

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

**Preparing the Next Generation for Faith Ownership by Training
Fathers in the Biblical Worldview**

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to
the Faculty of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

by

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Several modern factors increase families' difficulty training children in the Christian faith. Time commitments outside the home have increased, and a decline in faith practice has made parents less comfortable and confident with knowledge of the Christian faith. These factors fueled an increase in teenagers leaving the Christian faith as they moved into adulthood and a decline in the number of adults with a biblical worldview. The underlying assumption of this DMIN project is that if fathers are trained with a biblical worldview and mentoring skills, they will become more comfortable and prepared to share their faith with their children so that they can take ownership of their faith. A seven-week training program equipped fourteen men with biblical worldview information and mentoring skills to prepare them to help their children embrace a Christian worldview. Project participants' ability to identify and summarize a biblical worldview and grow more comfortable sharing their faith was analyzed with pre- and post-training questionnaires and surveys. The project results support the thesis that training men in a biblical worldview and holding them accountable for leading conversations with their children will empower them to summarize the biblical worldview and grow in the comfort of sharing their faith. Men equipped with this thesis' biblical worldview training can assist their children in taking faith ownership as they prepare for adulthood.

Keywords: biblical worldview, worldview development, father's responsibility, training fathers, faith sharing, faith ownership.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral thesis to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I am grateful for the call that He has placed in my life to share the gospel and to equip others to share the gospel as well. I also dedicate this paper to my family, who have supported me through the research and writing. This would not have been possible without their love, encouragement, and understanding.

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Abbreviations

BWV	<i>Biblical Worldview</i>
DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
IRB	<i>Internal Review Board</i>

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

As Christians, we are called to make disciples of Jesus Christ, walking alongside and discipling others into the kingdom (Matt 28:18–20). The tradition of handing down the faith from generation to generation is not just a practice but a vital biblical precedent. The Bible showcases successful and unsuccessful attempts to hand down the faith, emphasizing its importance. For instance, the story of Adam and his children in Genesis 4:1–16 provides an example of a successful attempt (Abel) and a failed attempt (Cain) to hand down the faith. After Abel's death, Adam and Eve's son Seth (Gen 4:25) also received the faith from his father as it was handed down from Adam to Seth. Through Seth's generations, we see faithful living with God passed down from one generation to the next (Gen 5) as the faith eventually reached Noah, who is described as righteous and blameless before God and the people of his time (Gen 6:9).

Teaching the next generation about faith as it relates to God's covenant with Israel begins with the covenant God makes with Abraham (Gen 15:18–20), which is then passed down to Abraham's son Isaac, Isaac's son Jacob, and Jacob's sons, the twelve tribes of Israel. God's covenant with Israel is reaffirmed through Moses as God rescues Israel from Egypt (Exod 6:2–8). Moses then reminds Israel that they are to instruct future generations in the commands of God and not forsake God's ways (Deut 6). The tradition of disciple-making continues in the New Testament as Jesus shared His kingdom teachings with the disciples and the crowds and other followers like Paul, who instructs new communities in the ways of Christ.

Disciple-making is essential for a Christian community; however, worldviews competing for the hearts and souls of individuals and families are increasing daily. George Barna and the Cultural Research Center determined in 2021 that only six percent of American adults hold a biblical worldview and that “Almost nine out of 10 U.S. adults (88%) have an impure, unrecognizable worldview that is nothing more than a customized, personal blend of disparate ideas adopted from multiple philosophies of life.”¹ In research conducted in 2022, Barna has reported a steady decline in the number of American adults holding a biblical worldview, as the percentage has decreased to four percent.² Barna describes the personalized blend of worldviews currently held by most adults as the worldview of syncretism.³ In 2023, Barna reported that while sixty-seven percent of parents of preteens claim to have a biblical worldview, only four percent of these parents actually hold to the biblical worldview, matching the national percentage of all adults.⁴ When all parents of preteens are included in the number, the percentage of parents who hold to the biblical worldview drops to two percent.⁵

With the rise of the syncretistic worldview, discipling families into the biblical worldview has become more essential and more complex. As evidenced by the statistics presented by Barna, parents are becoming less able to hand down the faith to their children as

¹ George Barna, *American Worldview Inventory 2021–22: The Annual Report on the State of Worldview in the United States* (Glendale, AZ: Arizona Christian University Press, 2022), 15–16.

² *Ibid.*, 91.

³ Syncretism is a worldview developed unsystematically by the individual who holds this unique and personalized set of beliefs and opinions. As a mixture of worldview beliefs, it cannot be recognized as any one worldview. Instead, Syncretism is developed to fit the individual’s personal preferences. Syncretism can be seen in the cultural statement, “Live your truth.” This cultural statement is addressed by Alisa Childers. Alisa Childers, *Live Your Truth and Other Lies: Exposing Popular Deceptions That Make Us Anxious, Exhausted, and Self-Obsessed* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2022), 19–35.

⁴ Barna, *American Worldview Inventory 2022–23: The Annual Report on the State of Worldview in the United States* (Glendale, AZ: Arizona Christian University Press, 2023), 17.

⁵ *Ibid.*

they themselves are less likely to hold a comprehensive biblical worldview. One place that a family desiring to form their child in the biblical worldview may turn to is the church and its professional staff. Unfortunately, Barna has also reported that pastors and children and youth ministers are also struggling to maintain a biblical worldview, with only forty-one percent of senior/lead pastors and only twelve percent of children/youth workers holding to the biblical worldview.⁶ With the biblical worldview not being disciplined through the church's ministries or the parents' work, a "disciple-making problem" has been created in which teenagers are not adequately prepared to follow Christ.⁷

Even when exposure to the church and its ministries occurs, a professed Christian faith is more often a cultural identification conveyed in a shallow and surface-level experience with the church.⁸ Through these surface-level experiences or the lack of any Christian experience at all, some Christian parents have become "complicit ... in the undoing of our own beliefs."⁹ As Barna states, "Parents cannot pass on a worldview that they do not embrace."¹⁰ Like parents, most pastors and children/youth ministers have also become complicit in the struggle to form the next generation in the biblical worldview, as they cannot hand down something they do not possess.

This project will consider how the biblical tradition of disciple-making can be strengthened in a modern Christian congregation by designing and implementing a program to instruct men in the biblical worldview and the necessary skills to help them disciple others into

⁶ Barna, *American Worldview Inventory 2022–23*, 44.

⁷ David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church ... and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2011), 21.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁹ Pete Hegseth and David Goodwin, *Battle for the American Mind: Uprooting a Century of Miseducation* (New York, NY: Broadside Books, 2022), 241.

¹⁰ Barna, *American Worldview Inventory 2022–23*, 19.

faith ownership. Consideration will first be given to the community and the specific congregation's culture where this project will be implemented. This first chapter will review the problem to explain the purpose of this project. The researcher's assumptions, definitions, limitations, and delimitations will also be shared to clarify this action research project's thesis.

Ministry Context

The ministry context for this action research project is Asbury Church (formerly Greenwood United Methodist Church) in Greenwood, Arkansas. Asbury Church has been serving the community of Greenwood, a suburb of Fort Smith, Arkansas, since 1867. In the 157 years this congregation has been established, it has experienced several transitions in its denominational heritage. Asbury Church was founded as a Methodist Episcopal Church South, later became a Methodist Episcopal Church in 1939 when the Methodist Episcopal Church South merged with the Methodist Protestant Church, and then, in 1968, a United Methodist Church (UMC) congregation. On March 8, 2023, Asbury Church voted to disaffiliate from the UMC, which the Arkansas Annual Conference ratified on May 13, 2023. The disaffiliation was completed on July 1, 2023. The DMIN candidate conducting this project has served as the Senior Pastor of this congregation since 2016. Along with the senior pastor, the church staff comprises an administrator, two youth directors, a children's ministry director, and a worship leader.

Cultural Setting

Greenwood serves as the second county seat to Sebastian County, Arkansas, and as a suburb of Fort Smith, the third largest city in Arkansas. There are approximately 9,600 residents living within city limits; however, the Greenwood School District also covers portions of two smaller communities outside of Greenwood and a southern part of Fort Smith and serves over

three thousand students.¹¹ Greenwood's proximity to Fort Smith, which allows it to serve as a bedroom community, along with the high-ranking school district, are significant reasons that the community of Greenwood has grown over the last decade and is projected to grow over the next ten years.¹²

Greenwood is a homogeneous racial community consisting of approximately ninety-plus percent white citizens; however, there is a disparity in Greenwood's economic makeup, with over twelve percent of the population living within the poverty level.¹³ High school athletics are essential to the cultural makeup of the Greenwood community, which fondly refers to itself as "Titletown" due to the high number of State Championships it has won in football, volleyball, basketball, cross country, and other high school sports. There is considerable pressure for families to enter their children into sports at an early age and to place them on travel teams focused on getting them placed on high school teams in the future.

As a bedroom community and with the increased pressure for children and youth to excel in sports and athletics, Greenwood churches face significant competition for ministries involving families and children, often having to schedule ministries and activities around parents' work schedules and children's sporting events. Like the rest of the nation, Greenwood families also experience and struggle with other secular influences identified by Kinnaman, such as "the influences of technology, pop culture, media, entertainment, and science."¹⁴ The competing

¹¹ "QuickFacts: Arkansas," United States Census Bureau, last modified July 1, 2021, accessed March 25, 2023. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/greenwoodcityarkansas>.

¹² Greenwood High School is ranked 13th in Arkansas for public and private schools. "U.S. News & World Report," Best Arkansas High Schools, accessed March 26, 2023. <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/arkansas/rankings>.

¹³ "QuickFacts: Arkansas."

¹⁴ Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 35.

voices of the various non-Christian influences have led the population of Greenwood to become more unchurched or de-churched than it has been in the past.

Church Programs

Asbury Church offers a variety of programs oriented to making disciples of Jesus Christ and serving its community through mission and outreach. Currently, Asbury Church celebrates one primary worship service that meets in a white-walled, red-carpeted, stained-glass windowed sanctuary. The worship service is a blend of historic aspects of worship, including the recitation of the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer, as well as the singing of the Gloria Patri after the creed. The music for this service is typically band-led and organized by a worship leader who can direct a choir that occasionally participates in worship. The regular attendance for the Sunday worship service is approximately 150 individuals.

Asbury Church is focused on making disciples through educational small groups as well. Several Sunday school classes meet each week, providing opportunities for children, youth, and adults to learn about their faith and apply it to their daily lives. A weekday women's Bible study and a men's group both meet weekly, and each group intentionally provides the opportunity for the growth of an individual in their knowledge of Scripture. The youth program also meets throughout the year on Sunday and Wednesday evenings and provides opportunities for children's Bible study groups, small group experiences, themed topics and lessons, and other community activities. The children's program offers regular monthly programs and special events for the children in the congregation (including Vacation Bible School and Confirmation classes), as well as weekly Sunday school classes and children's church.

Culture of Ministry and Mission

Before March 2020, Asbury Church celebrated three Sunday morning worship services, two traditional-style services in the sanctuary and one contemporary-style service that met in the Family Life Center. Even though these three services met on the same campus, shared staff, and had a joint ministry, each service had developed its own unofficial culture, which led to a disconnect between the three services and their attendees. Over the past several years, the disconnect had been addressed by offering combined services for special occasions, which were typically well received by much of the congregation. When the COVID-19 pandemic started in March 2020, Asbury Church experimented with its worship times and styles to accommodate changing community needs. This led to combining the three worship services into one weekly blended service that now meets in the sanctuary. This transition in worship has led to a greater sense of community, and many church friendships have been strengthened as the congregation gathers to worship together.

A second effect of the pandemic was a reconsideration of some of the longstanding ministries of the church. It quickly became apparent that some former ministries had become unsupportable due to a lack of volunteers and safety concerns (e.g., adult small groups, after-school children's programs, etc.). Other ministries were quickly seen as essential to the community and were rallied around as volunteers made themselves available to help. With limits placed on volunteer availability, Asbury Church quickly adapted by pruning specific ministries while strengthening the ones deemed more essential, including several mission ministries (e.g., monthly food pantry, a Christmas toy closet, an annual pumpkin patch, and other church missions).

