authority of the lead pastor behind the research is vital.

Delimitations

Along with the limitations, there are delimitations for this project. These self-imposed restraints fall into five areas. The first is the demographic audience against which the research will be conducted. Next are the churches to target for research. The third is the approximate age range of the target audience. The fourth is the area where data will be collected to assess the program's success to address the problem statement. Finally, the fifth area is a discussion and assessment of individual accountability.

Research for this project will be directed at a specific demographic group. The main focus of the group will be active-duty military members of all branches of service. The second part of the demographic group is family members of active-duty service members. The third part of the demographic group is civilian employees of the military and their family members. Although the problem statement may not directly apply to civilian employees, they still face the same challenges. Additionally, they may be able to provide illuminating data which active-duty members may be reluctant to disclose.

The selection of churches for this research is the second delimitation. This researcher's church will be the main focus. However, other churches who minister to a predominately military congregation may be contacted to participate in the research and the chapels on the military

installations. Another organization where data collection may be possible is Cadence International. They run a hospitality house close to both Osan Air Base and Camp Humphreys.

Due to the nature of this research's demographic group, there will likely be a narrow age spread for survey and interview respondents. The majority of active-duty military fall in an age range from 18 to 45, with a preponderance below 35. Civilian employees of the military are likely to have a different and larger age spread. Except for basic entry-level positions, most civilian employees start relatively older and often work until their 60s.

Fourth, the focus of the solution for the problem statement will be in the small group setting. The identification and implementation of the solution and resulting data collection will be confined to this area. Thus, the researcher's church will likely collect the vast majority of data in this area. Data from other churches may be collected, but this would require them to implement the identified solution program. Admittedly, that is not a realistic scenario.

The final area is individual accountability. In a sense, this is the real litmus test of the research and applied intervention method against the stated problem. The pastoral staff and small group leaders can formulate and implement a method to address the problem and follow agreed-upon methods and steps. However, it analyzes individuals' lives, which will measure this research project's success.

Thesis Statement

If the staff and members of MBC participate in a focused and structured small group ministry construct it will lead to enhanced spiritual growth and an increased resistance to the temptations of gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, and sexual sin.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

Literature Review: Introduction

Fostering a discipleship culture for military personnel and their families living in the ROK is a challenging task. This demographic group faces a combination of unique challenges not experienced elsewhere. While there is no shortage of excellent books on discipleship, there is a noticeable gap that does not address military discipleship or ministering to the military living in the ROK. Additionally, within the Western evangelical church, there is a severe deficiency in understanding and applying discipleship.³¹

Discipleship is a Long-term Process

Discipleship is the mandate Jesus gave to His followers in Matthew 28:19–20, and all believers should be involved in the journey in one way or another. For example, nowhere in Scripture does Jesus call His followers to plant churches; instead, He calls them to learn and follow His teachings.³² Rose follows this line of thinking by pointing out for a disciple to obey Jesus' teachings, they first must know what to obey.³³ Although the process of learning the teachings of Jesus as head knowledge may be viewed as a short-to medium-range endeavor, transferring this knowledge from the head to the heart must be viewed as a life-long process. Lee posits that the Great Commission and discipleship are not to be viewed as just a step along the

³¹ Brian Brock, "Discipleship as Living with God, or Wayfinding and Scripture," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 7, no. 1 (2014): 22.

³² Malan Nel and W. J. Schoeman, "Rediscovering 'Disciplemaking' and the Role of Faith-Sharing - ProQuest," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 75(4) (2019): 1.

³³ Joshua Rose, "Equipping Members for Ministry Through Small Groups," *Christian Education Journal* 14, no. 2 (2017): 361.

path of a higher purpose, but that this message is the ultimate goal as a follower of Christ.³⁴ As Cheshire points out, those involved in the process should view it as a long-term endeavor to achieve desirable results.³⁵ A significant reason to view discipleship as a long-term journey is once an individual decides to follow Christ, there is a significant shift in the priorities in their lives³⁶ – the new believer is no longer living with a selfish, worldly mindset. Instead, they are now living with a Kingdom mindset, which will not occur quickly. This change in a believer’s mindset will also not occur without effort on their part. Living as a true disciple of Jesus will require each to live a life of practiced discipline in following the teachings of Jesus.³⁷ Beard explains it differently: The way which leads to a permanent altering of a believer’s way of thinking and behaving is achieved through a profound structural change in the individual’s way of thinking, feeling, and acting brought about by a lengthy transformational learning process.³⁸

This same view was consistent across all sources researched. However, two authors took it a step further. Evans³⁹ and Putman⁴⁰ believe it is a life-long process resulting in the disciples’ life growing increasingly Christ-like. Rose consolidates this idea by stating, “it is through the learning process in small groups, with the ultimate goal of attaining Christlikeness, that group members

³⁴ K. Lee and F.P. Viljoen, “The Ultimate Commission: The Key for the Gospel According to Matthew,” *Acta Theologica* 30, no. 1 (2010): 64–83.

³⁵ Tom Cheshire and Tom Gensler, *Real-Life Discipleship: The Ordinary Man’s Guide to Disciple-Making* (Issaquah, WA: Made for Success Publishing, 2019), 533.

³⁶ Ellen Marmon, “Transformative Learning Theory: Connections with Christian Adult Education,” *Christian Education Journal* 10, no. 2 (2013): 424.

³⁷ Walter A. Henrichsen, *Disciples Are Made Not Born: Helping Others Grow to Maturity in Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2018), 215.

³⁸ Christopher B. Beard, “Connecting Spiritual Formation and Adult Learning Theory: An Examination of Common Principles,” *Christian Education Journal* 14, no. 2 (2017): 255.

³⁹ John Evans, “Equipping Disciples of New Christians From a Post Christian Culture” (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2013), 92.

⁴⁰ Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington, *Discipleshift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 57.

are equipped for ministry.”⁴¹ His statement may be the most concise encapsulation of Jesus’ goal for the disciples – becoming like Him and being equipped to carry on His work. Although some of Putman’s books are a bit dated, his church, Real Life Ministries, may have been the most successful megachurch in implementing a thriving small group ministry, a model they still follow today.⁴² Nel believes the disciple’s journey should be viewed as an increasingly flourishing life connecting with God’s Kingdom. The ultimate joy is not just in the destination but in the experience of the journey.⁴³ Browning includes this concept in his church’s mission statement by stating he wants his congregation to experience “the joy of salvation and a purposeful life of discipleship.”⁴⁴ Along this journey, disciples of Jesus are “to become what Jesus was for the world.”⁴⁵ A final factor to consider in the discussion of discipleship being a journey is to ask the question, “How do you identify a true disciple?” Scripture warns in 2 Timothy 4:3–4, “For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear something new. They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths.” False disciples will not produce spiritual fruit. Earley believes a true disciple will exhibit spiritual transformation and reproduction of new disciples, a visual display of producing fruit.⁴⁶ Jesus provides the litmus test of a true disciple in John 15:8, “My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be

⁴¹ Rose, “Equipping Members for Ministry,” 361.

⁴² “Who We Are | Real Life Ministries | Real Life Ministries,” accessed April 18, 2020, <https://www.reallifeministries.com/who-we-are>.

⁴³ Nel and Schoeman, “Rediscovering ‘Disciplemaking,’” 3.

⁴⁴ Dave Browning, *Hybrid Church: The Fusion of Intimacy & Impact* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 60.

⁴⁵ N. T. Wright, *Following Jesus: Biblical Reflections on Discipleship*, New edition with new preface. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), Kindle Location 849.

⁴⁶ Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is...: How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 105.

My disciples.” Although not all sources mentioned every concept in unison, the overwhelming majority position is that the discipleship journey is a lengthy process that results in the believers’ life becoming more Christ-like through time, while at the same time reflecting the image of Christ to the lost in the world around them.

Building Deep Relationships for Discipleship

Before beginning a survey of literature addressing the importance of building deep relationships in the discipleship process, it is important to discuss an obstacle in today’s Western society. In many ways, this obstacle is the single largest contributing factor leading to the spiritual and relational shortage today – the individualistic mindset of many Western cultures. This obsession with individualism is in direct opposition to Scripture. Nel states, “The well-being of the neighborhood [*sic*], inspired by the biblical texts, makes possible and even insists upon an alternative to the ideology of individualism that governs our society’s practice and policy. This kind of community life returns us to the arc of God’s gifts, mercy, justice, and law.”⁴⁷ Although each believer must have a relationship with God, an overemphasis on this idea in the West resulted in a lack of regard for community. A look at Paul’s letters reveals he referred to Jesus as the Lord of a group of people 53 times, and individually only once. Paul’s emphasis was on creating communities of believers on his journeys, not just individuals. By allowing this to happen, the Western church has conformed to the world instead of impacting the world to conform to the teachings in Scripture.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Malan Nel, “Discipleship: Seeking the ‘Kingdom and His Righteousness,’” *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73, no. 4 (November 2017): 8.

⁴⁸ Joseph H. Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), 6–7.

Since the overwhelming belief is that discipleship must be approached with the idea of a long-term commitment, the idea of forming and building strong, intentional relationships is a crucial component. Before moving into a discussion of person-to-person relationships, it is critical to address the primary relationship between a believer and their relationship to God. Each believer has a covenant relationship with God through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.⁴⁹ The key point to remember in this relationship is that the believer does not dictate the relationship's terms. Jesus is the one who sets the terms of this relationship, and His terms are He wants all and not just a part of us.⁵⁰ However, it is not just the believer's relationship with God, which points to the idea of deep relationships being integral. In the form of the Trinity, God exists in the most profound and most perfect relationship that can ever exist. Since relationships are essential to God, and each believer is made in God's image, deep relationships are essential to followers of Jesus.⁵¹ Just as the Trinity exists in relationship to "one another," believers are called to be in interdependent relationships to "one another."⁵²

Scripture points to this concept with the "one another" statements from both Jesus and the other New Testament writers. The Greek word is *allelon* and occurs 57 times in the New Testament. The idea behind the "one another" statements prioritize building deep, loving relationships with other believers. Within the framework of these deep relationships, believers can cultivate the principle of *allelon* with others and put into practice the "one another" passages.⁵³

⁴⁹ Jared Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 102.

⁵⁰ Kyle Idleman, *Not A Fan Updated And Expanded: Becoming A Completely Committed Follower Of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2016), 113.

⁵¹ Joel Comiskey, *Biblical Foundations for the Cell-Based Church: New Testament Insights for the 21st Century* (Moreno Valley, CA: CCS Publishing, 2012), Kindle Location 2123.

⁵² Ruth Padilla DeBorst, "'Unlikely Partnerships': Global Discipleship in the Twenty-First Century," *Transformation* 28, no. 4 (October 1, 2011): 246.

⁵³ Klaus Issler, *Living Into the Life of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), Kindle Location 1859.

Putman points out that the individual discipleship process places a premium on an intentional attitude and deep relationships to be successful.⁵⁴ Cole agrees with this idea, but he engages the issue from an organizational standpoint. He believes the church needs to transition from the traditional institutional community position to a more personal, relational, and intimate community level to make disciples successfully.⁵⁵ Beard agrees with this stance and states, “The church, therefore, is first a community.”⁵⁶ While Cole’s book is ten years old, it is still an essential resource for those interested in a cell or house-based church methodology, one of the most straightforward structures in developing in-depth relationships.

A key component of building deep and meaningful relationships is building trust between the individuals involved in the relationship. Jesus developed a trusting relationship with the disciples during His ministry. O’Loughlin believes there is an implied relationship between the teacher and the disciple, which ultimately leads to their joining the spiritual family of God.⁵⁷ As Wagner points out, part of the problem is the increasing difficulty people have with developing a trusting relationship with others.⁵⁸ Putman believes the level of trust required in the process is met when a family type environment exists.⁵⁹ In general, the belief is that small groups are better for making disciples. Since complete trust is vital for deep relationships, the two ideas appear to support each other. A believer will likely not have many individuals they trust to the level

⁵⁴ Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches That Make Disciples*, 233.

⁵⁵ Neil Cole, *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 30.

⁵⁶ Christopher Beard, “Missional Discipleship: Discerning Spiritual-Formation Practices and Goals Within the Missional Movement,” *Missiology: An International Review* 43, no. 2 (April 1, 2015): 175–194.

⁵⁷ Thomas O’Loughlin, “The Missionary Strategy of the Didache,” *Transformation* 28, no. 2 (April 1, 2011): 77–92.

⁵⁸ Wagner, “Open Bible Ministries: A Home Away From Home for Military Men and Women: A Case Study,” 66.

⁵⁹ Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples*, 207.

mentioned by Hull. However, this smaller dedicated group complements the idea discipleship occurs best in smaller groups. Ogden believes the optimum size for deep, relational groups involved in discipleship is between three and four people.⁶⁰ All of these ideas must be placed against the method of Jesus. He invested in twelve men to carry the message to the world. A synthesis of these similar but varying positions leads to the conclusion the optimal size for a deep and trusting relationship for discipling is from two to twelve individuals. The situation of those involved in the process will determine the final number.

Accountability in Discipleship

Hellerman points out that Western society places a premium on individuality and resistance toward accountability. However, trust is an essential element of any discipling relationship. Furthermore, once trust is established, accountability becomes much more manageable. Although Hellerman's book is not new, it provides rich background on the Mediterranean family during the early church period and why Jesus and Paul used family terminology in Scripture.

Ogden⁶¹, Earley⁶², and Putman⁶³ believe accountability is a crucial component through which a climate is created, which leads to life-changing transformation in the lives of fellow

⁶⁰ Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Connect, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2018), 10.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶² Earley and Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is*, 149.

⁶³ Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches That Make Disciples*, Kindle Location 737.

believers. However, Cole⁶⁴, Hull⁶⁵, and Dempsey⁶⁶ point out how accountability is handled is as crucial as holding someone accountable.

In his book, *Surfing for God*, Cusick presents a compelling argument that in the fight against pornography, it is not enough to have accountability. Instead, for the individual suffering from an addiction to pornography, it is the form accountability takes, which is the key to overcoming this addiction. He breaks accountability partners into three categories: cop, coach, and cardiologist. In his view, only the third accountability approach will succeed.⁶⁷ Jesus points to the heart as the source of sexual sin in Matthew 15:19, “For from the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies.” This concept is essential as sexual sin is one of the three challenges addressed in this research project.

Weaving accountability into the small group setting is achieved in various ways. Chan believes it is essential to share our struggles and hold one another accountable within the small group framework.⁶⁸ Sharing could prove challenging, depending on the nature of the struggles of individual group members. Some struggles may be difficult or inappropriate to share in a group containing children or mixed genders. Dempsey takes the concept of accountability in a small group setting and refines it by stating, “The confession of sin is typically made one-on-one with another member of the group outside the meeting. This is why helping each person in the group form an accountability relationship with one or two other people of the same sex in the

⁶⁴ Cole, *Church 3.0*, 131–132.

⁶⁵ Bill Hull and Ben Sobels, *The Discipleship Gospel: What Jesus Preached--We Must Follow* (Him Publications, 2018), Kindle Location 2539.

⁶⁶ Rod Dempsey and Dave Earley, *Leading Healthy Growing Multiplying Small Groups* (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University Press, 2015), Kindle Location 521.

⁶⁷ Michael John Cusick, *Surfing for God: Discovering the Divine Desire Beneath Sexual Struggle* (Nashville, Tenn: T. Nelson, 2012), 182–184.

⁶⁸ Francis Chan and Mark Beuving, *Multiply: Disciples Making Disciples*, First edition. (Colorado Springs, Colorado: David C Cook, 2012), Kindle Location 5495.

group is so important.”⁶⁹ Ferguson addresses this concept from the standpoint of leadership training. Small group leaders need to challenge and hold their group members accountable; the ministry organization's leadership must challenge their small group leaders to grow and be accountable in their ministry endeavors.⁷⁰

A synthesis of these concepts resembles Wesley’s method of organizing his ministry structure in the Methodist church. The class meetings contained three main categories of behaviors, which led to accountability among the members; activities to avoid, activities to be displayed, and beneficial practices.⁷¹ Another aspect of the class meetings that are attractive for developing trust in accountability relationships is members stayed in the same group for an extended period and, as a result, developed deep, trusting relationships.⁷² Finally, for those who struggled with sin, the penitent bands were created. The goal was the restoration of fallen believers much in the spirit of Galatians 6:1, “Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so you also won’t be tempted.”

Wilson believes accountability must be approached with a spirit of love and with possible solutions.⁷³ Putman agrees but also describes how Jesus, in keeping with rabbinical teaching practices, would admonish the disciples when necessary while also creating an environment

⁶⁹ Dempsey and Earley, *Leading Healthy Growing Multiplying Small Groups*, Kindle Location 519.

⁷⁰ Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson, *Exponential: How to Accomplish the Jesus Mission* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2010), 120.

⁷¹ D. Michael Henderson, *John Wesley’s Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples* (Wilmore, KY: Rafiki Books, 2016), 84.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 89–90.

⁷³ Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo*, 155.

where they could learn and ask for help.⁷⁴ Breen concurs with this philosophy and weaves it into his leadership training by developing an atmosphere of joint control, coupled with a high level of accountability to create an optimum environment for growth.⁷⁵ Creating this type of teaching relationship is problematic in today's society, but the teach and observe cycle is still a useful learning method. To be effective, discipling must occur in an environment of trust with loving accountability.

Family Style Relationships in Discipleship

One of the best pictures of an environment with trust and loving accountability is a healthy, functioning family.⁷⁶ Just as biological families are a long-term relationship, the idea of long-term discipling relationships resembling the depth of family relationships is an integral part of the process. Not only did Jesus and the disciples act as a family, but God also desires His children to have that type of relationship, as Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:9. Cole notes how Jesus' use of family terms and phrases were the initial steps in describing the spiritual family created to carry out the mission Jesus started.⁷⁷ Additionally, a review of Paul's journeys in the Mediterranean area reveals "His passionate commitment to the formation of Christ-following communities."⁷⁸

God's spiritual family is the universal church which is spread across the globe. The transnational aspect of the church can be seen as early as the book of Acts. Paul was from Tarsus

⁷⁴ Jim Putman, *Church Is a Team Sport: A Championship Strategy for Doing Ministry Together* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2008), 135.

⁷⁵ Breen, Mike, *Multiplying Missional Leaders: From Half-Hearted Volunteers to a Mobilized Kingdom Force* (Pawleys Island, SC: 3 Dimension Ministries, 2012), 110.

⁷⁶ Helleman, *When the Church Was a Family*, 160.

⁷⁷ Cole, *Church 3.0*, 60.

⁷⁸ Kwanghyun Cho, Ernest van Eck, and Cas Wepener, "Paul's Community Formation in 1 Thessalonians: The Creation of Symbolic Boundaries," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 71, no. 1 (2015): 1.

in Turkey, while Barnabas hailed from Cyprus but was also a Levite. Simeon was from the region around the Nile River, and Lucius was from modern-day Libya. On the other hand, Manean was a friend of Herod Antipas. The early church demonstrated that regardless of a believer's earthly origin, they belonged to a larger family, transcending national borders.

Moreover, the Christian family is supranational. This one large body is made up of many smaller units, the local church. Within these smaller units, loving, relational, and intimate fellowship occurs in the form of small groups. However, for these small groups to flourish, they must embody proper values. Followers of Christ cannot pursue a lifestyle of holiness alone; they need relationships encouraging accountability and transparency within this family-style structure.

Although not identical, contemporary small groups have many early church characteristics found throughout the New Testament. A review of Paul's journeys is replete with examples of meetings in houses (Acts 16:40, Romans 16:5, Colossians 5:15, and Philemon 1:2), *oikon ekklesia*, where gatherings were likely less than twenty people. A group of this size would lend itself to a more personal, family-style setting where teaching and discipleship would occur.⁷⁹

Just as biological families often interact with each other, Jesus designed the spiritual family, the church, to continually interact with each other. It started with the apostles sharing the Gospel as they spread out geographically. It continued with the work of Paul and Barnabas. The early church was highly relational and functioned similarly to a family. However, through time, as the church became institutionalized and hierarchal, it lost the relational intimacy that was part of its DNA. Comiskey takes Cole's description further when he writes the New Testament church

⁷⁹ Harley T. Atkinson and Joel Comiskey, "Lessons from the Early House Church for Today's Cell Groups," *Christian Education Journal*, 77–80, last modified March 22, 2014, accessed December 13, 2019, <https://link-galegroup-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/apps/doc/A364437690/AONE?sid=lms>.

exists in the recurring image of a family.⁸⁰ A healthy, functional family is one where each member is nurtured and loved by the other members. It is a family led by spiritual teachers who guide family members to see and understand their disobedience and to connect with Yahweh through obedience to His Word in fellowship with other members of their spiritual family.⁸¹ The desired outcome in this process is for all members to become mature in their actions through time.

Spiritual Growth in Discipleship

Before discussing practices leading to spiritual growth, it is important to discuss factors that are a barrier to spiritual growth. First, the enemy is against spiritual growth, as Paul points out in Ephesians 6:12, “For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.” Secondly, according to one survey among ministry leaders, the two main barriers are busyness and commitment. While there is little doubt many in the affluent West live busy lives, the more shocking result is that a significant segment of the Christian population has no desire to emphasize their spiritual growth.⁸² The third obstacle to spiritual growth is the lack of emphasis within the church. As Chan explains, this is a failure of ministry leaders not applying Ephesians 4:11–13, “And He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness.” He posits it is the church’s failure to emphasize the use of each individual’s spiritual gifts working together as a unified community of believers, which

⁸⁰ Comiskey, *Biblical Foundations for the Cell-Based Church: New Testament Insights for the 21st Century*, 122.

⁸¹ Marmon, “TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY,” 430.

⁸² Cheshire and Gensler, *Real-Life Discipleship: The Ordinary Man’s Guide to Disciple-Making*, 416.

leads to perpetual immaturity.⁸³ In contrast, a spiritually mature believer will understand and fulfill their role in God's kingdom.⁸⁴

Spiritual gifts are given to each believer to enable them to participate in building up the body of Christ. It is also through the power of the Holy Spirit working in each believer that allows their gifts to build up and edify the local body of Christ.⁸⁵ However, discussions and teaching on spiritual gifts must be done carefully and in the spirit of humility. De Vries presents a five-fold test criteria to confirm giftedness in an area:

- The Holy Spirit empowers a believer in an area of weakness to complete Kingdom work
- Gifts are given and used under church leaders
- Spiritual gifts are empowered through the Holy Spirit
- Utilizing spiritual gifts results in spiritual growth in the body of Christ
- Using spiritual gifts brings glory to God⁸⁶

Ministry leaders are also responsible for helping each believer nurture and use their giftedness to their local body of Christ. Although each believer is ultimately responsible for their spiritual growth, it is in a communal setting, reflecting the Triune God's familial characteristics, in which spiritual growth flourishes.⁸⁷ Henrichsen echoes this position and states, "having a building relationship with another person is imperative to Christian growth."⁸⁸ Ogden affirms this

⁸³ Chan, *Letters to the Church*, 92.

⁸⁴ Earley and Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is*, 42.

⁸⁵ Brian A. DeVries, "Spiritual Gifts for Biblical Church Growth," *In die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 50, no. 1 (2016): 2–3.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸⁷ Comiskey, *Biblical Foundations for the Cell-Based Churchy*, Kindle Location 2141.

⁸⁸ Henrichsen, *Disciples Are Made Not Born*, 243.

opinion from his personal experience by stating, “I need companions on this journey for my continuous growth.”⁸⁹

When discipleship occurs in an environment with deep, meaningful long-term relationships built on love and trust in a family or community setting and individuals are held accountable when they make mistakes, a natural outcome is spiritual growth.⁹⁰ Within this community setting, individuals can assist and challenge others by observing areas of weakness and strength. However, within the framework of spiritual growth, there is a wide divergence of opinions on how the process works.

Beard addresses spiritual growth from the perspective of a missional setting and approaching it in a two-fold manner. Although head knowledge is vital to understand what is expected of the believer, it goes beyond mere understanding. Application is critical in the growth process, and spiritual growth occurs in a relationship with a teacher who guides the disciple in their ministry context. Additionally, as the believer matures and is involved in more application endeavors, their behavior changes, resulting in an ability to process and apply knowledge into action quickly.⁹¹

Putman’s stance is that there are five distinct phases from unbeliever to a spiritually mature Christian who can disciple others. Also, not everyone will have a steady and positive growth; instead, there may be periods where the individual regresses.⁹² Although Cole does not speak about stages, he does mention specific daily actions resulting in spiritual growth:

⁸⁹ Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials*, 224.

⁹⁰ Helleman, *When the Church Was a Family*, 2.

⁹¹ Beard, “Missional Discipleship,” 254.

⁹² Putman and Harrington, *Discipleshift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples*, 60–73.

confessing sin, Bible reading, and praying for the lost.⁹³ Cheshire stresses that developing spiritual disciplines is to move believers to Scripture and God as that is how real transformation occurs, which is also displayed through changed lives.⁹⁴

Often neglected in the discussion of spiritual growth is the application to leaders in a church, such as pastors, elders, and deacons. Epperly warns of the dangers of neglecting this area. He states that leaders in the church “need to deepen their commitments to spiritual growth and self-care practices to ensure healthy and effective ministry over the long haul.”⁹⁵ Scazzero warns of another danger which impacts the spiritual health or growth, which he calls spiritual deficits, of leaders. The lack of spiritual growth in leaders manifests in their attempting to be involved in more ministry endeavors than their emotional, spiritual, and physical tank can accommodate.⁹⁶ Ministry leaders need spiritual growth and a healthy application of spiritual disciplines as much or maybe even more than the typical congregational member.

The goal of discipleship is a spiritually mature believer who surrenders to their life to the leading of Jesus. Wilson points out that this requires a change in priorities.⁹⁷ An unbeliever or a spiritually immature Christian would be focused on self, and the spiritually mature believer is now outwardly focused on those around them as they submit to Christ. Chan writes that God is genuinely glorified by believers who have completely surrendered their lives to Jesus.⁹⁸ Cole agrees with Chan but goes deeper into this understanding by saying the reason disciples surrender

⁹³ Cole, *Church 3.0*, 182.

⁹⁴ Cheshire and Gensler, *Real-Life Discipleship: The Ordinary Man's Guide to Disciple-Making*, 116.

⁹⁵ Bruce Epperly, *A Center in the Cyclone: Twenty-First Century Clergy Self-Care* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 22.

⁹⁶ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 25.

⁹⁷ Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo*, 110.

⁹⁸ Chan, *Letters to the Church*, 129.

their lives to Jesus is to fulfill the Great Commission by taking the Gospel to the lost and making disciples.⁹⁹ Weaving these concepts together point to a spiritually mature believer who has shifted their allegiance from self to others as they share the Gospel and make disciples.

