Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Discipleship: A Parental Responsibility

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By

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Thesis Project Approval Sheet

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT
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The primary disciple-makers of children are the parents, which is mandated by God. Throughout the Scriptures, God empowered the family to lead their children into spiritual growth. God charged the family in maintaining a spiritual atmosphere where their children can learn and become His disciples. God makes it clear to parents that their responsibility toward their children while at home is a continuous process of teaching His Word to them. Even though the family unit is one, the primary spiritual responsibility resides with the father in maintaining the integrity of the family discipleship endeavors in Christ. The purpose of this thesis is to assist the family in understanding their primary role as disciple-makers of their children and to know that parents as disciple-makers are planting God's words in their children for continuous multiplication

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Abbreviations

DMIN   Doctor of Ministry

GPBC   Greater Portmore Baptist Church

GPEI   Greater Portmore Education Institute

HBC   Hellshire Baptist Church

IRB   Institute Review Board

JBU   Jamaica Baptist Union

JBUMA   Jamaica Baptist Union Agency

JFLLL   Jamaica Foundation for Livelong Learning

LUSOD   Liberty University School of Divinity

POMs   Parents of Missionaries

SACABA   St. Catherine Baptist Association

UTCWI   United Theological College of the West Indies

VBS   Vacation Bible School

Chapter 1: Introduction

During the past six years of ministry at Hellshire Baptist Church, it is noticeable that approximately twelve parents, both single and married, have been attending services and religious activities without having their children accompanying them. Throughout the observation, which started in February of 2014 and ended in February 2019, it was observed that during Bible studies, prayer meetings, and religious services in the communities, only adults attended those activities, while their children whom they have the primary reponnsibility were not in attendance. It appears that the absence of approximately eight of the children accompanying their parents to religious activities created a void in the integrity of the body of Christ, which leads to family units that can prevent the growth of future disciples. These children ranging from six to seventeen years, come from single and marital homes, and are primary responsibility of the church attending parents.

It is noticeable that twelve parents are not disciples because the church does not emphasize discipleship and disciple-making. The lack of adult disciples caused the church to become stagnant and void of future growth in the ministry and addition to the body of Christ. After casually speaking with some members at Hellshire Baptist Church, single and married, as to their concepts of discipleship, it was discovered that they have a desire to learn about discipleship, which they believed in the church's responsibility to teach them and their children. Roughly twelve members thought that they do not have the abilities which will enable them to make disciples of their children. It appears that the lack of adulthood discipleship creates growth barriers and fostered dependability on the church for disciple-making of their children.

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Ministry Context

The Hellshire Baptist Church (HBC) was planted in 2004 as a spin-off from The Greater Portmore Baptist Church (GPBC). For over twelve years, HBC has experienced minimal growth and resided in a single school building room. Other denominations came into the communities and exceeded growth and discipleship. From its inception, HBC had a membership of thirty-five worshipers, which has been steady. At its peak, Sunday worshipers numbered roughly twelve and are declining because of a lack of support from the mother church

The Mother Church

In 1993, The Jamaica Baptist Union (JBU), in partnership with St. Catherine Baptist Association (SACABA), hosted their "Christ for the Crisi" evangelical service in the 2 East community of Greater Portmore, in the Parish of St. Catherine, Jamaica. This outreach ministry endeavor was launched, hoping to initiate Baptist presence in the community and eventually establish a Baptist congregation. Arising from the "Christ for the Crisi" evangelical services, a couple, Ruben and Martha Gordon, who were members of another Baptist Church in a nearby community, offered their home in the 2 East community as a meeting place for service. On May 5, 1993, under Gordon family's leadership, people began to meet at Gordon's home for prayer and Bible studies. The numerical growth of attendance, along with a steady audience, inspired Gordon's family to seek pastoral support from the JBU.

In responding to Gordon's family request for pastoral support in guidance and pastoral care, a few SACABA leaders assisted the new mission. However, at their executive meetings, SACABA Moderator emphasized that none of the JBU Circuits in St. Catharine felt called by God to a partnership with the mission in two East communities in its founding and establishing. In Halfway Tree, Kingston, Jamaica, Burchel Taylor, the Bethel Baptist Church leader, upon

hearing that ministers of SACABA have no intention of supporting the newly established mission. Burchel Taylor immediately answered the call to support the Gordon's established mission, on the basis that the JBU leadership would assign one of the next batches of probationer ministers to the Bethel Baptist Church with the responsibility for the new mission in two East communities.

In 1995, Burchel Taylor, in partnership with the Gordon and other members of the new mission, began negotiating with the Greater Portmore Comprehensive High School to use its auditorium as a meeting place for the new church mission. On November 5, 1995, the new church mission had its first official worship service in the school auditorium at 10:00 *a.m.* with thirty-six worshipers. In fulfilling its promise, on April 7, 1996, on Easter Day, the JBU presented to the Greater Portmore congregation, Michael Shim-Hue, who would be assigned to the Bethel Baptist Church. On August 1, 1996, Michael Shim-Hue assumed exclusive responsibility for the Greater Portmore church mission. On November 3, 1996, a commissioning service was held at the school auditorium, establishing the task as a member of the St. Catherine Baptist Association and Shim-Hue as its leader.

On February 23, 1997, at the JBU General Assembly held at the National Arena in Kingston, Jamaica, the Union, Jeffrey McKenzie extended the fellowship's right hand.

The new church mission was now officially recognized as a church, with congregational members of forty-five. The church mission now has a new name, The Greater Portmore Baptist Church (GPBC), with Michael Shim-Hue. By 2002, services were still held in the school auditorium, with a membership of 170. Outgrowing its present venue, the congregation made plans to move to a new location. On October 12, 2003, a groundbreaking ceremony for the Greater Portmore Church Sanctuary was held, and work started. On August 6, 2006, GPBC

moved to its new building and had the first worship service in a partially complete building. Currently, there are 450 members on the book, with 300 active members.

The Greater Portmore Baptist Church has nine specialized ministries, coordinating and overseeing nine specialized ministries to serve the communities. Those nine departments are Vacation Bible School (VBS), an annual event with the primary goal of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to the children as they participate in fun activities. During VBS, the church provided food and transportation to participants. The average attendance yearly to VBS is from 120 to 160, ages from four years to adulthood. There is also a prayer and fasting ministry, which worked in unison with the Comfort and Restoration ministry. GPBC also has a community outreach ministry, which organized community services, and events focusing on community participation.

There is also a birth-month ministry, which focuses on achieving fellowship among believers, such as membership bonding, teamwork, project planning, and general church relationship enrichment. In GPBC's ministry to the elderly, the church gives attention to assisting with the needs of the elderly in the community. The overseas mission, a partnership with Haiti in training ministers at the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI). Members of GPBC also participated in missions to the United States, in partnership with the Mount Zion Baptist Church in Tappahannock, Virginia, and the Greater Abyssian Baptist Church in New Jersey. The children's ministry is a partnership between parents and GPBC for children's spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical, and social development. Other departments are the Children's Service, Children's Moment, Children's Choir, and Children's Mission.

GPBC also has an education department, a legacy for enhancing and educating Jamaica to improve the Jamaican people's spiritual values and Christian principles. There is also the

hospitality department, music department, and youth department. At present, there is no women or men department. GPBC is governed by a team of deacons nominated every two years by the pastor and current deacons and approved by them, then presented to the congregation. There are twenty-six active deacons at GPBC, which consist of twenty-four females and two males. The numbers frequently change due to migration.

Hellshire Baptist Church

The HBC was planted in 2004 and is an extension of The Greater Portmore Baptist Church. Even though HBC is an extension of the Greater Portmore Baptist Church, it is autonomous, yet at the same time, under the leadership and guidance of Greater Portmore Circuit of Baptist Churches. In 2001, the St. Catherine Baptist Association (SACABA) indicated to the Portmore pastors that, based on the city's population and geographic growth, the community should have five to seven more Jamaica Baptist Union Congregations. From the expressed desire of SACABA, the Greater Portmore Baptist Church founded the HBC Mission in February 2002.

HBC was planted with twelve members and initially led by Deacon Nursita Johnson, with a vision of evangelizing the residents of "All Hellshire," consisting of fourteen communities. In 1976, the Jamaica Baptist Union purchased property, with an idea for future growth in Hellshire Community. The primary reason for establishing a mission church in Hellshire was approximately ninety-eight percent of the church-attending populace in the community was traversing out of Hellshire to places such as Greater Portmore, Old Harbor, and Spanish Town to worship.

In February 2004, the HBC was established as a church of the JBU at the Hellshire Park Estate Basic School, with members commissioned from Greater Portmore Baptist Church. Since then, the HBC has witnessed in the community through regular worship services on Sunday

mornings and Bible studies on Thursday nights. On Sunday, July 1, 2007, at 3:00 p.m., a commissioning and groundbreaking service of worship was held on the church land in Johnson-Hill Community, purchased by the JBU in 1976 expectation to commence erecting a building. To this day, no structure has been built on the ground. However, periodically, workdays have been held on the church property for beautification, and regular visits are made to adjoining communities.

There are forty members on the books, with approximately fourteen active members attending services on Sunday mornings, with roughly six members attending Bible studies on Thursday nights.

Membership at HBC is as follows: There are five adult males age ranged from nineteen to sixty-seven, seven children ages range from three years to fourteen, and twelve adult females age ranged from the mid-twenties to mid-sixties. HBC is governed by a team of five deacons, which are all females. Preaching is scheduled by the circuit office, located at GPBC. There are the adults Sunday schools, which have five to seven in attendance, and children Sunday school, which have two to four presence on any given Sunday, which are not consistent.

HBC has seven ministries departments, which are seldom active, except for Vacation Bible School, an annual event. It consists of twenty-five to forty children ages from four to twelve, attended daily for one week, street-side meetings are held periodically, around twice a month. Other ministries departments, which are seldom active, are family-time with the Word, evangelistic services, and a unique outreach ministry in the Half Moon Bay Community. HBC has no men or women fellowship ministries. There is a hospitality committee. However, due to inadequate membership, this department is dormant. HBC has a music department, which has been inactive for a few years. Some of these committees, along with the others, have become

defunct or inactive. Periodically, HBC, in a joint venture with the Greater Portmore Baptist Church, conducts outreach ministries in the communities, supported by the Jamaica Baptist Union Mission Agency (JBUMA).

In collaboration with its mother church, other community joint ventures undertaken by the HBC are the Greater Portmore Education Institute (GPEI), which is designed to facilitate students' needs up to the Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) level. At times, both Hellshire and Greater Portmore Baptist Church work in partnership with the Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL) to provide adults with continuing education. Currently, the HBC occupies a room at the Hellshire Park Estate Basic School in the Hellshire community, which is consisted of fourteen sub-communities in the Town of Portmore, St. Catherine, Jamaica.

Problem Presented

The problem is that it appears as though twelve Christian parents at HBC may not be training their children in the ways of the Lord, which will enable them to grow in God's grace and love. It also appears that they assume that teaching discipleship to their children is the church's responsibility, which freed them from the sole responsibility of introducing their children to discipleship from an early age. Conversely, discipleship is a parental responsibility, which is scripturally mandated, supported throughout the Bible, and practiced by the early churches. It also appears as though the twelve parents at HBC are attending services throughout the circuit without taking their children. However, the Circuit of Baptist Churches, which HBC is a part of, appears to place little or no emphasis on parents as disciple-makers of their children.

Therefore, the twelve parents of the HBC who participated in church activities appear to have little or no idea of discipleship's importance in their lives. To emphasize the problem, even though children from HBC are attending services, it appears as though their participation in

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planned activities is minimal. It seems as though the twelve parents at HBC, both single and

married, excluded their children from attending planned events, such as Bible studies, prayer

meetings, and outreach ministries. As a result, their spiritual growth is stagnant. It also appears

as though the non-attendance of children's participation in planned activities caused the church to

grow at a prolonged rate and is on the verge of becoming stagnant or even facing an early

demise.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to equip twelve parents to educate

their children in the way of the Lord and to enable them to grow spiritually strong in God's grace

and his love. The research project also involves exposing children from an early age to

discipleship and multiplication as they grew into teenagers. The hope is for the possible twelve

parents to know that they should not depend on the church to train their children in the ways of

the Lord.

Basic Assumptions

The fundamental assumption is that all parents should assume the sole responsibility of

being disciple-makers of their children and train them in the ways of the Lord. Other beliefs are

as follows: First, all Christians are disciples of Christ. Therefore, they must be active in disciple-

making. At the Great Commission, Jesus mandated that all His followers must be active

disciples. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every

creature." (Mark 16:15, NIV).

Second, it is assumed that it is a parent's right and privilege to be a role model for their

children, including making disciples of their children. Throughout the Scriptures, there are pieces

of evidence supporting parents training their children in the ways of the Lord, which is a form of

parents as disciple-makers of their children. "And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deut 11:19, NKJV).

Definitions

Body of Christ: "Ecclesiastical Terms, the Christian Church."[1]

Disciples: "One who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another: such as Christianity."[2]

Disciple-makers: "A Christian who enters into relationships with people to help them trust and follow Jesus."[3]

Disciple-making: "A relationship based on intimacy and obedience."[4]

Family Discipleship: "Discipleship within the family could be defined as; the act of training and teaching your family (spouse and children) to follow Jesus."[5]

Multiplication: "The result of a focus on making disciples who make disciples. In other words, a healthy disciple is formed and shaped in a life-giving cell."[6]

Spiritual formation: "Is the process of being changed to be more like Jesus."[7]

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[1] Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged, 12th Edition 2014. S.v "Body of Christ," accessed April 3 2020, https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Body+of+Christ

[2] Disciples, accessed April 2, 2020, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disciple.

[3] *What is a Disciple Maker?,* accessed April 2, 2020, https://discipleship.org/bobbys-blog/what-is-a-disciple-maker/

[4] Rod Dempsey and David Early, *Spiritual Formation Is... How to Grow in Jesus with Passion and Confidence.* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2018), 52.

[5] *What is Family Discipleship?,* accessed April 2, 2020, https://www.justbringithome.com/single-post/2015/09/15/What-is-Family-Discipleship.

[6] Joel Comiskey, *Making Disciples in the Twenty-First Century Church.* (Moreno Valley, CA: CCS publishing, 2013), 102.

[7] Dempsey and Early, *Spiritual Formation Is*, Part 1.

Spiritual transformation: "Is a fundamental change in a person's sacred or spiritual life."[8]

Transformation: "The act or operation of changing the form or external appearance, or change of the soul into a divine substance, as among the mystics."[9]

Ways of God: "His providential government or His works."[10]

Limitations

Some limitations are time and place. Because HBC services are kept at the Hellshire Park Basic School, accessibility to the building is limited to Thursday nights for Bible studies and Sundays for morning services. Therefore, the research will be limited to Sundays, after services for an hour and a half. Phone interviews are minimal due to the high cost of cellular calls. Therefore, for any significant outcome, face-to-face interviews and research are required. Time restraint is another limitation. Some of the potential participants work in the city and are depending on public transportation. Therefore, times will be set aside for interviews, and research will be established based on the building's availability, which will be on Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings. Thursday interviews and research will be conducted an hour before Bible studies, while on Sundays, interviews and research will be conducted an hour and a half after morning services.

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[8] Spiritual transformation. accessed April 2, 2020, https://www.merriam-webster.com

[9] Transformation, accessed April 2, 2020, https://av1611.com/kjbp/kjv-dictionary/transformm.html.

[10] Ways of God. accessed April 2, 2020, https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Ways+of+God

Delimitations

One delimitation is that only participants will be allowed in the room an hour and fifteen minutes before Bible studies and will be permitted to stay in the place on Sundays after morning worshiping for an hour and a half. In light of this, a small group ministry will be intentionally established for this project's research. The small group will be significantly small. There will be only two men available for participation. At the same time, there will be ten single and married parents, ages ranging from eighteen to sixty-five, who will participate in the study. Because the research focuses on The Greater Portmore Circuit of Baptist Churches, especially HBC, the study will only include parents and not the entire congregation. One last delimitation is that study will be conducted in two areas: The Greater Portmore Baptist Church (GPBC), which is the alternated site, and the primary location for the study will be HBC.