The pandemic provided needed light on the culture of the church's ministry. Specifically, it became clear that a community-driven mission was essential to its identity. While this is a

necessary and commendable part of every church's ministry (Jas 1:27), it can also lead to distorted discipleship if it focuses only on the behavior of the Christian disciple and never the basics of the Christian faith and beliefs (Rom 9:30–32). This works-based discipleship had begun to be noticed at Asbury Church as it became challenging to reengage small groups focused on Scripture and discipleship. The lack of interest of individuals and families to participate in intentional discipleship training has been highlighted at Asbury Church, as the number of small groups and participants is much lower than they were before the pandemic.

Project Resources Available

For this project, the DMIN candidate has identified two established groups that will be available and willing to help implement the program. The first group is a new Sunday School class formed in 2021, led by the pastor. This class comprises six couples with children living in the home. These families have taken seriously their call to live as disciples of Jesus Christ through study and action, thereby demonstrating a willingness and a desire to instruct their children in the ways of the Christian faith. The DMIN candidate has observed these families' willingness to engage in significant biblical topics and to participate in weekly homework or reading to be prepared for weekly discussions.

The second group willing to help with this project is a weekly men's group led by the pastor. This group, which has been meeting consistently for four years, comprises an average of twelve men who take their Christian faith and their call to lead their families seriously, as they are weekly participants in worship and other small groups. While these men are in different stages of life (half have children living at home, while the other half have grown children) and faith (some are newer Christians than others), they each want to use the influence God has given them to help disciple others. This group has also shown a willingness to participate in a

conversation around serious matters of faith and has communicated a desire to grow deep in their faith.

Along with these two groups, other individuals within the Asbury Church congregation and the Greenwood community will be willing to help implement this project. Outside of the time commitment of the individuals who participate and the use of the facility at Asbury Church for training/mentoring sessions, it is likely that no other resources will be necessary for this project. If resources become required for this project, the pastor, who has the support of the Leadership Team at Asbury Church, will communicate this need to those who can authorize the needed resources.

Problem Presented

Reporting on the worldview development of college students, Roger Erdvig noted that “six out of ten young adults who were involved in church ... do not maintain their faith in emerging adulthood.”¹⁵ Barna also suggests that an individual’s worldview begins to develop “at the age of 15 to 18 months and is generally fully developed by the age of 13.”¹⁶ After that point, the individual will test their worldview against their experiences. Barna’s understanding is supported by Willet, who argues that there is biblical support that three main stages of spiritual development exist (Childhood and the Birth of Faith, Young Adulthood and the Ownership of Faith, and Parenthood and Empowering Faith), with eight milestones that an individual must

¹⁵ Roger C. S. Erdvig, “A Model for Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults,” *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 29, no. 3 (2020): 28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10656219.2020.1816517>.

¹⁶ Barna, *American Worldview Inventory 2021–22*, 6.

achieve along the way.¹⁷ Willet argues that if the milestones are not achieved in each stage of faith, an individual will not develop into the next stage.¹⁸ Willet suggests that an individual new to the Christian faith will begin at the first milestone, even if they are an adult.¹⁹

Whether youth or adult, individuals must complete the first three milestones to transition from “Childhood Faith” to “Ownership of Faith.”²⁰ The milestones that an individual must achieve to take ownership of their faith include “experiencing God’s grace and forgiveness,” “embracing God as Father,” and “growing up together” (finding the support of a Christian community).²¹ These three milestones can be facilitated by helping an individual better understand the biblical worldview of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration, as these biblical principles will help individuals harmonize their lives and beliefs. By bringing beliefs into harmony with an individual’s actions, they are more likely to accept Christ and live out the biblical worldview.²² Suppose teenagers fail to take ownership of their faith as they mature into adulthood. In that case, they will continue in an immature faith or fall into the trap of secularism, where the only authority left is that of the self, where an individual begins to develop their own “assumptions, beliefs, and prescriptions for life.”²³

¹⁷ Don Willett, “A Biblical Model of Stages of Spiritual Development: The Journey According to John,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 94–95. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a6h&AN=ATLA0001789859&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 97.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 94.

²¹ Don Willett, *Stages of Faith: Eight Milestones that Mark Your Journey* (La Mirada, CA: Biola University, 2019), 7.

²² George Barna, *Raising Spiritual Champions: Nurturing Your Child’s Heart, Mind and Soul* (Glendale, AZ: Arizona Christian University Press, 2023), 91.

²³ Natasha Crain, *Faithfully Different: Regaining Biblical Clarity in a Secular Culture* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2022), 41.

Parents strongly influence a child’s developing worldview, and most children will eventually reflect the parents’ worldview while being unconsciously influenced by culture, education, media, and religion.²⁴ One of the side effects of the Industrial Revolution was that it took fathers outside of the home for increasing amounts of time. As Nancy Pearcey notes, “A dad might sincerely aspire to be the moral and spiritual leader in his family, but that function was increasingly difficult because of an economic structure that kept him away from home all day.”²⁵ This new economic structure increased the amount of time that boys spent away from their fathers, as they were now more influenced by their peers who also found themselves without the spiritual and moral guidance of their fathers, where the new “ideal of boyhood” began to be associated with “being rude, rowdy, rebellious, and rule-breaking.”²⁶

Fazel Freeks, in a study developed to mentor fathers who struggled with their own father issues, discovered that children who grew up in a home with an absent father were negatively impacted in their development and would often exhibit dysfunction with “emotional problems, physical and spiritual problems, poverty, abuse, educational problems, crime, sexual problems, teenage pregnancy, and many more.”²⁷ Looking at this from the perspective of psychology, Wayne Weiten states that there is an association between father absence and an increase in teenage pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, violent crime, drug abuse, eating disorders, teen

²⁴ Tawa J. Anderson, W. Michael Clark, and David Naugle, *An Introduction to Christian Worldview: Pursuing God’s Perspective in a Pluralistic World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2017), 14–15.

²⁵ Nancy R. Pearcey, *The Toxic War on Masculinity: How Christianity Reconciles the Sexes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2023), 139.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 139–40.

²⁷ Fazel E. Freeks, “Mentoring Fathers Who Grapple with Fatherhood Issues in a Faith-Based Context: A Pastoral-Theological Review,” *In die Skriflig* 55, no. 2 (2021): 4, <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v55i2.2698>.

suicide, and family dysfunction.²⁸ While Weiten would not claim that fathers are essential or necessary to the healthy development of children, he does argue that they contribute to and promote the healthier development of a child.²⁹

Since it can be argued that families, and fathers specifically, are significant contributors to the development of a child and that of the child's worldview, a congregation experiencing a large number of youth turning away from the Christian faith as they leave for college may have a lack of fathers who hold to the biblical worldview. If these fathers do not hold the biblical worldview, they will not be able to mentor their teenagers in this worldview. It may also be probable that these men do not have the skills to mentor their children successfully through the stages of faith development. If men in a congregation have not yet formed the ability to articulate a biblical worldview nor are able to facilitate the development of faith in their children, they will not be able to help the next generation understand how to take ownership of their faith. As noted, a parent cannot pass on something that they do not have themselves, whether a worldview or mentoring skills.

Over the last seven years, Asbury Church has launched over seventy-five youths into adulthood. Most of these college-bound students have stopped participating in faith-based activities and no longer practice the Christian faith. As Kinnaman suggests, they have become less likely to return to church when they begin having their own families.³⁰ Instead, many families have started modeling and reinforcing secular worldview patterns as they have been more actively involved in nonreligious activities, such as travel sports, leading to the parent's

²⁸ Wayne Weiten, *Psychology: Themes and Variations, 10th Ed.*, (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2017), 374.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 375.

³⁰ Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 71.

and children's inability to articulate the biblical worldview and apply it to daily living. Because families have become less churched, their teenagers have begun not to take ownership of their faith as they move into young adulthood (Deut 6).

One example of how the above problem has been observed at Asbury Church is through the confirmation class provided to sixth graders. For families who are not highly involved in worship, there is often a short increase in family worship involvement while the child participates in confirmation class, only to return to minimal participation once confirmation is concluded. Understanding that the home is one of the most impactful things on the worldview development of the child, many of these families need to be more spiritually led by their parents, specifically the father, who is not leading their families in spiritual development. Instead, worldly values are often reinforced in the worldview development of the child as activities outside the church have become more significant to the family's schedule. The problem is Asbury Church men cannot articulate the biblical worldview of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration and are disengaged in their teenager's faith development.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to develop and implement focused biblical worldview training so men can mentor teenagers into faith ownership. While researching worldview development in college students, Young Kim found that students entering college who had higher levels of faith formation were more likely to continue to integrate and develop their biblical worldview.³¹ The primary way an individual's worldview is formed is by watching

³¹ Young K. Kim, "Think Christianly, Think Critically: Faith-Learning Integration, Critical Thinking, and Perceived Importance of Worldview Development among Students in Christian Higher Education," *Religion & Education* 47, no. 3 (2020): 288, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15507394.2020.1765068>.

and learning from their parents; parents must be able to instruct their children into faith ownership before the teen leaves home. With the development of nonbiblical worldviews, the rise of syncretism, and the time commitment given to non-religious activities such as travel sports, the parents' job of teaching the biblical worldview at home has become more complex.

Freeks, who studied the role of mentoring fathers who struggle with worldview concerns, discovered that particular worldviews have set themselves against the biblical role of the father in the development of their children. Freeks specifically identifies modern feminism, whose quest for equality has undermined the traditional role of men as a particular worldview of concern.³² Pearcey supports Freeks, as she states that “It has become socially acceptable to express open hostility against men ... [and that] even some men have taken to maligning their own sex.”³³ Freeks argues that “the Bible should still function as the supreme source of authority for the moral life of faith-based families, institutions, communities and society,” even in a time of “secular domination,” and that “the man (or the father) should take the leading role, together with the woman (or the mother), to lead their family into the holiness of God the Father.”³⁴ Pearcey also suggests that once the biblical perspective and worldview are clarified, fathers and mothers can restore God's original purpose for the family.³⁵

Children need to be helped to transition into faith ownership, where they will be prepared for the cultural attack against their faith.³⁶ To help them be prepared for the cultural attack against their faith, children must learn the essentials of a biblical worldview, which is most often

³² Freeks, “Mentoring Fathers,” 3.

³³ Pearcey, *The Toxic War*, 20–21.

³⁴ Freeks, “Mentoring Fathers,” 3.

³⁵ Pearcey, *The Toxic War*, 27.

³⁶ Don Willett, *The Path: How to Understand and Experience Authentic Spiritual Growth* (Sisters, OR: Trusted Books an Imprint of Deep River Books, 2012), 102.

learned from their parents. Due to increased distractions from the religious formation of the family (i.e., travel sports, technology, etc.) and competing nonbiblical worldviews promoted in the media and public schools, parents have begun to shirk the responsibility of providing religious training for their children, believing that they are not qualified to instruct it or that the biblical worldview will be learned later. Therefore, implementing a program designed to train fathers to teach their families the basics of a biblical worldview, precisely the narrative of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration paired with skills to help these men teach their children these essentials of the faith, has become a critical concern for the church today.

This DMIN project will focus on creating and implementing a seven-week training program for the men of the congregation at Asbury Church. The program will provide an overview of the stages of faith and worldview theory as well as training in the biblical worldview essentials of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. The training will also allow the participants to practice leading a conversation around these topics with an individual outside of the group (either their child or another adult) with skills they will be taught during the training. Progress in the participant's ability to articulate the biblical worldview will be measured by providing assessments before and after the training.

Basic Assumptions

As will be argued in Chapter Two, everyone has a worldview, whether the individual has considered it or not. Unfortunately, not everyone's worldview is consistent with what they proclaim that they believe. If a worldview is inconsistent, individuals will not make life decisions based on their beliefs. Instead, their hidden worldview will lead them into a nonbiblical pattern

of behavior.³⁷ This action research project assumes that a teenager not instructed in the faith, specifically biblical worldview training, by their parents (as the primary influence in their child's life) will fail to take ownership of their faith as they move away from home and will transition into another worldview system. Even though faith training and development can and should occur in a church setting (i.e., worship, Sunday school, and youth meetings), the parents are primarily responsible for training their children in the faith (Prov 22:6). Unfortunately, in most Christian homes, worldview training is not happening on a regular or intentional basis.