Although the sources contained differing views on addressing spiritual growth, there was a consensus that spiritual growth is an essential indicator of true discipleship. It is worth noting that if groups are based on a community concept without practicing the spiritual disciplines discussed above, their chances for spiritual growth or maturity are limited. Rynsburger and Lamport suggest, “So, while it is conceivable that church-based adult small groups have great potential for effective discipleship of their members, close, even meaningful, intra-group relational connections alone are not sufficient to produce mature disciples of Christ.”¹⁰⁰ This shift in emphasis will need to be closely monitored. For this researcher’s thesis project, a synthesis of various ideas seems the most practical. The most efficient way to implement this is by emphasizing daily Bible reading, prayer, prayer journaling, worship, serving, accountability, and evangelism. Another essential practice is having at least one accountability partner outside of the small group setting. Molding these practices into the routine of daily life should enhance the spiritual growth of each individual. A final note about measuring spiritual growth among group members: Lamport and Rynsburger state, “Spiritual growth is inherently difficult to measure, which may be demotivating to some who operate more effectively in contexts with tangible and

⁹⁹ Cole, *Church 3.0*, 46.

¹⁰⁰ Rynsburger and Lamport, “All the Rage: How Small Groups Are Really Educating Christian Adults Part 1: Assessing Small Group Ministry Practice: A Review of Literature,” 118.

concrete parameters. If the small group leader can creatively promote self-measurement or group accountability for growth, members may be stimulated to greater life change.”¹⁰¹

Conclusion

The review of the literature clearly shows agreement in many areas as well as divergence in a few. There is a consensus the discipleship journey should be approached with the idea it is a long-term, life-long process occurring in a communal setting as the individual is shaped into Christ’s image. Although there is flexibility in the number of individuals in any discipling environment, there is general agreement the group size should be small, no larger than 12 individuals. When considering this, it is not difficult to see the other factors being relatively easy to weave into the process. A group of 12 or less has the appearance of a family structure where deep, meaningful relationships that encourage accountability are built on love and trust and are developed over time. It is essential to consider that there will likely not be a one-size-fits-all solution to the challenge of discipleship. For this researcher’s context, the practice of daily Bible reading, prayer, faithfully attending services and small group meetings, forming deep relationships, and having at least one mature accountability partner are critical components. Applying these practices should result in the individual's spiritual growth, leading them to move from a self-centered to an other-centered mindset as they mature spiritually. However, a significant gap exists in the literature pertaining to discipling believers in the military and, specifically, to those living in the ROK.

It is critical to note the enormous gap in the literature regarding discipling the military. A search for books related to this topic has thus far produced only one result, *Ministry with the*

¹⁰¹ Mark A. Lamport and Mary Rynsburger, “All the Rage: How Small Groups Are Really Educating Christian Adults Part 2: Augmenting Small Group Ministry Practice - Developing Small Group Leadership Skills Through Insights from Cognate Theoretical Disciplines,” *Christian Education Journal* 5, no. 2 (2008): 391–414.

Military: A Guide for Churches and Chaplains by Donald W. Hadley and Gerald T. Richards.

However, that book was written in 1992, and it could not address the changes which have occurred concerning religious freedom in the military in the intervening years. The overall climate has shifted from promoting Christianity to a position of tolerance or, in some cases, suppression and persecution of Christian beliefs and values within the military.¹⁰² Two websites do offer some additional resources. The first is the Officer's Christian Fellowship (OCF), whose vision is Christ-like leaders making a positive impact on the military community.¹⁰³ The second site is Cru Military, whose vision is creating movement in the military community around the world, so every member of the military knows at least one person who is a follower of Christ.¹⁰⁴ Both sites have study materials. In the case of OCF, only three of their Bible study plans are geared towards a military audience. Unfortunately, none of the three are focused explicitly on discipleship. The resources on Cru's website are all print books and would need to be purchased and shipped before ascertaining whether they can be utilized. A review of the description of the items that may be of value to this research topic indicates they are cursory.

An example is the spiritual fitness guide for Air Force members. This booklet is 4x6 inches and only 42 pages covering 12 topics, only one of which is discipleship related. However, it must be noted that neither organization has any resources directly tied to the researcher's focus on discipling military members and their families in the ROK.

¹⁰² Jacqueline Klimas, "U.S. military 'hostile' to Christians under Obama; morale, retention devastated," *The Washington Times*, April 15, 2015, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/apr/15/us-military-losing-christians-because-of-hostile-c/>.

¹⁰³ Josh Jackson, "Officer's Christian Fellowship," *Officers' Christian Fellowship*, accessed June 23, 2020, <https://www.ocfusa.org/>.

¹⁰⁴ "Welcome to Cru Military," *Cru Military*, accessed June 23, 2020, <https://crumilitary.org/>.

This study will provide an essential resource in filling the gap which currently exists in discipling the military community in an overseas location. The few thesis projects that this researcher was able to find regarding discipleship in a military context were either directed at those who were deployed without their families or serving in the United States. None of the research projects were aimed explicitly at military members with or without families serving in an overseas location.

Theological Foundations

The concept of discipleship was central to the ministry of Jesus. In Matthew 28:18–20, Jesus gives His followers the command to make disciples known as The Great Commission. Verse 18 clearly shows the responsibility of teaching people God’s Word and following Christ passed from Jesus to the original disciples. Jesus is transferring this responsibility to His original followers and all who come afterward and profess to be followers of Jesus. He promises to always be with them spiritually and to empower them as they spread the Gospel across the globe.¹⁰⁵ Jesus is telling His followers He has authority both in heaven and earth. This authority is critical for the success of spreading the Gospel message. Without the authority which Jesus passed to His followers, it would not be possible to evangelize the lost.¹⁰⁶ However, with this authority, the spiritually dead are brought into the kingdom of life. As Jesus is giving the disciples the task to reach the lost, He is also assuring them of success in their ministry.

Verse 19 is the command Jesus passed to His followers, “make disciples.” Making disciples is the central command in the Great Commission. It is the focal point of the mission of

¹⁰⁵ Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American commentary v. 22 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman Press, 1992), 431.

¹⁰⁶ Stuart K. Weber, *Holman New Testament Commentary: Matthew* (Nashville, Tenn: Holman Reference, 1998), 484.

all followers of Christ to reproduce in others what Jesus produced in His followers – the characteristics of obedience, growth, faith, authority, love, compassion, and spreading His message as witnesses. Disciples are expected to produce more disciples.¹⁰⁷ The making of disciples is not only a directive for Jesus’ followers, but it is also a purpose for the church. It is not enough for the church to evangelize and make converts vital as it is. If the church does not teach and make disciples, it does not follow the Great Commission’s primary command.¹⁰⁸

Further discussion on the concept of teaching and making disciples is needed to understand the thrust Jesus intended fully. All too often, churches will have a discipleship class or recommended readings on discipleship, implying the concept of discipleship is a program or a series of classes that signal the end of the discipleship journey. However, that is misunderstanding the meaning of the word “teaching” in the original Greek, the word *didasko*. What Jesus is commanding is not a series of classes. The original recipients of the message would have understood this to mean to “keep on teaching them.”¹⁰⁹ The teaching concept went beyond mere book knowledge; it was a call to live in obedience to what Jesus taught. It is not enough to know it. Instead, it must be demonstrated in the daily lives of those who profess to be followers of Christ. Through obedience to the teaching command, believers at every stage of spiritual maturity, from a brand-new believer to a spiritual adult, are taught to grow toward Christ’s perfect character.¹¹⁰

The writer of Hebrews addresses this in another manner in Hebrews 10:25, “not staying away from our worship meetings, as some habitually do, but encouraging each other, and all the

¹⁰⁷ Weber, *Holman New Testament Commentary: Matthew*, 484.

¹⁰⁸ Iain D Campbell, *Opening up Matthew’s Gospel* (Leominster: Day One, 2008), 178.

¹⁰⁹ Weber, *Holman New Testament Commentary: Matthew*, 485.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 486.

more as you see the day drawing near.” The writer earlier, in Hebrews 3:12–14, warned the readers of the danger of failing to meet in fellowship. The result could be a heart falling into unbelief and moving from a close relationship to God to a position of apostasy. The letter itself is meant to encourage the recipients to hold fast to Jesus regardless of their circumstances. It is also a warning about faithfulness and the consequences of being unfaithful. The exhortation to not fail to meet contained in this verse displays obedience to the Great Commission. In short, not only does Jesus command His disciples to teach others all He had taught the disciples, but Hebrews tells the reader to encourage one another – and this is done by setting an excellent example as a Christian on how to live.

In Luke 9:23, Jesus presents three requirements for His followers. The first requirement is to deny oneself. Jesus is not talking about a lifestyle of self-flagellation. To deny oneself is to alter the focus of being primarily concerned about oneself and achieving self-satisfaction and self-fulfillment. Jesus is telling His followers they need to treat themselves as if they did not exist. Tanner describes this as “to act in a wholly selfless manner.”¹¹¹ Stein explains it by stating a disciple not only denies their wishes, but they seek “to fulfill the will and teachings of Christ.”¹¹² The disciple’s allegiance has switched from self to Christ as they are transformed and grow spiritually. The second requirement of being a follower of Jesus is a daily task. Being a follower is not just about when the believer feels like being a disciple or convenient. Jesus is not asking His followers to be obedient when it is easy; He asks for obedience even when it could lead to

¹¹¹ Paul Tanner, “The Cost of Discipleship: Losing One’s Life for Jesus Sake,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56, no. 1 (2013): 47.

¹¹² Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, The New American commentary v. 24 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman Press, 1992), 279.

martyrdom.¹¹³ The final requirement goes a step further and implies an ongoing process. In the original Greek, the word for “follow” is a present, imperative verb. Following Jesus is a continual process that, once begun, will not find its end on this side of eternity.¹¹⁴

John 8:31 supports and connects with the idea of teaching disciples all that Jesus commanded as contained in the Great Commission. Jesus is saying a true disciple will hold onto and follow the teachings of Jesus.¹¹⁵ Those who are not taught or do not follow the teachings of Jesus cannot be considered true disciples. Borchert views the term “continue” to mean holding onto and wholly committed to following Jesus and His teachings as the mark of a true disciple.¹¹⁶

John 13:34–35 directly connects to the idea that believers are members of God’s spiritual family and to the command to observe Jesus’ teachings. Because He loved the disciples, they, as His followers, were to love each member of God’s spiritual family. To consider the love which Jesus had for His disciples requires the reader to understand this love translated to Jesus’ crucifixion on the cross.¹¹⁷ The depth and richness of Jesus’ love can only be fully grasped when each believer examines their life and realizes the depth of their sin.¹¹⁸ Jesus is telling His followers they need to extend the same measure of love to those in God’s community. Love for one another would also be an indicator they were faithful followers of Christ. It is in the context of a connected and loving community that discipleship flourishes.

¹¹³ Trent C. Butler and Max Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary: Luke*, vol. 3 (Nashville, Tenn: Holman Reference, 2007), 146.

¹¹⁴ Stein, *Luke*, 279.

¹¹⁵ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England : Grand Rapids, Mich: Inter-Varsity Press ; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 348.

¹¹⁶ Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1–11*, The New American Commentary v. 25A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 303.

¹¹⁷ Borchert, *John 1–11*, 99.

¹¹⁸ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 484.

Jesus also demands His followers submit to His Lordship. This submission is a calculated understanding of the requirements and costs of being a disciple of Jesus. He addresses this idea in a parable in Luke 14:25–33. In this parable, Jesus is not painting a picture that discipleship is easy or that it should be undertaken without careful consideration. He tells the two parables in this passage to challenge the hearer if they cannot finish the task; they should not even begin. The concluding verse in this passage is challenging. Although for the original disciples, it meant giving up everything they had when they decided to follow Jesus, the majority of commentators believe the correct interpretation of this passage is possessions no longer control the life of a believer.¹¹⁹ Sproul expands on this by explaining the correct interpretation is not just forsaking trust in worldly possessions but also confidently placing their future into Christ's hands.¹²⁰ Scripture calls for the followers of Christ to set aside allegiance to the things the world calls essential. It is all too easy for the believer to be seduced by the priorities of the world. Instead of chasing Jesus, they chase material possessions, money, promotions, prestige, or power. The church must present the entire Gospel message, not just the attractive parts, to the lost. Just as Jesus spoke the truth about the cost of following Him, the church needs to preach this message and include it in their discipleship process.

Not only are believers expected to set aside their personal goals and desires to follow Jesus, but they are also to set them aside to meet and serve with others in the spiritual family of God. The writer of Hebrews addresses this in Hebrews 10:24–25. Fellow believers in Christ are to display concern for one another through loving service to the community. Each individual has a responsibility of obedience to God, but they also have a responsibility to the corporate body of

¹¹⁹ Gavin Childress, *Opening Up Luke's Gospel* (Leominster: Day One, 2006), 136.

¹²⁰ R. C. Sproul, *A Walk with God: An Exposition of Luke* (Fearn: Ligonier Ministries / Christian Focus, 2005), 298.

Christ. Disciples will be there to help and encourage when other believers stumble in their walk. There will be an outward focus on the welfare of those with needs. There is a responsibility to encourage others to demonstrate love to each other and for Kingdom work.¹²¹ Barclay points out that believers live a selfless Christianity because living “a selfish Christianity is a contradiction in terms.” There is also a warning about failing to meet together for worship and mutual encouragement. However, Christianity is not meant to be lived in isolation but enjoyed in the community. Guthrie views the admonishment of failing to meet in verse 25 as a precursor to their local faith community deteriorating. Any local body of believers who discontinue meeting for worship and fellowship will suffer a fatal blow in persevering as Christians when struggles occur.¹²² Believers are to be different from those who do not follow Christ – the lost often show concern for themselves to the detriment of the group. Instead, believers are to be in constant fellowship to encourage and disciple each other. This fellowship and encouragement are especially critical in a world becoming increasingly hostile to Christians. Engaging in discipleship implies engaging in spiritual warfare as the enemy does not want Christians to grow in their faith and become more useful members of God’s Kingdom.

In many ways, the modern church resembles the church being addressed in Hebrews. Western society, even within the church, places a value on independence and self-reliance.¹²³ Just as the church in Hebrews had members who were in danger of slipping into their old self, Judaism, the modern church has members who are in danger of slipping back into their previous

¹²¹ Thomas D. Lea, *Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, Tenn: Holman Reference, 1998), 187.

¹²² George H. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 345.

¹²³ Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family*, 28.

worldly self. For the church with members attached to the military in the ROK, the dangers are falling back into the addictions of gambling, alcoholism, and sexual sin.

However, the Christian life was never intended to be lived in isolation from other believers. There is an attitude of independence, thinking each person can live and overcome difficulties on their own. This attitude displays two unhealthy characteristics. The first is the element of pride. The second is implied laziness and not wanting to commit, which may be too demanding in their eyes.¹²⁴

An important element in discipleship is giving and receiving encouragement from and to each other. When believers fail to gather together in groups, it undermines the entire discipleship process. Meeting together promotes godliness among the group and displays Christian love for each other. These gatherings should not be just occasional get-togethers, but regular and frequent meetings to spur each other in spiritual growth. This intimate fellowship is critical as the world becomes increasingly hostile to Christians, and persecution becomes prevalent.¹²⁵

Paul talks about the idea of encouragement in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing.” Paul is talking about mutual encouragement within the spiritual family of God. Every believer will go through periods where they feel discouraged or overwhelmed by circumstances. Fellow believers must encourage and remind those who are undergoing trials there is a future glory waiting and trials here, regardless of how terrible they may be, are temporary. Building one another up also implies an investment of time in a deep relationship. Every believer was bought with the blood of Christ and are worth the investment. These in-depth relationships, in turn, lead to spiritual maturity and accountability. As

¹²⁴ Philip H Hacking, *Opening up Hebrews* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 65–66.

¹²⁵ Thomas D. Lea, *Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, Tenn: Holman Reference, 1998), 187.

these individuals grow in their spiritual walk, they will remember how others invested in them and invest in those who are now experiencing trials.¹²⁶ Believers are also to encourage one another not to become complacent in their faith. That is the contextual understanding of 1 Thessalonians 5:11. It is easy for complacency to enter into the spiritual mindset of believers. When Paul is writing to “encourage one another,” it is written in the present tense. Encouragement is not an action to do only when a believer is going through difficult times. Encouragement should be done continually, regardless of whether or not someone is going through trials.¹²⁷ Discipleship is fruitful when it is done continuously and engagingly.

The Old Testament also supported the concept of gathering together for mutual support and encouragement. One passage is contained in Numbers 1:18a, “and they assembled the whole community on the first day of the second month.” Although this contextually talks about a census for those fighting age, there is an underlying message for an application today. The Israelites in Numbers were preparing for physical combat, and they were counting the family units in each tribe. In the same vein, modern Christians are engaged in spiritual warfare. Each gathering of believers is similar to a family unit presented in Numbers. Physical fighting is best done in groups, not individually. Even a person as mighty as Samson was overcome in the end. In the same manner, Christians today are more effective when engaging in spiritual warfare in a group.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Knute Larson and Max Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary: I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, vol. 9 (Nashville Tenn: Holman Reference, 2005), 71.

¹²⁷ D. Michael Martin, *I, 2 Thessalonians*, The New American commentary v. 33 (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 169.

¹²⁸ Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers: From Biblical Text ... to Contemporary Life*, The NIV application commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2004), 499.

Paul also speaks about this concept in 2 Tim 2:3–4. No soldier attempts to perform their duty in isolation. Instead, each soldier is part of a team working in unity. Working together, Christians can support each other when life gets tough. Just as soldiers come to each other’s aid in a physical battle, Christians are to come to each other in a spiritual battle.¹²⁹ This metaphor is mostly applicable and easily understood by the target audience of this researcher’s thesis project, the military community. Paul is picturing a similar mindset that is seen in the mindset of a professional soldier. Four qualities exemplify this mindset. The first quality is to focus on their service and not on the distractions of daily living. For a Christian, that means being focused on Kingdom work. The second quality is unwavering and complete obedience to the orders of the commanders appointed over them. There are times when the soldier may not understand why they are asked to accomplish a specific mission, yet they follow those orders.

Similarly, a Christian must have obedience to God's direction and follow His voice even when they cannot see what is on the other side of the door they are going through. The third quality is a willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice, their life, to accomplish the mission. War is never clean and always messy. Similarly, Christians are called to enter into the messy spiritual battle being waged, even if it would result in losing their life. The fourth quality is unbending loyalty to their commander. Christians are called to steadfast loyalty to Jesus and the Great Commission to make disciples wherever God leads them.¹³⁰

Just as physical warfare requires organizational structure under leaders, spiritual warfare requires a similar structure. A vital element of this organizational structure is obeying and

¹²⁹ Aida Besançon Spencer, *2 Timothy and Titus: A New Covenant Commentary*, NCCS (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), 97.

¹³⁰ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *I, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary v. 34 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman Press, 1992), 202–203.

following the leader under which an individual finds themselves. This concept is found in Hebrews 13:17, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account so that they can do this with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.” Accountability plays a significant role in the idea of relationships and spiritual growth within the small group context. The writer of Hebrews is making a prescriptive statement that members of the congregation are obedient to their church’s spiritual leaders. The writer is also stating that those in the leadership positions will bear responsibility for those under their care. This synergistic relationship is the kind leaders will give an account for being faithful in instructing their flock. The congregation members will account for being obedient in responding to the teaching, promoting their spiritual growth.

Good cooperation between pastor and congregation edifies the spiritual community and presents a positive witness to the lost around them. Just as those in a military unit submit to their leaders and work together to accomplish the mission, the congregation submits to the ministry leadership team responsible for equipping them to carry out the Great Commission. Just as military leaders are held accountable for how they lead their unit, church leaders know they will be held to a higher standard.¹³¹ This is echoed in James 3:1, “Not many should become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we will receive a stricter judgment.” At the same time, those called into ministry should celebrate with joy those who are obedient and receptive to the teaching of God’s Word and who continue on a spiritual growth path.¹³²

Within the small group ministry construct, each leader is responsible for their group members' discipleship and spiritual growth. The leader must be careful to lead in humility and not

¹³¹ Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 442.

¹³² David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary / gen. ed. David S. Dockery 35 (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Publ. Group, 2010), 625.

pride. At the same time, they are fervent in the zeal to instruct and protect those whom God placed under their care. Not every Christian is gifted for a ministry leadership role. It takes great character and integrity to undertake this calling, and those under their care are required to submit to their leadership.¹³³ However, this presents a challenge in modern society where a preponderance of emphasis is placed on individual freedom, choice, and a general resistance or outright disrespect to the idea of submitting to leaders.

The concept of discipleship is found in both the Old and New Testament. Although it happened different than how Jesus discipled the original twelve, Moses discipled Joshua as Israel wandered through the desert. Just as Jesus passed the torch of responsibility to His disciples, Moses passed the torch of responsibility to Joshua to lead Israel. Moses discipled Joshua by demonstrating how a leader was to act and the responsibility of leadership. Jesus demonstrated how to live a godly life to the disciples and provided instruction and correction to ensure His message would continue. Similarly, ministry and small group leaders are to model a Christian life to those they are discipling and provide opportunities for them to grow in their spiritual walk and become leaders in their own right. When Christians are obedient and faithful in their lives to follow Christ's commands, they will stand before Him and hear, "well done."

Theoretical Foundations

The theological foundation section explored how Scripture supports the idea of discipleship in a small group setting leading to accountability and spiritual growth. There are countless books and examples of practical ministry applications that support and expound on what is contained in Scripture. Academic works also address the importance of accountability,

¹³³ Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan ; Cambridge, U.K: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 708.

discussing the optimum size for groups, the need for consistent Bible reading and prayer, the church's role, and the concept of discipleship is a life-long process. Additionally, participation in small groups enhances the connection to the group member's local church. Dougherty and Whitehead state, "Research on church connected small groups suggests that those who join attend worship more often, feel a stronger connection to the church, and give more time and money to the enterprise than those who do not belong to a small group."¹³⁴ However, before beginning a discussion on the concepts and methods to apply within a small group setting, a review of small group models is required.

Although there is a wide variety of small group models and offshoots from the main ones, this section will briefly describe the most common ones. The first model to discuss, the Cell Church model, arguably ushered in the modern small group trend and was started in South Korea. Characteristics of the cell church model are:

- Groups exist for edification and evangelism
- They have a dual focus on Bible study and prayer
- Emphasize relational evangelism to the lost
- Every member of the group hierarchy, except for the lowest level, oversees approximately five other members

This model has been most successful in Asia, Africa, and South America, where churches using this model see consistent annual growth through conversions and new church plants.¹³⁵ The

¹³⁴ Kevin D. Dougherty and Andrew L. Whitehead, "A Place to Belong: Small Group Involvement in Religious Congregations," *Sociology of Religion* 72, no. 1 (2011): 98.

¹³⁵ Scott Boren and Jim Egli, "Small Group Models: Navigating the Commonalities and the Differences," *Christian Education Journal* 11, no. 1 (2014): 153–154.

second model is the Meta-Church or Free-Market model. This model was started in the North American church in the 90s. Characteristics of the meta-church model are:

- Church “of” small groups and not a church “with” small groups
- Church leadership formally organizes pre-existing informal groups
- Utilizes a large variety of small groups to accommodate the needs of everyone
- The main difference from the Cell Church model is that the Meta-Church model does not focus exclusively on edification and evangelism¹³⁶

The third and fourth models, open and closed small groups, are closely related except for one defining characteristic that separates them. The characteristics of the open small group model are:

- There is always space for new members
- Allows for flexibility in organizing the small groups
- Intimacy and accountability are limited
- Members may lack a high level of commitment

Characteristics of the closed small group model are:

- Once a group starts, new members are not allowed to join until a designated “open period” occurs
- Provide a deep level of trust and accountability
- Requires a high level of commitment from members
- Can become inward-focused

The fifth model is the neighborhood group model. The group members live close to each other and “do life together” consistently. Characteristics of this model are:

¹³⁶ Boren, “Small Group Models: Navigating the Commonalities and the Differences,” 154–155.

- The proximity of members increases the opportunity to interact
- Reduces the challenge of traveling to group meetings
- Members may not “fit” with one another
- Members may not embrace the early-church mentality that is prevalent in this model

The sixth model is the purpose-driven model developed by Saddleback Church. These groups are designed to develop five areas in the group’s members: fellowship, discipleship, ministry, evangelism, and worship. Characteristics of this model are:

- Creates well-rounded disciples
- Does not encourage group splitting for multiplication; instead, new groups are started
- Requires a high level of administrative oversight
- Occasionally new leaders are not ready for the responsibility of leadership

The seventh model is the sermon-based group model. This model studies the previous week’s sermon in greater detail. Characteristics of this model are:

- Reinforces the sermon material
- Group leaders do not need to develop their study material
- Creates a sense of unity among the small groups
- The danger the study turns into a sermon critique instead of a Bible study

The final small group model to discuss is the host group model. A host group model is where the leader hosts the group but is not the group's spiritual leader. The characteristics of this model are:

- New groups can be formed quickly
- Provides a vehicle to develop new group leaders
- Requires a packaged curriculum to succeed

- Potential for groups to be led by individuals who are not ready¹³⁷

Due to the nature of the ministry context with MBC and the military community, there is not a perfect fit with any one model. However, two models would work well in a combined format with this researcher's ministry setting. Those two models are the open group, due to the military community's transitory nature, and the purpose-driven group due to the focused intervention on specific areas and spiritual disciplines. One note of caution is needed here regarding the focus of small groups in discipleship. Walton states, "The default model to which most Christian small groups tend is one which majors on mutual support and affirmation rather than learning, outreach, challenge, or accountability."¹³⁸

Without a way to keep one another accountable, there is no assurance of spiritual growth and knowing when to provide a loving correction. Hull's position is that it is impossible to make disciples without accountability. Those who are best suited to keep each other accountable are on the same journey as those they disciple.¹³⁹ In Ogden's experience, it is the accountability that creates and encourages an environment for spiritual transformation.¹⁴⁰ However, those involved in the accountability process must do it in the spirit of love. Although some may respond to a harsh method of accountability, and in some cases, this may be the only way to reach some people, it has been proven that godly behavior will flourish best when an environment of loving accountability exists between participants.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ The information from the third model until this point was obtained from Christianity Today, "Small Groups Models," *Small Groups.Com*, accessed June 26, 2020, <https://www.smallgroups.com/build/models/>.

¹³⁸ Roger Walton, "Disciples Together: The Small Group as a Vehicle for Discipleship Formation," *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 8, no. 2 (2011): 112.

¹³⁹ Bill Hull and Ben Sobels, *The Discipleship Gospel: What Jesus Preached--We Must Follow* (Him Publications, 2018), Kindle location 2539–2551.

¹⁴⁰ Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials*. xi.

¹⁴¹ John Koessler, *True Discipleship: The Art of Following Jesus* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003), 107.