Thesis Statement

If HBC equips parents through small group ministry to be disciples of Christ, then parents will become disciple-makers of their children.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

Introduction

This chapter will present literature reviews for the concepts of parents being the primary disciple-makers of their children. The study programs are based on several biblical Scriptures such as Deuteronomy, Proverbs, and the Synoptic Gospels. Literature reviews will also examine various works as follow: 1) The roles of parents in discipleship by contemporary authors such as Christopher Mullennix and Cameron Lee, 2) Works by Yuen WA Leung, James Dobson, Forest William, and Steenburg, which emphasize the importance of family disciples, 3) Works by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, which highlights the cost of discipleship, and Bobby Harrington and Patrick Robert, which discuss disciple-making along with Paul Pettit on spiritual transformation.

Literature Review

Disciple/Discipleship

The term discipleship has taken on various meanings throughout the ages. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the term discipleship and its similarities defined by multiple writers. According to Bonhoeffer, discipleship is defined as loyalty to Christ, and because Christ is the subject of that adherence, it must take the form of discipleship.[11] Bonhoeffer further elaborates that discipleship is "An abstract Christology, a doctrinal system, a general religious knowledge on the subject of grace or the forgiveness of sin, render discipleship superfluous, and they positively exclude any idea of discipleship whatever, and are essentially inimical to the whole conception of following Christ."[12] In contrast, Hull's writing on the subject of discipleship, "In trying to understand that discipleship offers God's very best to us and that he sees it as the

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[11] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 59.
[12] Ibid.

primary undertaking of the church..."[13] However, Hull agrees with Bonhoeffer in a slightly

different way, by saying,

> If someone you don't trust tries to convince you to believe something or change your mind, she almost always fails. However, when someone you admire, and trust do the same. You'll almost always believe that individual. A disciple (Gk, *mathetes*) is a learner or follower-usually someone committed t.o a significant master...he further describes the term disciple as a follower of Christ.[14]

Bonhoeffer and Hull agree that disciple is the primary term used in the Gospels when

referring to Jesus' followers and is a communal referent for those known in the early churches as

believers, Christians, brothers/sisters, those of the way, or saints. However, they note that each

term focuses upon different aspects of the individual's associations with Jesus and others of the

faith.[15] The name was used most often in this specific sense at least 230 times in the Gospels and

twenty-eight times in Acts.[16] While some sources defined parent discipleship, others simply

defined discipleship. To establish the coherence of discipleship in families, the leadership must

clarify the terms disciple and discipleship's meanings, as these terms are often ambiguous among

Christians.[17] Unlike Forrest, Steenburg, and Mullennix, Wu and Harrington agree on this topic,

as their focus was primarily on defining discipleship and not parent discipleship.

Harrington is in agreement with Bonhoeffer and Hull in the importance of defining

disciple before teaching disciples. What are the three major characteristics which define a

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[13] Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: Tyndale house Publishers, Inc., 2006), 32.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 32.

[16] Yuen-WA Leung, "Fasting Discipleship to Jesus among Chinese Christian parents" Order No.13878016, Biola University, 2019. In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, accessed June 29 2929, http://ezproxy. Liberty .edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/ 2226105062?accountid=12085. Pp.9-10.

[17] Bobby W. Harrington and Josh Patrick Robert, *The Disciple Maker's Handbook: Seven Elements of a discipleship Lifestyle* (Grand Rapids: MI: Zondervan, 2017), 34.

disciple? 1) "Following" Jesus, who is the (head) 2) "Maybe being changed" by Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Changes come from within (heart) 3) Being committed to the mission of Jesus, which is to be "fishers of men,"? the act of multiplication (hands). Putting all three together, we arrive at the following definition of a disciple as someone who follows Jesus and is committed to the mission of Jesus.[18]

Harrington believes that before getting into the characteristics of a disciple-making life, it's necessary to know and understand what disciple-making is about. People occasionally use the same words regarding discipleship, which can have significantly different meanings, leading to problems. Disciple-makers have an end goal, which is making a disciple, and the definition of a disciple can be formed around the words of Jesus in Matthew 4:19.[19] According to Harrington, the three significant discipleship attributes are, first, "follow to be transformed, and have a change of heart," which are the primary foundations for disciple-making. Second, everyone who desires to be a disciple must first embrace the three fundamental characteristics of discipleship. Third, the combination of all three definitions is exemplified as everyone who is a follower of Christ and is being transformed by the Holy Spirit for the church's mission.[20]

Parents Discipleship

Dobson approached family discipleship from the viewpoint of parents having the primary responsibility of training their children in the Lord's ways and devoted quality time for interacting with their children, regardless of the situation. Dobson's views on family discipleship are crucial to parents. The duties as parents, then, are not to eliminate all challenges from their

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[18] Harrington and Robert, *The Disciple Maker's Handbook*, 35.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

children. Instead, it provides a self-confident ally, reassuring them when they are in distress,

intervening when the pressures become overpowering, and supporting them in times of crisis.[21]

According to a Dobson survey, parents will laugh at their frustrations and blame

themselves when they are overwhelmed and lose self-confidence in their abilities to be effective

parents.[22] Dobson also articulated the importance of parents setting aside quality time for their

children. He believed that parents must play an essential role in their children's discipleship

development. In comparison, Dobson does not believe in parents embracing Christian education.

Conversely, Lee does. He thought Christian education is the foundation for a parent's spiritual

growth.[23] Dobson, on the other hand, focuses more on the physical and secular roles of

parenting.

Forrest agrees that parents must train their children in the ways of the Lord. His argument

focuses not only on Scriptural references but also on numerous scholarly works that support his

claims in presenting parents as the primary disciple-makers for their children.[24] According to

Forrest, when God called the family into discipleship, He gave two specific commands, one is

cited above and the other is discussed in the text below; this is cosistent throughout the entirety

of Scripture. Forrest also believed that the theological framework for family discipleship is

affirmed throughout the larger stories of Scripture as God relates to Israel's nation as His

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[21] James Dobson, *Dr. Dobson's Handbook of Family Advice: Encouragement and Practical Help for your Home* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publication, 1998), 172.

[22] Lee, Cameron. Parenting as Discipleship: A Contextual Motif for Christian parent Education. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*. 19, no. 3 (September 1991): 268– 277.

[23] James Dobson, *Handbook of Family Advice,* 87.

[24] William R. Forrest, "Family Discipleship Practice in the Single-Parent Home: A Phonomenogical Inquiry" Order No. 13809650, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019. In PR5OQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, accessed June 29, 2020, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy. liberty.edu/docview/2201461454?accountid=12085. Pp.16-17.

children. Forrest goes on to say, "Modeled Family Discipleship in the Old Testament. As one

closely examines Scripture, the theme of family discipleship only becomes clearer."[25]

According to Steenburg, fathers are responsible for raising and nurturing their children in

partnership with their wives. It is the primary vital role of fatherhood. Fathers possess an

enormous influence over their children, not only in the negative, as discussed by Paul in the

beginning in Ephesians 6:4, but also in the positive, which he addressed in the conclusion of

verse four.[26]

It is the father's responsibility to train up their children in the ways of the Lord by

disciplining and instructing them (Eph 6:4b) As the head of the family, fathers have a role in

teaching their children (Deut 6:7). Fathers are the guiding light for their children (Prov 22:6). [27]

Fathers provide safety and protection for their children (Eph 6:4a). Fathers are to care for their

children and support them (1 Tim 5:8). As children of God, fathers are mandated by the

comprehension and precept of the Lord (Deut 6:20-25). The Christian principles dictate factors,

which guide how a father should discipline and nourish his children.[28]

Steenburg, also citing Polycarp's views in contrasting Paul's ideas, says, "Polycarp's

exhortation to the Philippians is reminiscent of Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians. By

considering the female role of helper from Genesis and examining Polycarp's letter,

contemporary readers of Scripture can learn that as much as the command in Ephesians is to the

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[25] Forrest, "Family Discipleship Practice," 20.

[26] Wesley Ryan Steenburg. "Effective practices for Training Parents in Family Discipleship: A Mixed Methods Study," Order No. 3454211, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011. In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Central, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, 33, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Feffective-practices-training-parents-family%2Fdocview%2F868493909%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085.

[27] Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the New American Standard Bible (NAS), Anaheim Lockman Foundation, 1998.

[28] Ibid.

father, the mother was just as involved in the instruction of children in the home of the first-century church."[29]

Mullennix's views have similarities with those of Timothy Paul Jones, who believes that parents should train their children in fear of the Lord from infancy. Two early Christian documents, *Didache* and *Letter of Barnabas*, summarize Christian practices from the first and second centuries AD. Those two sources emphasize the importance of parents training their children in fear of God from an early age.[30] According to Mullennix, Polycarp, a Christian leader of the second century, believed that husbands together with their spouses are responsible for raising their offsprings and for training them in the fear and wisdom of the Lord. Clement of Rome also articulates the roles of a father in raising their children; he advised parents to grasp the opportunity of communicating with their children the instructions of the Lord.[31]

In contemporary time, there are numerous resources which tackle family discipleship in the home environment. There are several methods for implementing family discipleship. However, there appears to be an overlap with the implementations of the plans.[32] According to Lee, the Bible outlines family discipleship and parent's role in the process. Deuteronomy 6 is a reoccurring theme. Overall, the various applications of family discipleship can be broken down into three categories: (1) the family-integrated model, (2) the family-based model, and (3) the

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[29] Christopher M. Mullennix, *"Developing a Strategy to Equip Parents at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, blackville, South Carolina to lead their Children in Family Discipleship through Deuteronomy 6:4-9"* Order No. 10291280, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016. In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Central; ProQuest Central ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, accessed June 30, 2020, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login? url=https:// search-proquest-com.ezprosy.liberty.edu/docview/1836057184?accountid=12085. pp. 39-40.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Mullennix, *"Developing a Strategy to Equip Parents at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church,* 39-40.

[32] Ibid., 43.

equipping model. These three models present the contemporary contexts in which family discipleship is practiced.[33]

Lee articulated that discipleship's concept offers a suitable theological theme for teaching a biblical understanding of the discipline. Within the parent-child environment, the words "*mathêtês,* or "learner" imply family discipleship's dominance as an agreement of love within the family unit. Michael Wilkins, professor of language and literature at Talbot School of Theology, also supports this relational emphasis. For example, the noun *mathêtês*, or "learner," is used frequently in the Gospels and in Acts to describe a disciple.[34]

Obedience

Obedience is the primary focus for Christians who desire to enter into discipleship. Bonhoeffer believes that the call goes forth and is at once followed by the answer of obedience. Walker believes disciples is an act of obedience, not an acknowledgment of faith in Jesus, and how the called instantaneously induce compliance.[35] Walker also agrees with Bonhoeffer when he infers that Christian obedience is a fight to overcome self-interest, to abandon our ways, and be content with what the Lord has provided for us. The methods of the Lord are not our ways. Jesus made this clear to His disciples, "if any man will follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me (Mark 8:34)."[36] According to Bonhoeffer, by reducing the faith's traditional values, we glide into a non-evangelical explanation of the Bible. The interior struggle is to overcome our self-centeredness, our wanting to do it our way, and to be ready to accept the

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[33] Cameron Lee, *"Parenting as Discipleship: A Contextual Motif for Christian parent Education"* Journal of psychology and theology. 19, no. 3 (September 1991): 268–270.

[34] Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship.* 32.

[35] David Walker, *"Christian Discipleship and Consecrated Life"* The Australasian Catholic Record 92, no. 2 (04, 2015): 131-40, accessed June 29, 2020, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1700064508?accountid=12085. Pg. 135.

[36] Ibid.

divine way, even though it means the cross. Disobedience is the child of pride. Obedience is the destroyer of pride.[37]

Walker believes that the explicit call of Jesus and the answer of single-minded obedience have an unchangeable implication. By those implications, Jesus calls people into genuine circumstances where faith is achievable. For that rationale, His call is an actual call, and He wishes it so to be understood because Christ knows that it is only through genuine obedience that man can become free to believe in Him.[38] Walker also affirms that obedience is an attitude that begins in the heart, which makes the believer obedient with a will that is open to God's Word. It allows the believer to surrender to the teaching of Christ and be open to the instruction of suitable church authorities and be open to good Christian morals and beliefs. It permits believers to surrender their will in the ways of God as a way of overcoming self-interest.[39]

Porter emphasizes obedience as the forerunner of discipleship when he says, "Another important reminder is that since Jesus sought the will of His Father as an act of inner obedience, doing His Father's will was a nourishing experience."[40] Porter laid the foundation for reliable and effective discipleship for all to follow by emphasizing obedience as the forerunner of discipleship. Walker and Porter agree that obedience is paramount in making disciples. Bonhoeffer articulates, "If, however, we make a chronological distinction between faith and obedience, and make obedience after faith, we are divorcing the one from the other, and then we

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[37] Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 83.

[38] Walker, *Christian Discipleship and Consecrated Life,* 135.

[39] Porter, Steven L, *"Will/Heart/Spirit: Discipleship that Forms the Christian Character"* Christian Education Journal 16, no. 1 (04, 2019): 79-94, accessed June 29, 2020, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url= https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/2184328075?accountid=12085.

[40] Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship,* 64.

get the practical question, when must obedience begin? Obedience remains separate from faith."[41]

Bonhoeffer believes that "By simply eliminating obedience on principle, we drift into a non-evangelical interpretation of the Bible. Some take it for granted as they open the Bible that they have a key to its interpretation. However, the key they use would not be the living Christ, who is both Judge and Savior."[42]

Formation/Transformation

Klaus articulates that several questions and uncertainties may arise regarding the topic of character formation. Character formation is not a moral formation project done by individuals' human power, but it must be initiated and continued by God's empowering mercy and grace.[43] Chan's views are similar to Klaus when he says, "The church is a group of redeemed people that live and serve together in such a way that their lives and communities are transformed. Through His life, death, and resurrection, we are transformed, 'made new.'[44] According to Kingsbury, John the Baptist believed the journey of transformation was all the proof anyone could ever need that Jesus had made a change in their lives, which will have many more signs of change.[45] Porter approaches spiritual formation from the basis of understanding the implications, while Chan focuses on community enhancements. Kingsbury references John the Baptist in transformation as proof of Christ working through the individuals. Klaus also linked change with the cosmos when

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[41] Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*. 83.

[42] Francis Chan, M*ultiply: Disciples Making Disciples* (Colorado Spring, CO: David Cook, 2012), 32.

[43] Ibid., 60.

[44] Karen Kingsbury, *The Friends of Jesus* (New York, NY: Howard Books, 2015), 191.

[45] Klaus Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus: The Formation of Christian Character* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 34.

he says, "Our formation into becoming like Jesus is part of a grand cosmic project, what Jesus called "the kingdom of God."[46]

Porter articulates that Willard strongly emphasized the importance of an accurate understanding of spiritual formation in Christ. For instance, he writes, "Understanding is the basis of care. What you would take care of, you must first understand...If you would care for your spiritual core—your heart or will—you must understand it."[47]

Porter believes that Willard made an important point, which is the truth of human life. Porter thinks that people simply will not know how to take care of plants, businesses, children, etc., without an adequate understanding. Porter also believes that people effortlessly do what is wrong without practical knowledge and fail to do what is right, which will do more harm than good.[48] Unlike Chan and Kingsbury, Porter articulates ideas about the importance of transformation relating to discipleship and frequently cites other sources, such as Willard, in supporting transformations. Hellerman's views are slightly different when he states, "Spiritual formation occurs primarily in the context of community. People who remain connected with their brothers and sisters in the local church almost invariably grow in self-understanding, and they mature in their ability to relate in healthy ways to God and their fellow human beings."[49] Pettit focuses on growing in the spirit, while Hellerman focuses on community enhancements. Pettit asserts that transformation is essential in the lives of all believers. He also believes that spiritual

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[46] Porter, Steven L, *"Will/Heart/Spirit: Discipleship that Forms the Christian Character"* Christian Education Journal 16, no. 1 (04, 2019): 79-94, accessed June 30, 2020, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url= https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/2184328075?accountid=12085.

[47] Porter, *Will/Heart/Spirit,* 81.

[48] Ibid., 1.

[49] Paul Pettit, *Foundations of spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to becoming like Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publication, 2008), 32-44.

change is necessary for the lives of Christians. It is the pivoting points in Christians' lives, which permit them to develop and make disciples of others.[50]

According to Pettit, "Viewing the fullness of the gospel ushers our discussion into theological implications for spiritual formation. Jesus, as salvation occurs by grace alone through faith, so too the spiritual formation process takes place by grace alone through faith empowered by the Holy Spirit, who keeps our eyes steadied on Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2)."[51] The theological implication of believers resides in how they view and accept the gospel, which is essential in their lives to bring spiritual formation by transforming them into disciple-makers through the Holy Spirit's power.