This research project assumes that transitional times in an individual's life are opportunities to strengthen or weaken a worldview. The first major transition in the life of many youths is graduation from high school, when they often leave the safety of home for college or a career. Suppose a teenager fails to take ownership of their faith while living at home. In that case, they will be unprepared to defend their belief when they face challenges to the biblical worldview. These teenagers are then vulnerable to falling prey to cultural influences urging them to form an unbiblical and personalized worldview. The "identity-making script" of culture promotes the idea that individuals are called to discover who they are on their own and that they will only find their true selves when they can be free of the "people, places, and traditions" of their upbringing, only then will they have true freedom of choice to be and live in a way that brings them self-fulfillment.³⁸ However, if a teenager were to be trained in the biblical worldview and could defend it, they would be prepared to face the challenge of encountering different worldviews while being able to maintain their own.

³⁷ Steve Wilkens and Mark L. Sanford, *Hidden Worldviews: Eight Cultural Stories that Shape Our Lives* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic an Imprint of Intervarsity Press, 2009), 11.

³⁸ Austin Wofford, *Forged: Young Adults and the Renewal of the Church* (Franklin, TN: Seedbed Publishing, 2022), 9–10.

Every individual must go through specific milestones in their faith development, beginning with a childlike faith that must understand the fallen world, and only faith in Jesus Christ can save people (Rom 3:22–23). While this project will develop and implement a training program that is targeted at men who are the parents of teenagers, it is assumed that the model for training that will be developed will be able to be used by men who desire to disciple individuals just beginning their faith journey, as well as by women who either want to train their teenagers or others who are preparing to move through the stages of childlike faith, as they learn to experience and accept God’s grace and forgiveness, embracing God as their Father, and learn the importance of Christian fellowship, to take faith ownership for themselves.³⁹ Therefore, this action research intends to have a more significant impact than the population it will be developed with.

To help men articulate the biblical worldview in a manner that will help to transition their teenagers into faith ownership, it is assumed that the biblical worldview principles of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration are the necessary components that will help to facilitate this transition. For an individual to accept for themselves the saving work of Christ, they must first understand God’s original design for this world and humanity (Gen 1–2), that humanity has fallen into sin (Gen 3), and that it is only through the work of God through Jesus Christ and an individual’s faith in that saving work (Acts 4:12) that sin can be overcome, and one day when Christ returns all things will be set right once and for all (Rev 21). Accepting these four things (Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration) is the beginning of developing a biblical worldview and taking faith ownership.

³⁹ Willett, *The Path*, 98.

Definitions

This DMIN action research project aims to help the men of Asbury Church learn to articulate the biblical worldview to their children. To achieve this outcome, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of what is meant by a biblical worldview. As will be discovered, defining a biblical worldview will also create the need to determine the meaning of other words and ideas related to this project's development.

Biblical Worldview. “A worldview ... is the conceptual lens through which we see, understand, and interpret the world and our place within it.”⁴⁰ The biblical worldview “includes everything related to the doctrines, values, priorities, and understanding of how the world works that the Bible commends and promotes.”⁴¹ Understanding that Christians of various denominations have developed traditions that may be extrabiblical, which might color the understanding of the term Christian worldview, this research project will utilize the term biblical worldview. Erdvig argues that a basic biblical worldview consists of understanding the Bible's metanarrative of Creation, Fall, and Redemption.⁴² The biblical worldview understanding of redemption is often broken into two stages: redemption provided and redemption completed (or Restoration).⁴³

“Big” Worldview Questions. The “big” worldview questions relate to the systematic questions that a worldview attempts to address, including ontology, metaphysics, cosmology, axiology, praxeology, and epistemology. These “big” questions are often condensed to a smaller

⁴⁰ Anderson, Clark, and Naugle, *Introduction to Christian Worldview*, 5.

⁴¹ Fred C. Smith, *Developing a Biblical Worldview: Seeing Things God's Way* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2015), 5.

⁴² Erdvig, “A Model for Biblical Worldview Development,” 287.

⁴³ Dan Kimball, *How (Not) to Read the Bible: Making Sense of the Anti-Women, Anti-Science, Pro-Violence, Pro-Slavery and Other Crazy-Sounding Parts of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Reflective, 2020), 44.

grouping like the ones asked by Anderson, Clark, and Naugle, “What is our nature? What is our world? What is our problem? What is our end?”⁴⁴ When considering various worldviews and training others in the biblical worldview, knowing these questions and how specific worldviews will answer them is crucial.

Childhood Stage of Faith. The childhood stage of faith is the first faith stage proposed by Don Willett. As the first stage of faith, an individual progresses through three milestones in which they learn to 1) experience God’s grace, 2) embrace God as their Father, and 3) learn to depend on the community of faith as they continue to grow.⁴⁵

Creation. “Creation tells us how things began, where everything came from (including us), the reason for our origins, and what ultimate reality is like.”⁴⁶ The biblical worldview bases its understanding of creation and God’s purpose in creating from the first two chapters of Genesis. “Biblically understood, the universe is the handiwork of a triune, supernatural, personal, and moral being who created it out of nothing.”⁴⁷

Faith Stage Development. Faith stage development is a faith-based developmental theory or model that explains the specific milestones an individual will progress through as they grow into Christian maturity. Don Willett proposes three stages: Childhood, Young Adulthood, and Parenthood.⁴⁸ Each stage has specific milestones an individual must complete before moving on to the next stage, and the individual’s age is not the determining factor in their development and

⁴⁴ Anderson, Clark, and Naugle, *Introduction to Christian Worldview*, 18.

⁴⁵ Willett, *Stages of Faith*, 81–82.

⁴⁶ Gregory Kokul, *The Story of Reality: How the World Began, How it Ends, and Everything Important that Happens in Between* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 25.

⁴⁷ Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith, Second Edition* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2022), 80.

⁴⁸ Willett, *Stages of Faith*, 7.

progress. For example, a new believer would need to achieve the milestones in the Childhood Stage before entering the Young Adulthood Stage of development. During the Childhood Stage, an individual experiences the birth of faith, while at the Young Adulthood Stage, an individual takes ownership of their faith. The Parenthood Stage is achieved when individuals can model their faith to others.⁴⁹

Fall. “Fall describes the problem (since we all know something has gone wrong with the world).”⁵⁰ Colson and Pearcey explain that the second element of any worldview is how it describes the human dilemma of suffering, which is particularly important for Christians who believe that the universe was created by a good God.⁵¹ While evidence of the Fall can be seen in the world around us and throughout the biblical narrative, the biblical worldview bases its understanding of the Fall on Genesis chapter three. Because of the Fall, Christians believe “that every aspect of humanity is corrupted by sin”⁵² (Rom 3:10); therefore, the answer to the Fall must come from outside of humanity.

Redemption. “Redemption gives us the solution, the way to fix what went wrong.”⁵³ Understanding that the solution to the Fall must come from outside human effort, God provided the answer through Jesus Christ. God gives the first hint of this plan in Genesis 3:15 and continues to pursue humans by “graciously selecting a particular people for his redemptive purposes, inspiring prophets, giving visions, and intervening in history – all with a view toward

⁴⁹ Willett, *Stages of Faith*, 7.

⁵⁰ Kokul, *The Story of Reality*, 25.

⁵¹ Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1999), 147.

⁵² Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 54.

⁵³ Kokul, *The Story of Reality*, 25.

the revelation of the divine Messiah.”⁵⁴ Since humans cannot merit salvation through their work, Christianity believes that only through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ can an individual experience “the restoration of the person through the achievements of Jesus Christ.”⁵⁵

Restoration. Restoration is the final step in God’s redemptive story and will be fulfilled when Christ returns in glory (Rev 21). While the story of God’s redemption has begun in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, all creation still waits for the final restoration to take place.⁵⁶ “*Restoration* describes what the world would look like once the repair takes place.”⁵⁷ The biblical understanding of restoration reminds disciples of Jesus that they are not to sit idle while they wait. Instead, Christians understand that in the meantime, they are to be about the Great Commission (Matt 28:16–20). Colson and Pearcey argue that once it is understood where all of creation has come from (Creation), why it has been broken (Fall), and what the answer to this problem is (Redemption), individuals can then see what they are called to do to participate in helping God to change the world (Restoration).⁵⁸

Syncretism. According to research by George Barna and the Cultural Research Center, Syncretism is the worldview held by nine out of ten U.S. adults.⁵⁹ Syncretism is “an impure unrecognizable worldview that is nothing more than a customized, personal blend of disparate ideas adopted from multiple philosophies of life.”⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 80.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁶ Joshua McNall, *Long Story Short: The Bible in Six Simple Movements* (Franklin, TN: Seedbed Publishing, 2018), 162.

⁵⁷ Kokul, *The Story of Reality*, 25.

⁵⁸ Colson and Pearcey, *How Now*, 477.

⁵⁹ Barna, *American Worldview Inventory 2021–22*, 16.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Worldview. A worldview is a comprehensive view of the world that affects how individuals think about and react to the world around them.⁶¹ A worldview of any variety systematically considered will answer the specific questions (also known as the “big” questions) of ontology (Who are we?), metaphysics (What is real?), cosmology (What is our nature?), axiology (What do we value?), praxeology (How should we act?), and epistemology (What do we know?).⁶² As a conceptual system, a worldview is often developed and shared by a group of people to function as a group and make common sense and meaning out of the world around them.⁶³ In this way, worldviews function as a primary narrative that guides the story of individuals and groups as the worldview provides meaning for how the world is the way that it is,⁶⁴ as it helps an individual or group to “experience, interpret and respond to the world ... [as a] decision-making filter”⁶⁵ impacting our life’s decisions, and helping to define the choices made by individuals and groups. Considering the importance of a worldview to a group of individuals can allow appropriate boundaries for the group to reduce conflict by developing a common worldview understanding that can frame how individuals respond and react to one another.⁶⁶

Young Adulthood Stage of Faith. The young adulthood stage of faith is the second faith stage proposed by Don Willett. As the second stage of faith, an individual will progress through another three milestones of faith development in which they learn to 1) own their faith for

⁶¹ Smith, *Developing a Biblical Worldview*, 1.

⁶² Ann Taves, “Worldview Analysis as a Tool for Conflict Resolution,” *Negotiation Journal* 38, no. 3 (Summer 2022): 367, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nejo.12403>.

⁶³ Ronnie P. Campbell Jr., *Worldviews & the Problem of Evil: A Comparative Approach* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 266.

⁶⁴ Kokul, *The Story of Reality*, 23.

⁶⁵ Barna, *American Worldview Inventory 2021–22*, 6.

⁶⁶ Ann Taves, “From Religious Studies to Worldview Studies,” *Religion* 50, no. 1 (2020): 137, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2019.1681124>.

themselves, 2) learn to apply their faith to their life decisions, and 3) learn how to progress through spiritual growth and development.⁶⁷ Throughout this thesis, this stage of faith development will be called *Faith Ownership*.

Limitations

Any time a project utilizes volunteer participants, there are limitations that should be considered by the project manager as those that they will not be able to control. For this project, there are several identifiable limitations involving the participants. First, the participants will have varying degrees of prior subject material knowledge and educational levels that may affect their ability to learn the presented material. Efforts will be taken to ensure that the presented material will be easily accessible to those with little understanding of the topics; however, understanding the information by every participant cannot be guaranteed.

A second limitation involving the participants relates to the sample size of the group. This project will utilize an existing men's group with invitations given to other men who are church members with teenagers. The target audience for this project will limit the size of the participating group as it may not interest those who do not have teenagers at home or an individual they would like to disciple. The existing men's group also consists of men whose children have grown; therefore, their participation in certain parts of the project might be limited to participating in the training without a complete evaluation of the implementation of the material as it will encourage them to disciple others. However, understanding that even adults new to the faith must go through the same stages of faith development if they are new Christians,

⁶⁷ Willett, *Stages of Faith*, 102.

this training may be helpful to men without teenagers if they have an individual in mind that they would like to disciple.