The size of a group ties in closely with the concept of accountability. Although there are general agreements and practical successes, the group's size should be less than twenty individuals; there is documented success from two participants to twenty. Chan's preference is towards the larger end of the spectrum, and his house church model has achieved remarkable success by adopting this policy. He believes any number up to twenty is acceptable, and once that number is reached, it is time for the small group/house church to split into two separate entities.¹⁴² At the other end of the spectrum, Cole has achieved success because accountability leading to life change is most efficient between two or three individuals.¹⁴³ Although there is a significant variance in group size, there were several common themes in their accountability application. One theme is regardless of the perceived hierarchy within the group, mutual accountability must exist.¹⁴⁴ Another theme is trust and speaking the truth in a spirit of love is essential.¹⁴⁵ A third theme to mention, as it is a direct challenge to the concept of biblical accountability, the modern church faces is the individualistic nature of Western society clashes with the idea of being held accountable to others.¹⁴⁶

Tied into the accountability aspect is the concept of providing a safe space for people to engage and form relationships. Myers references research done by Hall, which identifies four areas where humans interact. The first area is public space, where participants are 12 or more feet apart. The second area is social space, where participants are 4 to 12 feet apart. The third area is personal space with a separation of 18 inches to 4 feet. The final area is an intimate space where

¹⁴² Chan, *Letters to the Church*, 174–175.

¹⁴³ Cole, *Church 3.0*, 146, 161.

¹⁴⁴ Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches That Make Disciples*, Kindle location 722.

¹⁴⁵ Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo*, 173.

¹⁴⁶ Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family*, 28.

individuals may be in physical contact out to 18 inches.¹⁴⁷ Myers believes, “All belonging is significant...Harmony means more public belongings than social. More social than personal. And very few intimate.”¹⁴⁸ These concepts will require serious consideration to weave them into the small group intervention design to maximize impact. For most issues of accountability, the most important relationship to develop is the personal relationship. This relationship level will encourage members to spend more time in Scripture and prayer, as two examples. However, for pornography or other types of sexual sin, relationships will need to be intimate to share the innermost personal struggles believers have.¹⁴⁹ Without these intimate level relationships, authentic accountability for those struggling with these types of sins will be difficult. Due to the nature of the ministry context, small groups of 12 or less for general activities and four or less for accountability appear optimum.

A critical foundational activity for the small group intervention is a steady intake of the Bible. Bible intake is a universal concept among those who push the small group setting for discipleship. The regular study of Scripture is directly related to Jesus’ command to teach all His commands. By spending time in the Word, the disciple is receiving teaching, which results in spiritual growth. Another reason for emphasizing reading Scripture is to combat false teaching and false church tradition. However, Rynsburger and Lamport state, “Despite the Reformation, which called for the text of Scripture in the common language of the laypeople, the Christian laity remains largely uninformed about its contents.”¹⁵⁰ Those who call themselves followers of Jesus

¹⁴⁷ Joseph R. Myers, *The Search to Belong: Rethinking Intimacy, Community, and Small Groups* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Youth Specialties, 2003), 35.

¹⁴⁸ Myers, *The Search to Belong*, 50.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Mary Rynsburger and Mark A. Lamport, “All the Rage: How Small Groups Are Really Educating Christian Adults Part Three: Anchoring Small Ministry Practice - Biblical Insights and Leadership Development,” *Christian Education Journal* 6, no. 1 (2009): 112–125.

but are biblically illiterate are a danger to themselves and those they interact with. Chan's method to promote and reinforce Bible reading is to have all group members follow the same daily reading plan. When the groups gather, they can then discuss what they have read, what personal applications they received from the Word, and engage in edifying discussions about the Word.¹⁵¹

Prayer is a foundational spiritual discipline for all Christians, but it is essential for those who lead any ministry endeavor. The foundational aspect of prayer is especially true for one who leads a small group engaged in others' discipleship. Even though prayer is universally noted amongst successful ministry leaders, Earley captures the importance of prayer succinctly, "prayer is the most important activity of the small group leader. If a small group leader could do only one thing to make the group more effective, that one thing would be to pray."¹⁵² A recommended tool for the prayer ministry of a small group is a prayer list shared with all group members. Not only is it useful, so all prayer requests are remembered, but it also serves as a running praise report as prayers get answered.¹⁵³

Although the church's influence in promoting discipleship has declined in Western society in recent years, its influence should not be underestimated or ignored. There is widespread agreement that the church plays a vital role in the discipleship process among believers.¹⁵⁴ However, there are differing views on how these roles appear. Inherent in these differing views is the danger the church will preach a partial Gospel to make it more appealing to today's society.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Chan, *Letters to the Church*, 177.

¹⁵² Earley, Dave, *8 Habits of Effective Small Group Leaders: Transforming Your Ministry Outside the Meeting* (Houston, TX: Cell Group ResourcesTM, 2001), Kindle location 297.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, Kindle location 386.

¹⁵⁴ Cheshire and Gensler, *Real-Life Discipleship: The Ordinary Man's Guide to Disciple-Making*, 17.

¹⁵⁵ David Platt, *A Compassionate Call to Counter Culture in a World of Poverty, Same-Sex Marriage, Racism, Sex Slavery, Immigration, Persecution, Abortion, Orphans, Pornography*, 188.

The seeker-sensitive movement within the church effectively reached a large number of the lost. However, what it failed to achieve was the profound, committed disciple called for in Scripture.¹⁵⁶ Willard believes a significant failure in American churches is the failure to require being a follower of Christ in action, spirit, and instruction before being granted membership has resulted in those same churches being filled with undisciplined disciples.¹⁵⁷ To combat this phenomenon, Putman successfully instituted an environment where biblical discipleship occurred in close relationships, which demonstrated genuine care and love for each member resulting in authentic spiritual growth.¹⁵⁸ Creating a supportive and loving environment for group members will be crucial to success in the small group ministry within the ROK military community.

One final area to examine is how successful discipleship is approached concerning the contrasting ideas of short-term or periodic classes on discipleship versus viewing discipleship as a long-term or life-long journey. Although classes can impart head knowledge and limited observation of practical results and life application, the most successful discipleship results are obtained with a view towards a long-term process involving living life together. Successful churches or ministry leaders build their discipleship process in a way that, as much as possible, resembles the methodology of Jesus. An inherent characteristic in this process is the possibility that the teacher-leader may not see results as quickly as they expect. Instead of being discouraged, they need to be patient and faithful and trust God that results will be forthcoming.

¹⁵⁶ Bob Burney, “Willow Creek Model, Its Leaders Say, Fails at Discipleship,” accessed April 18, 2020, <https://www.christianexaminer.com/article/willow.creek.model.its.leaders.say.fails.at.discipleship/44056.htm>.

¹⁵⁷ Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship*, 1st ed. (San Francisco, Calif.: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 3–4.

¹⁵⁸ Putman and Harrington, *Discipleship: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples*, 146–149.

Chan's approach to this challenge is to create an atmosphere where his house church or small groups operate as a family. He argues it is not a fad or gimmick, but rather it is commanded by Scripture. When ministry is built around the concept where believers treat each other as family members and not as acquaintances, the result is a group of people united in supernatural love where relationships are long-term, and transformation occurs.¹⁵⁹

Putman has achieved success with a similar yet different approach. The church he pastors started in a home and, in rapid fashion, grew into a church with over 7,000 members. Nevertheless, this church embraces the small group model for discipleship with a view towards long-term commitment. A key component in their process is an initial assessment of each member to determine their spiritual maturity. Their program is built around a five-stage discipleship model. Those stages are dead, infant, child, young adult, and parent.¹⁶⁰ Their assessment is built around four components; identifying disciple growth stages, understanding the characteristics and needs of those stages, identifying phrases or words used by people in those stages, and helping people grow and move to the next stage.¹⁶¹ Once an assessment has indicated where the member falls in this model, they are placed in relationships or service areas that will enable them to mature in their spiritual walk. Putman sums up their approach by stating, "We want to create a movement of mature disciple-makers who can make disciples."¹⁶²

The process envisioned to address the stated problem in this research project will utilize the theoretical principles discussed above. The most effective way is through a synthesis of the areas which follow. Accountability will be addressed in groups of two or three individuals, while

¹⁵⁹ Chan, *Letters to the Church*, 80.

¹⁶⁰ Putman and Harrington, *Discipleship: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples*, 59.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

small group Bible studies will comprise groups of up to twenty individuals. Bible studies will be built around Chan's standard weekly reading model, which is discussed during the meetings, emphasizing understanding Scripture and finding practical applications to each person's life. Praying for each other and prayer journaling will be stressed as part of the small group philosophy. The last principle will be to apply a synergistic approach to the spiritual disciplines of worship, service, and evangelism. Synergism applies to these three by understanding that worship is daily and intentional on the part of believers. Service is a continuous mindset to others, and evangelism is manifested as worship to God by serving the lost.

One principle that is already in place is the church pastor that this researcher has aligned with, is emphasizing small group meetings. Finally, although the principle of a long-term process in discipleship is challenging in an environment where most individuals will move between one to three years after joining a local church, it still is an essential part of the discipleship process. To complement the process, it may help to contact the individual's former church, with their permission, to see how they have served and an informal assessment of their spiritual maturity level. Additionally, assistance can be provided before a person leaves to survey information on churches in the local area. They are moving to place them in a church that prioritizes small groups and discipleship. This assistance could also include contacting the church to smooth the transition.

From the information presented in this chapter, it is clear that a significant gap exists in the literature addressing discipleship within the military community in general and those living in South Korea specifically. The designed intervention will apply a small group ministry model based upon a hybrid open and purpose-driven group. A review of general discipleship literature and biblical examples drives the intervention design to focus on small groups with an ideal size of 12 or less and accountability groups of 4 or less.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Intervention Design

Introduction

The purpose of the intervention is to create an environment that enhances the participant's spiritual walk and growth, which will also equip them to be able to resist the challenges and temptations present in the military community in the ROK. The environment will be created by utilizing five primary areas of focus. The areas of focus will be applied and measured within the small group ministry at MBC. The desired end-state is followers of Jesus who exhibit growth in biblical knowledge and understanding, lives immersed in prayer, the ability to identify and remove personal idols, accountability to and with other members of their group, and an enhanced understanding and application of serving one another. The intervention design has met all the requirements for IRB approval (see Appendix A).

The first area of focus is on reading and understanding the Bible. Bible reading and understanding comes straight from the Great Commission. When Jesus commands His followers, "teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20a), this can only be accomplished by the teaching, reading, and understanding of Scripture. The small groups comprising the test groups will utilize Scripture reading and discussion to improve biblical understanding.

The second area of focus is on creating a lifestyle of prayer. Scripture shows that Jesus had a life that was focused on prayer. Jesus focused on prayer when He had a significant decision to make or was facing a significant trial. An example is found in Luke 6:12 when He spent all night in prayer before selecting 12 disciples to become the Apostles. Since Jesus's life was a life

focused on prayer, it follows that the life of every follower of His should fall in step with Jesus' lifestyle of prayer. A sub-focus is on creating personal prayer journals to track prayer requests and record answered prayer. At a minimum, each test group will have a prayer coordinator whose role is to record prayer requests, send out a compiled prayer request list each week, and record answered prayers.

The third area of focus is on identifying and removing personal idols. Scripture is replete with passages talking about idols, the dangers of idols, and removing idols. While most passages discuss idolatry under the guise of worshipping carved images or statues, in effect, little "g" gods, the contextual understanding is anything that removes a person's attention and focus on Yahweh is an idol. Today's followers of Jesus face many different idols: cellphones, internet, television, jobs, possessions, money, and prestige. While most of these can be considered essential for modern life, it is important to strike a balance in how each is viewed, and the priority placed on them. Each one has the potential to divert the follower's attention from Jesus to become an idol that is the center of one's attention.

The fourth area of focus is on accountability. Although there are no passages where Jesus directly commands accountability as defined by having an accountability partner, there are other passages of Scripture that speak to this. A few examples are, Proverbs 27:6 and 27:17, James 5:16, and 1 Thessalonians 5:11. The issue of accountability is admittedly a challenging one as the implied transparency required in an accountability relationship takes time to establish. However, without one or more individuals to keep followers accountable, it is easier to fall to the temptations of sin.

The fifth area of focus is in serving, with the original intent in this area being for each test group to collectively serve in some capacity to the local community. Options for this service

include orphan homes, elderly homes, or community clean-up activities. However, with the unpredictable situation of COVID-19 in the ROK, this may need to be modified to serving within the MBC ministry community or eliminating it altogether if church service is limited to an online format with only essential positions of message, worship team, soundboard, and computer operator allowed in the building due to the ROK government restrictions.

Each of these focus areas supports the purpose of conducting this research project. Additionally, the majority can be measured using objective tools. The two more subjective focus areas are Bible reading and prayer. However, objectivity can be introduced to these two areas in the following manner. Members can utilize a prayer journal where entries are made either before or after prayer. Also, notes based upon Scripture reading can be added to the prayer journal. Small group leaders can also make entries on their mid-point assessment or progress reports addressing whether they believe members are actively reading their Bible and engaging in meaningful prayer life.

Pre-Intervention Phase

The first few tasks will occur in the pre-intervention phase, and these tasks entail collecting data from four main groups. The first group is with the pastor, and the second is the leaders of small groups. The third group is the congregation. Although the intervention design already exists, the pre-intervention data collection results may modify the intervention design. The fourth group will be one volunteer from each small group to undergo an interview.

Interview Processes

The pastor interview is designed to determine their view on the challenges presented by gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, and sexual sin within the congregation. The interview will occur in a private location where others are not present or cannot hear the conversation and will

be classified as confidential, most likely the pastor's office. The interview will be recorded for later analysis. Before conducting the interview, the interviewees will be provided with a copy of the consent form, and their signature will be required before the interview can proceed. There are several purposes for this interview. The first is to ascertain the pastoral view on the spiritual health of the congregation. The congregational spiritual health determination will be based upon a series of questions. The first questions will define what characteristics, activities, or spiritual disciplines are essential from the pastoral viewpoint regarding spiritual health determination and why they were chosen. Based on the answers to the first questions, an evaluation of the congregational spiritual health will then be determined. The spiritual health assessment determines what area or areas the church is most potent, what area or areas need the most improvement, and what area the pastor is most satisfied with. The pastor will also be asked to rank order the sins of gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, and sexual sin as they have impacted MBC. The interview will conclude with a series of questions pertaining to small group activities and the perceived benefit of those activities on the discipleship process and congregational members' spiritual growth. The pre-intervention pastoral interview questions are found in Appendix B. The interview results could narrow the research project's focus if there is a preponderance of incidents within one category. If that is not the case, then the project will proceed with an emphasis on all three previously identified areas.

The second purpose of the interview is to determine whether any focused intervention was previously used to address problem areas. If an intervention was applied, then the next questions are to determine the intervention results. If success was achieved, would the same intervention still apply to improve the situation further? If there was no success, would modification of the

previous intervention be possible? A negative response to both of those questions would conclude that aspects of the previously applied intervention should not be considered.

The small group leader focus group meeting will mirror the pastoral interview in most facets (see Appendix C). The focus group meeting will occur in a private location where others are not present or cannot hear the conversation. The most likely locations are the pastor's office or a larger meeting room at the church. The meeting will be classified as confidential, and the participants will be identified as leader A, leader B, and so on. The focus group meeting will be recorded for later analysis. Before conducting the meeting, the participants will be provided with a copy of the consent form, and their signature will be required before the meeting can proceed. Although highly unlikely, those who decide not to sign the consent form will be asked to leave the meeting. There are several purposes for this meeting. The first is to ascertain the small group leaders' views on their small group's spiritual health. The small group spiritual health determination will be based upon a series of questions. The first questions will define what characteristics, activities, or spiritual disciplines are essential from the leaders' viewpoint regarding spiritual health determination and why those items were chosen. Based on the answers to the first questions, evaluating the small group's spiritual health will then be determined. The spiritual health assessment is a determination of the area or areas where the small groups are strongest, need the most improvement, and where the small group leaders are most satisfied. The small group leaders will also be asked to determine, from their perspective, what challenges their group members face in their lives and their walk with God, and to rank order the sins of gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, and sexual sin as they have impacted their groups. The meeting will conclude with a series of questions pertaining to their small group activities and the perceived

benefit of those activities on the discipleship process and spiritual growth of small group members.

With the pastor's permission, preliminary comparisons, both convergent and divergent positions, between the pastoral interview and the small group leader focus group meeting will be discussed. If the results are primarily convergent, little additional discussion is warranted. However, suppose there are divergent viewpoints in the two data sets. In such a case, that may necessitate additional discussion and guidance from the pastor to the small group leaders to ensure a consolidated theoretical application of the small group ministry to the congregation at MBC. In that case, the interview results could narrow the research project's focus if there is a preponderance of incidents within one category. It is also possible that a challenge outside of gambling, alcohol, or sexual temptations may be identified. If that is the case, a determination will need to be made to expand the scope of the intervention to address the challenge. If neither of the above is true, then the project will emphasize all three previously identified areas.

After data has been collected from both the pastors and small group leaders, an analysis will be conducted to identify the predominant problem areas and challenges that face the congregation. As stated previously, if there is an area of concern that was not already identified, it could become part of the intervention plan. However, the intervention plan must not become too broad or too challenging to implement. Since three areas were part of the original problem statement, it would be prudent to limit any intervention to a maximum of three areas of focus. The areas of focus will then drive the data collection on the congregation. Once the intervention plan's framework is designed, a group meeting with the pastor and all small group leaders will be held. At that meeting, the details of the intervention will be presented first. The small group leaders will then be asked if they want to volunteer their group to participate in the test group. Ideally, there

will be an even split between the number of control groups and the number of test groups. However, no group leader will be forced to be part of the test group. The next step will be to present the intervention plan based on the data collected. It will also provide a vehicle for any last-minute discussion on the intervention plan. These key players must agree and support the intervention plan before moving forward. The group leaders will be presented with the applicable documentation for their groups. All group leaders will receive the following documents or links to documents: small group leader progress reports found in Appendix F and small group leader mid-point assessment found in Appendix G. Group leaders who are part of the test group will also receive the small group covenant found in Appendix K.

Survey/Questionnaire Processes

The third group to collect data from during the pre-intervention phase is the congregation. Data collection on the congregation will be accomplished through an anonymous online hybrid survey and questionnaire format (see Appendix D). Conducting this survey in an anonymous mode is essential. Some questions are very personal, and military members would be reluctant to answer some of them as they are subject to a higher legal standing through the UCMJ. The purpose of this data collection point is to establish a baseline of the congregation's spiritual health and personal spiritual practices. It will contain both survey type questions that will measure the spiritual practices used and challenges that the respondents face as well as open-ended questions that bring to light the "how," "why," and "what" regarding small group participation. The hybrid survey will collect necessary demographic information followed by a question that will, in effect, split the remaining responses into one of two categories, those who participate and those who do not participate in small groups.

Since the intervention is built around small groups in the church, data collection will divide between those who do and do not participate in small groups. This process will establish two comparison baselines. The first is whether there is a significant difference in the spiritual practices of those who do and do not participate in small groups. A significant difference in this baseline may lead to the conclusion that participation in small groups leads to individuals with a higher degree of spiritual maturity than those who do not participate in small groups. The second comparison baseline is establishing pre-intervention statistical data that will later be compared against post-intervention statistical data. This comparison will be meaningful regardless of whether or not there was a pre-intervention significant difference between those involved in small groups and those not involved in small groups. Questions for the two groups, those who do and those who do not participate in small groups, will explore why they have made that choice. This is especially true for those who choose not to participate in small groups. The natural question to ask after examining the data is, “How can MBC make small groups more appealing to those who currently do not participate in them?” Another natural evaluation point for those who do not participate is whether it had anything to do with the small group’s leadership. If that is the case, additional training for small group members must be explored to remedy this shortcoming.

Intervention Processes

The intervention will occur within the small group ministry context. Specifically, it will be applied to the volunteer test groups and take place within their meeting construct. There are a variety of places where small group meetings can occur. From a historical perspective, there are three categories of locations. The first is at the MBC church building. There are various meeting rooms or classrooms where they can occur. The second is at residence, either on or off base. The third is at a coffee shop or over lunch at a restaurant. Although the third location is not optimal, it

has been utilized to accommodate a lunchtime meeting with military members who would otherwise not attend a small group meeting. However, one caveat must be presented regarding meeting at any location outside of an on-base residence. With the fluctuating impact and restrictions associated with COVID–19, both from military authorities and the Korean government, in-person meetings may be disrupted or prohibited periodically during the intervention phase. This possibility has already been discussed within the church leadership team, and the solution is to conduct small group meetings via an online mode. These include Zoom, FaceTime, or Google Hangouts. Although face-to-face meetings are always preferred, the church must be flexible in its ministry approach, especially during these turbulent times.

One of the first items to discuss during the initial meetings is the Covenant Agreement for the test groups (see Appendix K). Each small group leader must explain the rationale behind the agreement and inform the members that those who choose not to sign the agreement cannot be part of that particular group but may move to one of the non-test groups. If the meetings are conducted face-to-face, the group leader will provide a paper copy of each member's agreement to sign. If the meetings are taking place via an online format, then the leaders will need to send a copy of the agreement to each member. The easiest way is via e-mail, allowing the members to print a copy for each group member. Verification of their agreeing to the covenant can be done in one of two ways. The first is to have each member sign, scan, and e-mail back to the leader before the following meeting. The second is to have each member sign it “live” during the first meeting and then either scanning and e-mailing it or mailing a paper copy of the agreement via the free military postal service on-base.

The timeline for completing the steps within the pre-intervention phase will need to be flexible due to the impact of COVID–19. Interviewing the pastor will require approximately one

hour, with several days to analyze the information from the interview. It will be essential to complete the data analysis on the pastor interview before convening the small group leaders' focus group meeting. The rationale behind this is to identify any potential divergent views or positions within these two levels of ministry leadership within MBC. At the same time, it will be important that a significant time gap does not exist between the pastor interview and the focus group meeting. Ideally, it should occur as soon as possible after the data from the pastor's interview has been analyzed.

The focus group meeting will take approximately two hours to conduct. The time required to complete an analysis of the data will be dependent on two factors. The first is the amount of raw information that is collected during the meeting. The second is the degree of convergent or divergent data between these two data points. The higher the degree of divergence, the greater the task in analyzing the data. However, this is not an anticipated problem as there should be a high level of congruity between the two data sets. Although the small group intervention framework will be designed before collecting these two data points, revisions may be required if there are new revelations regarding the military community's perceived challenges. If this does occur, it should only take two to three days to modify the intervention plan's existing framework. If modifications are required, the updated intervention plan will be provided to the pastor and the test groups' leaders. Due to the difficulties caused by COVID-19, the timeframe from the pastor interview to the final intervention plan being distributed is anticipated to be three to four weeks; however, if there are no restrictions to face-to-face meetings, this timeframe is one to two weeks.

After this study is presented to the congregation at MBC, via both a presentation during a Sunday morning service and a follow-up e-mail, the online congregational hybrid survey will be made available to the congregation. The congregation will be the most challenging group to

collect data from as the average response rate for online surveys is less than 30 percent.¹⁶³

Enlisting the pastor's aid in encouraging the congregation in general and the small group leaders to encourage their group members to complete the survey should help the process. The duration that the survey will be made available is flexible and, to a certain degree, will be driven by the amount of the responses. However, the anticipated cut-off will be no longer than four weeks after the online survey is activated. The anticipated timeline for the pre-intervention phase is not expected to exceed four weeks.

Timeline for the Processes

The timeline from pre-intervention events to final assessment will likely need to run for a period of two to three months. There are several reasons for this. The first is that the intervention will start in the August to September timeframe. One of the reasons for this is that the system under which military members move is heavily weighted to a summer transition cycle. To start the intervention earlier than August would be counterproductive. Because of the impacts of COVID-19 on the traditional military move window, predominately over the first part of the summer, moves during the 2020 transition window did not start until the second half of July. Therefore, a start date of late August to early September is optimal. Starting later runs into the issue of many families taking a vacation over Christmas and New Year's, resulting in the absence of at least two to four weeks. Starting the intervention after the holidays runs into some of the same problems. There is spring break for those with children in school. One of the most extensive military exercises of the year occurs in the spring, resulting in most military members being unavailable for two to three weeks. The transition season where military members begin to move

¹⁶³ "What's the Average Survey Response Rate? [2019 Benchmark]," *Survey Anyplace*, August 8, 2019, accessed September 18, 2020, <https://surveyanyplace.com/average-survey-response-rate/>.

starts in May. Additionally, for those military members who are single or unable to bring their family, they are here for only twelve months. When all that is considered, starting in the August to September timeframe and lasting two to three months is the optimum choice.

Consent Processes

Consent to take part in the study will be obtained in a variety of means. For the pastor interview, small group leaders' focus group meeting, and small group member interview, a consent form with a confidentiality statement will be provided to each individual requiring their signature before proceeding with the questions. These signed forms will be kept by the researcher in a secure location in the researcher's apartment. The researcher will know who provided the data that appears in the report, but their names will not appear. Because of the sensitive nature of the issues being addressed and the ramifications of the UCMJ for many of the participants, anonymity must be guaranteed for all participants who complete the online hybrid survey. For those who participate in the online surveys, there will be a statement at the beginning of the survey on the anonymity of their answers and another that they consent to use the information they provide.

Resource Requirements

The intervention will require the following resources; small group covenant agreement, online forms for small group leaders to record individuals' activities in the covenant, the Bible reading plan, and possibly prayer journals for each small group member. The first three will be created in-house and provided as applicable. The prayer journal can be accomplished in two ways. First, each participant can use a journal they already possess or purchase one for the study. For those that prefer electronic journaling, the participants can create their journal on a computer,

tablet, or cellphone to document prayer requests, answered prayers, and notes from their Bible readings.

Pre-Intervention Process Summary

- Pastor interview
 - Signed consent form
 - Private location
 - Recorded
 - Approximately one hour to complete
 - Qualitative analysis
- Small Group Leader Focus Group Meeting
 - Signed consent form
 - Private location
 - Recorded
 - Approximately two hours to complete
 - Distribute any required material to group leaders
 - Qualitative analysis
- Comparison of Pastor and Group Leader Data
 - Identify convergent positions
 - Identify divergent positions
 - Identify previously unseen challenges, if any
- Identify Control and Test Groups
- Congregational Online Survey/Questionnaire
 - The consent form is the first page of the survey
 - Distribute the link to the congregation
 - Depending on the response, end the survey no later than four weeks after it begins
 - Quantitative analysis

Peri-Intervention Phase

During the peri-intervention phase, there will be three data collection points and the application of the intervention. The three collection points are; interviewing one member from each small group, small group leader progress reports, and small group leader mid-point assessment. The mid-point assessment is an optional assessment that may be deleted, pending the progress reports' results and the duration of the intervention.