Summary of Literature Review

The term discipleship and disciple have taken on various meanings throughout the ages. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the term discipleship and its similarities defined by multiple writers. Even though the term may slightly differ, they have more similarities than dissimilarities. Discipleship of children is assumed to be the parental responsibility. Parents training their children from an early age in the ways of the Lord will promote growth in God's grace and love. Various writer views on family discipleship are essential for parents to be disciple-makers of their children. While some sources defined parent discipleship, others merely defined discipleship as a source for multiplication. Obedience is the primary focus for Christians who desire to enter discipleship. While some sources viewed compliance as an act to follow Jesus, others see discipleship as an act of obedience in acknowledging their faith in Christ. There

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[50] Pettit, *Foundations of spiritual Formation,* 32-44.

[51] Ibid.

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are variations among various sources defining discipleship, children discipleship, and parents as disciple-makers, and these constitute the numerous approaches to discipleship.

Spiritual transformation is essential in the lives of believers. It is the pivoting point which enables them to grow and make disciples of others.

Parents must first experience a spiritual transformation in their lives before they can embark on the journey of making disciples of their children. Some sources viewed spiritual transformation as proof of Christ working through the individuals, linked with the cosmos. In contrast, others saw spiritual transformation as an individual journey transforming from the natural person into a religious endeavor and embracing characteristics of Christ, which enables them to make disciples. Family discipleship is crucial to parents. Obedience is the primary focus for Christians who desire to enter into discipleship. Spiritual transformation is essential in the lives of believers. It is the pivoting points that enable them to grow and make disciples of others. Certain preconditions for doing distinctively evangelical spiritual formation will frame the approach.

<center>Theological Foundations</center>

Parents Responsibility

The family unit is one of the essential aspects of Christendom. Parents should train their children in the ways of the Lord, which is their primary duty toward their children. The core theological objectives of Christians are first, to become disciples of Christ, and then teach their children, or making disciples of their children, so they can continue spreading the gospel and make disciples of others. Parents' roles are to provide for their children and be a theological role model, which their children can follow and become disciples of Christ. However, some Christian parents teach their children in the ways of God, while others fail to impart their Christian values

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to them. Throughout the Scriptures, parents are the primary disciple-makers of their children and responsible for their spiritual transformation. Parents, as disciple-makers of their children, are indispensable in the development of their children's spirituality. Regardless of the parent's social status or professions, they play an essential role in their children's lives from birth to maturity.

Some parents may not understand the values of an excellent religious education or downplay the importance of teaching discipleship to their children. Likewise, some churches depend on their Sunday school departments to teach children who do not meet discipleship requirements. Suppose parents are to be the primary disciple-makers of their children. In that case, they must deliberately approach discipleship by introducing their children to Christian education at some other institution, which will guide their children on their spiritual journey toward discipleship. According to David and Beckwith, "Instructional approach to children's religious education offers great opportunities to rethink what it means to educate children, to form children into young disciples, and to allow our journey of discipleship to be formed by children."[52] Parents and care-givers know that children can understand and adapt to the teachings of God's Word. Therefore, parents must supervise the development of their children's spirituality into maturity through discipleship. Since practically all parents know their children's strengths and weaknesses, they have an excellent idea of approaching and teaching their children for maximum results.

Parents are not the only ones who know their children's attributes; others who interacted with children frequently also know their characteristics. David and Beckwith believe that educators and pastors who minister to young people could practically declare that all children

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[52] David M. Csinos, and Ivy Beckwith, *Children's Ministry in the Way of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVersity Press, 2013), 37.

can meet God. Therefore, educators such as pastors should search for ways to enhance the spiritual capacities of children.[53]

Being the primary disciple-makers of the children is not a one-sided responsibility of either the mother or father. Both parents are equally held accountable for the spiritual transformation of their children. Based on the Scriptures, some may argue that it is the father's responsibility for the family's spiritual growth and stability. In contrast, others will affirm that both parents are equally responsible. "Just as God made the role of a diligent dad clear, He has also made His intentions known regarding the role of a godly wife. Like so many other essential doctrines, the role of the woman is first established in Genesis."[54] The father is to be the head of the family and leading them in spiritual growth.

However, the wife has equal responsibility in bringing spiritual transformation to her children in making disciples of them, especially if the husband fails to function in his God-given roles. Getting spiritual transformation in the lives of the children through discipleship is a significant responsibility. Some will argue that mothers are more equipped for making disciples of their children because they are more in-tuned to their children's needs than the father. They will also argue that women can be more effective in family endeavors than men. Regardless of the arguments, teaching discipleship to the children requires the attention and guidance of both parents. When considering mothers' roles in disciple-making, one author says, "She is encouraged to be a woman of character, integrity, and action. The passages even endorse her role as a respected businesswoman in the marketplace. Indeed, mothers should also be involved in teaching their children spiritual truths, while some diminish the mother's role of being a

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[53] Csinos and Beckwith, *Children's Ministry*, 48.

[54] Ken Ham and Steve Ham. *Raising Godly Children in an Ungodly World: Leaving a Lasting Legacy*, (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Publishing Group, 2011), 118.

housewife."[55] In contrast, others open all the possibilities of the mother's role as a help-mate who manages her home thoroughly, including being a dedicated contributor to her children's disciple-maker.[56]

However, some believe it is the role of fathers to be the family's primary spiritual leader and ensure that the Lord's Words are practiced according to the Scriptures. Some may argue that many fathers do not assume their role as the spiritual leader of the family. Fathers being the source of disciple-makers of their children, must be transparent to the entire family. The children should have no misunderstanding of the role their father played in their lives.

"Fathers are to be the overall spiritual head. Whenever and wherever possible, the father's leadership should be as obvious to the children as the wife. The task of raising godly children in an ungodly world takes teamwork."[57] As disciple-makers of their children, parents are the foundation that establishes the core values of spiritual growth in the body of Christ, the church, and in the community. Children are not only the future of their parents. Most importantly, they are the future spreaders of the gospel. However, training parents in discipleship is paramount to the survival of future disciples.

Many parents who are Christians do not have any interest in being disciples, much less disciple-makers of their children. "We have families that have mothers and fathers that cannot (or will not) fulfill their God-given roles."[58] Families who are not fulfilling their God-given roles may not be doing so intentionally. Therefore, the churches should ensure that a discipleship program exists to teach parents how to fulfill their God-given role as disciple-makers of their

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[55] Ken, Ham and Steve Ham. *Raising Godly Children in an Ungodly World.* 119.

[56] Csinos and Beckwith, *Children's Ministry*, 37.

[57] Ken Ham and Steve Ham, *Raising Godly Children in an Ungodly World,* 120.

[58] Ibid., 125.

children. A parental responsibility to be the primary disciple-makers of their children does not reside only within the marital status. Single Christian parents have an equal responsibility to train their offspring in the ways of the Lord.

Due to the stigma and hardship associated with being a single parent, it can be a daunting task raising children and, at the same time, enforcing the parent's God-given role as disciple-maker of their offspring. The writer is not saying that single parents cannot be disciple-makers of their children, but that it is more difficult having a single parent trying to balance the hardship of life with the complication of his or her spirituality.

"Single parents and those dealing with broken marriages have a very complicated and challenging task before them."[59] However, to overcome the complication of discipleship in a single home, the church can create specialized small groups that cater to single parents' needs and provide the tools and support needed to be capable single parents' disciple-makers of their kids. A parent's responsibility for being the primary disciple-maker of their children begins at home and then is transformed into the community. However, parents must first be a disciple of Christ to teach discipleship to their children.

People cannot teach what they do not understand. To teach discipleship, parents must be a disciple. "If I wanted to make healthy disciples, I needed to include parents."[60] Children are the future of the ministry. Therefore, to have reliable and dedicated disciples of Christ, it is crucial to involve parents in the process because they are the ones who will be mentoring and grooming future disciples. Being disciple-makes is a full-time endeavor, starting from birth to adulthood.

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[59] Ken Ham and Steve Ham, *Raising Godly Children in an Ungodly World*, 125.
[60] Dick Gruber, ed., *6 Children's Ministry Essentials: A Quick-Access Guide* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2017), 4.

As children transform from teens into adulthood, they tend to drift away from what they have learned at an early age, and God begins to come obscured to them. According to Csinos and Beckwith, "Over time, however, as children learn how the world works and about the reality of life around them, young spiritual pilgrims might begin to close themselves off to sensing God's presence."[61] Family continuity in discipleship paves the way for definite discipleship doctrines, which can protect against peer pressure when their children need to decide what is right from what is wrong. Not all scholars believe that children should be primarily under the supervision of their parents. Some may argue that it is the parents' role to govern their children. Thus, they are responsible for the activities of their children. Brennan and Robert believe, "Children are entitled to consideration of their fundamental interests on an equal basis with mature members of the moral community."[62] Children may be entitled to their own opinion in the secular world, and equally in a theological aspect.

However, it remains the parental responsibility to train and mold their children into good and productive citizens. Equally, God-fearing parents will teach their children to love and obey God's commandments. Still, some writers believe that parents do not have the skills or competence to train their children. Therefore, those parents will depend on others for skills and knowledge to teach their children. Brennan and Robert went on to say, "Parents, however, typically lack the expertise to educate their children, so schools are assigned special responsibilities for instruction."[63]

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[61] Csinos and Beckwith, *Children's Ministry*, 45.

[62] Samantha Brennan and Noggle, Robert, eds., *Taking Responsibility for Children*. (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007), 26.

[63] Ibid., 33.

Conversely, this concept of delegating the responsibility to schools has contaminated some churches. As a result, parents are transferring their God-given role of disciple-makers of their children to the church. Children are precious to God. Age is of no significant importance to God. Whether the individual is old or young, he is God's creation, and Christians have to be their brother's keeper. Dick believes that "The age of the person does not make an individual more important to God— whether young or old."[64] Many parents take their God-given role very seriously. They teach their children God's Word and mentor them in discipleship. The love parents have for God, and their children enable them to practice discipleship in their children's presence continuously.

Linhart notes, "Most parents want to see their children grow from an infant to a mature adult, a transformation that takes time, endurance, and intentionality."[65] Spiritual transformations of children from infancy into disciples of Christ is an intentional endeavor undertaken by parents as part of their God-given role in being disciple-makers of their children. Conversion to discipleship comes through the teaching children received from their parents. Teaching children the fear of the Lord is planting God's Words in their hearts from an early age, which is the foundation of the parent's God-given role of being the primary disciple-makers of their children.

<div align="center">Theoretical Foundations</div>

Parents Responsibility

The family unit is one of the essential aspects of Christendom. Parents should train their children in the ways of the Lord, which is their primary duty toward their children. The core

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[64] Gruber, Dick, ed. *6 Children's Ministry Essentials: A Quick-Access Guide* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2017), 5.

[65] Terry Linhart, ed., *Teaching the Next Generations: A Comprehensive Guide for Teaching Christian Formation*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 16.

theological objectives of Christians are first, to become disciples of Christ, and then teach their children, or making disciples of their children, so they can continue spreading the gospel and make disciples of others. Parents' roles are to provide for their children and be a theological role model, which their children can follow and become disciples of Christ. However, some Christian parents teach their children in the ways of God, while others fail to impart their Christian values to them. Throughout the Scriptures, parents are the primary disciple-makers of their children and uniquely responsible for their spiritual transformation. Parents, as disciple-makers of their children, are indispensable in the development of their children's spirituality. Regardless of the parent's social status or professions, they play an essential role in their children's lives from birth to maturity.

The family unit is the primary source of instilling God's Word in the hearts of their children. Bettis agrees with this concept when he says, "What better discipleship unit than the family? What better model, teacher, and shepherd over a little one than a parent? God's desire for your family is to be a Trinity-displaying, God-glorifying, disciple-making unit."[66] The assumption of the family unit in making disciples of their children is shared by another scholar in a slightly different way when he suggests, "When God invites a son or daughter into missions, He also invites the parents. For some parents of missionaries (POMs), the invitation from God was somewhat expected.

Some POMs were missionaries themselves and raised their children on the mission field."[67] Both writers stress the importance of parents taking an active role in developing their

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[66] Chap Bettis, *The Disciple-Making Parent: A Comprehensive Guidebook for raising Your Children to Love and Follow Jesus Christ.* (Diamond Hill Publishing, 2016), 6.

[67] Cheryl Savageau, and Diane Stortz*, Parents of Missionaries: How to Thrive and Stay Connected When Your Children and Grandchildren Serve Cross-Culturally*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 8.

children's spirituality leading to disciple-making. Bettis mainly approaches this concept from the family as a disciple unit, while Savageau leans towards the notion that children need their parents' guidance in becoming disciples of Christ.

Those two statements agree with the thesis assumptions that parents should be the primary disciple-makers of their children. The influence which parents have over their children is second to none. Throughout the Scriptures, there is evidence that suggests that parents are the spiritual mentors of their children. Perhaps some parents may not have the skills or understanding required to mentor their family in the ways o the Lord. Nevertheless, all parents should seek the guidance of their church for the necessary tools, which will enable them first to be disciples, so they can, in turn, mentor their children. As Savageau states, "You are your child's first mentor. After a discussion on how to find a Christian parenting mentor for yourself, we will apply those principles to coaching your child."[68] The beginning of discipleship starts at home with the parents. Children depend on their parents for guidance in practically all things, from the secular to the spiritual. The foundation for spiritual growth resides with the parents as being the initial mentor of their children. "How best do we disciple our children? Isn't that why we take them to church with us? A look at the Scripture reveals that disciples are not made in a factory."[69]

In comparison, Putman and Vanhoozer agree that home is the first place to mentor and teach discipleship to children. Putman's approach to parental responsibility in making disciples of their children teaches their children what they have learned. While Vanhoozer comes from a

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[68] Jim Putman, Bill Krause, Bill, Avery Willis, and Brandon Guindon, *Real-Life Discipleship Training Manual: Equipping Disciples Who Make Disciples*. (Colorado Springs: NavPress Publishing Group, 2010). 11.

[69] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Hearers and Doers: A Pastor's Guide to Making Disciples Through Scripture and Doctrine. (*Bellingham, WA: LexhamPress.com, 2019), 6.

Scriptural perspective, both writers agree with each other on the family roles in forming their children's disciples-making process. It is not the church's role to be disciple-makers of the children; it is the parent's primary duty. These concepts of parents being the sole disciple-makers of their children are shared by numerous scholars and writers, especially when it comes to excluding the church from assuming the responsibility of making disciples of the children. Malan notes, "The church was not intended to take over or become the plenipotentiary in charge of God's mission; the Church was called to be a servant, committed to the service of the realm of God."[70]

However, it is the church's responsibility to teach and equipping its members to continue the mission of Christ, including being their children's mentors. In this case, Gallaty agrees with Malan, and he says, "Christ did not come to make Christians; He came to make disciples." Discipleship is not one of the church's various ministries."[71] Both writers eliminate the church from any responsible role of making disciples of the children. Malan's approaches to discipleship focus on the church's calling to be a servant-leader. In contrast, Gallaty focuses on the idea that discipleship is not the church's role, but the parents. Both writers exemplify the writer of this thesis' views. The model for parental discipleship has its formation in the Scriptures.

The early church concept of discipleship was not the role of the church. Instead, it was a collective effort by the believers assuming the role of parenting and grooming their children for future multiplication. One scholar says it this way, "The defining, though not exclusive, a metaphor that shapes Paul's understanding of the goal and the process of disciple-making is

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[70] Nel, Malan. "*Imagine-Making Disciples in Youth Ministry ... that Will make Disciples*." Hervormde Teologiese Studies 71, no. 3 (2015): 1-11, accessed June 29, 20220, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl= https %3A%2F%2 Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F1738751534%3Faccountid%3D12085.