Due to the nature of the church membership and the surrounding community, the cultural and ethnic makeup of the participants will be limited to the population of Greenwood and the surrounding area. As described in a previous section, Greenwood is primarily a homogeneous community consisting of ninety-plus percent white citizens. Since the program will last for seven weeks, there can be no guarantee that each participant will be present at each weekly presentation. The time that this class will meet (6:00 a.m. on Monday) will serve as a limit to those willing to participate.

Limitations can include factors that do not relate to the participants themselves. The primary worldview themes discussed include Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. These four themes are not all that a biblical worldview consists of, nor the only way they can be explained; however, the case will be made that these are the four essentials of the biblical worldview that fathers need to understand so that they can be leveraged to help their teenagers take ownership of their faith successfully. Gaining an understanding of the biblical worldview of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration can inform a Christian disciple's continued growth and development.

Delimitations

This proposed DMIN project will occur at Asbury Church on Monday mornings and will comprise of men from the church over the age of eighteen. This delimitation will ensure a smaller group from the community of Greenwood. The group's makeup will potentially limit the theological perspectives that could be included in this study by narrowing the group to one

congregation. The number of participants will be limited to twenty men for an adequate opportunity for them to ask questions and receive answers as the material is discussed.

The targeted age group for this research project is men with teenagers (thirty-five to fifty years old). While men outside this age range will participate in the program, the targeted age of thirty-five to fifty has been selected as these are the men who most likely have teenagers living at home. Men who do not have a teenager at home will be allowed to participate if they are willing to discuss what they will be learning with another adult outside of the research group. To complete the action research within two months, the scope of the biblical worldview will be limited to the necessary basics of the biblical worldview that can be taught within this time frame. The limited number of topics of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration will allow the men to master these essentials and to practice teaching them to others so they will be better prepared to instruct their teenagers.

Thesis Statement

After leaving home and entering either the workforce or college, teenagers will begin to be exposed to new ideas that they did not learn during their earlier years. Some of these new ideas will be hostile to the biblical worldview and will encourage the teenager to move into holding a more secular worldview. Through new experiences and information, these teenagers will begin a journey of considering whether the lessons of the home are worth continuing in their own lives. Suppose the student was raised in a home that took their Christian walk seriously, as evidenced by prioritizing Christian activity. In that case, they are more likely to make their Christian faith a significant part of their life, and their parents would have supported them through the milestones of faith development. As Erdvig noted, the more serious a student was

engaged in their Christian faith, the stronger their commitment to it would remain.⁶⁸ On the other hand, if students do not have a biblical worldview modeled for them at home, they are more likely to develop a different worldview when they attend college. Therefore, the modeling of the biblical worldview in the home is essential.

One reason the biblical worldview may have yet to be learned in the home is that the parents failed to attain the milestones of the Christian faith and modeled an immature faith or an entirely different worldview. Parents then need help in growing in their knowledge and confidence in the biblical worldview and in their ability to defend and demonstrate that worldview so they can support the development of a biblical worldview in their children, especially as their youth move into young adulthood and are to begin the process of owning the Christian faith for themselves. Therefore, the training and support of these families are essential, and helping the fathers who are called to lead the family in spiritual development develop the biblical worldview and skills to train others will impact their family.

Fathers play a crucial role in their children's faith development; therefore, if a father models the biblical worldview to their child, they are more likely to take ownership of their faith when they become teenagers or young adults. This project will design and implement a training program to help fathers who need more confidence in their ability to articulate the biblical worldview to gain the necessary knowledge and experience to demonstrate and mentor their children. Specifically, this training will focus on the biblical understanding of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration as individuals must have a concrete understanding of these four essentials to take ownership of their faith and live within the biblical worldview. If men are

⁶⁸ Erdvig, "A Model for Biblical Worldview Development," 290.

trained to articulate and defend the biblical worldview, then they can successfully model it as they mentor their teenagers into faith ownership.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

James Sire defines a worldview as “a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions ... that we hold ... about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.”¹ The worldview an individual chooses to live by becomes the predominant story of their life, even if it is subconsciously held,² and becomes the way that decisions are made as the worldview determines what is believed about “meaning, value, purpose, and significance.”³ Even when a worldview is held consciously, it is essential to study one’s worldview and the worldview of others because understanding worldviews allows people to live in a community with people who think and believe differently.⁴ Learning about the biblical worldview also prepares an individual to articulate his or her worldview to others in a way that helps them see that it offers answers to life’s questions worth considering and can open them to a desire to find God in their own life.⁵

An individual should reflect upon their worldview to determine whether he or she lives congruently between their beliefs and how they live. This reflection is vital to help individuals determine if his or her decisions and life choices are made outside of their stated worldview; if

¹ James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, Sixth Edition (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2020), 6.

² Ibid.

³ Kokul, *The Story of Reality*, 23.

⁴ André Mulder and Bas van den Berg, “Learning for Life: A Hermeneutical-Communicative Model for Worldview Education in Light of White Normativity,” *Religious Education* 114, no. 3 (2019): 287, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2019.1602465>.

⁵ Douglas Groothuis and Andrew I. Shepardson, *The Knowledge of God in the World and the Word* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2022), xiii.

so, he or she may be working against their stated goal.⁶ Understanding how a worldview is developed and informed is essential to correct an incongruent worldview by “identifying and eliminating logical inconsistencies.”⁷ Disciples of Jesus Christ should remember what the apostle Paul explained to the Athenians about worldviews; individuals often look for answers that address life’s biggest questions when the evidence for God has been placed around them. As Paul said, believers “live and move and have our being in God” (Acts 17:8a, New International Version). Therefore, a biblical worldview should seek God’s understanding of how a worldview should be constructed. The following literature review will consider how a worldview is understood, why studying worldview matters, and how it can be developed consistently to increase the ability to live out the biblical worldview and be prepared to share it with others. Following the literature review, consideration will be given to the theological and theoretical implications that will help understand the biblical worldview.

Literature Review

Everyone has a worldview; however, not everyone’s worldview is examined. An unexamined worldview can lead to an incongruent life where an individual can express belief in one thing while living their life in another way. Worldviews are also changeable and can be altered based on an individual’s situation or role.⁸ Taves suggests that it is possible to identify an individual’s goal and determine how examining their worldview may help them work towards

⁶ David Setran, “From Worldview to Way of Life: Forming Student Dispositions toward Human Flourishing in Christian Higher Education,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 11, no. 1 (2018): 56, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1939790917753171>.

⁷ Anderson, Clark, and Naugle, *Introduction to Christian Worldview*, 815.

⁸ Taves, “Worldview Analysis,” 366.

that goal in a more congruent way.⁹ Assisting others to develop a worldview in this way would be supported by Charles Taylor, who proposed that individuals do not possess the tools necessary for complete self-definition.¹⁰ Therefore, if an individual understands how a worldview is developed and modified and is trained in appropriate mentoring skills, they can foster mature biblical worldviews in others.¹¹

Why Study a Worldview

As a major influence in worldview study, James Sire has provided a working definition often built on by other researchers who study worldviews and their development. Anderson, Clark, and Naugle summarize Sire's description: "A worldview ... is the conceptual lens through which we see, understand, and interpret the world and our place within it."¹² Therefore, the worldview's conceptual lens should become the "vision for life that leads to a specific way of living."¹³ For a Christian, this vision of life is "The foundational authority [that] plays a significant role in [our] learning and that is substantially influenced by Scripture."¹⁴ For a worldview to be comprehensive and owned by an individual, it must systematically address life's ultimate questions, including ontology, metaphysics, cosmology, axiology, praxeology, and epistemology.¹⁵ Arnold suggests that a biblical worldview needs to answer the questions of

⁹ Taves, "From Religious Studies," 137.

¹⁰ Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 33.

¹¹ Kate H. Siberine and Lisa Kimball, "Confirming Mentoring: Mutual Experiences of Incarnation," *Theology Today* 76, no. 1 (2019): 41, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040573619826950>.

¹² Anderson, Clark, and Naugle, *Introduction to Christian Worldview*, 8.

¹³ Erdvig, "A Model for Biblical Worldview Development," 287.

¹⁴ Young K. Kim, "Think Christianly, Think Critically: Faith-Learning Integration, Critical Thinking, and Perceived Importance of Worldview Development among Students in Christian Higher Education," *Religion & Education* 47, no. 3 (2020): 277, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15507394.2020.1765068>.

¹⁵ Taves, "Worldview Analysis," 367.

hamartiology, also known as the examination of sin, and soteriology, the process or means of salvation.¹⁶ The ultimate worldview questions are often called the “big questions.”¹⁷

Worldviews should be studied and taught because, through study and teaching, an individual can strengthen their worldview, and disciples of Jesus should want to strengthen their biblical worldview to live a more faithful life.¹⁸ As the apostle, Paul reminds the people of Rome that true worship is to “not conform to the pattern of this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind” (Rom 12:1b–2a, NIV). The Christian worldview is, therefore, to be all-encompassing of the teachings of Scripture in things of faith, views, and philosophy of living; otherwise, the worldview would be rejecting the teachings of the Bible and, ultimately, God.¹⁹

Studying the biblical worldview is essential because it grounds the Christian believer in the faith and prepares them to be ready to defend their faith against other worldviews that one might encounter in the world (1 Pet 3:15). Kreuger argues that many evangelical churches provide little theological training outside of personal conversion and personal piety.²⁰ When individuals are not trained in the biblical worldview, they are not prepared to respond to challenges to their worldview, which can be especially troublesome to individuals as they enter college. According to Kreuger, college students will react in one of three ways when the biblical worldview is challenged. A college student will either fail to engage the challenge that is being presented, develop a hybrid faith (syncretism), or abandon their faith altogether if it appears to be

¹⁶ Bill T. Arnold, “Embracing a Worldview Shaped by the Word,” in *The Next Methodism: Theological, Social, and Missional Foundations for Global Methodism*, ed. Kenneth J. Collins and Ryan N. Danker (Franklin, TN: Seedbed Publishing, 2022), 61–62.

¹⁷ Taves, “Worldview Analysis,” 364.

¹⁸ Smith, *Developing a Biblical Worldview*, 149.

¹⁹ Steven R. Martins, *Studies in Biblical Apologetics for a Christian Worldview* (Jordan Station, ON: Cantaro Publications, 2020), 39.

²⁰ Michael J. Kruger, *Surviving Religion 101: Letters to a Christian Student on Keeping the Faith in College* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 18.

inconsistent.²¹ Considering the likelihood that Christian teenagers will have their biblical worldview challenged when entering college, it has become essential that people shift from instructing disciples in only personal conversion and piety and prepare them to defend the profound historical theology of the Christian church.²²

In a study conducted by Dean and others that considered the religiosity of teenagers, they discovered that the religiosity of the parent during the teenage years was the most significant indicator of determining the religiosity of the teenager as they emerge into adulthood and the main reason that parents may not hand this faith down to their children is due to the lack of confidence in articulating the faith themselves.²³ Since worldviews are learned, most often by watching the behaviors and decisions of one's parents, Christian parents must become confident in their understanding of and ability to teach the biblical worldview to their children. To teach the biblical worldview, one must understand what "big questions" a worldview attempts to answer for individuals to live congruently between their beliefs and actions.

The Big Questions of Worldview

Sire poses eight questions to consider when examining an individual's worldview.²⁴ Others following in his footsteps have utilized and adjusted these eight questions. For example, Taves, who researches worldviews from both a religious and secular perspective, lists six questions, which she bases on the work of Vidal, that worldviews are attempting to address. Taves' six questions from her secular research are listed in the above section, while her religious

²¹ Kruger, *Surviving Religion 101*, 20.

²² *Ibid.*, 23.

²³ Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 111–112.