Small Group Member Interviews

Interviewing one member from each small group may shed light on practices within the small groups that are not captured from the pre-intervention data collection methods (see Appendix E). The interview will be conducted in a location away from the hearing of other individuals. Prior to starting the interview, the interviewees will need to read and sign a consent form. The interview questions closely mirror those asked during both the pastor interview and the small group leaders' focus group meeting. The purpose of this is to see if there are convergent or divergent views on the various areas being measured in the interviews. Divergent views could indicate several things. It could indicate that the biblical reasons for belonging to a small group were not adequately explained by MBC leadership to the group members. It could be an indication of the various levels of spiritual maturity of the members of the group. It could also indicate that MBC leadership and small group members do not emphasize a biblical foundation for their answers. Still, they place a differing emphasis on what is essential within the small group ministry context. If the interviews' results indicate a lack of biblical understanding of small groups, this can be addressed through the MBC leadership educating the congregation. Suppose the results indicate a difference in what is essential within the small group ministry; it should lead to a discussion on how leaders can better meet the congregation's needs through small groups without compromising the small group ministry's biblical foundation. A differing spiritual maturity within the small groups is a function of demographics and is to be expected.

Small Group Leader Progress Reports

Small group leader progress reports will be collected once every two to three weeks (see Appendix F). The progress reports comprise six questions that directly pertain to the activities within the intervention applied to the test groups. The progress reports will be administered via an

online survey that identifies the group via a pseudonym and will separate the control and test groups' data. The purpose of using pseudonyms to identify groups is to allow tracking of individual group progress during the intervention period. The questions will have a six-point rating scale for each of the measurable areas. The purpose of this data collection is to track progress within the two subsets, the control, and test groups, as the intervention proceeds.

The mid-point assessment is an optional data collection point (see Appendix G). The data collected from the mid-point assessment will be compared against the progress reports. Suppose there is no noticeable difference in the mid-point assessment data and the data collected from the progress reports immediately before and after it. In that case, the mid-point assessment will not be included in chapter four of this research project. The reason for this is that the questions for the mid-point survey mirror the data that will be collected during the progress reports.

Small Group Ministry Processes

The intervention that occurs during this phase will take place within the small group ministry context of MBC. More specifically, it will occur within the small group meetings. Within the small group setting, there will be two subsets of groups. Those two subsets are control and test groups. The control group leaders will be allowed to operate their groups as they see fit, within the small group ministry construct outlined by MBC leadership. This process could lead to highly different methodologies and results. The current small groups apply various approaches. The various approaches include a Bible study led by an experienced leader who conducts an exegetical study. These groups utilize video studies from various sources such as RightNowMedia and groups that utilize a structured Bible study that includes workbooks and leader guides. These groups will be required to participate in each data collection point. However, no other requirements will be levied against these groups.

The small groups that are part of the test group will need to follow a specified set of activities. First, they will need to participate in each data collection point in the same manner as the control groups. However, that is where the similarities will end. The groups that comprise the test groups will follow a structured approach utilizing the same areas of focus. The test groups will follow the tenets found in the Great Commission. The focus will be on discipleship based upon two of the three principles contained in Matthew 28:19–20. Those two principles are teaching and going. Baptizing will not be stressed due to the assumption that the group members are already followers of Christ. However, if a group member is not a believer, baptism will also be covered. The practices of the small group will also follow most of what is contained within Acts 2:42. The principal focus is on teaching God’s Word, fellowship, which includes accountability to one another, and prayer.

The area of teaching God’s Word will be accomplished through a two-fold methodology. The first is that the group leader will present a weekly Bible study lesson on either a topic they will cover for the duration of the intervention or present a verse-by-verse study of a Biblical book or a pericope. An example of a pericope that would lend itself to a lengthy and detailed study is the Sermon on the Mount. Regardless of the book or pericope chosen, the study needs to be an exegetical study of the passage, discussing the timeless principle or principles applicable in today’s society. The weekly lesson's desired duration is approximately 15 minutes, followed by a discussion period on the passage. The second phase of the Bible study methodology will follow the formal lesson portion of the meeting.

The second part of the test group meeting is when each member shares one life application from their weekly Bible reading. There are several reasons for doing this. First, it is to encourage each member to be immersed in reading God’s Word. The easiest way to do this is by following a

Bible reading plan. If members are already following a Bible reading plan, they will be encouraged to continue to follow it. If they currently do not follow a Bible reading plan, they will be encouraged to start one. One example of a yearly Bible reading plan is found at wearechurch.com.¹⁶⁴ However, there are many suitable Bible reading plans available, and leaders will not be tied to a specific one. What is important is that members are engaged in Bible reading on a regular basis. The second reason is through sharing in a group setting other members may discover an additional application they had not previously considered. The third reason is to hone each member's ability to correctly understand what God's Word is saying and then apply it to their lives. There may be a wide range of abilities in correctly discerning and applying Scripture within each group. The group leader's role and other group members is to encourage and teach those struggling to develop this ability. The end goal is for all members to read God's Word in a spirit of excited expectancy to discover new applications and draw closer to God.

The second principal component, fellowship, will be accomplished as the group meets, shares, and lives life together. Depending on the group meeting's times and locations, this could include a potluck meal or snacks. The fellowship time could be accomplished at either the start of the meeting or at the conclusion. Each group can structure this to best fit their needs. The fellowship's purpose is to share their joys, victories, struggles, or any other facet of their lives since the previous meeting. Accountability will also be part of the fellowship process, which can be accomplished in two ways. The first is general accountability in the group, which is relevant as struggles and challenges are shared during the group meetings. However, a second and more critical aspect of accountability will be accomplished between two or three individuals. They share their struggles, pray for each other, and check how they are doing in those areas. If group

¹⁶⁴ "2021 Bible Reading," accessed January 11, 2021, <https://www.wearechurchreading.com/>.

members already have an accountability partner, they will be encouraged to continue those relationships. Those members who do not have an accountability partner will be encouraged to find one to start this relationship. Ideally, their partner would be within the small group, but someone outside the group is also satisfactory. Because of the potentially sensitive nature of the conversations, what is essential is that their partner is someone they trust and are comfortable sharing their struggles with. The group leaders should periodically ask if their members have a partner and meet with them.

The third component of the group is prayer, and there will be three main components to the prayer ministry within each group. The first is a dedicated time of prayer during each meeting. Although each leader will have the flexibility to structure the sequence of their meetings to meet their members' needs best, the most logical place for prayer is after the Bible study and application sharing period. It is recommended that the group leader asks for a prayer coordinator for the group. This individual's responsibilities are to document the prayer requests, distribute a list of the prayer requests to the group as soon as possible after the meeting, and document answered prayers. Groups will be encouraged to celebrate answered prayers periodically during the lifespan of the group. The prayer list can be distributed in various ways; in a Word document via e-mail, a list sent via a chat application, or a dedicated Facebook group. Group members will be encouraged to pray over the prayer list daily. If either a Facebook group is created or a group is created in an application on a smartphone, immediate prayer requests can be communicated to other members at any time. This ability is beneficial for emergencies.

Another focus area utilized by groups is serving together at a community volunteer event or organizing an outreach event. The rationale behind this focus is to instill and grow a spirit of service for the group members. However, with the current impact of COVID-19 in the ROK and

the subsequent restrictions levied by the ROK government, that may not be possible. If those restrictions prohibit the opportunity to serve the local community, groups will be encouraged to volunteer in various aspects at MBC.

Pre-Intervention Process Summary

- Interview Small Group Members
 - The goal is one per group
 - Signed consent form
 - Recorded
 - Private location
 - Approximately one hour to complete
 - Qualitative analysis
- Small Group Leader Progress Reports
 - Once every two weeks
 - Assign pseudonyms to group leaders
 - Distribute survey link to group leaders
 - Quantitative analysis
 - Look for trends
- Small Group Mid-Point Assessments
 - Link distributed at the mid-point of the intervention
 - Quantitative analysis
 - Determine if data will be included in results

Post-Intervention Phase

The post-intervention phase will consist of various data collection points. The pastor and select members of each small group will be interviewed. The small group leaders will participate in another focus group meeting, and these data collections will be recorded and stored on a password-locked computer. An anonymous online hybrid survey and questionnaire will be administered to the congregation.

Interview Processes

The first interview will be conducted with the pastor (see Appendix H). Although subjective, the purpose is to ascertain whether the pastor observed any discernible change in the congregation over the intervention period. The interview will be conducted in a private location, most likely the pastor's office, and recorded. Prior to conducting the interview, the interviewees will be provided with a copy of the consent form, and their signature will be required before the interview can proceed. The interview questions will be similar to those asked during the pre-intervention phase. However, the focus will be on how the various areas have changed or not changed during the intervention process.

The post-intervention focus group meeting will occur in a private location where others are not present or cannot hear the conversation. The most likely locations are the pastor's office or a larger meeting room at the church. The meeting will be classified as confidential, and the participants will be identified as leader A, leader B, and so on. The focus group meeting will be recorded for later analysis. Before conducting the meeting, the participants will be provided with a copy of the consent form, and their signature will be required before the meeting can proceed. However, since this is the second focus group meeting, it is not anticipated that anyone would decline to sign the consent form at this point. This meeting aims to collect data on their small

groups to compare against the data collected during the pre-intervention phase (see Appendix I). This comparison will compare the two data sets to determine how members in their groups changed throughout the intervention from the leaders' perspective.

One member of each small group, with a priority on those who participated in the pre-intervention interviews, will be asked to participate in an interview (see Appendix J). The questions in this interview will closely mirror the questions asked during the peri-intervention phase. The interview will be conducted in a private location. Prior to conducting the interview, the interviewees will be provided with a copy of the consent form, and their signature will be required before the interview can proceed. The purpose of this data collection point is to determine, from the group member's point of view, whether there was any change in their spiritual walk.

Survey/Questionnaire Processes

The final group to collect data during the post-intervention phase is the congregation. Data will be collected in the same manner as in the pre-intervention phase, through an anonymous online hybrid survey and questionnaire format. Although it will be impossible to know if the same members participated in both the pre-and post-intervention data collection, those who participated in the first survey will be encouraged to participate in the second while at the same time not discouraging new participants. This critical data point will enable pre-and post-intervention data comparison on the congregation at-large.

Post-Intervention Process Summary

- Pastor interview
 - Signed consent form
 - Private location

- Recorded
- Approximately one hour to complete
- Qualitative analysis
- Small Group Leader Focus Group Meeting
 - Signed consent form
 - Private location
 - Recorded
 - Approximately two hours to complete
 - Qualitative analysis
- Interview Small Group Members
 - The goal is one per group
 - Signed consent form
 - Recorded
 - Private location
 - Approximately one hour to complete
 - Qualitative analysis
- Congregational Online Survey/Questionnaire
 - A consent form is the first page of the survey
 - Distribute the link to the congregation
 - Depending on the response, end the survey no later than four weeks after it begins
 - Quantitative analysis

Analysis and Evaluation of Data

The analysis and evaluation of data will occur in phases, utilizing a variety of tools. Data collected through recorded interviews or focus group meetings will be reviewed. The answers and comments of the participants will be annotated under each question on the applicable questionnaire forms. This process of annotation will occur as soon as it is possible after each event. Thus, the pre-intervention pastor interview and small group leaders' focus group meeting will be conducted before the intervention and the completed analysis before the intervention begins or within the first couple of weeks. The first set of interviews on small group members will occur within the first couple of weeks of the intervention, and the analysis completed as soon as possible. The post-intervention pastor interview, small group leaders' focus group meeting, and small group members' interviews will occur as soon as possible at the end of the intervention period.

Qualitative Data Analysis

When analyzing qualitative data, the researcher will look for the main concepts or themes in their responses. Once common themes or concepts are identified, a comparison will be made between the three interview data sets. It will be essential to identify themes that are found across all three sets. These themes would indicate common ground and areas to focus on if that does not already occur. For themes found only in one of the interviewee categories, further investigation may be warranted to determine if that theme should become a focus in the future or a misunderstanding exists within the appropriate data sub-set responses. Additionally, data from the pre- or early peri-intervention sets will be compared against the data collected at the end of the intervention to determine if changes occurred during the intervention period. Both sets of data will be presented in a tabular format for easy comparison.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected from the anonymous online surveys, both pre-and post-intervention, from the small group leader progress reports, and the small group leader mid-point evaluation will be entered into an Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet's set-up will list the questions vertically in the far left-hand column, and individual responses will be listed vertically in columns to the right of the questions. The congregational survey results will be separated between those who do and those who do not participate in small groups by entering the data into separate tabs on an Excel spreadsheet.

In this configuration, the congregational survey results will appear in four separate tabs in the Excel spreadsheet: pre-intervention not participating in small groups, pre-intervention participating in small groups, post-intervention not participating in small groups, and post-intervention participating in small groups. The pre-intervention analysis will be a one-tailed T-test on two independent means or a Wilcoxon signed-rank test on the groups who do not participate in small groups to determine significant differences in areas subjected to quantitative analysis. These findings will be presented in paired column graphs depicting each measured area's average score for those in and those not in a small group. The same procedure will be applied to the data collected at the post-intervention point. First, a one-tailed T-test on two independent means or a Wilcoxon signed-rank test will be conducted on those in and those not in a small group. The results of this comparison will reveal whether there was a significant improvement over time between these two groups. Significant differences in areas would indicate that participating in one of the two groups improves the participant's spiritual health over time. The anticipated outcome is that those who participate in small groups will see a more considerable increase in their spiritual health over time compared to those who do not participate in small groups.

However, an additional T-test on two dependent means or a Wilcoxon signed-rank test will be conducted on those who do participate in small groups. The data for this comparison will be separated between the control and test groups. The purpose of this comparison is to determine if there is a significant difference in the scores in the quantitative areas between the control and test groups. However, the comparison between pre- and post-intervention data between those who do and those who do not participate in small groups is vital in demonstrating the strength of small group participation. One of the critical points in evaluating the intervention hinges upon this second comparison. A positive result in evaluating the intervention will require the test group scores to be significantly higher than those of the control group.

In addition, the quantitative data collected on the congregation lends itself to numerous other possibilities of comparing data between specific questions or categories. One example is comparing data on those who actively use an accountability partner against those who do not and then comparing the corresponding answers regarding the challenges of gambling, alcohol, and sexual sins. The various data point questions present a myriad of comparative possibilities that may shed light on possible synergies, both positive and negative, between the different data points. Although this presents exciting possibilities, it will also be necessary not to get bogged down in this process. Instead, a quick survey of the data may reveal several connections that will warrant a more in-depth investigation.

The second key point in evaluating the intervention will hinge upon the progress reports from the group leaders. As previously discussed, the data will be entered into the Excel spreadsheet, and the quantitative data points will be evaluated. The first comparisons will be between subsequent data points, i.e., the second will be compared against the first, the third will be compared against the second, and so forth. The purpose of this comparison is to determine if

there are any improvements or regression spikes in certain phases of the intervention. If discernible spikes are noted, the data will be presented in paired column graphs that depict the average score for each measured area for those in the control and test groups. However, the main comparison point will be between the first and last progress reports. Each of the six quantitative areas in the progress reports will be evaluated for a significant difference throughout the intervention using a T-test on two dependent means or a Wilcoxon signed-rank test. This data will be presented in paired column graphs for each measured area. Data about the small group leaders' mid-point evaluation will only be presented in the results if one or more area shows a significant difference.

Analysis of Data Summary

- Qualitative Analysis
 - Look for themes or concepts in each set of interview answers
 - Look for common themes or concepts across the three sets of interviews
 - Look for outlier answers
 - Compare data from pre-and post-intervention
 - Note areas that did not change
 - Note areas that did change
- Quantitative Analysis
 - All data entered into Excel spreadsheet
 - Pre- and post-intervention separate into two subsets
 - Those who do not participate in small groups
 - Those who do participate in small groups
 - Perform one-tailed T-test on two independent means on the data in the spreadsheet

- Highlight results of a significant difference, $p < .05$
- For post-intervention
 - Highlight the results of a significant difference
 - Compare differences from pre- to post-intervention
 - Note any areas of change, either positive or negative

Implementation of the Intervention Design

The previous section identified, in general terms, the way data will be collected. The data collection methods are recorded interviews and focus group meetings where identities are confidential through pseudonyms, anonymous online small group leader reports, and anonymous online congregational hybrid surveys/questionnaires. Each of these methods will now be addressed in detail and split between qualitative and quantitative analysis methods.

Qualitative Data Processes

The first qualitative data collection point is the interview with the pastor. The interview will occur in a private location and will be recorded. A signed consent form will be required before the interview can proceed. After the interview is concluded, the recording will be reviewed, and the responses to the questions are transcribed into the Word document that contains the questions. Since the pastor interview lends itself to qualitative analysis, a review of keywords or concepts will be conducted on the answers provided. Those keywords and concepts will be entered into a spreadsheet under the corresponding questions.

The second qualitative data collection point is the small group leaders' focus group meeting. This meeting will be conducted in one of two ways. The preferred method will be in a meeting room at the church with all members present. However, with the various restrictions being placed on the ROK government's gatherings due to COVID-19, this may not be possible. If

the focus group meeting cannot be held in person, it will be conducted via an online meeting platform and audio recorded. Regardless of the format, all participants will need to read and sign the consent form before the meeting commencing. Each participant will be identified with a pseudonym. After the meeting, the recording will be reviewed, and the responses to the questions transcribed into the Word document containing the questions. A qualitative analysis will be conducted on the responses. Keywords or concepts will be entered into an adjacent column in the spreadsheet used to record the pastor's interview.

The third qualitative data collection will be through small group member interviews. The location for these interviews may be quite varied. Since they are one-on-one, they could be conducted at the church as COVID-19 governmental restrictions would not be a factor. They could also be conducted at a location of choice for the interviewee as long as privacy is assured. The third option would be an online meeting format. Whichever method is chosen, each interviewee will need to read and sign the consent form before the interview starting. Pseudonyms will be used for each interviewee. After each interview is complete, the recording will be reviewed, and responses entered into the Word document containing the questions. Qualitative analysis will then be conducted to determine keywords or concepts for each of the response areas. These keywords and concepts will then be entered into the spreadsheet previously identified, with each interviewee's keywords and concepts appearing in a separate column.

The fourth qualitative data area is the open-ended questions included as part of the anonymous online congregational survey. The responses will be analyzed, and keywords or concepts from each respondent will be noted. These will then be entered into columns in the qualitative spreadsheet, with the keywords and concepts aligned with the questions that were

asked during the interviews. It is anticipated that this evaluation area may be the most time-consuming, depending on the number of received responses.

Once the four sets of qualitative data analysis are complete, an overall review of keywords and concepts will occur. The overall analysis will be used to identify three areas. The first area is common responses to each question, classified as themes. The themes, depending on which question they refer to, will help identify positive areas and those requiring attention within the ministry context of MBC. The positive themes would identify those areas that MBC continues to stress to meet the congregation's needs, while themes that require attention to identify areas requiring improvement to meet the needs of the congregation. The second area is slippages in the answers between the three groups. Areas of slippage will need to be further examined to determine why they exist. The slippage could result from differing perspectives or priorities between the groups, indicating a deficiency in communication between the various groups. Another aspect of the analysis of themes and slippage is the idea of sensitizing concepts. Do the themes exist because leadership has effectively communicated to the followers, and do slippages exist because of a deficiency in the communication from leadership to followership? The final area to assess is whether there are any silence areas, areas where the participants are unaware of certain areas or practices among the groups.

The steps outlined above on the collection and analysis of qualitative data will also be applied at the end of the intervention. However, an emphasis will be placed on any change noted during the intervention period. As part of the analysis, it will be essential to note areas of change in the themes, slippages, and silence areas during the intervention.

Another data collection method is for the researcher to attend at least one meeting for each small group. However, this may not be feasible as three groups meet on the same day and

simultaneously. If this clumping of groups proves to be a hindrance to attending all of them, a decision will need to be made to attend only one, or possibly two, instead of all of them. It would be optimal to attend two meetings, one towards the beginning of the intervention and one towards the end. Attending two meetings would enable a comparison of the change within the group over the intervention. Due the ROK government restrictions that have fluctuated because of COVID–19, the attendance would be in-person or virtually via a video application if in-person gatherings are prohibited. While attending the meeting, the researcher will note how the leader conducts the meeting and the interaction among group members. Although the observational notes are subjective, they may add support to the quantitative data collected on the groups.

Quantitative Data Processes

The first and significant quantitative data collection point is the pre-intervention anonymous online hybrid survey questionnaire for the congregation. In addition to the T-tests or Wilcoxon tests described in the previous section, the data collected here will also be subjected to a more straightforward analysis form. The data will be split between those who do and do not participate in small groups. After that is accomplished, a computation of the average scores for each quantitative question in each group will occur. A simple comparison between the two groups for each area data can quickly be undertaken once that is complete. The purpose of this simple comparison is to show the differences between those who participate in small groups and those who do not. Although these results may not indicate a significant scientific difference from one group to another, the results could be presented to the congregation to support small groups' participation. The assumption is that those who participate in small groups will score higher in spiritual disciplines and lower in areas of sinful behavior.

The second area of quantitative data is the periodic small group leader progress reports. This data will be entered into a separate tab on the spreadsheet for analysis. Simultaneously, each small group leader will be identified with a pseudonym, used as an identifier on the progress reports. Additionally, the six areas being evaluated will be listed in the left-hand column twice, with several blank spaces between the two identical sets of questions. The responses will be entered twice to the right of the related questions. The upper row will list the answers from each reporting period. For example, all the answers for the first reporting period will be entered in consecutive columns with leader one in the column to the right of the questions, leader two to the right of leader one's column, and so forth. Two blank columns will be left after each reporting period, with the first blank column used to calculate an average score for each area's reporting period. The second blank column is a separator. The purpose of these point-in-time scores is to track the groups' progress as a whole across the six areas during the intervention. This evaluation will identify the areas that experienced the most significant benefit during the intervention and those that may have only achieved a minimal benefit. The small group leader will separate their second set of responses. For example, all small group leader's responses will be grouped in consecutive columns with two blank columns. The first blank column will calculate an average score through each area's intervention period for each leader. The second blank column will be a separator. The purpose of these scores is to determine if certain groups performed better than others and, if so, identify why that occurred. These scores will be used to see if there were noticeable differences between groups. If noticeable differences occur, further evaluation can be conducted to determine if it was due to the group leader or possibly the group members' spiritual maturity.

The intervention outlined in this chapter covers five focus areas that will be implemented within the test groups. The focus areas are Bible reading and comprehension, prayer and prayer journaling, identifying and removing idols, having an accountability partner, and serving others. A baseline snapshot of the congregation will be established through interviewing the pastor, holding a small group leader focus group meeting, interviewing small group members, and an online congregational survey. Periodic reports will occur during the intervention to establish trends and mark progress within the small groups. At the conclusion of the intervention, interviews will once again be conducted with the pastor, small group leaders, small group members, and an online congregational survey. The interview data will be subjected to qualitative analysis, while the surveys and progress reports will be subjected to quantitative analysis.

In the next chapter the results will be broken down into several sections. First, an analysis of the pre-intervention data will be presented. This will be presented in two sub-sets, qualitative and quantitative. This will be followed by an analysis of the peri-intervention data. It is anticipated that this will be the shortest section of the chapter as it contains fewer data points and collection methods. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of the post-intervention data.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The results in this chapter follows the same sequence as the intervention process outlined in chapter three, with the first section indicating the results from the pre-intervention phase of the study. The qualitative results will include the pastor interview, the small group leader focus group meeting, and the portion of the congregational questionnaire that contained open-ended questions. The quantitative results will include the survey portion of the congregational assessment. The peri-intervention results will contain the initial small group member interviews and the small group leader progress reports. The post-intervention results will mirror the pre-intervention sequence and include the small group member interviews after the intervention phase.

Pre-Intervention Results

Interview Results

The first data collection point was a pre-intervention survey with the pastor utilizing the questions in Appendix B and a small group leader focus group meeting using the questions in Appendix C. The difference between the two sets of questions is that the pastor was asked how they applied to the congregation, while the small group leaders were asked to consider their answers as they applied to their small group.

Table 1. Summary of Pastor Interview and Small Group Leaders Meeting

Question	Pastor Interview	Small Group Leaders
What characteristics, activities, or spiritual disciplines do you or would you use to determine the congregation's spiritual	Base it upon Scripture and the “one another passages” as well as the Great Commission. Studying and applying Scripture, prayer,	Leader C: Committed to the meeting, meeting the needs of those within the group. Leader B: communal and private prayer, Bible study,

<p>health or small group, and why did you choose them?</p>	<p>engaging in community, evangelism, and serving. These reflect Jesus' expectations in the New Testament.</p>	<p>willingness to serve the group and church, life of fellowship, and meeting others' needs.</p>
<p>Based on your answer to question #1, what is your assessment of the congregation's spiritual health or small group and factors that contribute to your answer?</p>	<p>On a scale of 1–10 a 5–6. COVID–19 has impacted the church, as well as being a transient community. Some do not want to deal with the inconveniences of attending service during COVID–19 due to the requirement of wearing a mask and having a temperature check. These are an indicator of what people value. There is also a consumeristic mindset prevalent within the community.</p>	<p>Leader A: Difficult to assess due to the transient nature of the group, many group members are co-workers, and many conversations are not spiritually centered.</p>
<p>In what area(s) is the congregation or small group most vital?</p>	<p>The small core of highly committed members.</p>	<p>Leader D: Time of fellowship and sharing highs and lows, serving each other, praying together, Bible study. Leader B: Communal aspect. Leader C: Increased involvement of members in volunteer and service aspects of the church.</p>
<p>In what area(s) does the congregation or small group need improvement?</p>	<p>Evangelism, serving, community engagement.</p>	<p>Leader B: Devotion to spiritual discipline outside the group and accountability. Leader D: Some members lack commitment.</p>

		Leader B: Understanding the reason churches use small groups.
With what area of the congregation or small group are you most satisfied?	Members are engaged in Scripture and small groups.	None noted.
What area would you change if you could instantly change it, and why would you change that area?	Evangelism and missional mindset of the congregation. A sense of urgency is needed.	Leader D: Consistency of attendance due to military commitments. Leader B: Consistency in prayer and Bible reading outside the group may be an indicator of spiritual maturity.
From your perspective, rank order the following challenges from least to most significant: gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, sexual sin?	Gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, sexual sin. Alcohol abuse may be more widespread than admitted due to the social acceptance of alcohol use in the military community.	Leader C and D: gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, sexual sin. Leader B: Depends on the group. Sometimes alcohol is first, but it usually is the same as what Leaders C and D stated.
From your perspective, rank order the following practices of small group membership in the process of discipleship and spiritual growth from most important to least important: volunteer outreach activities, accountability partner, understanding and identifying personal idols, daily Bible reading, a prayer journal?	Identifying idols as they direct attention away from God and lead to sin, accountability, Bible reading, prayer, and volunteer outreach activities.	All leaders agreed. Bible reading, prayer, accountability, volunteer outreach activities, and idols.