[71] Robby Gallaty, *Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples*. (B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 40.

spiritual parenting."[72]

Again, the process of disciple-making has its focus on the role and responsibility of parents. Throughout Paul's writings, there are metaphors of how he sees himself as being the parents of the body of Christ and have the responsibilities of nurturing believers from infancy into maturity. According to Ogden, "Paul's writings are sprinkled with images of spiritual fatherhood and motherhood: addressing those under his care as infants and children; characterizing himself as a nursing mother or as a mother in the agony of labor, or as a father with his children, stating that the goal in Christ is to grow up to maturity (adulthood)."[73]

As the biblical model for discipleship, from the Old Testament to the New Testament, parents can use the various examples outlined by biblical saints when assuming their God-given role in training their children in the ways of the Lord, from infancy to adulthood. Malan's views are similar to Ogden's; both writers view discipleship from a Scriptural point-of-view. According to Malan, "Therefore, the New Testament discipleship reminds us of the Old Testament bond between God and his people what distinguishes New Testament discipleship is the Person and Work of Jesus, who calls people to become his disciples."[74] Ogden approaches discipleship from the New Testament point of view, while Malan approaches discipleship from both the Old Testament and the New Testament point of view. Both writers agree that God mandates discipleship, and parents should assume their God-given role. These theories reflect the claims made by this thesis, that parents are the primary disciple-makers of their children, not the church.

Another writer holds similar views that parents, who are missionally active with their children, achieved the ultimate goal of having their children walking in their footsteps. Malan

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[72] Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*. (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 96.

[73] Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship, 96*.

[74] Malan*, Imagine-Making Disciples in Youth Ministry, 6.*

states, "Other POMs heard from their children early on that they wanted to be missionaries. Still, others lead or attend churches with a strong mission focus that captured the heart of their children."[75] Parents of Missions are a group that focuses on continuing the mission of Christ and are intentional in being the disciple-makers of their children. Savageau echoes this sentiment when he says, "Few of us were perfect parents, but somehow we taught our children to love God, and the hearts of our children have become hearts that God can use."[76] Children are the apple of God's eye.

Vanhoozer states, "He gave specific commandments for parents to train and mentor their children in His ways. God gave us little children so that we can influence them to become fully-devoted followers of Jesus Christ who love Him and love others."[77] Some Scholars and writers agree that parents have the primary responsibility of being the disciple-makers of their children, while the church's role is to equip parents first to be disciples of Christ and then mentor their children in discipleship. Conversely, some are devoted to multiplication; these people are devoted to maintaining their spiritual identity and helping others transform their lives into becoming disciples of Christ. According to Harrington, "We call people like this "discipleship first" people: their identity is completely wrapped up in being disciples of Jesus who make disciples of Jesus."[78] Parents who are disciples first will strive to make disciples of their children and others. Harrington goes on to say that throughout biblical history, people learned that they would most likely make disciples of others when they are first transformed into

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[75] Savageau, *Parents of Missionaries,* 8.

[76] Ibid. 9.

[77] Vanhoozer, *Hearers and Doers*, 6-7.

[78] Bobby William Harrington, and Josh Robert Patrick, *The Disciple maker's handbook: Seven Elements of a Discipleship Lifestyle.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 19.

disciples of Christ.[79]

Small groups play an intricate role in transforming parents into disciples and equipping them to be the disciple-makers of their children. This thesis assumes that parents who are members of small groups can transform into their homes' discipleship models. According to Walton, "In recent times the role of small groups in discipleship formation has been given much attention, and they are widely promoted as the key means for such formation."[80]

However, even though small groups are heralded as an ideal medium for spiritual transformation, it should be understood that it is not the only way for disciple-making. The concept of a small group is consistent with Walton's stand on this matter: "Although I have some passion for small-group work in the church and think there are ways to achieve good outcomes, including the task of helping to form disciples, there is an implicit recognition throughout that it is not the only way to undertake discipleship formation."[81] A small group is a useful tool for spiritual transformation. However, it should not be the sole method used for disciple-making. Small groups work well because of their effectiveness, which resides in the number of participants, anywhere between two and twenty-five members.

"In recent times, the role of small groups in discipleship for-mation has been given much attention, and they are widely promoted as the key means for such formation."[82] Walton notes, "A small group is an intentional association of between two and twenty-five people over time for a shared purpose, where meaningful interaction is expected in fulfilling the group's task."[83]

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[79] Ibid.

[80] Roger L. Walton, *Disciples Together: Discipleship, Formation and Small Groups*. (London: Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd, 2014), 67.

[81] Ibid., 68.

[82] Ibid., 71.

[83] Ibid., 73.

Conversely, this thesis' assumes the ideal number for maximum results can be between two to twelve members.

Small groups are useful because people's values and worth are accepted and appreciated. Members of small groups function as one unit for the good of the many while maintaining each member's individuality. Walton goes on to say, "Belonging to a group where you are known, valued, and accepted is a source of great strength. It gives you a sense of identity and a set of people you can turn to when you face problems."[84] He also presents the benefits of small group ministry while at the same time cautioning not to rely on small groups for transformation solely. A parental responsibility for assuming their God-given role resides in realizing that they are a servant of Christ and adhere to His commandment to make disciples of all nations.

Gallaty states, "As a follower of Christ, you most likely agree with the command to make disciples."[85] Making disciples begins at home and then transcends into the community by agreeing with God's commandments to make disciples. Chipao and Gallaty concur on this subject with slight variations. According to Chipao, Discipleship is the transfer of spiritual maturity from one person to another. It is a lifelong process."[86] Gallaty has summarized discipleship as the individual agreeing to obey God's command, while Chipao's view on discipleship is a never-ending process. These two presumptions are the core of this thesis' claim that discipleship is a parental responsibility, from infancy to adulthood, and continues from generation to generation.

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[84] Walton, *Disciples Together, 73*.

[85] Gallaty, *Growing Up,* 10.

[86] Lawrence Chipao and Project Muse, *Church Planting and Discipleship: Unlocking the Feasible Growth*. Baltimore, MD; Mzuzu [Malawi]: Project Muse, 2017; 2016; 23-26.

Discipleship Models

Various discipleship models are strong and robust, producing the ultimate result of achieving quality and dedicated disciples. We will explore two of these models, which will be the foundation of this thesis research project. The first Model we will look at is "John Wesley's Class Meeting." This Model not only enables John Wesley to establish a fruitful and enduring religious organization, but it also catapults his ideas into both the academic and scholarly environment throughout the history of the church. Wesley's Model for making disciples has a proven track record of how small groups can accomplish what large groups or congregations cannot achieve. Wesley's Model has three parts, 1) Band, 2) Class, and 3) Society.

Even though those three elements are separate, they function as one. The "Class" will be the "undergird" of this research project because it exemplifies this thesis's claim. "The class was to be an intimate group of ten or twelve people who met weekly for personal supervision of their spiritual growth."[87] Wesley's class model works well because it brings people together and enables them to achieve spiritual growth.

However, the class does not prepare its members to be disciples of Christ, which will allow them to be the primary disciple-makers of their children, which is its weakness. This thesis will build on Wesley's model's foundation by strengthening applying the class's principles, focusing on parental discipleship. According to Bonhoeffer, "Jesus' call to discipleship makes the disciple into a single individual. Whether disciples want to or not, they have to make a decision; each has to decide alone."[88] This thesis used the same class concept in bringing people together for spiritual growth and multiplications along with their children and then branches out

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[87] D. Michael Henderson, *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A model for Making Disciples. (*Wilmore, KY: Rafiki Books Publisher, 2016), 93.

[88] Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Discipleship: Readers Edition.* Lanham: Fortress Press, 2015. Accessed September 26, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central. 59.

into the community. Wesley's Model omitted this concept from within the class model.

The second disciple-making model, which is the cornerstone of this research project, is created by Dempsey, "The Discipleship Requirements of Jesus." This model consists of three stages, which strengthen the making of disciples. 1) Believer, 2) Disciple, and 3) Disciple Maker. These three stages are a trilogy of faith, which moves the believer from one location to another. According to Dempsey, "The Gospels reveal that discipleship is a matter of taking the next step. It is a progressive relationship based on increasing levels of faith, obedience, and commitment."[89] This research uses the same principles as Dempsey's model by enabling believers first to understand that their primary mission is to believe in Christ, be His disciple, and then make disciples of their children and others.

Ministry Models

Various ministry models serve as an excellent tool for making disciples of both parents and children. Two of those models are: Making Kingdom Disciples and Disciple Your Kids. These two models are relatively the same and followed the same principles. They both exemplify this thesis claim. For example, Dembowczyk says, "While God designed parents to be the primary disciples, He did not intend for us to be the only disciples. He has given us the church— our local community of faith—to come alongside us, encourage us, and echo what we are teaching in our homes."[90]

This thesis claimed that children's discipleship's primary responsibility is the parental responsibility, even though the church played an important role in shaping its members'

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[89] David Earley and Rod Dempsey. *Disciple Making Is: How to live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence.* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 60.

[90] Brian Dembowczyk. *8 Tips to Help You Disciple Your Kids*, accessed September 10, 2020, from, https://www.gospelproject.com/8-tips-to-help-you-disciple-your-kids/.

spirituality. Similarly, Spoelstra articulated, "We need to be realistic of what our family discipleship will look like. Dempsey and Earley exemplifies the importance of recruiting and grooming leaders to lead others into discipleship based on planting small groups to transform Christians into discipleship. This transformation through small group ministries focuses on healthy members dedicated to praying and loving God, others, and themselves. This thesis emphasizes the importance of recruiting and grooming all Christians, without exception, to be both leaders and servants to each group member. The difference between Dempsey and Earley and this thesis, Dempsey, and Earley are focusing on making leaders primarily lead small groups, while this thesis concentrates on turning all Christians and group members into leaders and servants, who will lead small groups.

Perhaps that means talking about a Bible story for 15 minutes one night a week at dinner and trying to find one or two times each week to move conversations toward the gospel."[91] Both Dembowczyk and Spoelstra agreed that parents played an important role in shaping the family discipleship, which is their strengths. These two models' weaknesses are that they do not emphasize parents being the primary disciple-makers of their children. This thesis claims that family ministry played an important role in discipleship, but the ministry models should make parents the primary disciple-makers of their children.

Ministry Practices

Many believed that it is the church's responsibility to train both parents and children to be disciples of Christ. The researcher was attending numerous discipleship training for the past five years, which the church offers. This training lasted for one month each year. The contents of the

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[91] Spoelstra, Melissa. *Total Family Makeover: 8 Practical Steps to Making Disciples at Home*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2016., accessed September 26, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central.

training speak about discipleship only in generality and have no disciples-making guidance. Many times Christians looked to the church for their spiritual growth, yet, the church has partly turned from being a fundamental base for Godly inspirations to been a place where the world can feel good and thrived in a business-like environment. "We've created a corporate America-like church, and it's because we buy into a false dichotomy between a leadership culture that produces leaders and a discipleship culture that produces disciples."[92]

The church's ineffectiveness in preparing parents for discipleship has caused stagnation in enhancing disciple growth. Chiang notes, Discipleship has taken place because the believer has been taught what is godly and ungodly and has submitted himself to both healing and correction. Besides, he has a real experience of God's presence and love."[93] Since many churches are preaching and teaching health and wealth messages, believers are not adequately trained what is godly from what is ungodly. The focus of this research is leading and preparing believing parents into discipleship as biblically intended.

It is not the intention of this research to discrediting the church or saying that all churches are the same. Conversely, many churches can create an atmosphere conducive to enabling parents to be the disciple-makers of their children. This change can come about by a change in leadership and forming small groups of ministries that focus on parents' discipleship. "As I changed my leadership strategy, church members became "disciples"—called to fulfill Jesus' commission to make disciples of others."[94] That statement is a pivotal point in this research

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[92] Mike Breen and the 3DM Team, *Multiplying Missional Leaders: From Half-Hearted Volunteers to a Mobilized Kingdom Force.* (Pawleys Island, SC: Zondervan Publishing House), 2012, 4.

[93] Johnathan Lee Shoo Chiang, *The Importance of Inner Healing and Deliverance.* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers), 2011, 15.

[94] Laurene Bowers, *Invitational Ministry: Move Your Church from Membership to Discipleship*, (Chalice Press, 2014). ProQuest Ebook Central. 4.

because it demonstrates the importance of enabling church members to be disciples of Christ, then disciple-makers of their children and others. "Christ does not expect His disciples to bear a little fruit, but "much fruit," and He expects it to be "fruit that will last"[95]

Because most churches are not equipping their members for multiplication and spiritual growth, expansion is not achieved, which is one of their weaknesses. This research will enhance the participants' spiritual growth by enabling them to bear fruit, enduring through their offspring. This research aims to take people committed to Christ and transform them into fruitful disciples. Eims notes, "He meant people who knew how to win another person to Christ and then take that person from the time of his conversion and help him become a solid, dedicated, committed, fruitful, mature disciple who could in time repeat that process in the life of another."[96]

In teaching others and parents to be the primary disciple-makers of their children, this teaching must be centered on Scriptural references and be grounded in strong biblical foundations. Andersson and Skinner said, "It is important to notice that power, authority, and teaching are all centered in Christ and not in human efforts. This biblical foundation is foundational to making disciples. No matter how gifted the individual or how welcoming the community, disciple-making is fueled by the transformational work of the Holy Spirit."[97]

The focus also of this research is to keep believers in the church as the body of Christ and to make disciples of parents, so they can teach God's Word to their children, hoping to prevent them from straying. According to Sondergaard, "It is imperative that we focus on making

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[95] John Koessler, *True Discipleship: The Art of Following Jesus.* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003), 2

[96] Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 1

[97] Tamara Anderson L; Shelly Skinner A, "Feelings: Discipleship that Understands the Affection Processes of a Disciple of Christ," *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 1 904, 2019): 66-78, accessed June 25, 2020, http:// ezproxy.liberty.edu/ login? qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest. Com %2Fdocview%2F2184329281%3 Faccountid%3D12085.

disciples. We live when most are gradually moving away from focusing on what the Word of God says."[98] Many churches believed that it is their mission to make disciples of their members and change them into Christ's likeness.

Dunahoo says, "The church's mission is to make disciples by evangelizing and educating the believers. In turn, believers are transformed into the likeness of Christ, as demonstrated by a life of Christlike service within the kingdom of God."[99] That statement is one of the weaknesses of the church. This thesis claimed that when parents were disciple-makers of their children when they grew up, they will already be disciples of Christ. However, the church has the responsibility to continue the spiritual growth of its members' discipleship through small groups ministry, which is the strength of this research. Another area of ministry practices in making disciples can be found in the Bible studies environment.

According to Wilson, "Meeting God in Bible study can be life and world-changing! First, your personal spiritual growth brings a new relationship with God, His Word, and those He has entrusted to you."[100] The problem with that statement is, most Bible studies are pre-planned and followed a rigid format, which offered little or no deviations from the curriculum. Bible studies are seldom meeting the requirements for children's discipleship and hardly encouraged parents to be disciple-makers of their children. One of the weaknesses of Bible studies is that they do not address the needs of the congregation. Koessler, in his book, *True Discipleship the Art of Following Jesus.* Emphasize progressive growth with the assumption that parents enable their

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[98] Torben Sondergaard, *The Last Reformation: Back to the New Testament Model of Discipleship* (Locust Grove, GA: Published by Laurus Books, 2013), 2.

[99] Charles H. Dunahoo, *Making Kingdom Disciples: A New Framework.* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2005), 3.

[100] Darryl Wilson, *Disciple-Making Encounters: Revolutionary Sunday School.* (Abbotsford, WI: Life Sentence Publishing, Inc., 2017), 14.

children to grow from infancy into adulthood. Likewise, parents' spiritual growth started from spiritual infancy, with a limited understanding of God's word. This thesis agrees with the claims made by Koessler. The thesis emphasis that parents who are not disciples cannot make disciples of others, much less their children. Those parents are babes in Christ and must be groom and natured into being disciples first; then, they will become the primary disciple-makers of their children upon maturity. This thesis, along with Koessler, believed that the chief focus of parental responsibility toward their children, is in developing their spiritual faith and understanding of discipleship.

This research is not condemning Bible studies; if Bible studies are to be the vehicle for discipleship, it must prepare parents to be the primary disciple-makers of their children. On making enduring disciples, Watson says, "God taught me, through many failures, that I had to focus on making disciples of Christ, not followers of my church or denomination. He also taught me that I needed to teach these disciples to obey the commands of Jesus, not my church/denominational doctrines or traditions."[101]

God gave His people a commandment, which says, "Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and on the road, going to bed, and getting up (Deut 11:19). About children discipleship, Root says, "Here the children were ministering to Bonhoeffer, their prayers awakening his spiritual life, bringing the stale institutional prayers to life as the shape of the community."[102]

Koessler, in his book, *True Discipleship the Art of Following Jesus.* Emphasize progressive growth with the assumption that parents enable their children to grow from infancy

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[101] Avid Watson & Paul Watson, *Contagious Disciple Making: Leading Others on a Journey of Discovery.* (Nashville, TN: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2014), 4.