²⁴ Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 8–9.

research consists of a similar set of questions: “what is? (ontology), (2) what is true and what is false? (epistemology), (3) what is good and what is evil? (axiology), (4) how should we act? (praxeology), (5) where does it all come from? (explanation), and where are we going? (prediction).”²⁵ Anderson, Clark, and Naugle pose four questions: “What is our nature? What is our world? What is our problem? What is our end?”²⁶

Smith has also developed four simple questions to analyze worldviews that allow for easy comparisons and explore their discrepancies: “Who am I? Where am I? What is wrong? and What is the answer?”²⁷ Discussing the worldview of the New Testament writers, Wright posed a similar set of questions: “Who are we, where are we, what is wrong, and what is the solution?”²⁸ While Smith and Wright’s four questions help analyze worldviews, Anderson, Clark, and Naugle provide four questions and a framework that can be used to determine internal, external, and existential consistency within a worldview based on the answers to the four questions that they propose.²⁹ By learning to assess the coherence of the biblical worldview by determining if it is logically coherent,³⁰ corresponds to the evidence,³¹ and is pragmatic by providing a way for it to be experienced,³² and an individual can then defend and teach that worldview to others. However, to teach the biblical worldview, it is helpful for the worldview to be presented in a

²⁵ Taves, “From Religious Studies,” 141.

²⁶ Anderson, Clark, and Naugle, *Introduction to Christian Worldview*, 18.

²⁷ Smith, *Developing a Biblical Worldview*, 9.

²⁸ Nicholas Thomas Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 123. Wright gives credit to Walsh and Middleton for the origin of the four questions he poses, noting that they pose the questions in the singular form. Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 35.

²⁹ Anderson, Clark, and Naugle, *Introduction to Christian Worldview*, 76–77.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 78.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

³² *Ibid.*, 87.

narrative format that will simplify its being remembered. The narrative of the biblical worldview is where Kokul is helpful as he explains worldviews as consisting of four parts and summarizes not the questions themselves but the answers to Anderson, Clark, and Naugle's four questions as "creation, fall, redemption, and restoration."³³

Regardless of the number of worldview questions that comprise a system of understanding, it is essential to note that worldview questions are "comprised of three central dimensions: heart orientation, propositional (cognitive), and behavioral."³⁴ These worldview dimensions guide an individual's feelings, thoughts, and actions. This is helpful to remember, as Martins notes, that the average Christian is "accustomed to delivering the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ ... limited to personal soteriology. This is itself insufficient, since the natural man might perceive that the Christian doctrine of justification could be synthesized with his own philosophy of life."³⁵ Therefore, analyzing, developing, and defending a comprehensive biblical worldview that addresses heart, mind, and behavior is essential to help those who hold another worldview discern the inconsistencies within their held worldview. Learning to analyze different worldviews will also help an individual develop strategies that will provide ways to defend the historic Christian faith.³⁶ The narrative form of the biblical worldview of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration can be presented in a way that captures the hearts, minds, and behaviors of teenagers as they prepare to take ownership of their faith.

The big questions of the biblical worldview help provide a framework to address the big questions of life. Presenting the answers to the big questions in a narrative format can help the

³³ Kokul, *The Story of Reality*, 25.

³⁴ Erdvig, "A Model for Biblical Worldview Development," 286.

³⁵ Martins, *Studies in Biblical Apologetics*, 84.

³⁶ Kruger, *Surviving Religion 101*, 23.

instruction be memorable and serve as a way to align an individual's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors to biblical truth. However, to teach a worldview, it is necessary to understand how a worldview is developed and strengthened.

What Develops and Strengthens a Worldview

Taves argues that individuals develop their worldviews from the society and culture around them, specifically by observing the behavior of others.³⁷ This is supported by Siberine, who claims that “much of people’s learned spiritual behaviors such as compassion, forgiveness, or devotion come from seeing those behaviors modeled by family and community members as well as through oral, written, or electronic media.”³⁸ Through reflection, an individual begins to make meaning of what he or she sees others doing. When they are encouraged to participate in the behavior by their peers, parents, and teachers, the individual will become actively involved in constructing their identity and worldview and learn to make it a priority in his or her life.³⁹ While researching the way in which the Christian faith is passed down in families, Bengtson, Putney, and Harris found that the influence of the mother is helpful in the life of a child and will reinforce the likelihood that the child will grow up to hold to the same religious values as the mother.⁴⁰ However, Bengtson, Putney, and Harris also discovered that the closeness of the father to the child will play a much more significant role (a twenty-five-point difference) in the child taking on the same religious attitude of the father (either positively or negatively).⁴¹

³⁷ Taves, “From Religious Studies,” 143.

³⁸ Siberine and Kimball, “Confirming Mentoring,” 44.

³⁹ Mulder and van den Berg, “Learning for Life,” 287.

⁴⁰ Vern L. Bengtson, Norella M. Putney, and Susan Harris, *Families and Faith: How Religion is Passed Down Across Generations* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013) 77–78.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Since a worldview is often learned through watching others and participating in their behavior, it is unsurprising that “for most of us, presumably, our worldview does not primarily consist of a set of (more or less) interconnected beliefs and values – a product of our thinking. Rather, our beliefs and values are experienced, absorbed, and expressed in the course of life.”⁴² Therefore, worldviews held by individuals are often syncretistic, where they may reflect a portion of any given worldview while simultaneously living out parts of a competing worldview.⁴³ Christian parents who do not intentionally raise their children in the biblical worldview are likely modeling a syncretistic worldview. The child developing a syncretistic worldview becomes more likely if the child has a close relationship with the father who is modeling a syncretistic worldview.

As suggested by Siberine above, media and the stories they tell also play a role in worldview development. Examining C. S. Lewis’s use of myth to convey worldview, Alan Pihringer determines that stories have been used by all cultures throughout time to convey the importance of their beliefs and worldview to the next generation as he reminds us that “Every worldview has an overarching story expressed in myth, answering the pressing issues of human existence.”⁴⁴ Chatraw argues that through imagination, often evoked by stories, individuals can piece together a meaningful existence on how life could be if they considered living in a specific way.⁴⁵ Therefore, the story has become an essential tool in the Postmodern world in which

⁴² Mikael Stenmark, “Worldview Studies,” *Religious Studies* 58, no. 3 (2022): 570, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412521000135>.

⁴³ Barna, *American Worldview Inventory 2021–22*, 16.

⁴⁴ Alan J. Pihringer, “C. S. Lewis’ Use of Myth to Convey a Christian Worldview,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 47 no. 1 (Feb. 2023): 43, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rlh&AN=161735759&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁴⁵ Joshua D. Chatraw, *Telling a Better Story: How to Talk About God in a Skeptical Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Reflective, 2020), 44.

individuals are less likely to believe the truth of Christianity based on its logical coherence but may consider the power of the story being told. As Pihringer argues, “Where crisp apologetic arguments might fall on deaf ears, innovative use of myth engages the imagination with an attractiveness that can cause people to question their longstanding presuppositions.”⁴⁶

Encouraging others to tell their story may also be helpful to find where God is looming within their story as they are awakened to their longing for God.⁴⁷ The biblical worldview easily fits within a narrative pattern as it addresses the Christian understanding of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. Christian parents who can articulate and model the biblical story are prepared to instruct their children in the biblical worldview. Teaching children the biblical narrative will help them take ownership of their faith as the child becomes a teenager or young adult. Instructing children in this way will also help them to be prepared to live in the pluralized environment of today without having to withdraw from the culture; instead, the children will learn how to engage the culture in a more holistic way that reinforces the integrity of the biblical worldview.⁴⁸

Storytelling is also an essential and valuable tool that can be used to strengthen, develop, or redevelop the biblical worldview during a time of crisis. When an individual enters a time of crisis or significant life event⁴⁹ (e.g., life stage transition, marriage, the birth of a child, death of a loved one), their held worldview may come into question and may be reconsidered to determine if the answers that the individual had developed still fits their everyday experience.⁵⁰ If the

⁴⁶ Pihringer, “C. S. Lewis’ Use of Myth,” 42.

⁴⁷ Chatraw, *Telling a Better Story*, 15–17.

⁴⁸ Joshua D. Chatraw and Mark D. Allen, *The Augustine Way: Retrieving a Vision for the Church’s Apologetic Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic a Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2023), 4–11.

⁴⁹ Barna, *American Worldview Inventory 2021–22*, 6.

⁵⁰ Erdvig, “A Model for Biblical Worldview Development,” 288.

individual's worldview does not answer the questions coherently, the distress will open them to reconsidering a better worldview story.⁵¹ As Anderson, Clark, and Naugle state, "We are storied creatures, responding more readily to narrative than to doctrine."⁵² This opportunity for an individual to examine their worldview may lead to the development of one that better addresses the "big questions" and becomes one that is worth holding on to.⁵³ Therefore, the biblical worldview and the narrative it tells would be essential to share as it will answer the questions satisfactorily, giving them a coherence that will lead to existential power in the individual's life.⁵⁴ If a teenager has been trained in the biblical worldview by their parents, they will be better prepared to give a faith-based answer and not turn away from their faith when they face challenging circumstances.

Understanding that there are times in an individual's life when a worldview is open to being strengthened, re-narrated, or transformed is helpful to anyone willing to walk alongside someone to help the individual see the benefit of living within a biblical worldview. Identifying these moments of transformation is the first step, while knowing how to approach the individual is the second. Therefore, it is not only necessary to determine when an individual may be open to reexamining their worldview but also to develop skills to help them do so successfully. For this purpose, mentoring will now be considered to facilitate worldview development.

⁵¹ Daryl R. Van Tongeren et al., "The Role of Religious Orientation in Worldview," *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 30 no. 3 (2020): 239, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508619.2020.1744317>.

⁵² Anderson, Clark, and Naugle, *Introduction to Christian Worldview*, 14.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵⁴ Stenmark, "Worldview Studies," 570.

Mentoring and Worldview Development

While researching the role mentoring plays in helping African American teens transition into young adulthood successfully, Lou Selzer noted that parents play the most critical role in the development of teens as “they contribute their knowledge, skills, encouragement, and wisdom for life experiences,” and “can assist their sons and daughters to set and achieve meaningful goals for a purposeful life.”⁵⁵ However, Selzer noted that when there has been neglect in this relationship, a mentor can serve as a vital counterbalance as a surrogate relationship by providing a dynamic relationship to the mentee.⁵⁶ Mulder and van den Berg supported these findings as they considered worldview development in education and noted that worldviews could be fostered in others by taking on different roles to help them do so, including mentoring.⁵⁷ As mentoring can serve as a surrogate relationship in place of parenting, it can be argued that parents who develop mentoring skills will be enabled in the process of helping their teenagers move into young adulthood and take ownership of their faith.

Freeks argues from Scripture that fathers should be actively and proactively involved in mentoring their children, teaching them valuable lessons about forgiveness, and making better decisions.⁵⁸ While parenting and mentoring are different, Mason and Pedrone argue that as children age, parents can easily move into a mentoring role with their children in a way that is

⁵⁵ Lou Selzer, “A Christian Mentoring Program for Character Education of African American Teens and Young Adults from Detroit,” in *The Wiley Handbook of Christianity and Education*, ed. William Jeynes, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 165–67. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=5477772>.

⁵⁶ Selzer, “A Christian Mentoring Program,” 172.

⁵⁷ Mulder and van den Berg, “Learning for Life,” 292.

⁵⁸ Freeks, “Mentoring Fathers,” 5.

healthy and helpful to the child as they come of age and begin making their own decisions.⁵⁹ Fathers trained in mentoring skills will have more success in helping their youth transition into faith ownership; therefore, training men in both the biblical worldview and mentoring skills will benefit the church. Churches should also be prepared to instruct fathers in these skills as churches have been recognized by mothers (religious and non-religious alike) as the place most identified with being able to help fathers become better in their role.⁶⁰

Mentoring is evident in Scripture in the relationships between “Joshua, Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Paul, Timothy, and others,” and these relationships provide dynamic examples of the mentoring relationship.⁶¹ Freeks also argues that within the Old and New Testaments, the home itself was seen as a type of church in which the father was responsible for leading his family in the practice and development of their faith.⁶² Freeks provides several principles for faith-based fathers to consider as they mentor their families into developing more robust biblical worldviews, including the importance of God and depending on God in their own life by grounding themselves in the biblical faith, committing themselves to growth and the role of father/mentor, and taking seriously their responsibility to guide and lead their family as role models.⁶³

The mentoring relationship typically has four stages: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition.⁶⁴ As a mentor comes alongside a mentee, they should be aware of the purpose

⁵⁹ R. Peter Mason and Dino Pedrone, *Mentoring the Next Generation: Making a Lasting Difference* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2012), 104–105.