The data contained in table 1 contains both themes and slippage. A common theme was the challenge presented by the predominately military composition of the congregation. This challenge manifested itself in several ways: the transient nature requiring moves every one or two

years, the reluctance to commit to church activities when they know they will be leaving, and the frequent readiness exercises occurring every two or three months, which require longer work hours and reduce participation during the exercises. Although all are legitimate challenges, they are also known factors, and ministry endeavors should find ways to work around them.

One additional challenge, not isolated to the ROK, is the impact that COVID-19 has made on church life. This pandemic is exacerbated in the ROK because of the duality of rules. With MBC being located in the local community, they must follow the ROK government's guidance, while those connected to the military must also follow the guidance from those authorities. At times, the two groups' guidance has not been consistent, confusing what activities are or are not permitted.

The second theme is the perception of gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, and sexual sin within the congregation. All responses ranked sexual sin, alcohol abuse, and gambling addiction from the greatest to least impact. However, leader B did state that alcohol can occasionally be a more significant factor than sexual sin from their experience. Thus, it would be appropriate to focus the most significant attention on combating sexual sin because of this common theme.

The third theme is how the groups assess the spiritual health of their respective flocks. Although explained differently, both groups are saying the same things. The pastor based their assessment on Scripture, the "one another" passages, and the Great Commission, while the leaders expressed the same beliefs without referencing Scripture. It was a commitment to the group for the leaders and meeting "one another's" needs, serving "one another," Bible study, and prayer. The pastor succinctly summed it up by stating that the assessment should be based upon Jesus' expectations of His followers found in the New Testament. It is encouraging that there is a

strong and common biblical understanding of assessing the church's spiritual health and individual small groups.

Slippage was noted between the leaders and the pastor in four areas and amongst the group leaders in their answers to individual questions. The first area is in assessing the strength of the congregation and small groups. From the pastor's perspective, a strength is the small core of highly committed individuals. In contrast, the group leaders' strengths vary with overlapping themes: serving and communal fellowship, and one leader noted prayer and Bible study. An observation note is that the strengths identified by the group leaders are stable when compared against the strength identified by the pastor. A small core of highly committed members could be negatively impacted by the military rotation cycle resulting in a reduction in the core the pastor identified.

The next two slippage areas can be combined as there is a synergistic relationship between them, reflecting a difference in understanding the surface issue and the underlying cause. These are where the congregation and small groups need to improve, and the areas that the pastor and small group leaders would instantly change if they could. The pastor believes the congregation's missional mindset is a weakness characterized by a lack of evangelism, community engagement, and serving. The answers provided by group leaders indicated that spiritual maturity is an issue as they felt members were not engaging in Bible reading and prayer outside of the group setting. One leader added that members lacked an understanding of why churches utilize small groups. Although there may be a correlation between the pastor's answers and the group leaders' answers, this is not the case from the researcher's observations. Although evangelism is encouraged from the pulpit, there is a lack of a systematic training program to equip people to evangelize. The group leader's comments regarding spiritual maturity reflect the pastor's answer to a previous

question that there is a small core of individuals committed to ministry and the rest have a consumer mindset. An integrated discipleship process with oversight should increase spiritual maturity and decrease the consumer mindset. It would appear that addressing the areas that the leaders identified as needing improvement would improve evangelism.

The final area of slippage centers on how the pastor and the group leaders ranked a list of six practices in the small group setting to facilitate discipleship and spiritual growth. The dichotomy between the two groups on identifying and overcoming personal idols, with the pastor listing it as most important and the leaders unanimously listing it as the least important, is fascinating. The pastor’s selection of idols as the most important is because an idol is anything that will divert a follower’s attention away from God, leading to sin. Once they are identified and overcome, other practices would naturally be successful as the distractions are removed. The group leaders did not explain why they listed idols as the least important. This dichotomy should be further explored in a setting with the pastor and group leaders engaged in a discussion. The two groups may not agree with each other but having such a large difference in importance is a matter that needs to be resolved.

Contained within the anonymous online survey/questionnaire administered to the congregation were several open-ended questions that differed depending on whether they participated in a small group. This data will be presented in two sections. The first is those who do not participate in small groups and the second is those who do participate in small groups.

Table 2. Summary of Those Who Do Not Participate in Small Groups

Why do you not participate in small groups?	Recently moved, do not have time, do not know much about them.
Have you participated before?	Only one respondent had participated before.
If you participated before, why did you stop?	I moved and have not found a new group yet.

What would encourage you to participate in the future?	Suppose if I understood the benefits and reason to join one, if I had more time and friends in the group.
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One reason for not participating is symptomatic of the military community here, the community's inherently transient nature. It can be inferred from their answer that if the restrictions put in place because of COVID-19 did not exist, they would have joined a group. It appears from the answers of the others who do not participate that a proper understanding of the benefits and friends already involved in a group would facilitate their joining.

Table 3. Summary of Those Who Do Participate in Small Groups

Why do you participate in small groups?	Fellowship, spiritual growth, encourage one another, accountability, pray together, learn to serve together.
Why are small groups important?	Learn from each other, create a sense of family among believers, accountability, teach our children the importance of fellowship.
How long have you participated in small groups?	Responses ranged from 2 to 23 years, with the majority having attended for at least seven years.
How has small group participation affected your spiritual walk?	Helps in learning, sharing burdens, and strengthening each other; some groups did not grow spiritually.
What is the single most beneficial aspect of small group participation?	Fellowship, support each other, prayer.

A broad range exists in the amount of time the respondents have participated in small groups, with the vast majority having participated for seven years or more. The duration of participation implies that those who participate have a positive experience and want to continue participating. A common theme is the sense of fellowship, family, and prayer support experienced by the participants lining up with the concept of fellowship that is seen in Acts 2:42. Slippage was noted in two areas: one response noted the importance of showing their children small group

participation was an integral part of the biblical fellowship, and not all small group participation resulted in an improved spiritual walk. From a summary of responses, fellowship, a sense of belonging to a spiritual family, and praying for one another are the small group characteristics most valued by small group members at MBC. The complete absence of any reference to Bible study in the small group setting should be viewed with concern.

Survey Results

The anonymous congregational survey, found in Appendix D, was conducted online. The data comparison was conducted against two main points. One point was between those who participate and those who do not participate in small groups. This point was chosen to determine if there are differences, and what they are, between these two groups. This information can then demonstrate how participating in a small group enhances an individual's spiritual walk. A second point was data between men and women. This point was chosen to determine if differences exist in how the two groups are affected by addictive behavior and determine strengths and weaknesses in each group's spiritual disciplines. For the question about addiction struggles, the scoring is based upon a four-point rating scale: 0 for no struggle, 1 for a minor struggle, 2 for a moderate struggle, and 3 for a significant struggle. For the questions about spiritual disciplines, the scoring is based upon a six-point rating scale: 0 for not applicable, 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neither agree nor disagree, 4 for agree, and 5 for strongly agree.

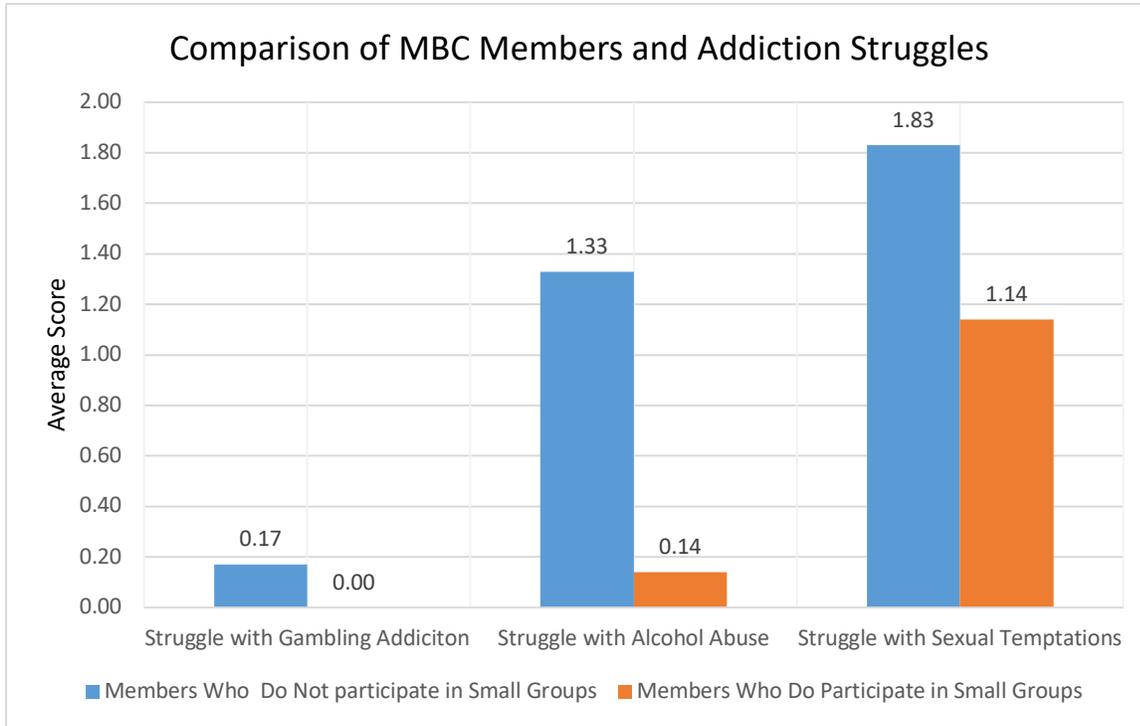


Figure 1. Comparison of MBC Members and Addiction Struggles

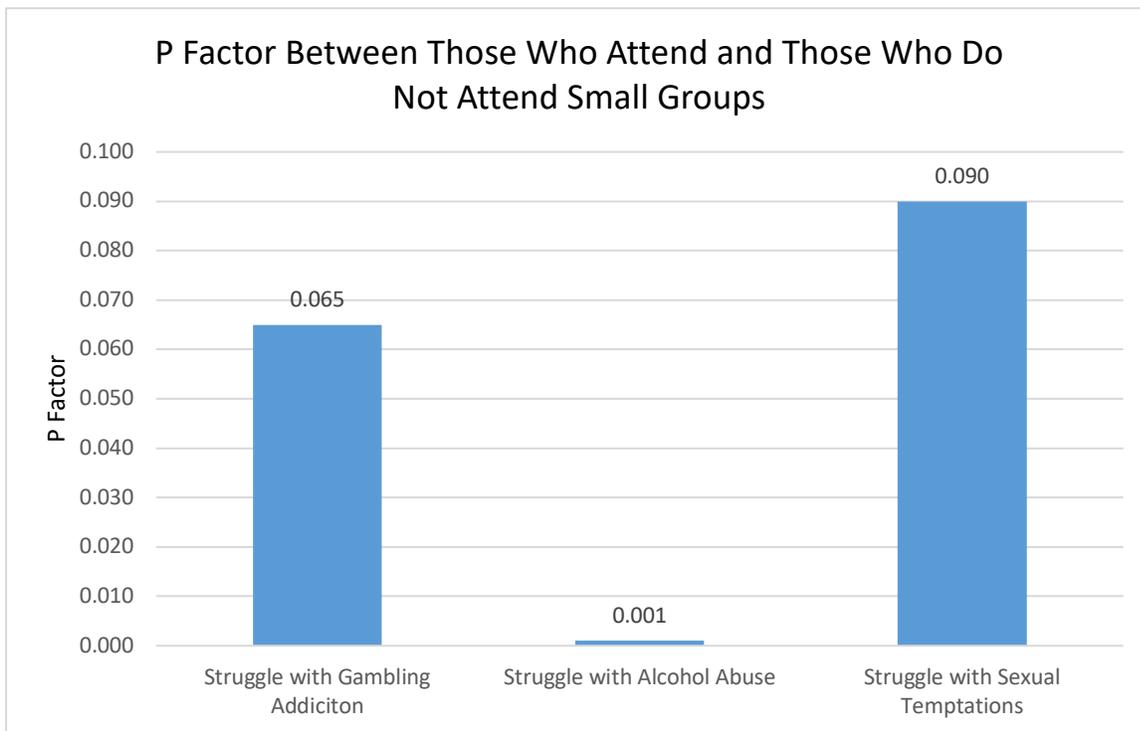


Figure 2. P-Factor Between Those Who Attend and Those Who Do Not Attend Small Groups

The data collected on the congregation concerning addiction struggles shows that those who participate in small groups are less likely to struggle with gambling, alcohol, or sexual sin based upon average scores. However, they do have a minor struggle with sexual sin. On the other hand, those who do not participate in small groups have at least a minor struggle with alcohol and are close to having an overall moderate struggle with sexual sins. When p-factor scores are considered, the only significant difference between the two groups occurs in the area of alcohol abuse. Individuals who participate in small groups have a significantly lower chance of struggling with alcohol abuse than those who do not participate in small groups. The surprise was in sexual sin. There was no significant difference between those who do and do not participate in small groups. This will be further explored in the spiritual disciplines section.

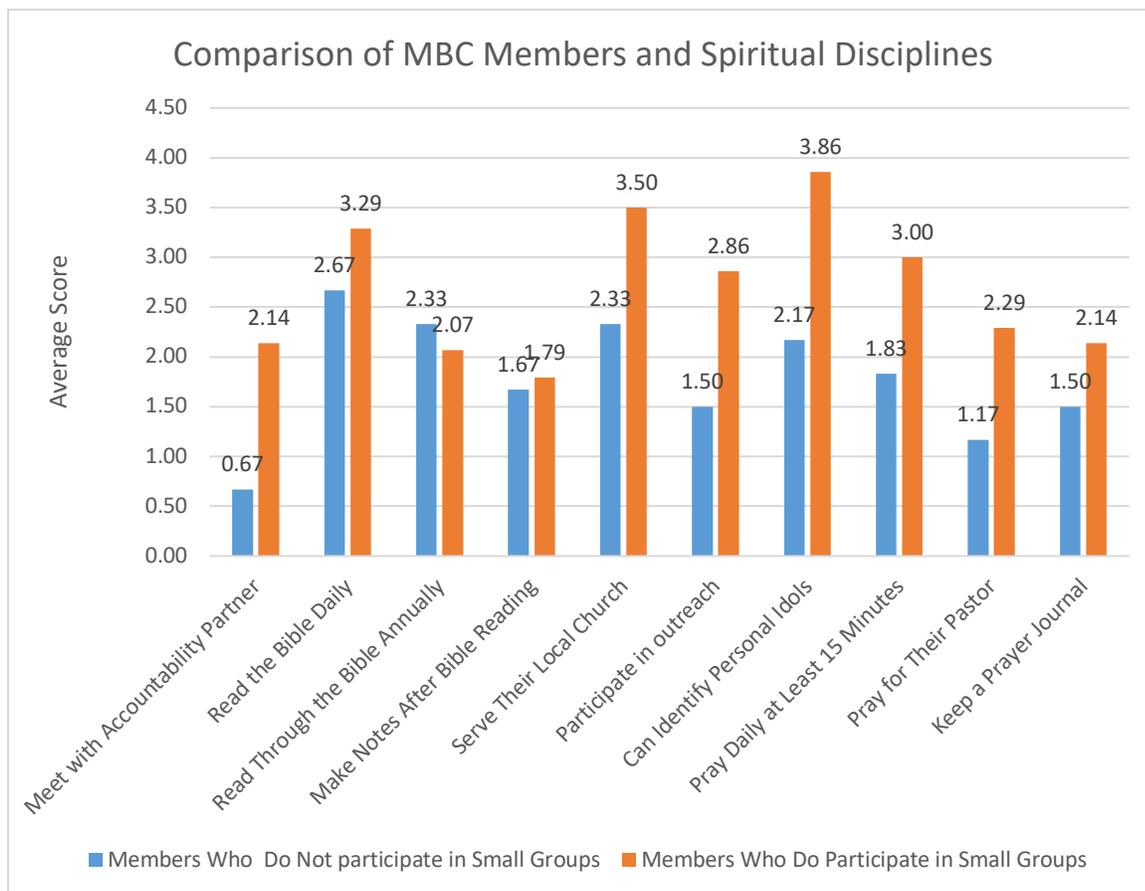


Figure 3. Comparison of MBC Members on Spiritual Disciplines

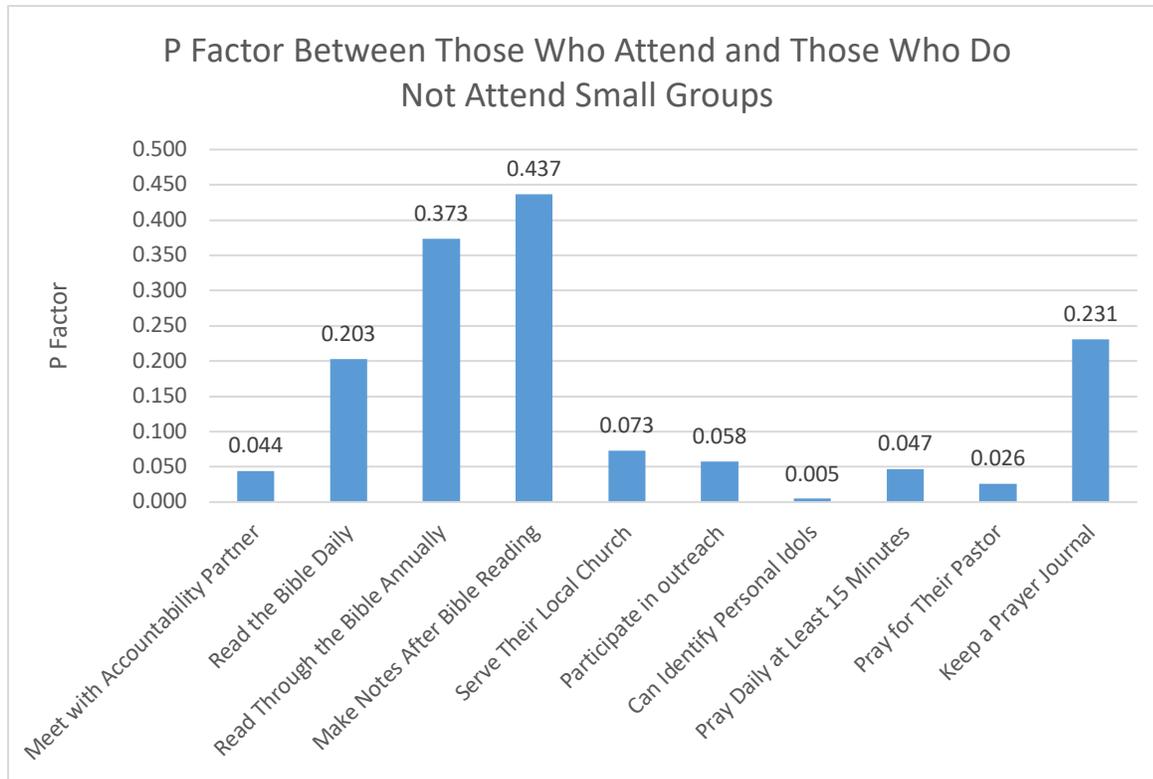


Figure 4. P-Factor Between Those Who Attend and Those Who Do Not Attend Small Groups

The difference in the scores for meeting with an accountability partner between the two groups, those who do and do not attend small groups, was not surprising. There is a significant difference between the two groups, with those who attend small groups being more likely to meet with an accountability partner. However, looking back at the results in figure 2, which showed no significant difference in struggling with sexual sin, and comparing it to figure 4 would lead to the conclusion that accountability partners are: not holding each other accountable, not venturing into the area of sexual sin, or not being honest with each other in their struggles.

One somewhat surprising area is that those who do not attend a small group are slightly more likely to read through the Bible annually. Although it is not a significant difference, it was not anticipated. It should also be noted that this was the only area where those not attending a small group had an average score higher than those who do attend a small group.

Those who attend a small group scored higher in all other areas than those who do not attend. In only three areas do those attending small groups have an average score above 3.0, neither agree nor disagree. Those areas were: reading the Bible daily, serving their local church, and identifying personal idols. These results support the information gathered in the interviews with the pastor and small group leaders that members lack commitment, and there is a consumeristic mindset within the congregation. Another point to note is that all scores were below three for those who do not participate in small groups, indicating that they slightly disagree with each question.

When the p-factor scores are considered, four out of the ten measured areas result in a significant difference. The areas where individuals who participate in small groups score significantly higher are

- Meet with an accountability partner
- Identify personal idols
- Pray daily at least 15 minutes
- Pray for their pastor

One area that was expected to score higher for those who participate in small groups but did not is in the area of outreach. This low score supports answers given in the pastor interview, where community engagement and evangelism were identified as areas that needed improvement.

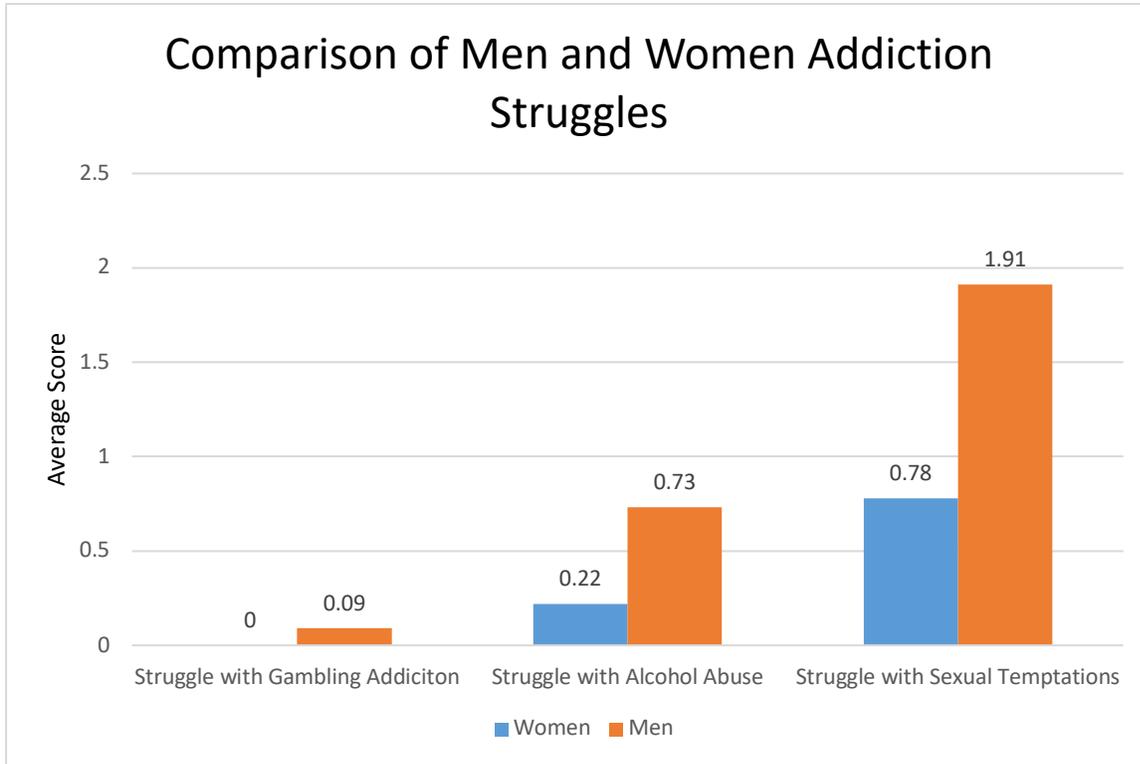


Figure 5. Comparison of Men and Women Addiction Struggles

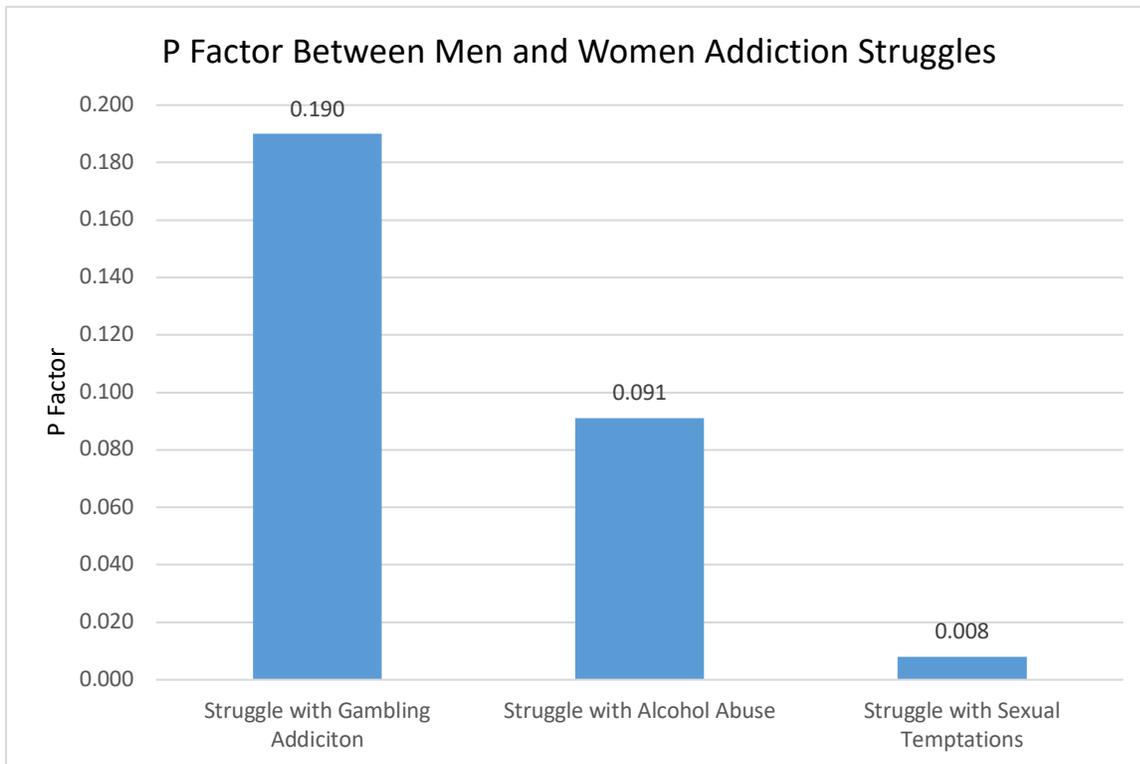


Figure 6. P-Factor Between Men and Women Addiction Struggles

The first point to note is that men struggle more than women in all three categories. However, gambling addiction’s average score is almost identical and indicates that gambling is not worrying for the current congregation. Women scored below the threshold for minor struggle in all three categories, while men score below that threshold in two areas. The one area of concern is the men’s average score in the area of sexual temptation falling just below the moderate struggle threshold. When p-factor scores are considered, sexual sin is the one area with a significant difference between men and women. Therefore, ministry efforts in addressing addiction struggles need to primarily focus on equipping men to combat the temptations of sexual sins.