[102] Andrew Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2014), 5.

into adulthood. Likewise, parents' spiritual growth started from spiritual infancy, with a limited understanding of God's word. This thesis agrees with the claims made by Koessler. The thesis emphasis that parents who are not disciples cannot make disciples of others, much less their children. Those parents are babes in Christ and must be groom and natured into being disciples first; then, they will become the primary disciple-makers of their children upon maturity. This thesis, along with Koessler, believed that the chief focus of parental responsibility toward their children, is in developing their spiritual faith and understanding of discipleship.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology for approaching the purpose was to determine why approximately twelve parents of the HBC appeared not to be teaching their children discipleship. Concerning the lack of discipleship occurring in the church, a method has been formulated to help the researcher engage with parents to uncover the root cause of the problem and find a solution. The primary way which will be utilized is the qualitative interview approach, supplemented with four other methods, which are persuasive interviews, focus group interviews, face-to-face interviews, and longitude survey. The above methodologies will guide principles throughout the research process to enable the researcher to gather, sort, and analyze the participants' information.

Methods

This program is a qualitative research project. The researcher is primarily interested in gathering as much written and oral information as possible, which will present a clear and concise picture of the program's purpose. Therefore, the primary mode of approach is the qualitative interview, which is most advantageous for this research project.

The qualitative interview technique will be used because it is exceptionally diverse from the typical day-by-day conversation people engaged with in the four ways. First, a qualitative interview is a tool used by researchers, which required the researcher to prepare excellent questions in advance. This tool can be analyzed at a later time for results. Second, all inquiries are controlled by the interviewer to keep the interviewees focused on the questionnaires. Third, qualitative interview techniques required the interviewer to practice and maintaining ardent reflection skills. Finally, beyond having attained excellent interviewing power, the methods required an attitude of learning.

The qualitative interview technique is also ideal because the researcher is a facilitator and has also become a student. In turn, it inspired those who are being interviewed to describe what they are experiencing in their expressions accurately. Qualitative interview techniques establish what is significant, what is moral, and the result's entirety and accuracy.[103] By employing qualitative interviews, the process will place the researcher in a controlling mode, where the interviewer can manage the information. The researcher will be present in the room and answer any questions that the participants may have. The qualitative interview methods allowed participants to answer questions without any direct or indirect interaction from the researcher. All items are prepared in advance, and the participants can fill out the questionnaires in their own words.

Face-to-Face

In complementing the research process, face-to-face interviewing will be utilized, which will enable the researcher to have direct interaction with the participants. The interview is essential because, through observations, the researcher can detect deviation from the norms, which may occur during the process. Face-to-face interview methods are employed because of the research approach's unique interface, which has three primary purposes. First, a face-to-face conversation is a system that collects information when the interviewer openly converses with the participants in agreement with the prepared questionnaire's protocol. Second, the method of face-to-face interviews allows the researcher to capture accurate data, participants' assessments, see changes in attitudes, partialities, and other information that arises during the discussion with

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[103] H. Rubin, & Rubin, *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995), 2.

the participants. Finally, the face-to-face interview method guarantees that the data gathered values are accurate and inspires participants to respond in an in-depth manner.[104]

Persuasive Interview

Another complementary method, the qualitative interview technique, will also conduct a persuasive interview, which will be done in conjunction with a face-to-face meeting. The persuasive techniques will be utilized during the training process, mainly in the small group ministry and lecturing sessions. The Persuasive method is essential because it is a tool, which is primarily two aspects. First, it is designed to sell something or an idea to someone during the interviewing or training process. Second, when the interviewer or moderator is having a conversation with the target audiences, influencing the participants to take the appearance of persuading them that what has been said is ideal and will meet their needs.[105]

The Persuasive method is an essential process during the research process because it enables the researcher to present ideas to the participants in a convincing way, expecting to bring changes to their way of living or thinking. During the training and lecturing forums, the researcher can present to the participants all the evidence. If there are any unclear statements, participants have the opportunity to ask questions for clarification. Persuasive techniques also allow the researcher to operate in unison with other methods to satisfy the targeted audience with what has been provided to them.

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[104] Tyrima Spinter, *Face-to-Face Interview,* accessed April 20, 2020, https://spinter.lt/site/en/vidinis/vidmenu/face-to-face-interview.

[105] The Business Communication, *What is Interview? Types of interviews,* accessed April 20, 2020, https://thebusinesscommunication.com/what-is-interview-types-of-interviews/.

Longitude Survey

The methodology of the Longitude Survey will be incorporated in the qualitative

interview techniques. Because of the type of survey, the research process will be looking for

changes and similarities based on the original questionnaires, which took place over a period.

The Longitude Survey is a tool that enables the researcher to measure the results of an event

from point "A'' to point "B." There are times when someone may want to measure or see the

results of circumstances that transpired over time. The measuring of events usually occurs,

starting from point "A," and then an assessment will be made after an intervention period to see

what has been achieved.[106]

Small-Group Interviews

The final complementary method for the qualitative interview is the Focus Group Survey.

The research project will take on the form of a small group ministry to teach parents how to be

disciples, and then, in turn, be disciple-makers of their children. Small group ministries have

been the backbone of many religious originations, which promote growth and sustainment. Small

groups are essential and, for the most part, are reliable in bringing changes in the lives of its

members.

There are four primary reasons why the utilization of small group interview is considered.

First, the small group allows the researcher to conduct interviews with participants to collect a

mixture of data. Second, the small group enables the researcher to control the number of people

in the group, which can be as small as four and twelve. Finally, a small group can allow

participants to share ideas and to learn from each other. At the same time, the researcher actively

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[106] James Zabloski, *Presentation: Different Kinds of Surveys*, accessed April 20, 2020, https://learn. liberty.edu/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course_id=_ 577531_1&content_id=_38286272_1.

listens and observes changes. The small-group method is essential during small group discussions, designed to allow parents to communicate freely and exchange ideas freely. The group will also facilitate the needs of parents to grow spiritually. The group will enable members to depend on each other for guidance in learning how to be future disciple-makers of their children.

Intervention Design

In designing an intervention plan for approximately twelve parents at HBC who may not be training their children in the ways of the Lord, it is essential to introduce those individuals to a robust and sustainable intervention program. The intervention initiative should be designed to bring spiritual transformation in the participants' lives and empower them to be disciple-makers of their children. The intervention design can be viewed as the fundamental principles, which are the guiding ideologies for formulating a systematical approach in transforming the participants from been merely Christians into Disciples of Christ and disciple-makers of their offspring.

The Process

The leader of Greater Portmore Circuit of Baptist Churches is Michael shim-Hue. There are three churches in the Circuit: Cumberland Baptist Church, HBC. Greater Portmore Baptist Church is the mother church. As head of the Circuit of Churches, he has the primary authority in permitting the research program and the facility's use. The other person whose permission is also needed is the Circuit secretary Nursita Johnson, who is also a deaconess and leader of the HBC. Both leaders have approved.

After getting the support, it is agreed that the Circuit of Baptists Churches will assist in the research program by publishing an announcement in their Sunday service bulletins and also make oral announcements, which is customary. It has been determined that the notifications will

be made twice a week for three weeks as follow: twice on Sundays at Greater Portmore baptist Church, once during the morning worship, and once at the evening service, and on Wednesday evening at Bible studies. Announcements will also be made at Cumberland Baptist Church twice a week: once in the Sunday morning worship and on Thursdays at Bible studies. At HBC, announcements will be made twice a week: once on Sunday morning worship and Tuesdays at Bible studies.

Persuasive Interview

The first contact will be in the form of Persuasive Interviews. Only those essential to the research project will be allowed to participate. Single parents of HBC will be approached and will be told of the nature of the research program. An introduction will initiate the interview, and this will segway into the purpose and the detailing of the study.

Verbal Recruitment Script

The introduction serves to build rapport and to introduce the purpose of the project. "Hi! Good afternoon, my name is Ranny Lewis: As a graduate student in the School of Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am researching as part of a DMin degree requirements. The purpose of my research is to determine why some parents may not be assuming their responsibility as the primary disciple-makers of their children and why they may be assuming that the church has the responsibility to make disciples of their children." The verbal script will be followed by the twelve specific questions, followed by giving contact information to participants interested in the study.

Face-to-Face Interviews

After conducting the motivation interview, follow-up contacts will be made with those interested in participating in the research project. Additional information will be provided

regarding the date, time, and place for the group's initial meeting. At the initial meeting, the researcher will be introduced to the participants while participants present themselves to each other. After the introduction, a detailed explanation of the project will be given to the participants explaining the program's full scope from start to finish. During that time, participants will be told that they reserve the right to quit the program at any time for whatever reason.

The participants will know how their information will be used, who will have access to their data, and what will happen to their report after the research project. The initial meeting will also be a question-and-answer session. During the initial meeting, participants will have the opportunity to formulate any change in the meeting times. Participants will also be told that the research process will officially begin by filling out a questionnaire consisting of ten questions at the next meeting, refer to Appendix E. At the second meeting, the survey questions in Appendix C will be presented to the participants.

Those twelve questions are the basis for the research. The answers provided will be analyzed and formulated into a logical order to uncover the study's root. Upon completion of analyzing the data, the research process will proceed using what has been found as the guiding principles.

Longitude Survey

After three weeks of presenting an assortment of works of literature and lecturing with numerous question and answer sessions, an assessment will be conducted to ascertain whether or not any improvements were made. The original twelve questions in Appendix C will again be presented to the participants for them to answer, and then a comparison will be made against the original answers. The participants' new answers will be gathered, analyzed, and arranged systematically to uncover any changes. After going over and organizing the latest data, a

comparison between the previous responses and the new answers will be made to see the differences between week one and week three.

Small-Group Integration

The Longitude Survey serves as the pivoting point in the research process. Participants will be introduced to small group ministry through the focus group methods. The participants will be broken into four groups, and each of the four groups will have a leader. The members of their specific group select the leader. The group primarily focuses on transforming its members into disciples of Christ and enabling them to become disciple-makers of their offspring. Each member of the group has an equal voice and is encouraged to participate in all group activities. The group's members solely make all decisions. The researcher will be present as an advisor when needed.

Final Evaluation

The final evaluation will be in conjunction with the Longitude Survey. During the small group ministry sessions, the researchers will conduct an observational assessment for two to three weeks of group activities. The researcher will be looking to see if the participants have made a transition from being mere Christians in name to becoming disciples of Christ. The observation will also examine if the participants involve their children in religious activities and have their children accompanying them to morning worship and Bible studies.

<div align="center">Implementation of Intervention Design</div>

Upon receiving the authorization to launch the research, permission will be ascertained from the authoritative bodies. Michael Shim-Hue is the Greater Portmore Circuit of Baptist Churches, which consists of Greater Portmore Baptist Church, Cumberland Baptist Church, and HBC. The authorization focus will come from two individuals; Michael Shim-Hue, the leader,

and Nursita Johnson, the Circuit sectary and a deaconess and the HBC leader. After receiving the authorization from those two individuals to use their facilities and conducting the research, the implementation will follow.

Announcements will be made in all three Circuit churches, informing the congregants of the expecting research program. The announcements will be made twice a week for three weeks at the GBPC, once in the morning during Sunday's worship and once on Wednesday nights at Bible studies. Announcements will also be made at Cumberland Baptist Church once in the morning during Sunday's worship, and once on Thursday day nights at Bible studies. At HBC, the announcements will be rendered once in the morning during Sunday's worship and earlier on Tuesday nights at Bible studies.

The Implementation

During the phrases of announcements, arrangements will be made for the use of the facilities, while at the same time, a qualitative interview will be conducting to identify only those who are eligible to participate in the research program. When the targeted audiences are selected, they will be invited to attend a face-to-face meeting to tell the full extent of the research process. This initial meeting will be more of a meet-and-greet session to have all the necessary documents and materials required to initiate the program. Following the initial meeting, participants will be instructed to return at a set date, time, and selected venue. Upon their return, they will be given questionnaires consisting of twelve questions, which they must answer without interacting with the researcher. After analyzing and arranging the answers systematically, the stage will be set for the next step, initiating the research program using the uncovered data gathered as the guiding principles. For the first three weeks, the researcher will guide the participants by transforming themselves from mere Christians into becoming disciples of Christ. At the end of the third week,

and evaluation will be conducted using the Longitude Survey method by giving the participants the same questions to answer, which they have responded to in the first week. After gathering, analyzing, and systematically arranging the new data, the comparison will be made to uncover any significant progress.

Small-Group

After the data has been collected and analyzed at the end of three weeks, the research will move into its final phase. The researcher will introduce participants into the small group environment to learn from each other and interact with each other on a corporate level. During the small group ministry process, the researcher is more in an observatory status where each group member's activities can be observed to see any changes. The small group environments are designed for the group members to be in unison while ignoring their own needs and desires. Members of the small group will learn to depend on each other rather than individually accomplish any given task.

Evaluations

Evaluations will be conducted during the fourth to sixth weeks of small group activities. The assessments will consist primarily of observations. The researcher will be looking to see what changes have been made and adopted by the participants. The researcher will take note of any significant changes and determine if those changes are reflecting spiritual growth. Also, during the observation, data will be gathered to indicate whether or not participants are bringing their children to group meetings and having their children accompanying them to religious activities.

Weekly Training Sessions (First three Weeks)

Week 1: Establishing a parental responsibilities

- Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Proverbs 22:6.

- Introduction to family responsibility

- Introducing parent responsibility

Week 2: Parents as disciple-makers

- 1 Samuel chapters 1, 2, 8

- Godly parents/ungodly children

- Eli

- Samuel

- Possible outcome when parents failed to be disciple-makers of their children

- 1Samuel 1; Job 1; Godly parents/Godly children

- Hannah

- Job

- Possible outcome when parents are disciple-makers of their children

- Promise keeper and way maker through consistency

God's story Part 1: The Bible as a Narrative

- Disciple-makers, ungodly children (Eli and Samuel).

Week 3: Parents as disciple-makers

- Deuteronomy 6; Proverbs 22:6

- Train your children from an early age.

- Be consistent without wavering.

- The parent's blessings are their children's heritage.

- Parent's responsibility for family multiplication.

- Part of it is multiplication (Duet. 7:13).

God's story Part 2: The Bible as a Narrative

- Disciple-makers, godly children (Hannah and Job).

First evaluation:…………………………………………

- Original Questionnaires will be fill out (The original questionnaires)

- Analyzing new data

- Comparing and contrasting for changes.

Weekly Training Sessions (Last Three weeks)

Week 4: Introduction to Small group ministries

Introduce to Small a variety of small groups

- Introduction to small group methods

- Introduction to a generic small group

God's Story part 3: The Bible as a Narrative
- Effectiveness of small groups (from early churches to contemporary churches)

Week 5: The Formation of Small group ministry

Devoted to God (1 Peter 4:2)
- Devoted to each other

- Devoted to the group mission

- Depending on each other

Committed to be disciples of Christ (Matthew 16:24)
- Formal

- First, be disciples of Christ.

- Second, be disciple-makers of their children.

- Third, be disciple-makers of others.

- Practice what you have learned.

- Informal

- Invite your children to group sessions.

- Invite your friends and associates to group sessions.

- Share new experiences with the group.

- Volunteer for a community project.

God's Story Part 4: The Cell-Base Church as a Narrative

- 21st Century Church (opinions of writers such as Comiskey, Dempsey, Earley, and Bontun)

Week 6: Evaluation through observation

- Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Proverbs 22:6.

- Parental responsibility

- Parents assuming their responsibilities

- Parents teaching their children in the ways of the Lord

- Parents becoming disciples

- Parents becoming disciple-makers of their children

God's story Part 5
- Healthy small groups (Implementation of G.R.O.U.P., and L.I.F.E.)

Conclusion
- Final evaluation.

- Opportunities for further training and follow up

Survey Questions (Third week)

The third week is the Longitude Survey questions based on the first week's survey questions, enabling the researcher to determine changes and the study's effectiveness. The questions are the same as the questions asked in the first week. These are in Appendix C.

Chapter 4

Results

Discipleship: A Parental Responsibility

Discipleship is all about having and maintaining a relationship with Jesus Christ. The goal of all parents is to be the primary a disciple-makers of their children. Parents can turn their children into disciples of Christ by regularly teaching them Christian values and morals without ceasing. This thesis approached discipleship-making of children in three ways: First, it prepared parents first to be disciples (parents cannot impart to their children what they do not possess). Second, it proposed that parents are the primary disciple-makers of their children (by teaching them what they have learned from attending training). They need to be an exemplary disciple model (children looked to parents for leadership and continuity). Third, it guided parents on interpreting the Scriptures and the implication of discipleship in their lives.