⁶⁰ Norval Glenn and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, *Mama Says: A National Survey of Mothers' Attitudes on Fathering* (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2009), 5, <https://www.fatherhood.org/mama-says-survey>.

⁶¹ Freeks, “Mentoring Fathers,” 5.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 5–7.

⁶⁴ Selzer, “A Christian Mentoring Program,” 175.

of each step to be the most help to the individual. A Christian mentor should also understand that mentoring involves “earn[ing] the trust of their mentees ... modeling being fully human pilgrims on the Christian journey ... [being] intentional, goal-oriented, and contractual.”⁶⁵ Reese and Loane also suggest that Christian mentors should model Jesus’s approach to mentoring by coming alongside others in a way that is faithful to the Spirit’s call on their lives and in the life of the mentor, for God’s purposes and the mentor and mentee’s well-being.⁶⁶ By walking alongside another in a mentoring relationship, the mentor can help the mentee answer the questions of “Who is God? ... Who am I? ... What am I to do with my life?”⁶⁷ By searching for answers to these three questions, the individual can be guided into a better understanding of the biblical worldview.

An individual or a father serving as a Christian mentor should also consider that the basis for their work is founded on the Bible, and the biblical worldview should inform how the mentor guides the mentee.⁶⁸ The Christian mentor not only relies on the normal mentoring process but also has the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who provides extra support in this relationship.⁶⁹ Keeping these things in mind, a “Christian mentor can create space for teens who are engaged in the natural process of separating their own religious identity from their parent’s religious identity to explore what they believe about God.”⁷⁰ A Christian father who understands the stages of mentoring can use these skills to coach their teenager into faith ownership.

⁶⁵ Siberine and Kimball, “Confirming Mentoring,” 40.

⁶⁶ Randy D. Reese and Robert Loane, *Deep Mentoring: Guiding Others on their Leadership Journey* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books an Imprint of Intervarsity Press, 2012), 178.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁶⁸ Selzer, “A Christian Mentoring Program,” 177.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁷⁰ Siberine and Kimball, “Confirming Mentoring,” 46.

Theological Foundations

Freeks addresses the challenges fathers face in fulfilling their role and obligation to the family as spiritual leaders.⁷¹ Freeks' primary concern is the absence of fathers in the home and the negative impact of this epidemic on South African families.⁷² Freeks identifies original sin as the contributing factor that has eroded the traditional understanding of fathers within the home, as society has pressured the traditional family to adapt to different roles.⁷³ Freeks recommends that fathers relearn their fundamental role as the spiritual leader of the home, developing their relationship with Christ, and then model responsibility, accountability, and authority, spending quality time with their family and forming positive relationships exhibiting respect for others.⁷⁴ Considering that this action research project depends on fathers training their children in the biblical worldview, it would be helpful to consider the scriptural basis for fathers serving as spiritual guides for their families and the biblical worldview they impart to their children.

Fathers as Spiritual Guides

Abraham Smith argues that First Thessalonians 2:11–12 informs fathers of their primary responsibility to lead others, specifically their children, to Christ.⁷⁵ Fathers are to lead by urging their children to live worthy lives, encouraging them in their relationship with God, and pleading for them to remain in the faith just as Paul urged, pleaded, and encouraged the Thessalonians to be a faithful community. Smith reminds fathers that this call to proclaim and nurture the gospel

⁷¹ Fazel Ebrihiam Freeks, "Christian Fathers as Role Models of the Church's Fulfillment of the *Missio Dei* in a Fatherless Society" *Missionalia* 46, no. 3 (2019): 331–32, DOI: 10.7832/46-3-289.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 334.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 343.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Abraham Smith, "The First Letter to the Thessalonians," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 11:671–737.

in others was to occur even in the face of adversity and hostility from the world.⁷⁶ First Thessalonians speaks to the modern father, reminding him that it is crucial to encourage and equip their child in the faith because the world is hostile to the gospel and the biblical worldview.

While Cain and Abel likely learned from Adam that they were to worship God and even bring sacrifices to God (Gen 4:1–5), the text is unclear where Cain and Abel learned they were supposed to or how to bring acceptable sacrifices to God. As Fretheim notes, “They bring offerings without any command to do so; the writer assumes that human beings worship and conduct sacrifices.”⁷⁷ Walton also suggests that Genesis Chapter Four does not provide the necessary instruction for sacrifices to God, only that it provides enough detail for the dialogue between God and Cain to take place and explain the important narrative of Abel’s death.⁷⁸ The purpose of the story is to “ultimately focus on God [by] ... traveling through Cain’s territory ... for we can only appreciate the depth of God’s character as it is seen alongside of the shallow depravity of Cain.”⁷⁹ Therefore, the story of Cain and Able (and the following generations of Cain and Seth) provides a reminder that faith and relationship with God will either be handed down successfully and will go well with the individuals who follow God, or it will be handed down unsuccessfully, and it will not go well for those who allow sin to rule their life instead.

One of the earliest and clearest examples of an individual being called into the practice of handing down the faith is seen in Genesis 18:18–19. As the two angels leave Abraham, Abraham overhears God speaking to them about God’s desire to talk to Abraham about what will occur.

⁷⁶ Smith, “The First Letter to the Thessalonians,” 701.

⁷⁷ Terence E. Fretheim, “The Book of Genesis,” *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 373.

⁷⁸ John H. Walton, “Genesis,” *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 266.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 267.

Fretheim claims that in this example, God intentionally includes Abraham in the conversation regarding the justice God plans to enact in Sodom and Gomorrah.⁸⁰ Abraham is invited into the conversation and pleads for God to relent if any just individuals are found. Fretheim concludes that it was God's purpose to teach Abraham about God's plan so that Abraham would be able to teach his children how to keep the way and do what is right and just.⁸¹ Speiser supports Fretheim by suggesting that in this passage, God's intent is focused on how Abraham is expected to live and that God expects Abraham to hand down the faith and the responsibility of living in the covenant to the generations that follow him.⁸² The covenant community would end if Abraham did not pass on the faith.⁸³ God's interaction with Abraham expresses God's intention that one generation should always be handing down the faith to the next.

In Deuteronomy 6, God's intention for one generation to hand down the faith to the next continues. Clements notes that in this passage, God's purpose is not just for Israel to remember His commands but also to understand that once Israel enters the land, they will face temptations that will seriously threaten Israel's ability to remain faithful.⁸⁴ While Weinfeld argues that children in these verses could mean pupils, he acknowledges that it is still necessary for the community of Israel to be constantly reminded that the community was to nurture their children in the faith by giving them a clear example of a faithful life through their devotion to God.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Fretheim, "The Book of Genesis," 467.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 468.

⁸² E. A. Speiser, "Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes," vol. 1, *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1987), 133.

⁸³ Fretheim, "The Book of Genesis," 468.

⁸⁴ Ronald E. Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 2:342.

⁸⁵ Moshe Weinfeld, "Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary" vol. 5, *The Anchor Bible* (New York, NY: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1991), 340–41.

Clements notes that the primary setting for children to learn about their faith was in the home and that it was the responsibility of the fathers to do the instruction.⁸⁶ Bock suggests that this instruction should be repetitively taught through various daily life activities and that the faith community should support the family in this work, as faith development is also a public matter of the church.⁸⁷ Deuteronomy 6 speaks to the danger that awaits the biblical worldview of Christian teenagers as they leave home and prepare for adulthood and why it is necessary for fathers to instruct their children in the faith.

Church historian and theologian Thomas Oden explains the benefit of teaching children the biblical faith through encouragement and discipleship. By introducing children to the faith of Christ, they become part of the family of God. Children then enjoy the benefits of being a part of a family and a loving and caring community devoted to growing together in Christ. The community also supports the child and parents as they learn and live alongside others who are also learning what it means to grow in holiness.⁸⁸ By becoming members of the community, children learn what it is to live within the church's discipline, which prepares them to receive the eternal gift of God's kingdom.⁸⁹ Oden also points out that there are clear signs in an individual's life that point to whether or not they have been formed in the discipline of the faith.⁹⁰ Therefore, parents need to attend to their faith development while they disciple their children, as the parents' discipleship will impact how important the children will take their faith ownership.

⁸⁶ Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," 343.

⁸⁷ Daniel I. Block, "Deuteronomy," *The NIV Application Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 184–85.

⁸⁸ Thomas C. Oden, *Classic Christianity: A Systematic Theology* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 1992), 643–44.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 644.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Perkins contends that Ephesians 6:1–4 focuses on the requirements for parents to instruct their children in the faith.⁹¹ Specifically, fathers are to discipline (train) their children and teach them correctly to live virtuously as disciples.⁹² Perkins suggests that this training should be done carefully so as not to create a false conversion, as fear of punishment only compels short-term obedience.⁹³ To bring their children up in the knowledge of the Lord, Perkins explains that parents should instruct their children by explaining how they feel when their child does wrong, which gives the child a better frame of reference for why they should act in a certain way.⁹⁴ Perkins also suggests that Ephesians 6:1–4 makes concrete demands on how a father should disciple their children. Precisely, a father should model Christian behavior, which includes allowing their children to see how the father loves God, enjoys reading and studying Scripture, and is excited to share their faith with their children.⁹⁵ Barth supports Perkins by suggesting that a father should also be mindful of heeding the discipline of God in their own life and by living as a social being in the world as they live in the proper Christian way.⁹⁶ Children need to see that the Christian life, and therefore, the biblical worldview is a way to live, not a set of information to be mastered. Having considered the biblical basis for fathers to lead their families in spiritual formation, consideration will now be given to the biblical worldview that fathers are to teach their children.

⁹¹ PHEME PERKINS, “The Letter to the Ephesians,” *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 11:452.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 453.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 456.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ MARKUS BARTH, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4–6* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1986), 755.

The Basic Biblical Worldview

A second challenge men face in instructing their children in the biblical worldview is their understanding of what it entails. The biblical worldview is not based on denominational standards, personal bias, or feelings but instead constitutes the essentials of the biblical faith held by all believers.⁹⁷ The essentials of the biblical worldview are more than the consensus of believers; instead, they are based on the divine revelation of holy Scripture and a Christian's faithfulness to that word.⁹⁸ Understanding Scripture as authoritative in all matters of life has been under debate, as many Christians are willing to adapt to the cultural trends of the day to prevent debate or dissension.⁹⁹ Adapting the cultural trends has led Christians down two paths: accommodation or retreat. The path of accommodation has led the church to accept secular and pagan practices, which has led to the rise of syncretism within the church. Accommodation of culture has also led to the problem of "Seculosity," or the attempt to achieve "enoughness" by secular means. It has turned the eyes of the believer away from the work of Jesus Christ for their atonement.¹⁰⁰

The second path of retreating from the world and withdrawing into a closed community has led the church away from its call to speak to culture and make other disciples.¹⁰¹ Even when it retreats from culture, the church struggles to determine whether it is a "hospital for sinners" or

⁹⁷ Roger E. Olson, *Counterfeit Christianity: The Persistence of Errors in the Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015), 25.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹⁹ Trevin Wax, *The Thrill of Orthodoxy: Rediscovering the Adventure of Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP an Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2022), 104.

¹⁰⁰ David Zahl, *Seculosity: How Career, Parenting, Technology, Food, Politics, and Romance Became Our New Religion and What to Do About It* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2019), 167.

¹⁰¹ Wax, *The Thrill of Orthodoxy*, 105–106.

a “schoolhouse for saints.”¹⁰² While Zahl notes that the church should be both a place of healing and learning, he argues that by withdrawing from culture, the church has lost its witness to speak against the secular replacements that those living in the world have begun to chase after as a substitution for their relationship with God.¹⁰³ Christians who are called to be salt and light to the world (Matt 5:13–16) will understand that they are called to live in purity to God’s word and live in a way that calls others into a life of faith. Therefore, biblically committed Christians will not accommodate the pagan or secular culture. Instead, they will draw upon the holy scriptures as their ultimate authority, discover the power of living into the biblical worldview, and spread the good news of Jesus Christ with all they can.¹⁰⁴ To live in this way, one must be familiar enough with the biblical worldview of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration to articulate it to others.