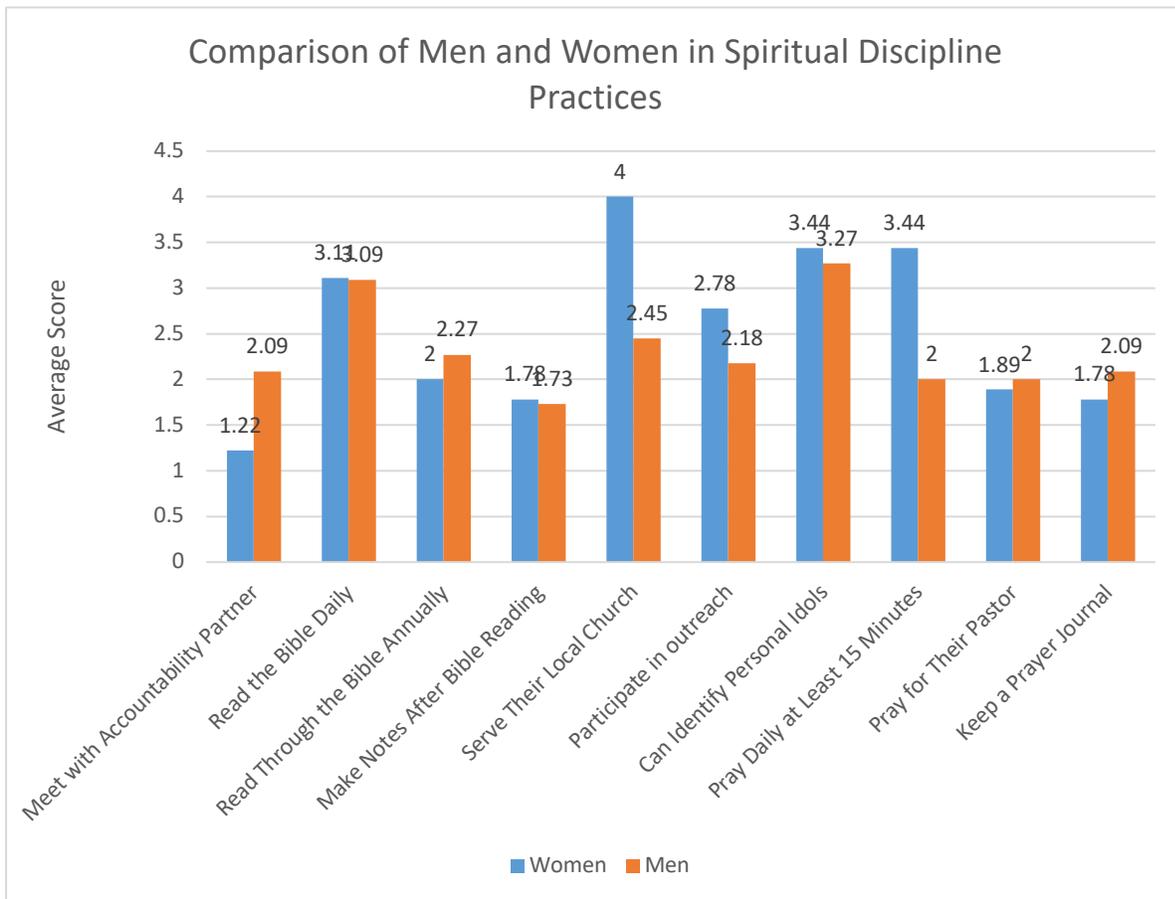


Figure 7. Comparison of Men and Women in Spiritual Discipline Practices

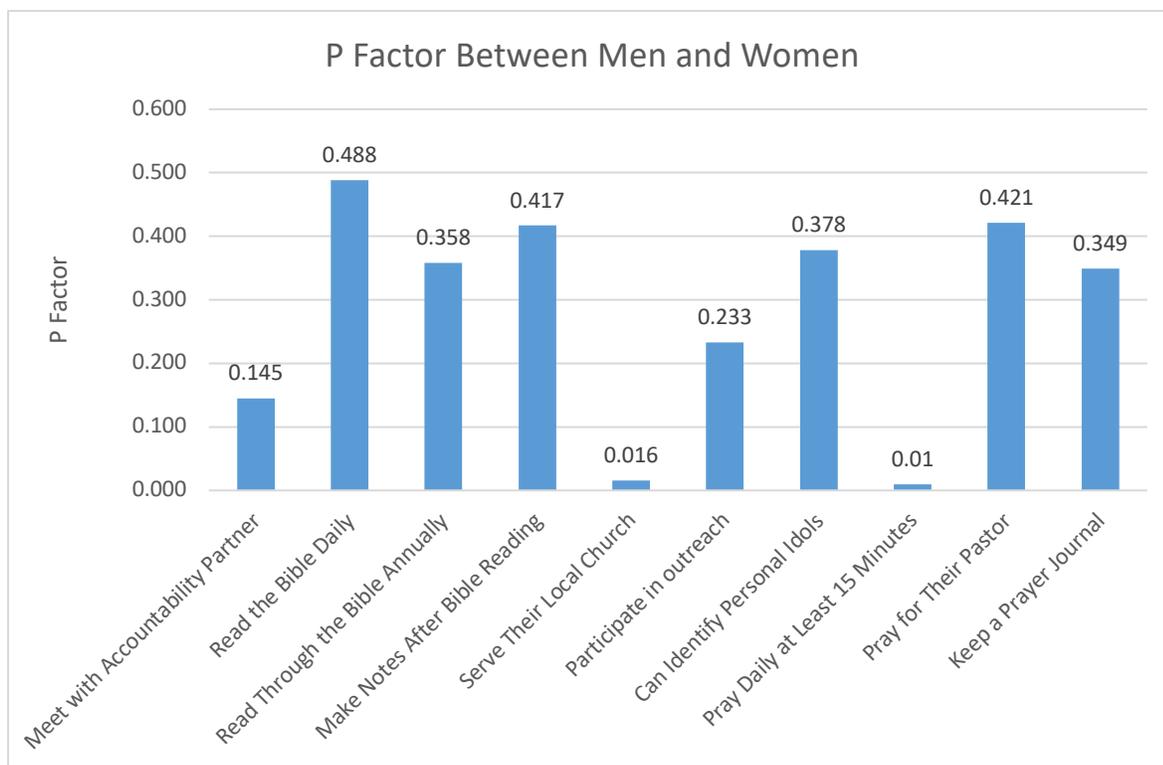


Figure 8. P-Factor Between Men and Women

The average scores between men and women comparing spiritual disciplines reveal that women score higher in six out of ten. In a couple of areas, they score significantly higher. On the other hand, in the four areas that men score higher, three are marginally better, and only meeting with an accountability partner shows a larger gap. However, it is still not a significant difference. Considering that factor women score above the median threshold of 3.0 in four areas and only in the area of “serving their local church,” do they reach an average score of “agree.” Men score above this threshold in two areas, and both areas are only marginally better than a score of three.

Here are a few observations from the average score data. The overall low scores indicate a congregation that is at least marginally spiritually immature or a congregation that is not being shepherded biblically. In the Great Commission, Jesus instructs His followers to make disciples by going (outreach), teaching (Bible reading) and baptizing. The last point is not addressed in the survey. Additionally, Acts 2:42 contains teaching (Bible reading), fellowship (serving), breaking

of bread, and prayer. Breaking of bread is not addressed in the survey data. When looked at in this light, the congregation is falling short of the standards outlined in the Great Commission and the church's essential characteristics as outlined in Acts.

The data shows a significant difference between men and women in two areas. They are serving the local church and praying for at least 15 minutes a day. In both, women score significantly higher than men. A point to consider is the area of serving. For the MBC congregation, the most significant area number-wise of service on any given Sunday is children's ministry, which has a higher proportion of women serving. Those factors may be driving the large difference in this area between men and women.

The results of the pre-intervention data support the design of the intervention method. The areas of Bible reading, and prayer are areas that need improvement based upon the pre-intervention survey data. Bible intake is addressed with the weekly Bible reading plan and sharing group members' reading and application from the previous week. Prayer is addressed through prayer time in the group and encouraging members to keep a prayer journal. Although identifying personal idols was the second-highest score for both men and women, it is still an area that requires some improvement. The area of an accountability partner also needs to be stressed as both men and women scored low.

Additionally, if done correctly, an accountability partner should address the area of sexual temptation that men face. The last area, serving, is still somewhat problematic due to the ongoing issues with COVID-19 at this stage in the intervention. Outside of the Sunday service, any meeting is prohibited. It may be that serving will be limited to the weekly Sunday service.

Peri-Intervention Results

Interview Results

Interviews were conducted with one member of each small group to get a cross-section of views on the questions in Appendix E. Throughout the responses a common theme was Bible study, prayer, and fellowship, which lines up nicely with Acts 2:42. Honesty was demonstrated in the assessment of their spiritual health, with most not satisfied. The members were unanimous in listing sexual sin as the most significant impact on their small group and gambling addiction as the least. They were also unanimous in listing volunteer outreach as the least essential activity in a small group setting. One response that should raise concern among the church leaders is that prayer time was weak and more of an afterthought than an integral part of their small group.

Table 4. Small Group Member Interview Answers

Question	Small Group Member Responses
What characteristics, activities, or spiritual disciplines do you/would you use to determine your spiritual health, and why did you choose them?	Bible reading, praying, worship, serving, fellowship, meditation, and singing hymns. Bible reading and prayer draw them closer to God and begin the day right. Serving makes them feel closer to God and sense His pleasure. Fellowship with others creates a sense of belonging. Hymns create a calming effect in dealing with children.
Based upon your answer to question #1, what is your assessment of your spiritual health?	The majority were not satisfied with their spiritual health. Measuring health on a range from 1 to 10 resulted in a low score of 5 and a high of 8, with an average of 6.5.
In what area(s) are you strongest?	Serving and studying God's Word.
In what area(s) do you need improvement?	Prayer and in-depth Bible study.

With what area of your small group are you most satisfied?	Fellowship, Bible study, and edification of talking through Scripture to grow one another, and the contents of the study we are doing.
What area would you change if you could instantly change it, and why would you change that area?	Prayer time is weak and is more of an afterthought than an integral part of the group and meet in person instead of virtually due to COVID-19.
From your perspective, rank order the following challenges from least to most significant as they impact your small group: gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, sexual sin?	All members rank-ordered the same: gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, and sexual sin.
From your perspective, rank order the following practices of small group membership in the process of discipleship and spiritual growth from most important to least important: volunteer outreach activities, accountability partner, understanding and identifying personal idols, daily Bible reading, a prayer journal?	The majority chose Bible reading and prayer as the most important, followed by identifying idols and accountability. Volunteer outreach was the least important for all members.
What two areas are most important, and why?	The majority listed Bible reading and prayer as the two most important areas, in that order. One member chose accountability and identifying idols as those are more critical in a communal setting.
What two areas are the least important, and why?	Accountability and outreach are the least important; the other activities must occur first. Also, outreach usually runs into a scheduling problem where most members are not available simultaneously.

Progress Report Results

Two differing views on the small group progress reports are now presented. The first is a mid-point snapshot comparing the control and test groups. The questions for this assessment are found in Appendix G. The second view shows the change over time between the control and test

groups through two progress reports. These measures were taken after the second and fourth week of the study. The questions for this assessment are found in Appendix F.

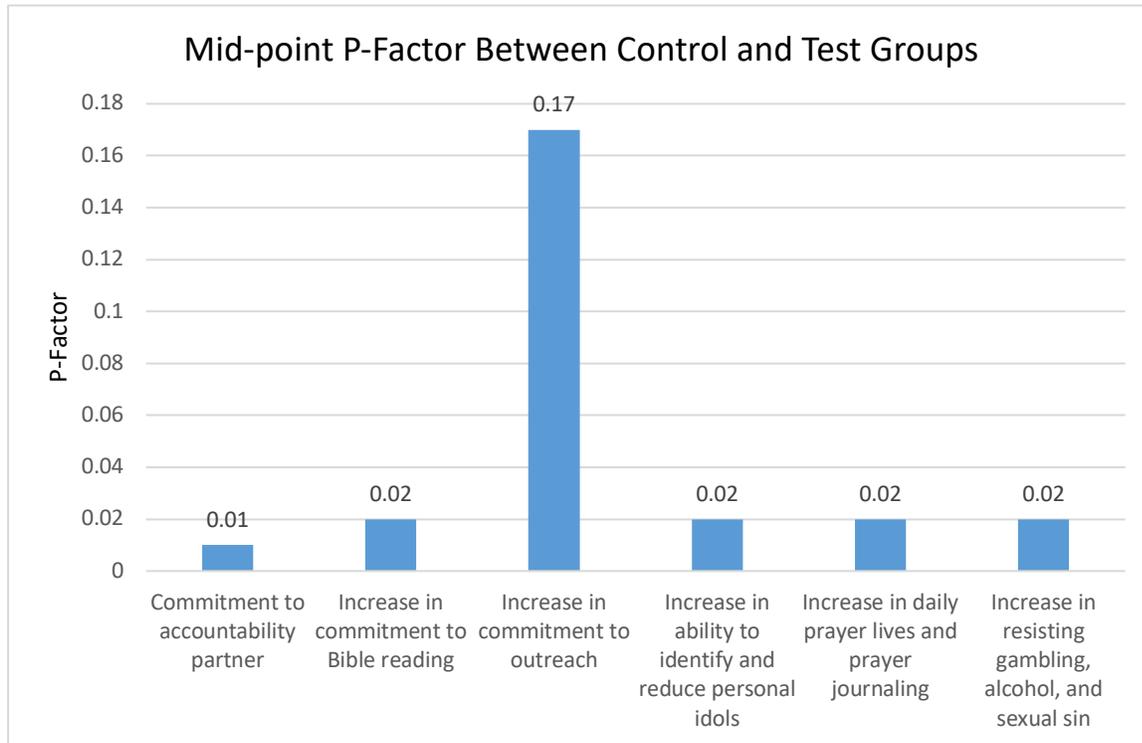


Figure 9. Mid-point P-Factor Between Control and Test Groups

The data demonstrates at the mid-point of the study, the test groups were assessed as demonstrating significantly better habits in all areas except for the area of outreach. The fact that outreach is not demonstrating a significant difference can be traced to two points. In the initial pastoral interview and the small group leaders’ focus group meeting, outreach was ranked last or second to last in importance. The second and most likely more significant point is that with COVID-19 restrictions in place, groups face significant obstacles in finding outreach opportunities.

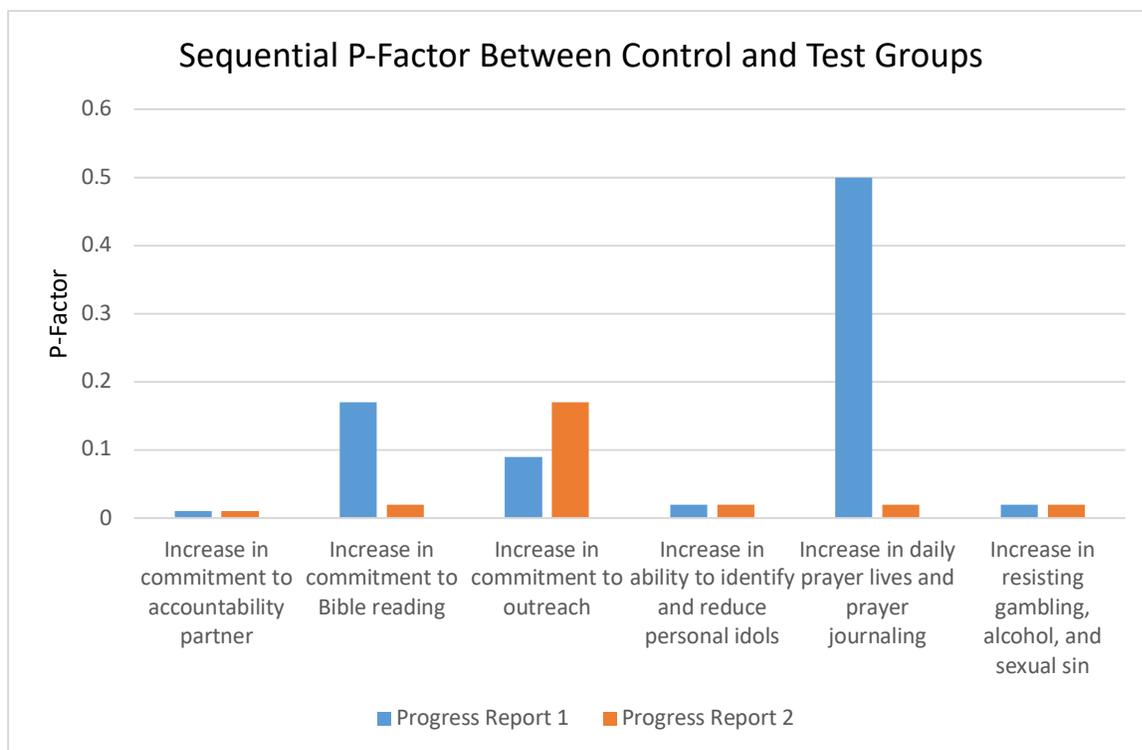


Figure 10. Sequential P-Factor Between Control and Test Groups

Three conclusions can be reached from figure 10. First, the outreach area demonstrated a consistent non-significant difference over the first four weeks of the study. Second, the areas of an accountability partner, identifying idols, and resisting the three main identified local challenges demonstrated a consistent significant difference over the first four weeks. Third and most exciting is the demonstrated improvement in increased commitment to Bible reading and prayer. Both areas had a non-significant difference after the first progress report, but both improved significantly after the second progress report.

Post-Intervention Results

Interview Results

In this section, the interview results will be presented by exception from the data collected in the pre-intervention interviews for those identical questions. Questions that are unique to the

post-intervention interview will be presented in their entirety. As in the pre-intervention section, the pastor interview and small group leader’s meeting questions are found in Appendix B and C, respectively.

Table 5. Summary of Post-Intervention Pastor Interview and Small Group Leader’s Meeting

Question	Pastor Interview	Control Group Leaders	Test Group Leaders
What characteristics, activities, or spiritual disciplines do you/would you use to determine the congregation's spiritual health and small group?	No change.	No change.	No change.
Has the congregation's spiritual health or small group changed after the intervention period, and if so, how?	Multiple individuals from test groups approached the pastor on how they could help in the church. Several test group members were meeting together for prayer/Bible study outside of their appointed meeting time.	The general spiritual growth of members.	General spiritual growth with additional growth in the areas of Bible study/understanding and prayer.
In what area did the congregation or small group improve the most?	A desire to meet in church after the C19 lockdown of local churches.	Personal relationships, accountability, and prayer.	Bible study and prayer.
What area still needs significant improvement?	More members are involved in small groups.	Accountability.	More ministry involvement outside of Sunday morning or group meetings.
With what area of the church or small group are you most satisfied?	Those who serve are committed to the church and relational community.	Sense of community.	Increased time in Bible study and commitment.

What area would you change if you could instantly change it, and why would you change that area?	More people are involved in small groups.	Meet in person and more diversity in the group.	Transparency in group member's struggles and meet in person.
Has the pre-intervention rank ordering of gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, and sexual sin changed post-intervention?	No change.	No change.	No change.
From your perspective, rank order the following practices of small group membership in the process of discipleship and spiritual growth from most important to least important: volunteer outreach activities, accountability partner, understanding and identifying personal idols, daily Bible reading, prayer, and a prayer journal?	Bible reading, prayer and prayer journaling, identify idols, accountability partner, and outreach activities.	Accountability, Bible, prayer, volunteer, and idols.	Bible, prayer, idols, accountability, and volunteer.

The data in table 5 contains both themes and slippage. Those areas which did not change from the pre-intervention interviews will not be discussed. Changes in the spiritual health of the congregation and groups exhibited both themes and slippage. Leaders in both the control and test groups noticed a general spiritual growth in members, with those in the test group showing pronounced growth in Bible study/understanding and prayer. In contrast, the pastor noted that several test group members were proactive in seeking ways to serve during the Sunday service. In both groups, leaders noted the most considerable improvement in prayer, while the test groups were also noted for a significant increase in Bible study and understanding. The pastor was most

pleased with the congregation quickly returning to corporate worship once restrictions were lifted on the Sunday morning service.

The question about the area needing the most improvement brought the most comprehensive response range. The pastor desires a larger proportion of the congregation involved in small groups. The control group leaders desire a higher level of accountability, and the test group leaders desire more volunteer involvement. Both the pastor and control group leaders are most satisfied with the sense of community. In contrast, the test group leaders identified Bible study and commitment. The pastor revisited his desire to see more people involved in small groups when identifying his area for instantaneous change.

In contrast, the control groups wanted to meet in person and add more diversity to their groups. The test group leaders desired increased transparency with personal struggles and the ability to meet in person. The pastor and test group leaders were identical in ranking desired practices in small group discipleship, emphasizing Bible study and prayer. In contrast, the control group leaders placed accountability first, and it may be a factor of members in control groups struggling more with sin in their lives.

Table 6. Post-Intervention Summary of Those Who Do Not Participate in Small Groups

Why do you not participate in small groups?	No time, not interested, do not feel a connection with group members.
Have you participated before?	One responded, “yes.”
If you participated before, why did you stop?	Poor leadership and gatherings turned into social meetings.
What would encourage you to participate in the future?	If they had more time, felt welcomed, and strong leadership.

The majority of reasons identified for not participating in small groups can be addressed by MBC leadership. The area of time is outside the control of the church. However, this could be addressed by educating congregation members on the importance of small group participation and

for them to alter their priorities. The other two areas, poor leadership and not feeling welcomed, are both within the church’s control. From what this researcher observed, there is no formal vetting process nor training program for small group leaders, which is an area that needs addressing in the future.

Table 7. Post-Intervention Summary of Control and Test Groups

	Control Groups	Test Groups
Why do you participate in small groups?	Fellowship, Bible study, meet others.	Bible study, Christian community, fellowship.
Why are small groups important?	Support, encouragement, accountability.	Support, prayer community, discipleship.
How long have you participated in small groups?	From 3 to 10 years, with an average of 7 years.	From 1 to 9 years, with an average of 4.25 years.
How has small group participation affected your spiritual walk?	It helped my understanding of the Bible, helped me grow and help others.	It helped me grow spiritually, helped my understanding of the Bible, pray for others.
What is the single most beneficial aspect of small group participation?	Fellowship, prayer support, understanding the Bible.	Understanding the Bible, prayer support, fellowship.

Responses from both the control and test group participants were quite similar. It is interesting to note that the first question’s responses followed the leader’s responses to the same question. Control groups valued fellowship and accountability, while test groups valued Bible study, support, and a community of prayer. Those in the control groups tended to have participated longer in groups. Both groups identified the same areas as being most beneficial in small group participation. However, the order of importance was inverted between the groups.

Survey Results

The online anonymous congregational survey, found in Appendix D, was administered after the intervention study. In contrast to the pre-intervention survey, this survey focused on three main points:

- Members who do not participate in small groups
- Members who participated in the control groups
- Members who participated in the test groups.

It should be noted that small groups were unable to meet in person for the entire study period due to COVID-19 governmental restrictions, and this also makes data in the area of outreach unreliable due to these same restrictions.

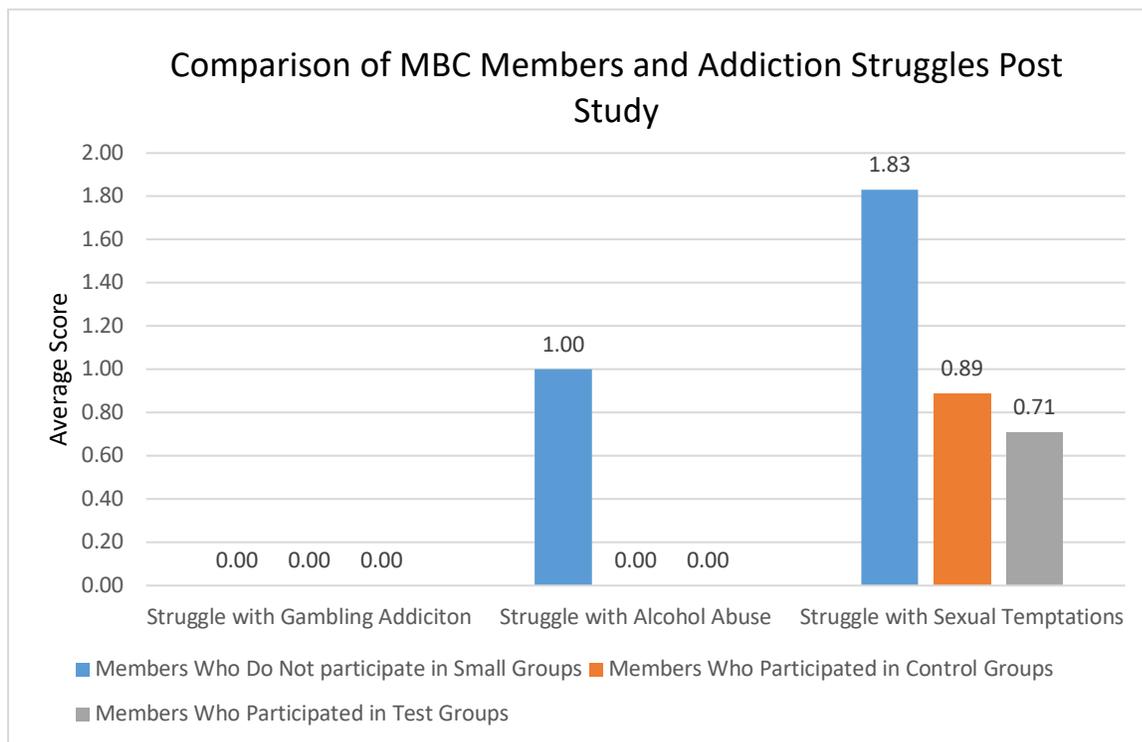


Figure 11. Comparison of MBC Members and Addiction Struggles Post-Intervention

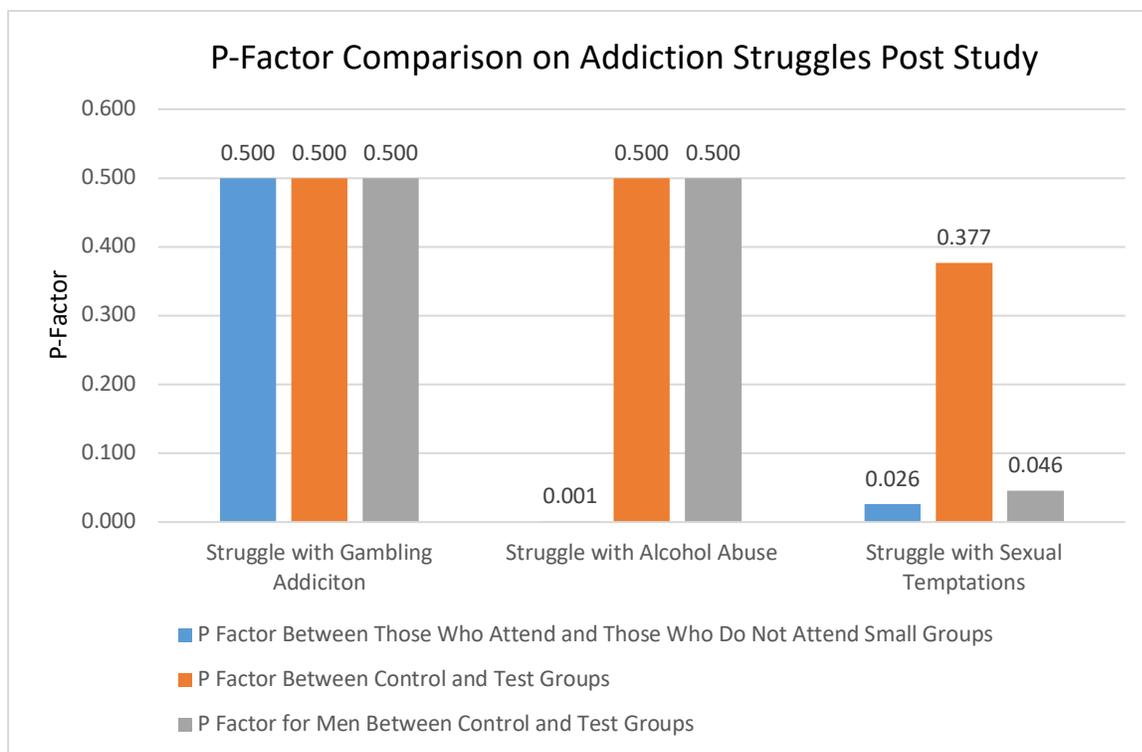


Figure 12. P-Factor Between Those Who Do Not Attend Small Groups, Control Groups, and Test Groups

The scoring convention is identical to the pre-intervention survey. Overall, there was little change in average scores compared to the pre-intervention survey. Gambling addiction is not a concern in any group, while alcohol abuse is a minor struggle for those who do not participate in small groups. It is in the area of sexual temptation struggles that changes were noticed. The average score for those who do not participate in small groups was identical to the pre-intervention score. Those in both the control and test groups were lower than the overall small group participant score in the pre-intervention survey. There is a significant difference in sexual struggles between those who attend small groups and those who do not. However, the p-factor between control and test groups was not significant. It is only by digging deeper into the data that a significant difference is noted. In the pre-intervention section, it was noted that there was a significant difference between men and women concerning sexual struggles. In the post-

intervention survey, men who participated in the test groups were able to resist sexual temptations at a significantly higher rate than those in the control groups.