To adequately train up a child in the ways of the Lord, parents need to know and understand the biblical principles outlined in the Scriptures. Advising our children in discipleship is influenced by four primary attributes of parental qualities; Love, empathy, reassurance, and leadership. Love is the parent's instinct to protect, develop, and guide their children in all things which are right in the sight of God. Empathy is not sympathy; it is parents knowing their children and understanding their attributes. Reassurance is not criticizing; it is love in correcting behaviors. Leadership is not being the boss; it is mentoring for discipleship continuation. The research training sessions took place twice weekly for the first three weeks: one on Sunday morning after worshiping and once on Tuesdays before Bible studies.

All sessions were conducted in a classroom environment. For the second three weeks, the training was conducted in two small groups of six members, which took place once on

Wednesdays before Bible studies, and once on Saturdays. Discipleship: A Parental Responsibility training outline is designed with an outlined, which introduced parents to several possible outcomes of their children/ or child. These outcomes are based on whether parents are disciples and whether they reached their children to be disciples of Christ. Discipleship: A Parental Responsibility training outlined focused on the first three weeks of lectures and interactions between the researcher and participants in a classroom environment. The last three weeks are conducted in two separate small group settings. In the small group environment, participants are encouraged to practice what they have learned and demonstrated their understanding and implication of small groups ministry, dedicated primarily to disciple-making.

Content Analysis

Typically, the content analysis consists of simultaneous survey questionnaires submitted by participants. The data collected are reliable and individually answered without knowing what other participant's answers are. The content analysis reflects the format and approaches the researcher has taken to gather, execute, and analyze the data. It also showed what elements are used and how they are used in the final evaluation.

Data Sources

On Research question (1) How would you define what a disciple is? After analyzing the data, the researcher discovered that 60 percent of the participants described a disciple as Christ's follower. Thirty percent believed that all Christians are disciples, while 10 percent say that a disciple is a person who regularly attended worship services—research question (2). How would you describe a Christian who is a disciple of Christ? 30 percent say that a disciple of Christ is a teacher. Twenty percent see a disciple of Christ as someone who attended church regularly. Forty percent say that a disciple of Christ is witnessing, while 10 percent are not sure how to define a disciple of Christ.
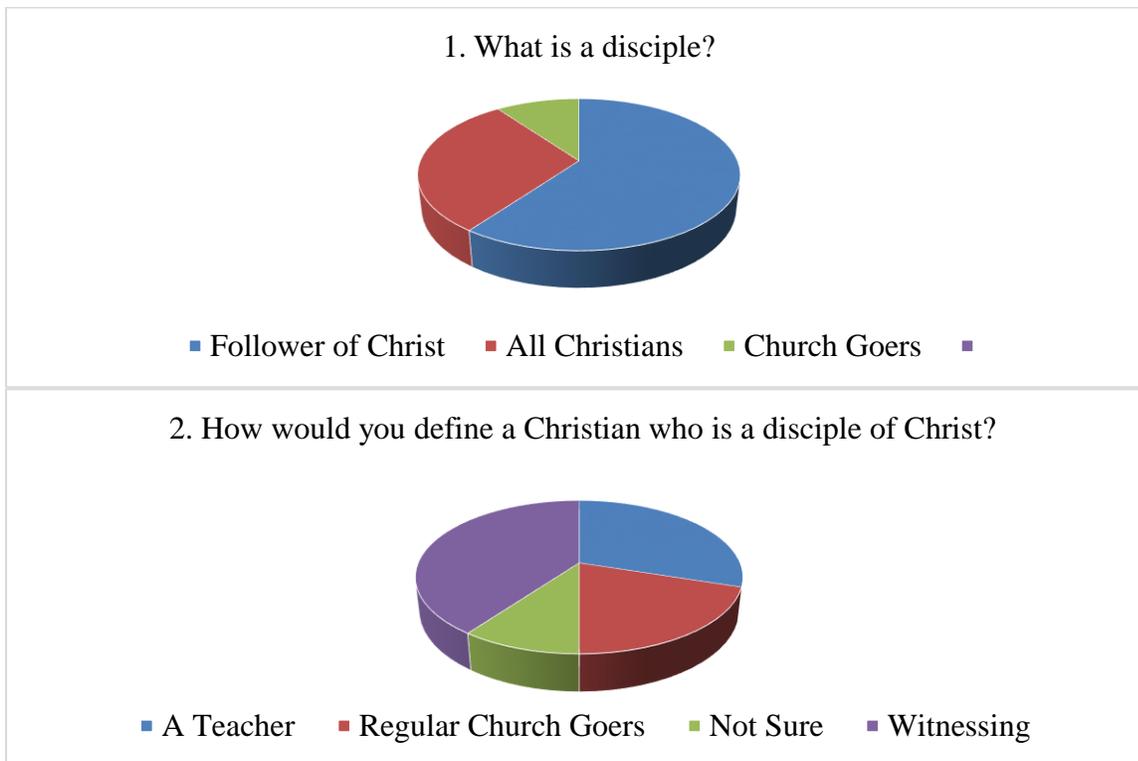
Figure 1. Response to Interview Survey Q1 & Q2

Research question (3). How would you define the church's role in teaching discipleship to parents? Sixty percent of participants believed that it is the role of the church in teaching parents discipleship. Thirty percent say that discipleship is individual responsibility in learning, while 10 percent are unsure of what role the church should play. Research question (4). How would you define the part of the church in teaching discipleship to Children? Eighty percent believed that the church has the responsibility for teaching discipleship to the children. Ten percent thought that the role should be shared between the church and the parents, while 10 percent are unsure of its position.
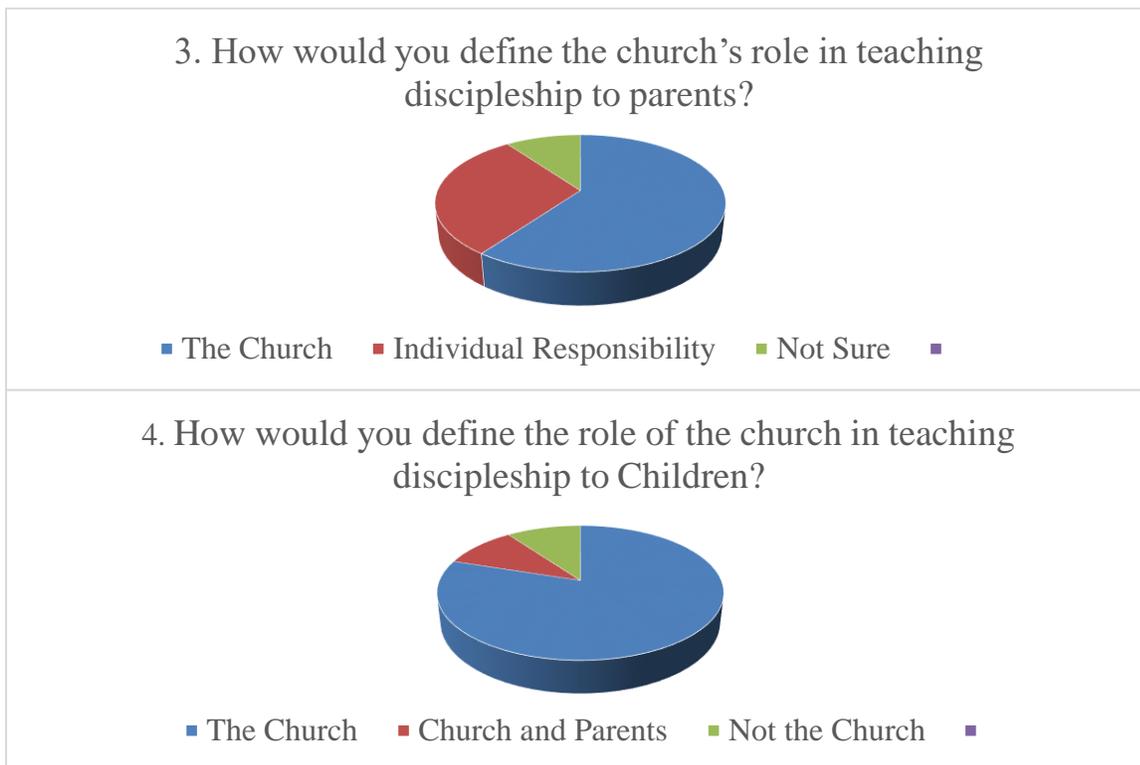
Figure 2. Response to Interview Survey Q3 & Q4

Research question (5). What is your perception of who is responsible for making disciples of children? Seventy percent believed it is the church's responsibility to transform children into disciples of Christ. Twenty percent view children's disciple-making as the parent's responsibility, while 10 percent are unsure whose responsibility it is. Research question (6). What is your understanding of who has the sole responsibility to teach discipleship to children? The answer to this question mirrored the answers to research question five. Seventy percent assumed that it is the church's responsibility to teaching and transforming children into disciples of Christ. Twenty percent believed the sole responsibility resides with the parents, while 10 percent are unsure.
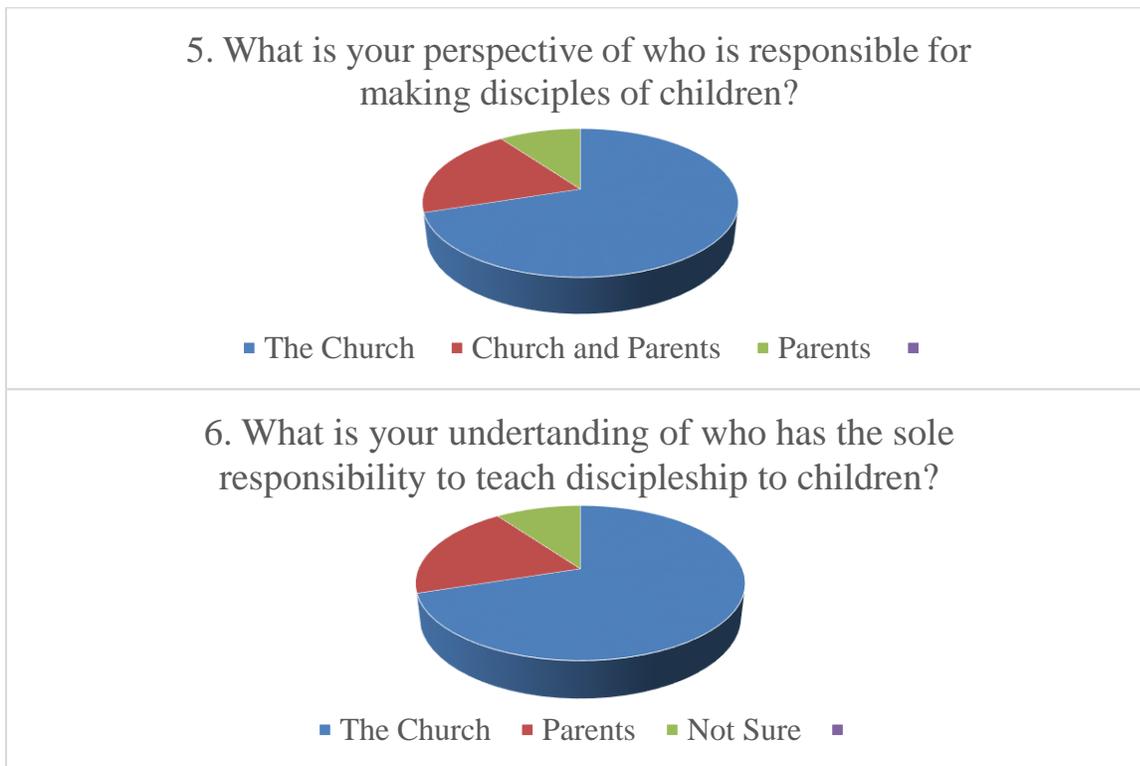
Figure 3. Response to Interview Survey Q5 & Q6

Research question (7). Why do you believe that some parents are not taking their children to church? Forty percent say they do not take their children to services regularly because they are single. Thirty percent leave their children at home because there are separate services for adults and children. Twenty percent say they cannot control their children, while 10 percent viewed their children as unruly in service. Research question (8). What do you know about small group ministry? Twenty-five percent viewed Sunday schools and small group ministry as the same. Ten percent have no idea what small groups ministry is all about. Forty percent understood small group ministry as a group of people having services together, while 25 percent assumed small group ministry to be a type of Bible Study.
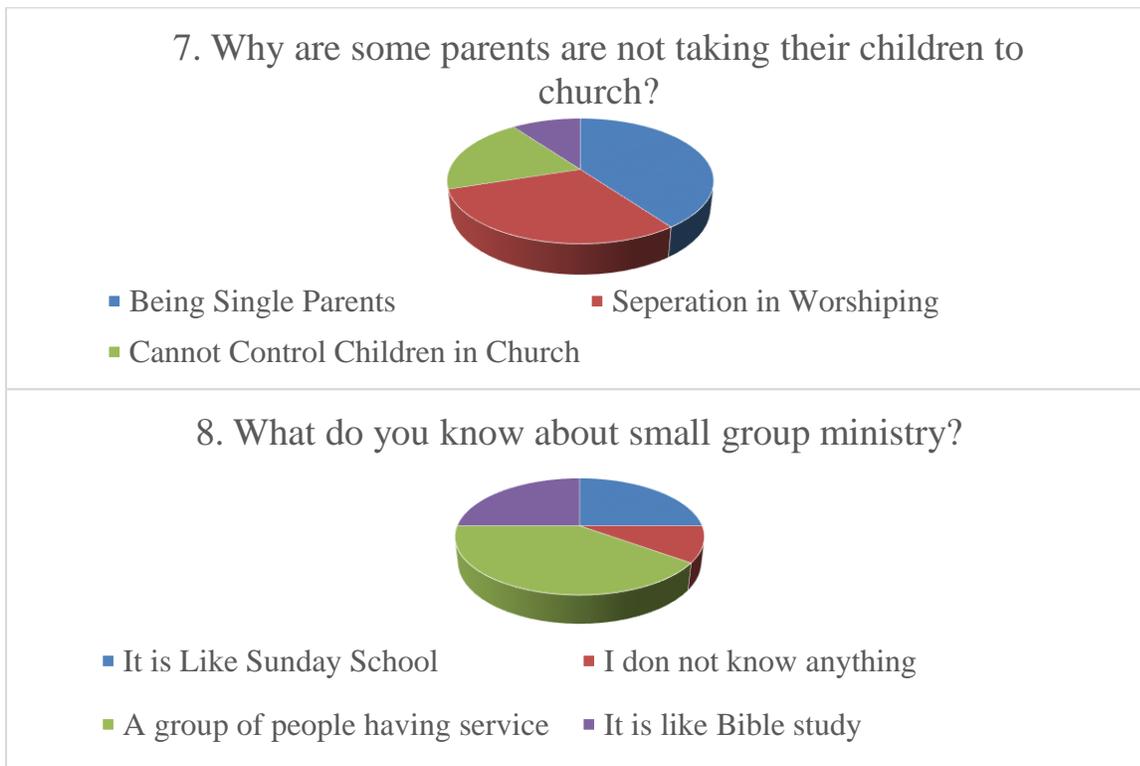
Figure 4. Response to Interview Survey Q7 & Q8

Research Question (9)**.** What are your views on families worshiping as a unit in the church? Fifty percent believed that the family should worship together as a single unit. Thirty percent assumed that children should participate in a different environment from their parents, while 20 percent are unsure. Research question (10)**.** What are your ideas about being the disciple-makers of your children? Forty percent believed that Bible studies are where children should learn to be disciples. Thirty percent thought that they are not qualified due to their lack of knowledge of God's word. 20 percent wants to know how they can become the disciple-makers of their children. In comparison, 10 percent were not interested in transforming their children into disciples.

Figure 5. Response to Interview Survey Q9 & Q10

Research question (11). What are your ideas for small group ministries? Forty percent viewed small group ministry as a birth-month group born in the same month congregate and fellowship with each other. Thirty percent had the idea that a small group is going into the community and have services. Twenty percent believed small group ministry serves others in need, while 10 percent viewed its helping others. Research question (12). Are you interested in becoming the primary disciple-makers of your children? Eighty percent are interested in becoming the primary disciple-makers of their children, while 20 percent will do so with proper training and church help.