Creation

The first step in developing the biblical worldview is understanding God is the creator of all things. Drawing upon the work of Langdon Gilkey, Olson restates three essentials about the Christian understanding of creation and adds a fourth that Gilkey did not state: 1) God is the source of all that there is, 2) Creatures are dependent yet real and good, 3) God creates in freedom and with purpose.¹⁰⁵ Olson’s fourth essential deals with the following two steps in the

¹⁰² Zahl, *Seculosity*, 163.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 164.

¹⁰⁴ Olson, *Counterfeit Christianity*, 25.

¹⁰⁵ Roger E. Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity, Second Edition* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic an Imprint of Intervarsity Press, 2016), 159.

biblical worldview: “Creation is fallen under a curse and needs supernatural healing (i.e., redemption).”¹⁰⁶

The creation story in Genesis chapters one and two stands as a reminder that God created out of nothing, and out of nothing, God created all things with a word (Gen 1:3). Christians understand that God Himself is the one who has done this work of creation (Isa 44:24) and that the word that God spoke has been ultimately revealed in His Son Jesus Christ who has also come forth as God’s Word (John 1:1–18).¹⁰⁷ Scripture also teaches that because God created all things, all things reveal God’s glory, and therefore, humanity is without excuse to recognize and glorify God (Rom 1:18–23).

Watkin explains that because the universe has a beginning, it was possible for the universe not to exist.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, if God chose to create the universe and to give it order (Gen 1:2), there must be a purpose.¹⁰⁹ Grudem supports the belief that God created the world out of nothing and created it for God’s glory and to be in a relationship with God’s creation.¹¹⁰ Being clear that God is the one who has created this world stands as a reminder that the Christian faith and the biblical worldview believe and teach that God is separate from creation and not in creation as the pantheists believe.¹¹¹ As a theistic worldview, the Christian faith also stands against naturalism, which denies God’s existence.

¹⁰⁶ Olson, *Mosaic of Christian Belief*, 159.

¹⁰⁷ Gerard S. Sloyan, *John: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1988), 14.

¹⁰⁸ Christopher Watkin, *Biblical Critical Theory: How the Bible’s Unfolding Story Makes Sense of Modern Life and Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2022), 53–54.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹¹⁰ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology, Second Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020), 338–40, 565.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 343–45.

The biblical worldview of creation is also rooted in the belief that humanity (both Adam and Eve) is the pinnacle of God's creation and that it was God's original purpose to be in full communion with humanity, who were created in His likeness.¹¹² Having been made in the image and likeness of God has several implications as humans are self-conscious, spiritual beings who were meant for immortality, designed with intelligence to be in relationship with God and to be holy as God is holy, with the freedom to decide for themselves to choose God above all other things.¹¹³ Part of being created in God's image and likeness included the command to subdue, rule over, and care for the earth (Gen 1:28) and to do so in a harmonious relationship with one another and God. These new rulers were given one stipulation: do not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:16), but humanity chose a world of their own making instead, disobeyed God's command, and fell into sin.¹¹⁴

Fall

Adam and Eve's rebellion led to the Fall of humanity and came with the steep price of a broken relationship with God.¹¹⁵ Reflecting on Genesis 3:14–19, Fretheim claims that all conceivable relationships were disrupted at the moment of the Fall, including humanity's relationship with creation, animals, one another, God, and even themselves, and that sin now touches every aspect of life.¹¹⁶ Scripture contains stories that remind the disciple of humanity's

¹¹² James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations are Fulfilled in Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2022), 224.

¹¹³ Robert E. Coleman, *The Heart of the Gospel: The Theology Behind the Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books a Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2011), 57–61.

¹¹⁴ Vaughn Roberts, *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible* (Downers Grove, MI: IVP Books an Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2012), 32 & 39.

¹¹⁵ Coleman, *The Heart of the Gospel*, 67–74.

¹¹⁶ Fretheim, "The Book of Genesis," 362–63.

struggle with sin and with statements made like the apostle Paul's words, "I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do" (Rom 7:14b–15, NIV) clearly articulates the struggle that everyone has in doing God's will on their own. Grudem reminds his readers that at the Fall, the image of God that humanity was created in has been distorted, but not all hope is lost.¹¹⁷ Unfortunately, humanity clothed in sin and shame can no longer stand in a perfect relationship with God, which means that it will only be through supernatural help that healing and redemption can occur.¹¹⁸

Even in the story of the Fall, the grace of God is clear and present. As God speaks to Adam and Eve, God speaks to the enmity that will exist between the serpent and Eve's descendant, later identified as Jesus Christ (Isa 7:14, Hab 3:13, and Gal 3:13), who will crush the head of the serpent.¹¹⁹ God's goodness and grace are also visible in the way in which God interacts with Adam and Eve as well. Brueggemann suggests, "The miracle is not that they are punished, but that they live."¹²⁰ This idea is reflected in Romans 5:12–19 as the apostle Paul reflects on the universal sin of Adam and the salvation from this sin that can be found only in Jesus Christ. Brueggemann also points to the grace of God as God continues to protect and provide for Adam and Eve as they are clothed, which covers their shame and is something that they could not yet provide for themselves.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 569.

¹¹⁸ Olson, *Mosaic of Christian Belief*, 159.

¹¹⁹ Fretheim, "The Book of Genesis," 363.

¹²⁰ Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1982), 49.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

Redemption

God initially placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to have a perfect relationship with Him. Due to their sin of rebellion, the Garden was defiled. With the Garden defiled, a holy God could no longer walk side by side with humanity (Gen 3:8).¹²² The grace of God continues even after the Fall as God desires to continue to be in a relationship with humanity for the purpose of God's glory, but for God to be in relationship with humanity atonement is required. This is first seen in the sacrifice of animals for clothing Adam and Eve in their shame.¹²³ God's relationship with humanity for redemption continues through the call of Noah (Gen 6) and later the call of Abraham (Gen 15). Eventually, God will prepare and equip his people for their ability to be in God's presence again as they are instructed to build a tabernacle that his presence might be in their midst (Lev 26:11 & Deut 23:14).¹²⁴ It is in the tabernacle that the Levitical priests are enabled to offer up sacrifices to atone for the sin of Israel, that Israel might remain in covenant relationship with God. Unfortunately, the sacrifices offered up for atonement are incomplete and must be performed annually by the priests to remind them of their sins (Heb 10:1–4).

It is not until the Incarnation of Jesus Christ and His Death and Resurrection that the Atonement of sin is paid for in a perfect way (Heb 10:5–14 & 1 Cor 15:3–4). As Hamilton suggests, Christ truly fulfills the purpose of both the temple and the tabernacle through the Incarnation; Jesus becomes the place where God's presence walks among humanity and, at the cross, completes the final necessary sacrifice for sin.¹²⁵ Through a Christian's faith in Christ, they are freed from their sin and gifted the Holy Spirit to overcome sin and become obedient to

¹²² Hamilton, *Typology*, 224.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

Christ and God's call (John 3:16–34). It is also through faith in Christ that a believer will experience the power of resurrection at the end of their life (1 Cor 15:12–58). A Christian living with a biblical worldview also understands that the redemption that they find in Christ is not fully complete until Christ returns and restores all things (Rev 21:5). Until then, the Christian is called to share their faith and the good news about Jesus Christ with others (1 Pet 3:15).

Restoration

As noted in the previous section, God's redemption was completed through the work of Jesus Christ; however, Christians understand that the final completion of God's redemption will not fully occur until Christ returns, when those who have put their faith in Christ will be fully restored along with creation. In the meantime, Christians understand that “in this world you will have trouble” (John 16:33, NIV), but they also remember the words of the Apostle Paul, who reminds believers in Christ that they are not to lose heart even

Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor 4:16–18, NIV).

While much of the New Testament was written to help disciples of Jesus Christ live faithfully in the world and to be renewed daily until Christ returns, the book of Revelation gives Christians the most detailed picture of Christ's final victory over evil and suffering in this world.

Blount argues that Revelation 21:1–8 gives a clear picture of the future new creation that provides present ethical purposes for the Christian church. Specifically, Blount claims that the purpose of Revelation is to give the Christian church an understanding of what will happen so that those who hear or read the words of Revelation will know how to direct their lives in a way

that will put them into this proclaimed future.¹²⁶ When the proclaimed future arrives, God will take all that is old and will transform it into something new by fiercely transfiguring the old.¹²⁷ The full transfiguration of the old creation is clearly viewed as the sea, which represents the source of chaos and defiance of God's sovereignty in creation, is removed once and for all.¹²⁸ As Blount states, "In a powerful re-creation and escalation of the Genesis endeavor, God does not tame the sea by imposing land upon it; God orders new cosmos by completely removing it."¹²⁹

As creation is renewed from the effects of humanity's sin, Mulholland argues that those who have put their faith in Christ will experience this new environment as "a new earth and sky that are released from the destructive influence of the 'sea' are formed."¹³⁰ This new structure, including the creation of a New Jerusalem, will allow those who are, have, and will conquer through Christ to live in perfect community and human existence with God and one another.¹³¹ McKnight and Matchett summarize the community that "the conquerors in Christ will inherit [as] (1) intimate, eternal presence with God and Jesus and (2) the new Jerusalem, a flourishing, growing, and vibrant city that embodies the ever-increasing fullness of God's design for creation."¹³² McKnight and Matchett remind Christians that the promise to inherit the New Jerusalem is made to those who conquer by standing up, speaking up, and speaking out "about

¹²⁶ Brian K. Blount, "Revelation: A Commentary," *The New Testament Library* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 374–75.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 376.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 377.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., "Revelation: Holy Living in an Unholy World," *A Francis Asbury Press Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, an imprint of Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 315.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 315–16.

¹³² Scot McKnight and Cody Matchett, *Revelation for the Rest of Us: A Prophetic Call to Follow Jesus as a Dissident Disciple* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2023), 159.

the Lamb who is Lord of lords.”¹³³ One way to stand up, speak up, and speak out is by living faithfully in the biblical worldview of Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration and training others to do the same. As argued above, modeling and instructing children in the biblical worldview has become essential for today’s Christian parents.

Theological Conclusion

The biblical account clearly articulates the necessity of fathers handing down their faith to their children and for this to happen to each successive generation. For a father to hand down the faith to their children, the father must first learn and understand the faith for themselves to articulate and model the faith for their children. The faith that a Christian father is to hand down is the faith based on the biblical worldview, which is built on the understanding that God is the Creator of all that there is, and that humanity was created to live in perfect relationship with God. However, Scripture also describes the Fall and sin of humanity as Adam and Eve, and every successive individual and generation chooses their own self-will over the will of God. Scripture also makes clear that even though creation was broken through the fall of humanity, God chooses to set in motion a plan to save God’s creation, which ultimately happened through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and will come to its completeness when Christ returns in final victory. Having considered the biblical basis for fathers to lead their families in faith and the basic understanding of the biblical worldview, the theoretical foundation of faith formation will now be considered.

Theoretical Foundations

Considering that this project will train fathers in the biblical worldview to help them facilitate the biblical worldview in their teenagers, it is important to consider ways these men can

¹³³ McKnight and Matchett, *Revelation for the Rest of Us*, 162–63.

accomplish this task. This section will consider the theoretical foundations of faith development and discuss the significance of evaluating faith development as a theory versus a model and why understanding this difference matters in helping fathers learn to mentor their children through the stages of faith development. Since this project will be training fathers in the biblical worldview, it is also important to help fathers learn to defend the Bible so the fathers will be prepared to answer objections that their teenagers might raise during their faith development. Therefore, this section will also look at the apologetic method of defending the Bible.

Faith Development Theory or Model

The faith development of an individual has predominantly been considered in two ways. First, following the work of Fowler, faith development has been seen as a “soft” developmental theory.¹³⁴ As a theory, faith development follows the pattern of psychological theories of human development by presenting stages of development based on age. Fowlerian style faith development has brought its share of criticism as it often locks the faith development of an individual to their chronological age as opposed to the individual’s life situation. Jones and Wilder argue that explaining faith development in this way becomes not only descriptive of a faith journey but also prescriptive.¹³⁵ Therefore, Fowler’s stages risk becoming a universal model that allows no flexibility in the faith development of an individual. If faith development is based only on an individual’s age, an individual who fails to navigate any one stage successfully would be less likely to complete the intended development in the following stages. This would be

¹³⁴ James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1981).