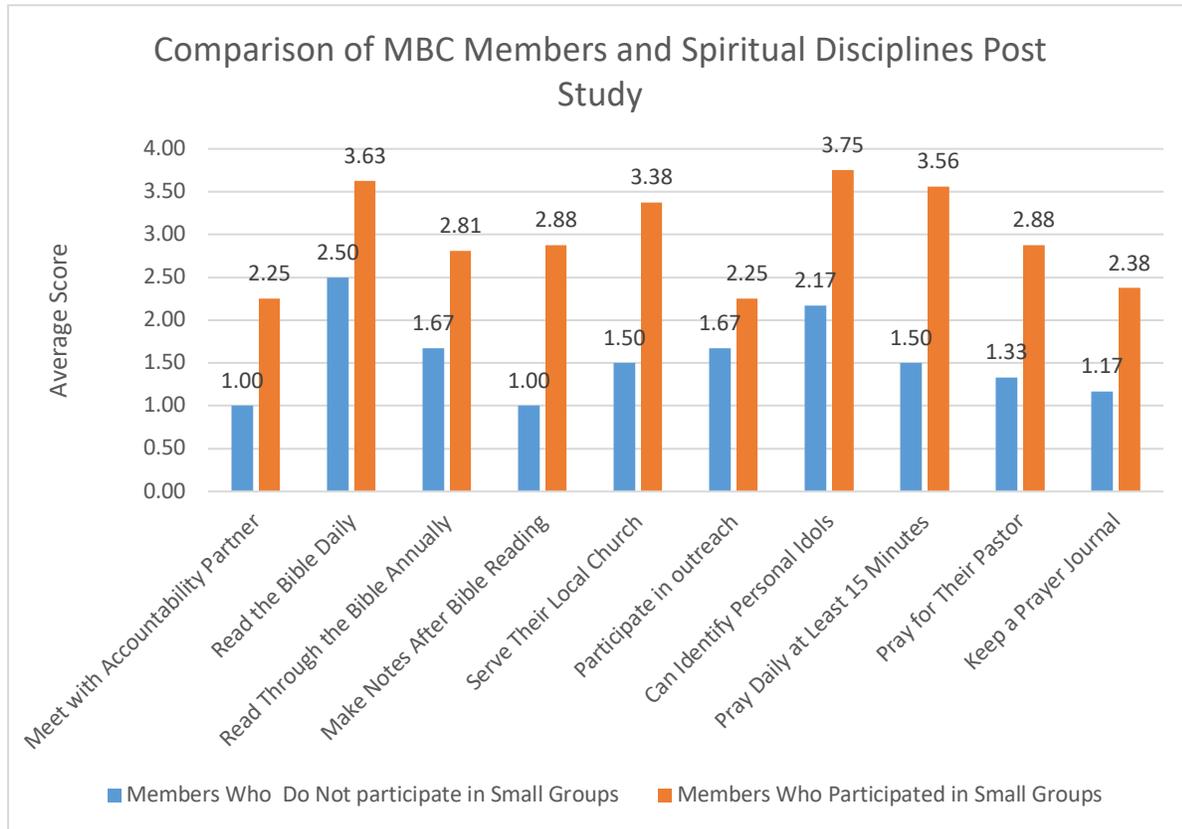


Figure 13. Comparison of MBC Members and Spiritual Disciplines

Those who participated in small groups scored higher in every area when compared with those who did not participate. This outcome supports the idea that small group participation leads to increased spiritual health.

In the following figure, those who attend small groups score significantly higher in all areas except for meeting with an accountability partner, reading through the Bible annually, and participating in outreach. As noted above, the outreach data is unreliable. Meeting with an accountability partner may have been impacted because of COVID-19 meeting restrictions.

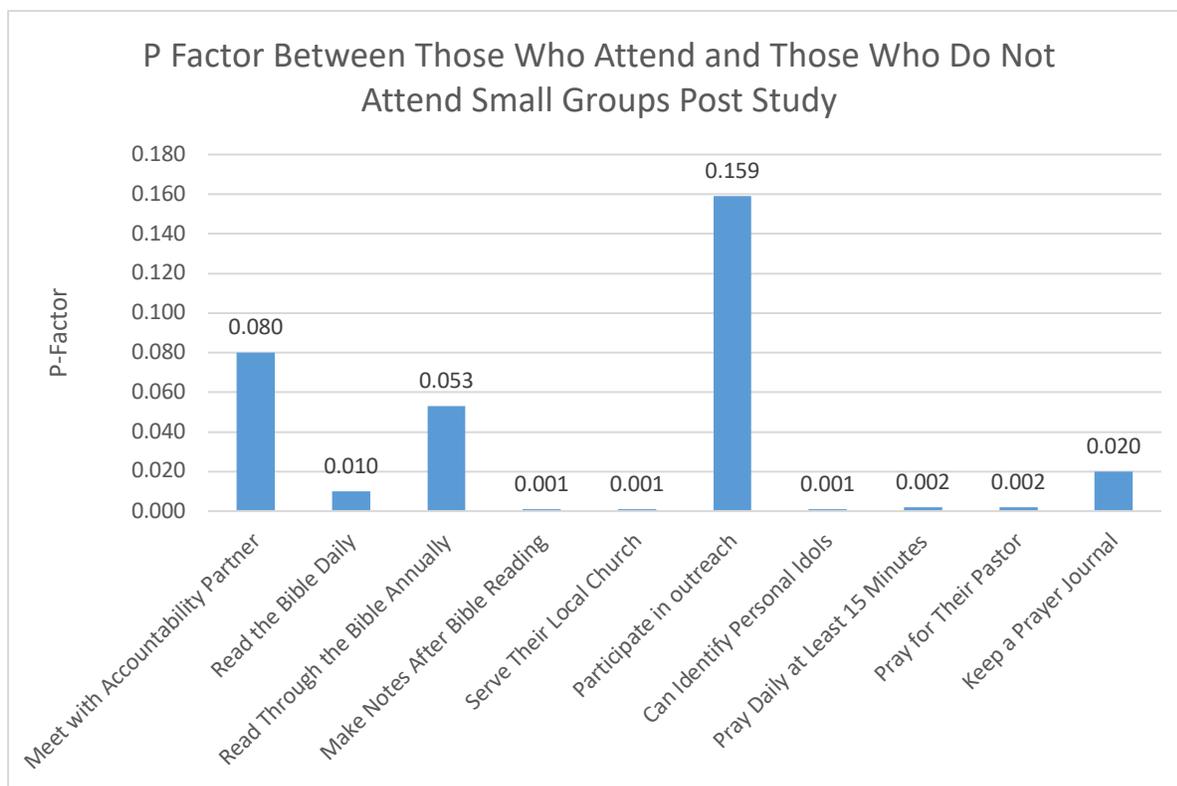


Figure 14. P Factor Between Those Who Attend and Those Who Do Not Attend Small Groups

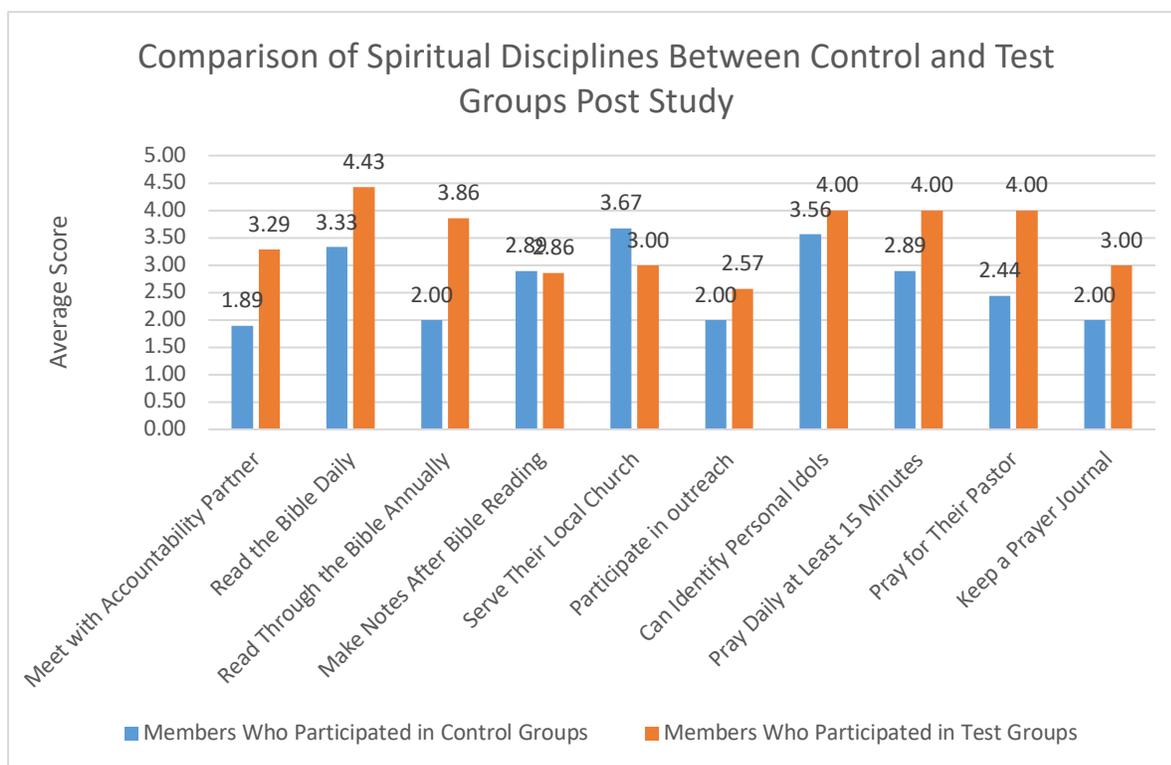


Figure 15. Comparison of Spiritual Disciplines Between Control and Test Groups

Those who participated in test groups scored higher in all areas except making notes after Bible reading and serving in the church. Figure 16 will show those areas where the test groups scored significantly higher than the control groups. As previously noted, the area of serving may be unreliable due to COVID-19 restrictions.

In half of the measured areas, those who participated in test groups scored significantly higher than those in control groups. Several of the areas exhibiting significant differences are foundational to spiritual growth. Those areas are being immersed in Scripture, vigorous prayer life, and having an accountability partner. Once again, it is essential to note that two of the areas not scoring significantly higher, serving in church and outreach activities, were impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

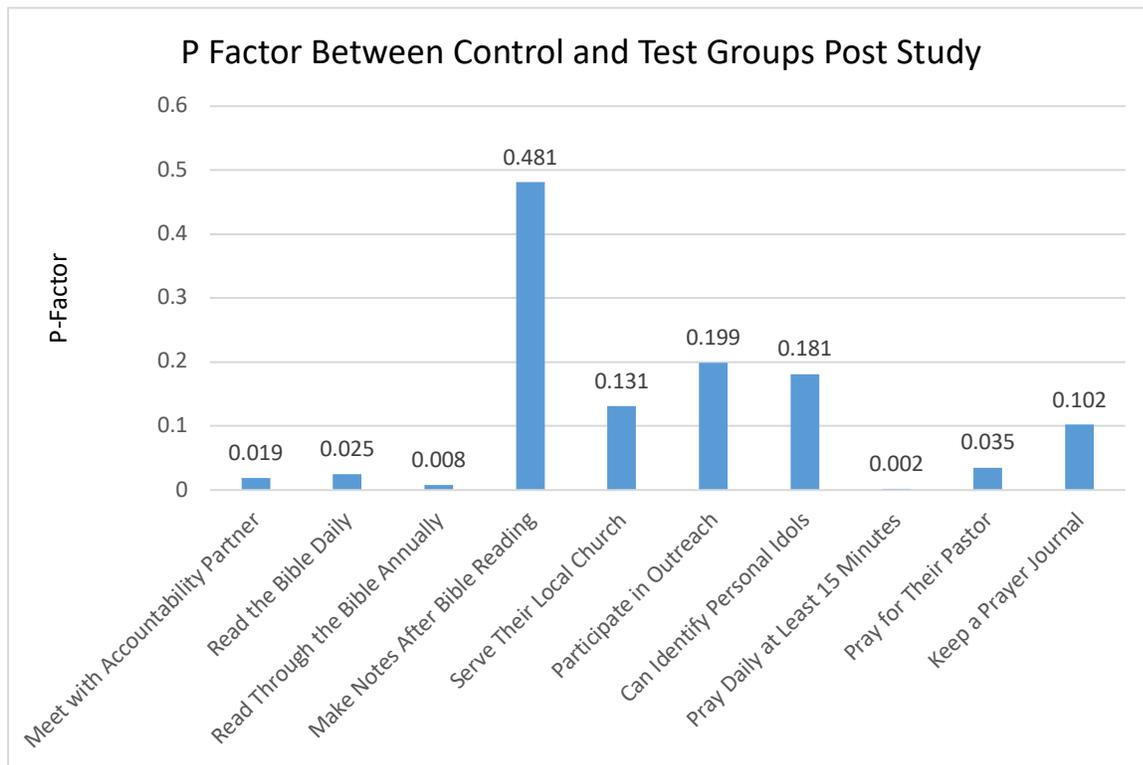


Figure 16. P Factor Between Control and Test Groups

Figure 17 shows the p-factor in assessing key areas by leaders of both the control and test groups.

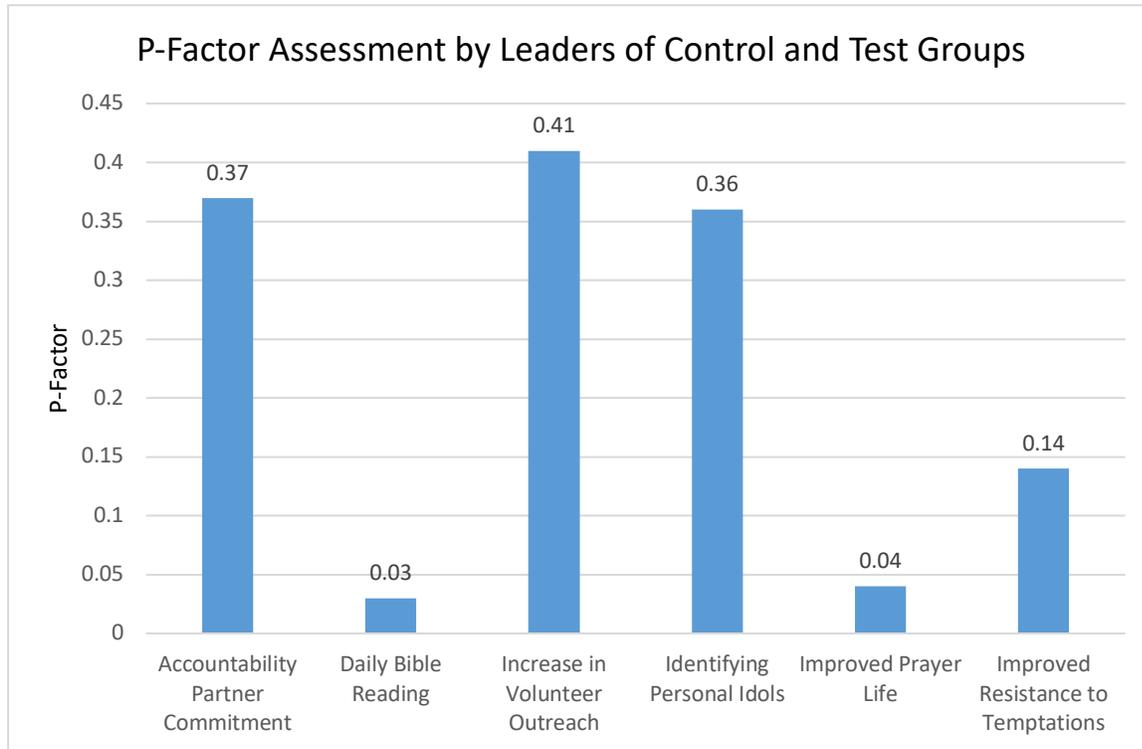


Figure 17. P-Factor Assessment by Leaders of Control and Test Groups

From the group leader’s perspective, there was no significant difference between the two groups meeting with their accountability partner. Although the data does not indicate a significant difference in resisting temptations, group leaders felt that small group members were doing better than themselves. There are two likely reasons for this. First, group members may be overly harsh on their self-assessment. Second, there may be a lack of transparency of the group members when interacting with each other. Based on the post-intervention small group leader’s meeting, the second reason seems plausible. The issue of transparency may be overcome as the groups continue to interact and develop a deeper level of trust over time. What is encouraging is that two foundational pillars of spiritual growth, Bible reading and prayer, were assessed as significantly more robust in the test groups.

Summary

The pre-intervention data collection established the baseline against which all others would be evaluated. Once again, it must be noted that COVID–19 restrictions created numerous obstacles within the church environment in the ROK. These restrictions impacted the indigenous Korean churches and those focused on the US military community, including MBC. For the duration of the intervention period, small groups were prohibited from meeting in-person. Besides, for approximately half of the intervention period, the Sunday service was also unable to meet in-person.

Data collected in the pre-intervention phase showed many themes between the pastor and the small group leaders. The most important was agreement on the challenges facing the congregation, with sexual sin being the greatest. Another theme was the challenge noted by the transient nature of the military community. Although the transient nature of the military community does present challenges, it also presents opportunities. A process that may not have worked previously may be successful with a new group of congregants. MBC leadership should view this as an opportunity and not a threat. However, slippage was noted between the two groups in assessing spiritual health and the priority of small group practices for discipleship and spiritual growth. A method to correct this discrepancy is to have a unified concept of the purpose, practices, and methodology in the small group ministry endeavor. Outside of the test groups, there is no oversight from MBC leadership on the groups' practices.

Pre-intervention congregational data indicated that sexual temptation was the primary factor impacting MBC, with men struggling significantly more than women. After the study, there were two significantly different areas of sexual temptation struggles. The first was noted between those who do and do not participate in small groups. Those who do participate can significantly

resist sexual temptations better than those who do not attend small groups. The second, and crucial for the research, is that men in test groups could significantly resist sexual temptations better than those in control groups.

Overall, the intervention plan should be viewed as at least a partial success. Although gambling addiction was not noted as a problem by either congregants or MBC leadership, it does not mean it will not be a factor in the future, especially when considering the community's transient nature. Alcohol abuse was a minor consideration with the current community. However, one group leader noted that alcohol abuse had been a more significant concern than sexual temptations in the past. In the area of sexual temptations, the plan successfully reduced the impact on male test group participants. Since men at MBC struggle more than women in this area, the results are encouraging. Although not conclusive, it would not be inconsistent to conclude that a congregation suffering from a severe gambling addiction or alcohol abuse problem would benefit from the focused small group model utilized in this research project.

Although not an explicit focus of the thesis for the research project, half of the spiritual disciplines or practices noted on the congregational survey were significantly stronger in those participating in the test groups than the control group members. Two areas, Bible reading, and prayer are foundational for spiritual growth, while meeting with an accountability partner aids in addressing areas of spiritual bondage. The practice of the spiritual disciplines of Bible reading and prayer was significantly higher in the test groups than in the control groups. The small group leader's final assessment agreed in the areas of Bible reading and prayer. However, they did not note a significant increase in commitment to accountability partners. In addition, the pastor noted that only members of the test groups approached him to inquire about serving opportunities during the Sunday morning service.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Project Purpose Review

The congregation of MBC is a medium-sized Baptist Bible Fellowship International church, with the overwhelming majority of members being military or civilian employees associated with the military. Because of the congregational demographics, the church membership is highly transitory, with the vast majority of members attending for two years or less. Military members are also negatively impacted at higher rates than the average US population in gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, and sexual sin.

The basis for this research project was birthed by the observations that this researcher made while serving in the ROK for eight years. During this observational time, numerous military members struggled with gambling, alcohol, and sexual sin. The consequences of these actions ranged from minor correctional punishments from military commanders to promising military careers being prematurely terminated to marriages ending and families being torn apart. From this researcher's experience in a ministry setting within the ROK, intentional small group discipleship is not an area of emphasis at either the chapels on-base or the churches off-base that cater to the military community. It was a combination of these two factors that drove the formulation of this research project.

This research project adds to the limited literature that addresses discipleship within the US military community and the complete void in addressing discipleship and the specific challenges for those service members serving in the ROK. The results in chapter 4 demonstrate that a structured and focused small group ministry program can benefit participants in a couple of areas. The first is a strengthened resistance to the temptations that exist while serving in the ROK.

The second is in enhanced growth of spiritual disciplines leading to measurable spiritual growth among the participants.

Review of the Findings

Pre-intervention data from the pastor and small group leaders revealed interesting themes and slippages. The pastor noted one overarching issue, a consumeristic mindset prevalent in the congregation, while both groups noted the challenges presented by the transient nature of the congregation. Also, gambling was not identified as a problem by MBC leadership, and survey data on the congregation supported that view. The next section will discuss that issue in detail.

From a congregational standpoint, those who participate in small groups understand and enjoy the benefits they experience in spiritual growth and fellowship in a community of like-minded believers who can support each other. The data on spiritual disciplines and practices indicates that in all areas but one, those who participate in small groups are spiritually healthier than those who do not participate in groups. In four of the ten measured areas, they are significantly healthier than those who do not participate in small groups. That is an important finding, which can be leveraged for small group activities in the future. The data also indicated that men struggle more than women in each of the three areas of concern.

The small group member interview data, Bible study, and prayer were overwhelmingly listed as the most important components of small group activities. One interview even identified prayer as a glaring deficiency in that particular group's activities. The interviews supported the view that sexual sin was the single most significant impact on group members, and gambling was the least. All four groups ranked these challenges in the same order.

The group leader's mid-point evaluation and the sequential analysis of the progress reports were encouraging in the picture they painted. The mid-point evaluation indicated that the test

groups' members were doing significantly better in five out of six areas. The one area not significantly better was in outreach activities. However, as has been noted repeatedly from chapter four, the restrictions due to COVID–19 render all data on outreach activities suspect. The sequential reports also indicated that those in test groups improved between progress report one and two in two areas that were not rated significantly better in the first report. It was only in outreach that test group members regressed between the first and second reports. However, that measurement area is suspect, as noted above.

In the post-intervention data from the pastor and small group leaders, they all noted an overall spiritual growth in members who participated in small groups. Those in test groups grew the most in the areas of Bible study and prayer. While members of both control and test groups valued Bible study and fellowship, those in control groups prioritized fellowship. In contrast, those in the test groups placed a priority on Bible study.

A measurement of the three areas of struggle continued to indicate that small group participation is beneficial in resisting alcohol and sexual sin challenges. In contrast, gambling continued to be a non-factor in all groups. A discussion of the reasons that gambling was not an issue is presented in the next section. The single most encouraging result is that men in test groups could significantly resist sexual sin better than men in control groups. This outcome was the goal of the intervention, and it bore fruit in this area.

Although admittedly not a stated goal of the intervention, an additional benefit is that a comparison of spiritual discipline practices between control and test groups was very encouraging. In eight of the ten measured areas, test group participants scored higher than their control group counterparts. One area was almost identical, and only in serving in the church did the control group score higher. When the corresponding p-factors are considered, the test groups

scored significantly higher than their control group counterparts in five out of the ten measured areas. These results would indicate that the intervention successfully created an atmosphere where members can battle the three sin areas that were the study's focus. The intervention effectively creates an environment where individual members' spiritual practices and health are enhanced. In the final small group leader's meeting, their input supports the data that test group members display healthier spiritual habits as two of the six areas were rated significantly higher. What may be even more critical when considering this point is the two areas rated significantly higher are daily Bible reading and improved prayer life. Those two spiritual disciplines are arguably the most important ones for spiritual formation and growth. Without being immersed in God's Word, it is difficult to know how to be obedient and know what he taught His followers. Additionally, it is difficult to have a meaningful relationship with God without having an active prayer life. These two practices also help us to determine God's will for our lives.