11. What are your ideas of small group ministries?

- A Birth House Group
- Community Services
- Helping others
- Serving each other

12. Are you interested in becoming the primary disciple-makers of your children?

- Interested
- With the church
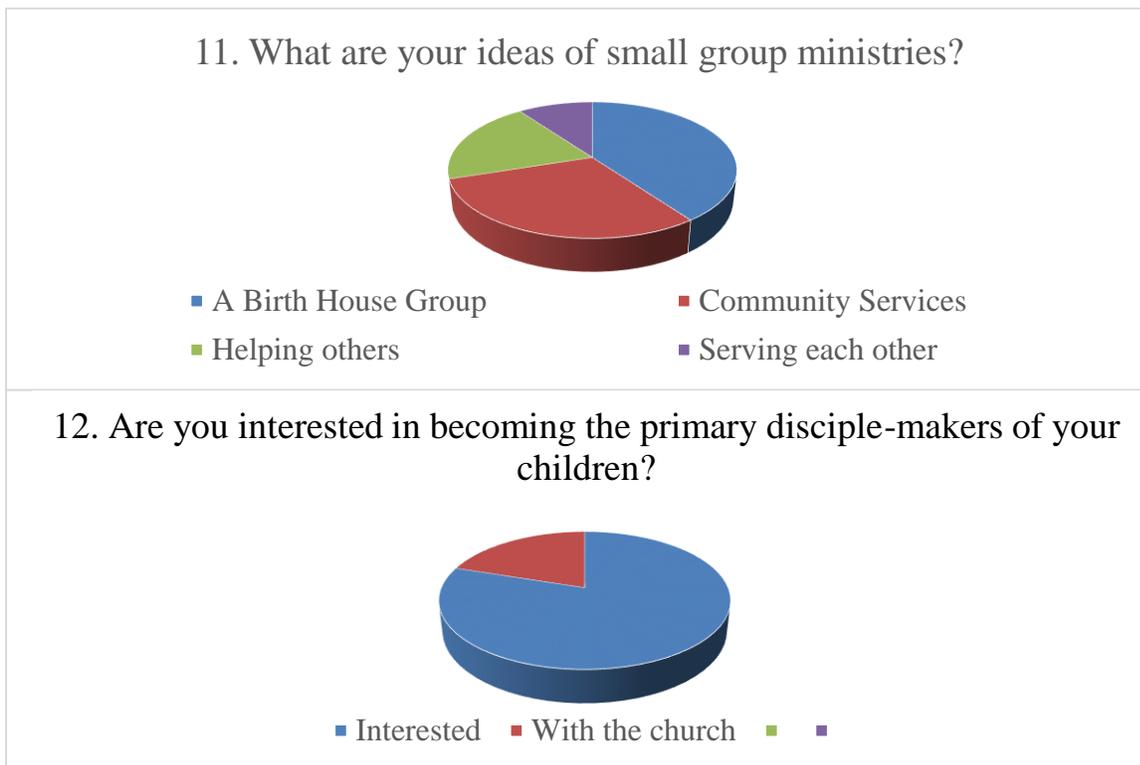
Figure 6. Response to Interview Survey Q11 & Q12

Results Outcome

According to Chapter 3's intervention plan, there are two types of standard approaches: (1) classrooms and (2) small group integration.

Table 1. Summary of Intervention Guidelines

Strategies and Profiles	Managerial Approaches	Performance Guides
Face-to-face	Direct	Detailed results
Persuasive	Selling an idea	Detailed results
Longitude	Comparison	Detailed results
Groups integration	Selling an idea and observation	Detailed results

To fully capitalized on the research training, the managerial approaches are used to ensure all critical information and topics are relevant to the study. This method enables the researcher to address any selected issues and offer a framework for understanding performance in any specific area. The levels of administering the intervention plans that sustain integrity are directly reflected in the approach's contents. The performance guide is to motivate and compare the information with progressive growth and sustainability of how well participants are maintaining and adapting to what they have been taught. The performance guide is a direct result of the managerial approach.

First Three Weeks

During the first three weeks of the research conducted in a classroom environment, participants were very excited and enthusiastic about their studies' contents. Even though all participants are Christians, some are babes in Christ while others are matured and grounded in God's Word. Some participants' knowledge of discipleship and parents as the primary disciple-

makers of their children were shrouded with uncertainties. As the training progressed, participants asked many questions, and practically all the participants regularly solicited clarity.

At the beginning of week two, after lecturing on godly parents with ungodly children, participants were given the opportunities to study the effects or possible outcomes of religious parents who did not or do not train their children in the ways of the Lord. Participants presented their findings at the end of week two, which they presented to the class individually. The participants' result of ungodly children was astonishing. One hundred percent of the class agreed that when godly parents failed mentored their children in the ways of the Lord, the outcome can be unfavorable.

Week three began with a lecture on godly parents, who mentored their children in the ways of the Lord. During week three, participants relied heavily on Eli and Samuel's story and used their narratives as the guiding principles for a model of parents who failed to teach their children in the ways of the Lord. Participants asked many questions and presented various outcomes. They also reflected on their own experiences as an example of their spiritual growth from their parents' biblical principles, compared to children who did not receive spiritual guidance from their parents. Participants used the narratives of Hannah and Job as the basis for their spiritual transformation by exemplifying the importance in their discussions of godly parents who dedicated themselves to God and kept their promises to train their children in His ways.

The participants embraced the idea that their children's discipleship is a never-ending endeavor, as reflected by Job as he continuously prays for his children. Participants were allowed to study the effects of godly parents who mentored their children in the ways of the Lord. At the end of week three, participants presented their findings in an open forum, which indicated that

parents who mentored their children according to biblical principles are more likely to grow in the spirit and grace of the Lord. Week three ended with introducing small groups ministry, which was for three weeks, starting with week four, and finished with week six.

Last Three Weeks

Throughout week four, participants were introduced to the various small group models, with their strengths and weaknesses. The small groups served as a vehicle for parents to gain spiritual support and learn from each other about the importance of parents being disciples of Christ and becoming the primary disciple-makers of their children. Participants utilized what they had learned about discipleship during the first three weeks to enhance their functionalities in the small groups' environments. Participants were divided into groups of six and then assigned to separate groups.

At the beginning of week five, the researcher presented an in-depth lecture on small group effectiveness solely devoted to parental discipleship. Participants were aware that this was a new concept for a small group. However, it is durable, and they were the spearhead of this type of group study. The weaknesses of this small group are that it is new. Enough research has not been conducted as yet to determine the shortcomings. The strength is that of other similar small groups. It brings spiritual growth and sustainment in reaching and maintaining spiritual maturity. From the middle of week five to the end of week six, the researcher functioned primarily in an observatory mode, with little or no input, and only interacted with participants when solicited.

During the small group integration, participants were very active among themselves. They opened each session with prayer, sang a short chorus, and then went into their pre-planned activities. During these activities, participants went back over their notes from previous training and used what they had learned to complement their group sessions. During the fourth and sixth

weeks, through observations, it was noted that participants read and researched many Scriptures about disciples and discipleship and began to talk about how biblical parents followed God's mandates in training their children in His way instead of placing this responsibility on the church. During week six, both groups came together

Among themselves, the participants formed a team, debating two issues: (1) the church's role in preparing parents for discipleship, and (2) Their part in turning their children into disciples. The groups established one rule; what the one group believes. The other group must argue against it. Each group adequately defended what it believed by using scriptural references and biblical stories. Group members also discussed among themselves why they were not taking their children to service with them. They used biblical words to enhance their future endeavors in being the sole disciple-makers of their children. The initiatives taken by both groups without any prompting from the researcher are a direct reflection of a well-organized and executed research program, which results in success.

<div align="center">Favorable Outcomes</div>

The researcher took a Longitude Survey at the end of week three. This type of survey is used when comparing earlier results for later development. The survey was used to determine what participants have learned and any significant changes in their discipleship perspective. The initial survey questionnaire, which was asked at the beginning of week one, was asked at the end of week three. Below is a table of the results using longitude surveying.

Table 2. Summary of Longitude Intervention Guidelines

		The Initial results in week 1 with week 3 results			
No.	Research questions	Before the Study Responses	%	After the Study Responses	%

1	What is a disciple?	a. Follower of Christ	60%	a. All Christians Should be disciples of Christ	100%
		b. All Christians	30%		
		c. Regular churchgoers	10%		
2	How would you define a Christian who is a disciple of Christ?	a. Someone who attends church regularly	20%	a. A witness who makes disciples for Christ	80%
		b. A teacher	30%	b. Those who teach others about Christ	20%
		c. A witness	40%		
		d. Not sure	10%		
3	What are your views on the role of the church in teaching parents' discipleship?	a. The church role	60%	a. The church role	100%
		b. Individual responsibility	30%		
		c. Unsure	10%		
4	What are your ideas of the role of the church in teaching discipleship to children?	a. The church role	80%	a. The role of parents	100%
		b. Both church and parents' role	10%		
		c. Unsure	10%		
5	Who is responsible for making disciples of children?	a. The church	70%	a. The parents	100%
		b. The parents	20%		
		c. Unsure	10%		
6	Who has the primary responsibility to teach discipleship to children?	a. The church	70%	a. The parents	100%
		b. The parents	20%		
		c. Unsure	10%		
7	Why do some parents not take their children to church with them?	a. They are Single	40%	a. Young children should go with parents	90%
		b. Children are not adults	30%		
		c. Unable to control their children	20%	b. Parents should be an example of adult children	10%
		d. Children are unruly	10%		
8	What do you know about small group ministry?	a. Same as Sunday school	25%	a. A group that is designed for a specific purpose	100%
		b. Have no idea	10%		
		c. Group of people having service	40%		
		d. A type of Bible study	25%		
9	What are your views on families worshiping as a unit in the church?	a. Family should worship together	50%	a. Family worship together	80%
		b. Worship separately	30%	b. Family worship separately	20%
			30%		

		c. Unsure			
10	What are your views about being the disciple-makers of your children?	a. Should be Bible studies b. Not qualified c. Wants to learn d. Not interested	40% 30% 20% 10%	a. Wants to know how	100%
11	What are your ideas for small group ministries?	a. A birth month group b. Having community services c. Serves those in need d. Helping others	40% 30% 20% 10%	a. A group that is designed for spiritual growth b. A group for spiritual transformation	60% 40%
12	What are your ideas for becoming the primary disciple-makers of your children?	a. Interested b. With the church help	80% 20%	a. Yes b. With the church help	100% 0%

Table 3. Analytical Tools

Face-to-face	Direct
Persuasive	Selling an idea
Longitude	Comparison
Groups integration	Selling an idea and observation

Four primary analysis tools are outlined in chapter three, which were used throughout the research process; they are (1) Face-to-face, (2) Persuasive, (3) Longitude, (4) Group Integration. Here are the rationale for each tool will be explained. In the initial stage of the study, the researcher conducted a face to face interview. This method was utilized to allow the participants to answer similar surveying questions and ask questions for clarity. The researcher also used this method to paraphrase queries and ensure that answers were not given in a closed-ended manner. An initial face-to-face interview is a direct approach that sets the stage and established an immeasurable trust and confidence between the researcher and the participants, which is vital to the researcher's success. The Face-to-face approach is the bridge between the study and its success.

Using persuasive techniques enables the researcher to be a salesman who has some products to sell. He must convince the buyers that his goods are superior to those of his competitors. The thesis claimed that parents should be the sole disciple-makers of their children. With the persuasive approach, the researcher engaged the participants with confidence in the demonstrations and facts they needed. The practical technique is a powerful tool for the researcher, but it also works very well for the participants because they have the right to accept

or refuse what has been offered to them. Persuasive techniques played a significant role in achieving a favorable outcome for the research.

Due to the study's nature, longitude surveying is vital to the study's advancement and growth. From the inception of the course, it was determined that there must be a way to determine the research's effectiveness, and if participants retained what they are learned. If participants had known how well are had, they learned, and at what rate. Also, were there significant changes to the initial concept they had? Longitude enables the researcher to compare past performance with a future version by comparing the same answers participants took at the initial stage of the research. The same surveying questions were what they filled out at the halfway point of the study. Both the initial responses and the present answers were compared and analyzed.

The analyzed data enables the researcher to determine its effectiveness or lack of it and the required changes or approach. Longitude serves as the road map to the entire research process in deciding what is durable from what is not stable. For sustainability and continuity in the discipleship process, group integration played a fundamental role in transforming its members' lives and bringing spiritual growth and expansion. Group integration was utilized through the second phase of the research process by enabling participants to distinguish between groups and cliques' elements. Throughout, the researcher observed how group members interacted with each other and how they transformed from individuality into a unity of togetherness. The analytical tools' combined effects presented the following outcome, measurable and reflected the success of the research program.

Table 4. Summary of the analytical tools

No.	Research questions	Before the Study Responses	%	After the Study Responses	%
1	What is a disciple?	Follower of Christ	60%	All Christians Should be disciples of Christ	100%
2	How would you define a Christian who is a disciple of Christ?	Someone who attends church regularly	20%	A witness who makes disciples for Christ	80%
3	What are your views of the role of the church in teaching parents discipleship?	The church role	60%	The church role	100%
4	What are your views of the role of the church in teaching discipleship to Children?	The church role	80%	The role of parents	100%
5	Who is responsible for making disciples of children?	The church	70%	The parents	100%
6	Who has the primary responsibility to teach discipleship to children?	The church	70%	The parents	100%
7	Why do some parents not take their children to church with them?	a. They are single b. Children are adults c. Unable to control their children d. Children are unruly	40% 30% 20% 10%	a. Young children should go with their parents. b. Parents should be an example of adult children	90% 10%
8	What do you know about small group ministry?	a. Same as Sunday school b. Have no idea c. Group of people having service d. A type of Bible study	25% 10% 40% 25%	a. A group that is designed for a specific purpose	100%
9	What are your views on families worshiping as a unit in the church?	A family should worship together	50%	Family worship together	80%

10	What are your ideas about being the disciple-makers of your children?	a. Should be Bible studies b. Not qualified c. Wants to learn d. Not interested	40% 30% 20% 10%	Will become disciple-makers of their children	100%
11	What are your ideas for small group ministries?	a. A birth month group b. Having community services c. Serves those in need. d. Helping others.	40% 30% 20% 10%	a. A group that is designed for spiritual growth b. A group for spiritual transformation	60% 40%
12	Are you interested in becoming the primary disciple-makers of your children?	Interested	80%	Yes	100%

Summary

Chapter four examines the results of twelve participants who participated in the research study. Data collection started from the first to the sixth weeks of the program with a linear evaluation of all data. The content analytical tools results show a favorable overall increase and changes in each research question area. Those changes ranged from a forty to eighty percent increase in terms of spiritual growth and transformation. The managerial approaches of the analytical tools are the primary focus of the research. The participants enthusiastically interacted with each other in all aspects of the study.

This research study revealed that participants' understanding of their role of being the primary disciple-makers of their children doubled in some areas and increased threefold after the training. During small group training, it was observed that participants spent a great deal of their time praying to God, reading, and explaining scriptures. They discussed strategies for multiplication and mentoring their children. This thesis is a complimentary training disciple-making concept for The Greater Portmore Circuit of Baptist Churches, especially HBC. When

applied, this program can help churches create a formidable disciple-making environment for parents, who will make disciples of their children.

The Longitude Survey and evaluation demonstrated that at the end of the first three weeks, participants developed a clear and concise understanding of the importance of discipleship in their lives and the relevance of parents being the primary disciple-makers of their children. The analytical tools result demonstrated the research success by enabling parents to embrace small groups to grow their children's discipleship growth. Chapter five will discuss the data resulting from this twelve-questionnaire study, reflect on this research's restrictions, and present suggestions for future research studies.

Some of the verbal questions which weres asked and the rationality of asking those questions are: Would you be interested in participating in the research program? The researcher first ascertained whether on not the prospective candidates are interested in participating in the program. Also equally important is to ensure that all participants meet the requirements, such as: Been a member of the Circuit churches and children who fall within the required age group.

A few explanations for asking various initial survey questions: How would you describe a Christian who is a disciple of Christ? It is crucial to get an idea of how the participants think of themselves as disciples of Christ. This question sets the stage by introducing the candidate to explore who they are and where they are going and how they will get there.