Comparing the Results against Published Works or Research

When comparing the three environmental challenges, gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, and sexual temptations, facing those serving in the ROK against the research and published data in the introduction to this paper, there are three divergent results from the data collected on the congregation of MBC. Although gambling addiction is almost 600% more prevalent among veterans than the US population and is readily available on the military installations, neither the church leadership nor the congregation identified it as an issue. There are three possible reasons that gambling addiction was not identified either by church leadership or the members. First, there is a remote possibility that gambling addiction within the congregation does not exist. Second, it is possible that individuals did not answer the survey questions honestly. While both of these stated reasons are possible, they are not likely, as numerous responses indicated sexual

temptations were an issue. Third, because of COVID-19 restrictions, the opportunities to participate in gambling were positively impacted. When considering the input from church leadership and input from congregational family members on the surveys, this researcher leans towards the position that gambling addiction is not a factor in the current congregation. However, considering the overwhelming statistical data on gambling addiction in the US military community, a gambling problem may exist. Still, either an unwillingness to admit the problem or a deficiency within the data collection process clouded the truth.

As previously noted, alcohol use and abuse are a deeply rooted and institutional challenge within the US military community. Although the current congregational composition of MBC does not appear to suffer from severe or even moderate alcohol problems, group leaders did identify it as a potential problem, and it occurred in the past. From the researcher's viewpoint, there are four potential reasons that alcohol abuse was not identified as a more significant issue.

First, it is not an issue with this congregation. Second, individuals were dishonest with their responses. However, the same issue applies here that was applied to gambling. If numerous responses indicated sexual temptation issues, there is no reason to believe that individuals would have been dishonest in an area often considered a lesser sin. Third, in society at large, alcohol use has become so normalized that the needle for "abuse" is often not recognized. This occurrence is especially real within the aviation community, where alcohol is readily available within the flying squadron buildings. It is customary to end the flying week with a drinking party at the office. Besides, there are quite a few members of the aviation community who attend MBC. Because of these factors, there may be a more significant alcohol abuse issue than the respondents realize. Suppose this researcher was able to restructure the question on alcohol use to a quantitative measure. In that case, i.e., the respondent consumes XX number of drinks per week and compares

the responses to published data on how many drinks constitute alcohol abuse. A different evaluation may have resulted. Fourth, COVID–19 restrictions have made a significant impact on the availability of alcohol. The US military authorities placed off-base drinking establishments off-limits in the spring of 2020, and as of the date of this writing, they are still off-limits. For those outside of the aviation community, going to the bars off-base is a significant recreational activity, especially on weekends and after payday. Even the clubs on-base that serve alcohol placed social distancing restrictions impacting the number of people entering.

Based upon the four potential reasons alcohol was not identified as a more significant issue, this researcher believes that a combination of two is the underlying factor in alcohol abuse not being identified as a more significant issue. The first is the cultural norm of alcohol use within the military community, especially the aviation community. Second, there is no doubt that COVID–19 restrictions have significantly restricted the availability of alcohol. Since purchases of alcohol at the liquor store on base are tracked, and the amounts are limited, it is harder for individuals to abuse alcohol. These same restrictions do not exist at the clubs on base or bars off-base. Once restrictions on off-base establishments are lifted, alcohol abuse may increase.

Finally, the student-researcher noted in the introduction that the military community suffers from pornography addiction at twice their civilian counterparts. The data collected on the congregation at MBC confirmed that sexual temptation and sexual sin among the male members were challenges to the current congregation.

The literature review identified the importance of approaching discipleship as a long-term process built on strong, intentional relationships in the community. These same characteristics were noted in every segment of data collected in the pre-intervention phase. Both the pastor and small group leaders indicated that a life of fellowship was crucial in determining their respective

group's spiritual health. Those who participate in small groups echoed those sentiments by listing fellowship and family as primary reasons for participating in small groups and why small groups are essential. Small group members drove home this point by listing fellowship as the single most beneficial aspect of small group participation.

However, the post-intervention data produced some exciting differences from published literature. While members of the control groups continued to list community and fellowship as areas of strength or highest satisfaction, the test groups identified Bible study and prayer as strengths and areas of highest satisfaction. The purpose of identifying this difference is that the test groups scored higher in the spiritual discipline assessment areas and in men being better equipped to resist sexual temptations. It is possible that those in the test groups felt a high level of fellowship and community in their groups but placed a higher emphasis on Bible study and prayer, resulting in a foundation based on Scripture intake and a vibrant prayer life that was resistant to sexual temptation.

The literature identified accountability as an essential component of discipleship and noted that Western society's priority on individuality creates a conflict. The data collected on MBC seems to support the idea that accountability is a challenge within this congregation. One group leader identified accountability as an area needing improvement, while neither the pastor nor the other group leaders identified it as an area of strength. Although the pastor emphasized accountability in the pre-intervention survey, it had slipped to fourth out of five areas in the post-intervention survey. However, there was a divergence between the control and test groups ranking of accountability in the post-intervention group meeting. The control groups felt that accountability was the most essential practice of small groups.

In contrast, the test groups ranked it third, the same as the overall group leader's pre-intervention ranking. Also, leaders of the control groups identified accountability as the area still needing significant improvement, which may be a function of the practices of those in the two respective groups. Those in test groups were almost twice as likely to meet with an accountability partner, resulting in a significant difference between the two groups in this area. Coupled with the previously stated fact that men in the test groups resisted sexual temptations significantly better than those in the control groups, it supports the previously published literature that accountability is crucial in overcoming sin. One caveat to note is that test group leaders identified transparency among group members to discuss struggles as an area needing instant change. The need for transparency can be viewed in two ways. The first is that the test groups lacked any transparency. The second is that there was transparency, but more was needed. Based upon the other data related to this topic, it seems the second is likely the correct evaluation since members were meeting with accountability partners, and they were doing significantly better in resisting sexual temptations.

Learnings from Project Implementation

There were several lessons learned during the implementation of this project. It was very encouraging to observe how leaders and individuals involved in the test groups embraced the interventions' structured and focused format. However, it did not end with just observing how they embraced the format for the test groups. The most encouraging factor was seeing the spiritual growth in test group members as their reading and understanding of the Bible increased during the intervention period. Also, there were numerous instances of answered prayer, some of a significant nature, in the groups. Those occurrences reinforce the importance of prayer and having a prayer network to support one another.

Another lesson was the design of questions on alcohol use and the number of data collection tools used during the intervention. As noted in the previous section of this chapter, alcohol abuse did not reveal the anticipated issues. If the survey questions could be done over, they would be designed to quantify the answers instead of allowing a subjective personal assessment of an individual's drinking habits. The questions about alcohol use would not use the four-point rating utilized in the research. Instead, an actual consumption level would be utilized.

An example is, "in one week the individual consumes XX number of drinks" with several choices such as "0 to 5, 5 to 10, 10 to 15, over 15." This data could then be compared against published data that defines the point at which alcohol consumption over a specified period indicates a drinking problem. This approach would eliminate the possibility that those who consume large amounts of alcohol, but feel it is expected, would be appropriately evaluated. This same conceptual design could also be utilized for gambling to eliminate the dulled sense of the individual's addiction. The number of data collection tools utilized proved to be quite challenging to manage and analyze. One comfortable place to trim is in the area of the small group leader's data collection. Either the mid-point assessment or the progress reports can be eliminated without any detriment. Keeping the progress reports is appropriate as they do paint a picture of progress over time.

The pastor mentioned the issue about the percentage of small group participation in the church during the interview process. Although members who choose to participate in small groups seem genuinely committed to faithful participation and growth, they represent a minority of the church's total membership. To a certain extent, it is understandable that a military member who will spend, at most, one year in the ROK and even less time attending church because of various other commitments leans away from participating in small groups because of the time

required to develop meaningful relationships. Simultaneously, attending small groups is likely the vehicle those individuals need to keep them from wandering from the path of obedience to Jesus and following a path that leads to sinful behavior. The plan is to share the intervention study results with the congregation to show the effectiveness of participating in small groups for spiritual growth, leading a life of purity, and demonstrating the test group intervention model's level of success. The intended result of sharing the information is that more members will commit to joining a small group and for MBC to adopt the intervention format as the standard format for small groups.

Project Application to Other Settings

From the researcher's perspective, it would appear that the results obtained from this study could have varying practical applications. Although this research project focused on the three specific areas of gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, and sexual sin, there is no reason to limit it to only those three types of addictive behavior. The areas where the results could be applied are military settings, both overseas and those in the United States, as well as congregations that struggle with any addictive behavior.

Although this research project was specifically designed to address issues affecting the military community the ROK, it is entirely reasonable to conclude that the intervention applied to the ROK would also be useful in other overseas areas where the US military is stationed. As noted in the first chapter of this research project, slot machines are located in the clubs on all military installations located overseas. Even though gambling was not a factor at MBC, there may be military-heavy congregations in other countries that struggle with gambling addiction. With alcohol use prevalent across the board in the military community worldwide, it is probable, not just possible, that military-heavy congregations in other overseas areas have members who

struggle with alcohol abuse. Finally, sexual sin is a world-wide problem. Human trafficking is a concern in many locations, and the juicy bar environment is not confined exclusively to the ROK. In each of the situations, the intervention applied in this research project can yield positive results.

Due to the study's focused nature and intervention around the concept of equipping Christians for spiritual growth and resisting addictive behavior, this intervention may also find practical application outside the military community. Although the intervention was designed around gambling, alcohol, and sexual sins, the underlying biblical principles it was based on may prove useful in dealing with other addictive behavior. Additionally, since the intervention proved effective in strengthening the spiritual walk and solidifying several spiritual disciplines, any church or ministry setting seeking a structured small group program could utilize the intervention applied to MBC.

Thoughts on Future Research

One of the first thoughts regarding future research is reshaping some of the questions to ensure truthful answers from a statistical research standpoint are obtained. An example is the questions regarding alcohol use discussed in the “what did the researcher learn” section. Shaping the questions with quantitative responses may have resulted in a different evaluation regarding alcohol use. Although it appears that accurate data was obtained on the areas of gambling and sexual sin, doubts do remain regarding the accuracy of the results on alcohol use. A second example is to include an open-ended question to ask if the respondent is aware of other areas of struggle in the church body. There may be hidden areas that church leadership is unaware of, but congregational members know exist.

A second area to consider is the area of accountability and having an accountability partner. The intervention did not intentionally assist those who did not currently have a partner to

find one. Admittedly, this may be a very challenging undertaking considering the community's transient nature and the need for deep relationships for accountability to be successful. However, the need for accountability is a significant theme in published literature and was identified by the pastor, group leaders, and congregation members. One of the significant differences between the control and test groups was that test group members demonstrated a higher commitment to an accountability partner than those in control groups. Accountability was also the area identified as still needing significant improvement by the leaders of the control groups.

The third area of future research is applying this intervention and focusing on measuring spiritual growth and the application of spiritual disciplines. The intervention plan's research outcome indicated exciting spiritual growth in the test group participants over two months. It would be interesting to see if the growth level observed over the two months is sustainable and when the growth would begin to level off. To a certain extent, the results would be a function of the spiritual demographics of the group. Those who are already immersed in Bible reading and prayer may not experience the same level as those who begin small group participation in a degraded state of spiritual health. However, it is safe to speculate that the growth would continue past the two-month point, as exhibited in the study. Since most military members serve between 12 and 24 months in the ROK, if they participated in small groups, they would leave the ROK in a better spiritual state than when they arrived. In turn, those who participate in small groups may progress to a group leader position either while serving in the ROK or once they leave for their next duty assignment. In either case, that is a crucial component in the disciple-making cycle. Growing leaders who will develop other leaders, leading to a continuous cycle of spiritual formation and multiplication in the discipleship process.

Recommendations for MBC

These recommendations are predicated on MBC's desire to have a vibrant and impactful small group ministry program. The first recommendation is that MBC develops a formal small group ministry program, which would entail several steps. First, ensure that all small groups who meet under the name of MBC are identified and included in a database of small groups. Second, before an individual can lead a small group, they need to go through two steps. The first is a vetting process to ensure that they are ready, willing, and able to lead a group. The second step is a training process to ensure that leaders understand the format for small groups. The format includes a covenant agreement for all participants, a Bible reading plan, emphasis on prayer, accountability, serving, and outreach activities. Once those two steps are completed, the individual can lead a group. Third, list all small groups on the church website to include information on when and where they meet, the group leader's name and contact information, and any other information specific to the group. Fourth, develop a small group oversight function where church leadership would periodically attend a small group meeting to observe its work. Fifth, at the end of the military move cycle, typically in August, have an event night at the church called "MBC Connection Night" where all the group leaders would be present, and those interested in joining a small group could attend. This event may facilitate a better initial match and reduce members changing groups during their time at MBC. Sixth, have periodic meetings between church leadership and small group leaders. These meetings would function as a "how goes it" and share ideas, concerns, or challenges that have appeared in their groups. Seventh, have an evaluation method on the group leaders. The evaluations could be conducted in several different ways. They could be set to occur every four to six months when group members move to a new duty location or when group leaders move.

The second recommendation is that MBC appoints an individual to oversee the small group ministry program. This appointment could be made through a discipleship pastor, an elder whose primary role is to oversee the program, or a small group director. Any of these would work but implementing and overseeing the program as outlined in the previous paragraph requires a person dedicated to the process.

The third recommendation is that MBC formally adopts the intervention design as their small group ministry model. Because the intervention did prove successful in improving the test group's spiritual health and increasing their resistance to sexual sin, this seems like a logical step. Simultaneously, there should be periodic evaluations of how the intervention is performing in the future. A starting place uses some of the interview and survey questions utilized in the initial research. These could be modified by the individual overseeing the program to provide flexibility in changing dynamics. The critical point is never to lose sight of the goal, equipping saints to grow spiritually, resist the sinful nature of the world they live in, and create an environment where mature disciples are reproduced in a never-ending cycle.

Closing Conclusion

In conclusion, a revisitation of the purpose statement will clarify the overall results of the research project. The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry study is to develop and implement impactful relational small groups that address the challenges of geographically separated families, alcohol abuse, gambling addiction, and sexual temptations facing military members and their families in the ROK while focusing on biblical discipleship and mutual accountability that leads to spiritual growth. The first fact to note is that COVID-19 played a significant factor in how MBC conducted ministry, especially small groups, as they were forced to meet virtually for the entire intervention period. It is also possible that the intervention results would be different if

small groups could have met in-person during the research period. However, in the face of these difficulties, the applied intervention successfully reduced sexual sin among men who participated in the test groups. While the data did not show the same results in gambling addiction and alcohol abuse, it is possible, if not probable, that those results were a function of COVID–19 impacts or deficiencies in framing data collection on gambling addiction and alcohol abuse. Additionally, participants in the test groups scored higher in eight of the ten spiritual discipline areas evaluated, with a significant difference noted in half of the areas. These results indicate that the test groups achieved the goal of enhanced spiritual growth, as outlined in the purpose statement.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval

July 29, 2020

Theodore Danecki

IRB Approval IRB-FY19-20-399

Title: Military Discipleship: A Strategy for Discipleship in the U.S. Military Community in the Republic of Korea

Dear Theodore,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

IRB Mentor

Liberty University

Appendix B: Pre-intervention Pastor Interview Questions

1. What characteristics, activities, or spiritual disciplines do you/would you use to determine the spiritual health of your congregation? Limit your answer to no more than five.
2. Why did you choose those?
3. Based upon your answer to question #1, what is your assessment of the spiritual health of your congregation?
4. What factors contribute to your answer to question #3?
5. In what area(s) is your congregation strongest?
6. In what area(s) does your congregation need improvement?
7. With what area of your church are you most satisfied?
8. What area would you change if you had the ability to instantly change it and why would you change that area?
9. From your perspective, rank order the following challenges from least to greatest: gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, sexual sin?
10. Why did you rank them in that order?
11. From your perspective, rank order the following practices of small group membership in the process of discipleship and spiritual growth: volunteer outreach activities, accountability partner, understanding and identifying personal idols, daily Bible reading, a prayer journal?
12. What three areas are most important?
13. Why do you feel that way?
14. What two areas are least important?
15. Why do you feel that way?

Appendix C: Pre-intervention Small Group Leader Focus Group Meeting Questions

1. What characteristics, activities, or spiritual disciplines do you/would you use to determine the spiritual health of your small group? Limit your answer to no more than five.
2. Why did you choose those?
3. Based upon your answer to question #1 what is your assessment of the spiritual health of your small group?
4. What factors contribute to your answer to question #3?
5. In what area(s) is your small group strongest?
6. In what area(s) does your small group need improvement?
7. With what area of your small group are you most satisfied?
8. What area would you change if you had the ability to instantly change it and why would you change that area?
9. From your perspective, rank order the following challenges from least to greatest as they impact your small group: gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, sexual sin?
10. Why did you rank them in that order?
11. From your perspective rank order the following practices in the process of small group membership in the process of discipleship and spiritual growth: volunteer outreach activities, accountability partner, understanding and identifying personal idols, daily Bible reading, a prayer journal?
12. What three areas are most important?
13. Why do you feel that way?
14. What two areas are least important?
15. Why do you feel that way?

Appendix D: Pre- and Post-intervention Survey Questions for the Congregation

Section 1: Collect demographics

1. Gender: male/female
2. Age: 18–30, 31–40, 41 or older
3. Marital status: single/married with family in country/married without family in country
4. How long have you been a Christian? not a Christian/0–3 years/3–10 years/over 10 years
5. Affiliation: active-duty military/active-duty family member/civil service or contractor working for the military

Section 2: Small group participation

1. Do you currently participate in a small group?
 - A. If you answer “no” to this question, move to section three. Do not answer questions in section four.
 - B. If you answer “yes” to this question, move to section four. Do not answer questions in section three.

Questions for those who do not participate in small groups

Section 3 Part 1:

1. Why do you not participate in small groups?
2. Have you participated in small groups in the past? If you answer “yes,” proceed with question #3; otherwise, move to question #4.
3. What factors caused you to stop participating in small groups?
4. What factors would encourage you to participate in the future?

Section 3 Part 2:

The first three questions in this section will have a four-point rating scale: no struggle, minor struggle, moderate struggle, or major struggle. The remaining questions in this section will have a six-point rating scale: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, or not applicable.

1. I struggle with gambling.
2. I struggle with alcohol.
3. I struggle with sexual temptations.
4. I have an accountability partner who I meet with on a regular basis.
5. I spend time daily reading my Bible.
6. I read through the Bible at least once each year.
7. After I finish my Bible reading, I make notes on how the passage applies to my life.
8. I serve my local church with my time and talents.
9. I participate in outreach or volunteer opportunities in the local community.
10. I can identify the modern-day idols (i.e., television, cellphone, money, status, job, possessions, etc.) in my life and actively work to overcome them.
11. I spend at least 15 minutes each day in prayer.
12. I pray daily for my pastor and the leaders in my church.
13. I keep a prayer journal of requests and answered prayer.

Questions for those who participate in small groups

Section 4 Part 1:

1. Why do you participate in small groups?
2. Why do you think small groups are important?
3. How long have you participated in small groups?
4. How has small group participation affected your spiritual walk?
5. What is the single most beneficial aspect of small group participation?

Section 4 Part 2:

The first three questions in this section will have a four-point rating scale: no struggle, minor struggle, moderate struggle, or major struggle. The remaining questions in this section will have a six-point rating scale: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, or not applicable.

1. I struggle with gambling.
2. I struggle with alcohol.
3. I struggle with sexual temptations.
4. I have an accountability partner who I meet with on a regular basis.
5. I spend time daily reading my Bible.
6. I read through the Bible at least once each year.
7. After I finish my Bible reading, I make notes on how the passage applies to my life.
8. I serve my local church with my time and talents.
9. I participate in outreach or volunteer opportunities in the local community.
10. I can identify the modern-day idols (i.e. television, cellphone, money, status, job, possessions, etc.) in my life and actively work to overcome them.
11. I spend at least 15 minutes each day in prayer.
12. I pray daily for my pastor and the leaders in my church.
13. I keep a prayer journal of requests and answered prayer.

Appendix E: Pre-intervention Small Group Member Interview Questions

1. What characteristics, activities, or spiritual disciplines do you/would you use to determine your spiritual health? Limit your answer to five.
2. Why did you choose those five?
3. Based upon your answer to question #1 what is your assessment of your spiritual health?
4. What factors contribute to your answer to question #3?
5. In what area(s) are you strongest?
6. In what area(s) do you need improvement?
7. With what area of your small group are you most satisfied?
8. What area would you change if you had the ability to instantly change it and why would you change that area?
9. From your perspective, rank order the following challenges from least to greatest as they impact your small group: gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, sexual sin?
10. Why did you rank them in that order?
11. From your perspective rank order the following practices of small group membership in the process of discipleship and spiritual growth: volunteer outreach activities, accountability partner, understanding and identifying personal idols, daily Bible reading, prayer journal?
12. What three areas are most important?
13. Why do you feel that way?
14. What two areas are least important?
15. Why do you feel that way?

Appendix F: Small Group Leader Progress Reports

The anticipated frequency of these reports is one report every two or three weeks.

Questions in this section will have a six-point rating scale: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, or not applicable.

1. Members in my group are demonstrating a commitment to their accountability partner.
2. Members in my group are demonstrating a noticeable increase in their commitment to daily Bible reading.
3. Members in my group are demonstrating a noticeable increase in their commitment to outreach or volunteer opportunities in the local community.
4. Members in my group are demonstrating a noticeable increase in the ability to identify and reduce the influence of personal idols in their lives.
5. Members in my group are demonstrating a noticeable increase in the quality of their daily prayer lives and are keeping a prayer journal.
6. Members in my group are demonstrating an improvement in resisting the temptations of gambling, alcohol, or sexual sin in their lives.

Appendix G: Small Group Leader Mid-point Assessment

Questions in this section will have a five-point rating scale: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree.

1. Members in my group are demonstrating a strong commitment to their accountability partner.
2. Members in my group are demonstrating a noticeable increase in their commitment to daily Bible reading.
3. Members in my group are demonstrating a noticeable increase in their participation in outreach or volunteer opportunities in the local community.
4. Members in my group are demonstrating an increased understanding of personal idols and reducing the influence of idols in their lives.
5. Members in my group are demonstrating a noticeable improvement in their prayer lives and are keeping a prayer journal.
6. Members in my group are demonstrating a noticeable increase in resisting gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, and sexual sin.

Appendix H: Post-intervention Pastor Interview Questions

1. What characteristics, activities, or spiritual disciplines do you/would you use to determine the spiritual health of your congregation? Limit your answer to no more than five.
2. Were changes made after the intervention, and if so, why?
3. Has the spiritual health of your congregation changed after the intervention period, and if so, how?
4. What factors contribute to your answer to question #3?
5. In what area(s) did your congregation improve the most?
6. What area(s) still need significant improvement?
7. With what area of your church are you most satisfied?
8. What area would you change if you had the ability to instantly change it and why would you change that area?
9. Has the pre-intervention rank ordering of gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, and sexual sin changed post-intervention?
10. If there has been a change in the rank ordering, why do you think that has occurred?
11. From your perspective, provide a post-intervention rank order of the following practices of small group membership in the process of discipleship and spiritual growth: volunteer outreach activities, accountability partner, understanding and identifying personal idols, daily Bible reading, a prayer journal?
12. What three areas are most important now?
13. Why do you feel that way?
14. What two areas are least important now?
15. Why do you feel that way?

Appendix I: Post-intervention Small Group Leader Focus Group Meeting Questions

1. What characteristics, activities, or spiritual disciplines do you/would you use to determine the spiritual health of your small group? Limit your answer to no more than five.
2. Were changes made after the intervention, and if so, why?
3. How has the spiritual health of your small group changed after the intervention period?
4. What factors contribute to your answer to question #3?
5. In what area(s) did your small group improve the most?
6. What area(s) still need significant improvement?
7. With what area of your small group are you most satisfied?
8. What area would you change if you had the ability to instantly change it and why would you change that area?
9. From your perspective, rank order the following challenges from least to greatest as they impact your small group: gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, sexual sin post-intervention?
10. Why do you think there has been a change in your rank ordering?
11. From your perspective rank order the following practices of small group membership in the process of discipleship and spiritual growth: volunteer outreach activities, accountability partner, understanding and identifying personal idols, daily Bible reading, a prayer journal post-intervention?
12. What three areas are most important now?
13. Why do you feel that way?
14. What two areas are least important now?
15. Why do you feel that way?

Appendix J: Post-intervention Small Group Member Interview Questions

1. What characteristics, activities, or spiritual disciplines do you/would you use to determine your spiritual health? Limit your answer to five.
2. Were changes made after the intervention, and if so, why?
3. Has your spiritual health changed after the intervention period, and if so, how?
4. What factors contribute to your answer to question #3?
5. In what area(s) did you improve the most?
6. What area(s) still need improvement?
7. With what area of your spiritual health are you most satisfied?
8. What area would you change if you had the ability to instantly change it and why would you change that area?
9. Has the pre-intervention rank ordering of gambling addiction, alcohol abuse, and sexual in your small group changed post-intervention?
10. If there has been a change in the rank ordering, why do you think that has occurred?
16. From your perspective rank order the following practices of small group membership in the discipleship process and spiritual growth after the intervention period: volunteer outreach activities, accountability partner, understanding and identifying personal idols, daily Bible reading, prayer journal?
11. What three areas are most important now?
12. Why do you feel that way?
13. What two areas are least important now?
14. Why do you feel that way?

Appendix K: Small Group Covenant¹⁶⁵

1. The Covenant of Priority. I will make attendance at and involvement in this group a high priority in my schedule.
2. The Covenant of Prayer. I will pray for the members in this group on a regular basis. I will also pray that the Lord of the Harvest will send others to our group.
3. The Covenant of Outreach. I will encourage our group to reach out and involve others, both believers and those who have yet to believe in Christ as Savior. I will seek to do this to the best of my ability.
4. The Covenant of Growth. I will seek personal growth (in all areas of my life), and I will help the group grow in both quality and quantity.
5. The Covenant of Openness. I promise to become an open person, disclosing to you, as well as I am able, my feelings, struggles, joys, and hurts. I will also remain open to involvement in a leadership team for this group or a future group.
6. The Covenant of Multiplication. I believe that multiplication is a powerful tool to build the kingdom of God and will seek to help the leadership team to mature this group to the point where we can multiply or birth another healthy small group.
7. The Covenant of Availability. I make available to you, the group and the members, my time, my insight, and my resources.
8. The Covenant of Confidentiality. I promise to keep confidential anything shared within the confines of our group, knowing that this is essential to trust and openness between us. I also agree not to share private prayer requests with others unless I have the permission of the person sharing the request.
9. The Covenant of Accountability. I recognize that my Christian growth will be enhanced if my walk with Christ and my relationships with others are open to other members of my small group. Therefore, I ask you to watch my life, to check on my progress in achieving my personal and spiritual goals, and to help me become more like Christ.
10. The Covenant of Love. I promise to seek to grow in my love for God, for the members of this group, and for people who may not be in this group at this time. I understand love, according to the Parable of the Good Samaritan, involves risk, sacrifice, time, and commitment.

Signature

Date

¹⁶⁵ Dempsey and Earley, *Leading Healthy Growing Multiplying Small Groups*, Kindle Location 1042–1063.