Another equally important question is: How would you describe the church's role in teaching discipleship to children? Teaching discipleship to children can be a daunting task. It is critical to know whether on not parent's views of family discipleship are the church's

responsibility and not theirs. Knowing who has the primary responsibility for making disciples of the children and what are the family roles in training the children in the ways of the Lord. Asking the question: What do you think are some reasons why some parents may not take their children to church with them? This question is the pivoting point in introducing parents to the importance of family worshiping together and as a unit.

A small group ministry is a useful tool in accomplishing desired goals and spiritual growth. By asking questions such as: "What do you know about small group ministry?" Exposed the candidates to the workings and methodologies of implementing small group ministries as a vehicle to achieve the desired outcome is paramount. This question also enables the participant to know the difference between a group and a clique. Finally, in this line of questioning, asking: "Are you interested in becoming the primary disciple-makers of your children?" This interview question perhaps the most important of all. Regardless of their qualifications and meeting all requirements, if participants are not interested in becoming the primary disciple-makers of their children, it will be up to the researcher to convince them that it is their responsibility to utilize motivational techniques.

Some demographic questions are asked to ensure all candidates meet the requirements, such as year of birth. This question is required to make sure that only participants of eligible age are enlisted. Questions such as family status are used for compiling survey data clearly and concisely. Sorting data by age, gender, class, and children presented a brief graphic chart of the research outcome.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Introduction

The growing need for parents to be disciples, and in turn, be the primary disciple-makers of their children has reached an increased demand in Christendom. Whether the church prepares parents to be disciples or not, it is the parental responsibility to be the disciple-makers of their children, which is the focus of this research study. This chapter will discuss the results produced in the preceding chapter. The following segments discuss each of the research questions addressed in this research paper, followed by comparing other research literature. Lastly, the restrictions, recommendations for future research, and suppositions of this study and produced.

Future Endeavors

The research regarding parents being the primary disciple-makers of their children should be further examined to determine the church's feasibility of encouraging its members. Parents must adhere to God's commandment, as outlined in Deut 6:1-9; Prov 22:6, to be the frontline educators of their children in the ways of the Lord. The church also needs to establish and dedicate specific days for discipleship training and lessons. Many churches have a set day for Bible studies, and they meet at least four times a month. One possible solution to the activity is to allocate specific time for teaching discipleship. Instead of having Bible studies four times, divide those weeks and commit two weeks for bible studies, while the other two focus on disciple ministries.

Another future endeavor is to create and establish small groups ministries, which are primarily dedicated to making disciples to all Christian, regardless of their family orientations and status. In sustaining the integrities of what they have learned of this study have committed to continuing their studies in the form of small group ministries by frequently meeting to share

discipleship knowledge and sustain their spiritual growth. Members of the research study also planned to introduce their gained discipleship knowledge to their respective congregation and seek their pastor's approval to establish two days per month primarily for discipleship teachings and create small groups ministries focusing only on disciple-making of parents. It was articulated by the participants that their small group ministries will be revealed to all Christians in training them on how to be the primary disciple-makers of their children.

Compared to Other Literature

The results of the research project are in line with some of the literary work which was analyzed. For example, before undertaking teaching discipleship, it is imperative to understand how the participant views what constitutes disciple/discipleship. Harrington, Bonhoeffer, and Hull agree that it is crucial to define disciple before teaching discipleship. Parents have a great responsibility in bringing spiritual transformation in the lives of their children. An area of this research result's success demonstrated when parents or family are well trained and have a clear and concise understanding of their roles in their children's lives. They can rise to the occasion in establishing family discipleship.

Dobson approached family discipleship from the viewpoint of parents having the primary responsibility of training their children in the Lord's ways and devoted quality time for interacting with their children, regardless of the situation. Dobson's views on family discipleship are crucial to parents. The results also confirmed that parents, not the church, have the ultimate responsibility to train their children in the ways of the Lord. Forrest's views aligned with the Research question (6): What is your understanding of who has the sole responsibility to teach discipleship to children? He agrees that parents must train their children in the ways of the Lord. His argument focuses not only on scriptural references, but he also cites numerous scholarly

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works that support his claims in presenting parents as the primary disciple-makers for their children. This research project has similarities that paralleled Dodson and Forrest's by claiming that parents should be the primary disciple-makers of their children.

Throughout the research project, the focus was on educating the parents, who will, in turn, educate their children in the ways of the Lord. The research project claimed that children could understand God's Word and decipher what they learned with clarity. David and Beckwith believe that educators and pastors who minister to young people could practically declare that all children can meet God. Therefore, educators, such as pastors, should search for ways to enhance children's spiritual capacities. Conversely, at the same time, the study omitted educators and pastors from the equations of teaching discipleship children on a full-scale basis but can do so partially, while the parents maintained full responsibility. David and Beckwith's views are aligned with the results of the research project.

This research project was also compared to other works of literature about the effectiveness of small group ministries. Small groups play an intricate role in transforming parents into disciples and equipping them to be the disciple-makers of their children. This thesis assumes that parents who are members of small groups can transform into their homes' discipleship models. This research has similarities with Walton, who implies that small groups' role in discipleship formation has been given much attention. They are widely promoted as the essential means for such formation.

However, even though small groups are heralded as an ideal medium for spiritual transformation, it is not the only way for disciple-making. Walton also assumes that small-group work in the church is of great benefit to church planting and disciple-making. He thinks there are ways to achieve good outcomes, including helping to form disciples. There is an implicit

recognition throughout that it is not the only way to undertake discipleship formation. Walton believes it is aligned with the research results, which affirms that small groups play an essential role in transforming parents into discipleship.

There is also a need for additional training in the format of Bible studies to complement small group discipleship programs. The researcher compared the results of the literature analyzed with the research results. Practically all the published works of the literature explored to have the same thing in common. They approached family discipleship as a parental responsibility but not as the sole disciple-makers. This thesis takes a different approach to family discipleship by assuming that it is the parent's primary responsibility to turn their children into disciples of Christ.

There is literature on numerous small group models, focusing on small group ministries to multiply their effectiveness in achieving their goals. However, none of those small group models are dedicated solely to transform parents into disciples. This research project approaches small group ministries from two different perspectives: The first is to see the small group with an exclusive purpose to teach Christians to be disciples of Christ. The second perspective is to teach parents how to become the primary disciple-makers of their children. That is one of the significant differences between the research project results and published literature

Lessons Learned

The researcher learned several lessons that directly impacts the thesis assumptions. It was discovered that at the initial stages, participants were very eager to learn all they can about the true nature of disciple/discipleship. Many participants had no idea of their responsibility of being a disciple before they can disciple others. Once the course started and was in full swing, participants began to ask questions and then formulated their ideas and presented hypothetical

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situations and events and the possible outcomes for each scenario of parents who did not mentor their children in the ways of the Lord.

The researcher learned that people are eager to learn new things from the project's implementation, even when those new ideas are foreign to them. It was also discovered it was not what is introduced to the participants, but how the delivery is made. First, the researcher must establish trust and confidence must be installed; then participants must have faith in the researcher. It was also uncovered that most of the initial stage participants continuously performed fact-finding by double-checking biblical references and literature sources. People like to be recognized for a job well done. It motivates them to go the extra mile.

The researcher discovered that participants enjoyed working autonomously in the small group environments and would seek assistance from the researcher when required. It is also found that when people are working on a project, they need clear and concise guidance and information. They enjoyed been told what to do, but not how to do it. Participants get their ultimate satisfaction from solving problems as a team, and not from the researcher continually giving them the answers to complex and tedious situations.

Applying to other Settings

The results of the research findings can be beneficial in the following three settings: (1) Bible studies, (2) Sunday schools, (3) Small group ministries, and (4) Children services. Instead of having Bible studies four times per month, Bible environments incorporate disciple training in the studies by having two Bible studies a month and two discipleship training. This training will complement what has been previously learned and enhance parents' and the entire congregation's durability to continue multiplication. Integrating discipleship in the Sunday school lessons will build the church and give parents the unique ability to impart what they have learned about

discipleship to the entire congregation. Since this format emphasizes individual attention, it will also work effectively in a gathering where Sunday school lessons are planned and executed by the Sunday school teachers. It will be a daunting task getting this to use in a church culture, where Sunday school materials are pre-planned and implemented in the forms of printed materials. These churches are institutionalized and are set in their ways. Applying the results in small group ministries can be feasible because practically all churches have some group ministries. Some churches have birth-month groups. For example, Greater Portmore Baptist Church has four birth-month groups, with more than eighty-nine members per group. These groups are ineffective and served no purpose other than to raise money for various projects.

By dividing these groups into manageable small groups and implementing a discipleship program, the church will grow. The birth-month groups will have a spiritual purpose, and the group members will learn to depend on and trust each other for their spiritual growth in discipleship. Children's services are the most overlooked settings within the religious environment. Some parents do not take their children to worship with them because they are against family separation during worshiping. At the same time, others do not see any harm in worshiping separately from their children. By implementing the research results with children's services, those parents who refused to take their children to church with them will have their desire achieved knowing that what is taught to their children is aligned with God's word.

Children's services are a handy tool to build and mold the young minds of future disciples. The implementation should reinforce what has been taught at home by the parents about discipleship. Children's service is all about the formation of a spiritual mind and transforming children into future disciples. Implementing this research project results will achieve this desired goal.

Future Research

There are not enough research studies on three significant aspects of the research: The first perspective is parents as primary disciple-makers of their children. The second step is to develop a small group ministry for discipleship. The third step involves the church's role in children's discipleship. These three aspects emerge from the studies, which merit future research. With the propositions that parents should be the primary disciple-makers of their children, participants were initially lost and confounded with the idea of them being primarily responsible for transforming their children into discipleship. Conversely, the concept of being a disciple was not new to the participants

However, their understanding that they cannot teach their children to be disciples if they are not disciples was difficult for them to comprehend because the teachings they received indicated that all Christians are disciples. Therefore, they are qualified to teach others to be disciples, even their children. The research project proved to participants that being a Christian does not necessarily make a person a disciple. Further research studies are required to expose the church's discipleship programs' true nature, how the church prepares its members to be disciples and its effectiveness.

Small groups dedicated to parents' discipleship also is another area that merits future research. There are numerous small group models available for church planting, multiplication, growth, and church sustainability. Still, throughout the literature research, no groups were uncovered that were dedicated solely for preparing parents to be disciples or preparing them to be the primary disciple-makers of their children. The research project demonstrated how well this small group model works.

The project showed the model's strengths and weaknesses and its effectiveness in promoting discipleship in parents and guiding them in making their children disciples. Creating a small discipleship group is a new concept. Initially, this concept worked in a minimal and limited setting, which can be viewed as a control group. Participants functioned well and adhered to all rules and requirements. This small group model needs further research to evaluate its feasibility and effectiveness in transforming parents into disciples, then enabling them to be the primary disciple-makers of their children.

Another area that required further research was the role of the church in preparing children for discipleship. During the research project, it was uncovered that approximately seventy-five percent of the participants believed it was the church's responsibility to transform their children into disciples. Participants also thought that the various ministry departments in the church (Sunday school, Bible studies, children services, etc.) were capable in their curriculum for teaching discipleship to their children. Further studies are required in the areas of the church's programs and how effective are Bible studies, Sunday school, and Children services, to determine if these ministries are adequately prepared to complement parental responsibility in transforming their children into disciples of Christ.

Overall, this research project presents only data on specific goals using the content analysis. By focusing on the constraint of this report's scope and research, further study is essential to investigate parents' in-depth concepts as primary disciple-makers of their children and Small groups for discipleship, contributing more to this thesis in understanding its implication.

This research project adds significant proof to the prevailing discipleship and small groups model ministries. It offers current information as gathered from participants in the content

analysis for parents as primary disciple-makers of their children. With the stated objectives for studying the recent research questions, this project investigates the twelve research survey questions gathered and analyzed from the twelve participants' problem statement. The findings are a summary of the trend over six weeks.

This summary indicates general themes towards increasing the participant's understanding of the implication of discipleship. Nevertheless, this study provides more information on a lower scale than literature researched and analyzed on discipleship and small group ministries. This revealing information and combination of discipleship and small groups are another topic of this research project. There are similarities to the findings in other pieces of literature to those of this study. However, this research proves to be more favorable in recognizing parents as the primary disciple-makers of their children. For this reason, a reasonable hypothesis applies. The evidence provided enables the author to analyze the disclosure procedures, like revealing the location and content.

The longitude results show that participants' understanding of the course contents transformed their initial understanding of discipleship from obscurity to a clear and concise account of the subject. Discipleship: This thesis is an intricate endeavor that cannot be adequately explained by a single theoretical assessment or an available degree of declaration. In retrospect to this study, further research is required with larger numbers of participants and wider range of situaltions to provide greater evidence of its efficacy.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval

August 12, 2020

Ranny Lewis
Daryl Rodriguez

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY19-20-414 Discipleship: A Parent's Responsibility

Dear Ranny Lewis,

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 collected proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate ypdate 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

Introductory Recruitment Script

Hi! Good afternoon, my name is Ranny Lewis: As a graduate student in the School of

Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am researching as part of a DMin

degree requirements. The purpose of my research is to determine why some parents may

not be assuming their responsibility as the primary disciple-makers of their children and

why they may be assuming that the church has the responsibility to make disciples of

their children.

1. Would you be interested in participating in a research program?

2. Only members of the Greater Portmore Circuit of Baptist Churches who are parents

   are eligible.

   Are you a member of Hellshire Baptist Church or GPCB?

3. Do you have a child or children?

4. Is your child/children between the ages of two and eighteen years?

5. If your child/children is/are nineteen or older and living with you; you are eligible.

6. This research program is for parents who are not practicing child-discipleship.

   The program will be for approximately six weeks, twice a week, once on Sundays

   after worship for an hour and a half, and on Tuesdays, an hour before Bible studies.

   Will you be available at those times?

7. The research will be conducted in a classroom environment for three weeks and three

   weeks in a small group environment.

   May I have your name and contact information for follow-up purposes?

8. May I will contact you with information as to when we will have our first meeting?

If you answer yes to all these questions, you can participate in the research program.

Here is my contact information (876-787-7118; 954-573-4778). Please let me know if you are interested.

Thank you for your interest in participating in the program.

Appendix C

Research Questions – 12 Question Survey

Face-to-face Interview.

At the 2nd and 3rd meetings, the survey questions below will be presented to the participants.

Answer the following questions in your own words. Please print your response.

1. How would you define what is a disciple?

2. How would you describe a Christian who is a disciple of Christ?

3. How would you define the role of the churches in teaching discipleship to parents?

4. How would you describe the part of the church in teaching discipleship to children?

5. What is your perception of who is responsible for making disciples of children?

6. What is your understanding of who has the sole responsibility to teach discipleship to children?

7. What do you think are some reasons why some parents may not take their children to church with them?

8. What do you know about small group ministry?

9. What are your views on family worshiping as a unit in the church?

10. What are your ideas of being the disciple-makers of your children?

11. What are your opinions of small group ministries?

12. Are you interested in becoming the primary disciple-makers of your children?

    [ ] Yes   [ ] No (circle one and explain).

Appendix D

Demographic Questions

1. When were you born? (Circle the appropriate answer below A-E)

    A) Born before 1945

    B) Born between 1946 and 1964

    C) Born between 1965 and 1980

    D) Born between 1980 and 2000

    E) Born in 2001 or 2002

2. Family status.

    a. Are you: Male or Female (circle one)

    b. Marital status: Married, Single, Separated, Widow, Widower. (circle one)

    c. How many children do you have? ___ (enter the number)

    d. How many of your children are males? ___ (enter the number) First son's age___Second son's age___Third son's age___Fourth son's age___Fifth son's age___Sixth son's age___

    e. How many of your children are females___ (enter the amount) First daughter's age___ Second daughter's age___ Third daughter's age___ Fourth daughter's age___ Fifth daughter's age___. Sixth daughter's age___

    f. Do these children live with you?
       Yes   No (circle one)

    g. Do your child/children accompany you frequently to worship service?
       Yes   No (circle one)

Appendix E

Small-Group Interview Questions

1. Are you a Christian?

2. Do you have children/ a child?

3. Why are you interested in this study?

4. Tell me a little about yourself?

5. What do you expect to gain from participating in this study?

6. What do you know about discipleship?

7. What do you know about small group ministry?

8. What do you think about the church as being disciple-makers of the children?

9. What do you think about parents as being disciple-makers of their children?

10. How do you feel about being the primary disciple-maker of your child/children?

11. The study is for six weeks. Are there any present reasons which might prevent you from complete the study?

12. Do you have any questions you would like to ask me?