¹³⁵ Timothy Paul Jones and Michael S. Wilder, “Faith Development and Christian Formation,” in *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology & Human Development*, ed. James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 175.

problematic for teenagers who fail to reach earlier milestones as they move into young adulthood and are supposed to be taking ownership of their faith. Also, faith development as a theory does not prescribe what content should be learned by the individual, only how that individual may look at their faith in that season of life.

A second way to consider faith development is as a functional model. As a functional model, faith development is typically connected to an individual's age; however, a functional model also considers the individual's situation in life, allowing for growth and ownership of faith at different points during a lifetime. For instance, an individual growing up in a non-religious home who later attends college, interacts with a campus ministry, and chooses to give their life to Christ would begin in the childhood stage of faith development. Once the individual makes the necessary progress in the childhood stage of development, they will then be prepared to take ownership of their faith at the appropriate time. Jones and Wilder propose that considering faith development as a model allows an individual to begin with an allegiance to Christ while learning the Christian faith's necessary content. Then later, when dissonance is experienced in the individual's life, they can transform their faith through later developmental stages as they grow in content, doctrine, life, and faith experiences.¹³⁶ Understanding faith development and formation as a model instead of a theory allows individuals to appropriately redefine their lives as they grow in faith (not just age) alongside the Christian community, regardless of when they first became a part of one.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Jones and Wilder, "Faith Development and Christian Formation," 191.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 195.

One model of faith development has been proposed by Willett, who argues that 1 John 2:12–14 presents a model of development that other Scriptures also defend.¹³⁸ As previously discussed, Willet offers three stages of faith development, with milestones that an individual must attain before they mature into the next stage. For Willett, faith development is flexibly linked to age; however, moving through the stages is more about individual readiness than chronological age while acknowledging that at the latter two stages, individuals may have to strengthen areas that were neglected in the “Childhood” stage.¹³⁹ Willett’s model aims for an individual to mature in Christ, where the individual could “Parent” other individuals into faith. Willet laments that the Christian faith has a “shortage of seasoned, experienced Parents in the faith who [can] assume responsibility to skillfully guide others.”¹⁴⁰

In his research aimed at developing a model for biblical worldview development in young adults, Erdvig provides theoretical implications that could be used to build a program to help teenagers strengthen their biblical worldview as they enter emerging adulthood.¹⁴¹ Erdvig’s grounded research study focused on understanding the contributing factors that were helpful to emerging adults to develop and maintain a biblical worldview and discovered that a primary factor in creating a biblical worldview for teenagers is having Christian parents who take their faith development seriously.¹⁴² Erdvig notes that Fowler’s faith development theory helps explain the unsettling years of emerging adulthood as one begins to take ownership of their

¹³⁸ Willett, “Stages of Spiritual Development,” 92.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Roger C. S. Erdvig, “A Model for Biblical Worldview Development in Evangelical Christian Emerging Adults” (Doctor of Education diss., Liberty University, 2016). Erdvig also summarized the results from his research in a journal article with the same title published in 2020.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 183.

faith;¹⁴³ however, Erdvig also notes that Fowler's theory is "simply not adequate to explain the phenomenon of Biblical worldview development, though it does offer some clues as to how a person may experience Biblical worldview development,"¹⁴⁴ Erdvig's research fills in a gap where little research has been done to determine how a biblical worldview develops over an individual's life.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, the study provided by Erdvig is helpful to any research designing ways to help teenagers maintain and strengthen a biblical worldview as they enter emerging adulthood.

Regarding Christian parenting, Erdvig noted several things parents could do to help prepare their teenagers to take ownership of their faith and continue to develop a biblical worldview as they enter young adulthood. First, Erdvig noted that the participants in his study consistently pointed to the faith of their parents as a positive experience that helped them decide to grow in the biblical worldview themselves; therefore, parents should pursue and practice their faith and intentionally develop in their biblical worldview.¹⁴⁶ Erdvig also found that parents could help their teenagers develop a solid biblical worldview by providing opportunities to learn about the biblical worldview at home, school, and church settings,¹⁴⁷ by allowing the teenager to develop godly friendships that remain consistent over time,¹⁴⁸ by creating a community of other adults that will provide additional examples to the teenager of individuals living out the biblical

¹⁴³ Erdvig, "Model for Biblical," 52–53.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 182.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 184.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 185.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 185–86.

worldview,¹⁴⁹ and by intentionally providing the teenager with opportunities to experience God and take ownership of their faith relationship themselves.¹⁵⁰

Training parents to model and instruct their children in the biblical worldview is also essential. However, it is vital to consider any barriers that may prevent parents and children from developing a truly integrated biblical worldview. As a university professor, Kanitz realized that students must integrate their Christian faith into their lives or studies. The insight that Kanitz presented helps consider barriers that may lead to the integration of the biblical worldview, as she notes that denominational and institutional differences can and do matter when it comes to biblical interpretation, which may lead to a different understanding of the biblical worldview.¹⁵¹ Kanitz argues that it is essential to level the playing field regarding biblical interpretation to help the students replace their worldview with actual biblical content.¹⁵² Therefore, it would be helpful to determine a parent's skill in biblical interpretation to help them to be able to instruct their children in the biblical worldview.

While working in college education, Esqueda recognized that due to isolation, disconnection, depersonalization, and competition, students often could not integrate the biblical worldview in various areas of their lives.¹⁵³ Due to these students' social and religious compartmentalization, they often lived as "practical agnostics."¹⁵⁴ Individuals training parents in the biblical worldview should consider that the parents, themselves, may be living with an

¹⁴⁹ Erdvig, "Model for Biblical," 185-186.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Lori Kanitz, "Improving Christian Worldview Pedagogy: Going Beyond Mere Christianity," *Christian Higher Education* 4, no. 2 (2005): 102–103, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15363750590923101>.

¹⁵² Ibid., 101, 104.

¹⁵³ Octavio Javier Esqueda, "Biblical Worldview: The Christian Higher Education Foundation for Learning," *Christian Higher Education* 13, no. 2 (2014): 92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15363759.2014.872495>.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

understanding that the Christian faith and the biblical worldview can be reduced in their life to religious activity and practices that have no impact on the other areas of their life.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, it would be necessary for any program developed to train men in the biblical worldview to mentor their children in the biblical worldview should consider ways that the men can learn to integrate and model the biblical worldview to their children more regularly. The biblical worldview modeling practices should also consider how the three aspects of worldview (propositional, behavioral, and heart orientation) can be modeled for those being trained.¹⁵⁶

Understanding that faith development can be understood as both a theory and a model, this DMIN action research project will focus on faith and worldview development as a model. Considering worldview as a model will allow for the development of a program that will first strengthen the worldview of fathers, as they may need to revisit earlier stages of their development before they can mentor their teenagers into faith ownership. Helping fathers reinforce their biblical worldview by considering critical biblical passages and by helping them develop ways to model this worldview more regularly will help them to transition their teenagers into faith ownership successfully. Having considered the theoretical underpinnings of faith development as it pertains to this project, it is now important to consider how a father can defend the Bible itself if objections arise as these fathers train their own children.

The Basic Defense of the Bible

While discussing the importance of signposts to truth and reality, Wright states that “The story of Jesus thus offers a new framework for understanding the world—the framework of

¹⁵⁵ Esqueda, “Biblical Worldview, 91.

¹⁵⁶ Katherine G. Schultz and James A. Swezey, “A Three-Dimensional Concept of Worldview,” *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 22, no. 3 (December 2013): 240, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10656219.2013.850612>.

victory over corruption and death itself and the launching of the new creation.”¹⁵⁷ However, with the majority of Americans (six out of ten) no longer believing that the Bible is true, accurate, reliable, or relevant, it has become increasingly important to not only help individuals understand that the Bible is the true framework for understanding the world but also to defend the reliability of the Bible itself.¹⁵⁸ If fathers do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God or do not know how to defend the Bible as the reliable Word of God, it will affect their ability to help their children develop the biblical worldview for themselves. While the defense of the Bible could be considered a theological task, the process of the apologetic defense can be explained as a theory.

Geisler and Brooks provide a six-step method for building a case for the Bible.¹⁵⁹ First, Geisler and Brooks suggest that the case for God’s existence should be argued for and Naturalism argued against. Evidence for God’s existence can be argued in two ways. First, Pascal’s wager can be offered as a challenge that suggests that if Christianity and God’s existence have at least a fifty percent chance of being true, then it is rational to commit to living a Christian life.¹⁶⁰ Second, Beck’s threefold argument for God, which combines the cosmological, teleological, and moral arguments to explain God’s existence, should be explained as a method to defend against Naturalism.¹⁶¹ Once the argument for God has been made, Geisler and Brooks

¹⁵⁷ Nicholas Thomas Wright, *Broken Signposts: How Christianity Makes Sense of the World* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2020), 192.

¹⁵⁸ Barna, *American Worldview Inventory 2022–23*, 105.

¹⁵⁹ Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask: A Handbook on Christian Evidences, Revised and Updated* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2013), 148.

¹⁶⁰ Michael Rota, *Taking Pascal’s Wager: Faith, Evidence and the Abundant Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 13, 48.

¹⁶¹ W. David Beck, “God’s Existence,” in *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God’s Action in History*, ed. R. Douglas Geivett and Gary Habermas (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 149–62.

suggest that it is time to argue for the possibility of miracles.¹⁶² For this purpose, the definition of a miracle should be explained, and then objections to the miracle stories should be considered.¹⁶³

Once the case has been made for the existence of God and for miracles, Geisler and Brooks explain that the case for the New Testament as a historically reliable document can then be argued.¹⁶⁴ Habermas offers a simple method to defend the New Testament based on minimal facts about the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ that most historians will agree upon.¹⁶⁵ A defense of the New Testament should also consider defending the historical reliability of the text and the care that has been taken over the millennia to hand down accurate scriptures to the Christian church, even though some textual variants exist.¹⁶⁶ After arguing for the case that the New Testament is reliable, one can then make the last three arguments that the miracles reported in the New Testament confirm Jesus's claim to be God, that whatever Jesus teaches is true, and that Jesus Himself "taught that the Bible is the Word of God by confirming the Old Testament and promising the New Testament."¹⁶⁷

Providing fathers with the tools to defend the Bible will help to reinforce the importance of the Bible in their own life of discipleship and will give them more reason to take Scripture seriously to determine their worldview. Also, by helping fathers understand that the Bible is a reliable source and how to defend it, they will be better prepared to explain to their children how

¹⁶² Geisler and Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask*, 148.

¹⁶³ Richard L. Purtill, "Defining Miracles," in *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God's Action in History*, ed. R. Douglas Geivett and Gary Habermas (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1997), 62–63.

¹⁶⁴ Geisler and Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask*, 148.

¹⁶⁵ Gary R. Habermas, *The Risen Jesus and Future Hope* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 9.

¹⁶⁶ Craig L. Blomberg, *Can We Still Believe the Bible?: An Evangelical Engagement with Contemporary Questions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2014), 40–41.

¹⁶⁷ Geisler and Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask*, 148.

and why the Bible is essential to a Christian disciple. Teaching children the importance of Scripture will help them be better prepared to make their own decisions based on the truth of Scripture and resist accommodating the ways of the world based on feelings, emotions, or societal norms.¹⁶⁸

Theoretical Conclusion

The purpose of this project is to train fathers in the biblical worldview along with mentoring skills to help them be better prepared to teach their children the faith and to help them be ready to take ownership of their faith as they move into young adulthood. This project will move forward with the understanding that faith development is a model for growth and development that allows individuals to enter the Christian journey regardless of their age. It is understood that individuals will have the opportunity to progress and grow in their faith even if they fail to achieve ownership as they move into young adulthood. Additionally, it is understood that any project focusing on helping fathers to be better prepared to foster faith development in their children will also have to provide training in a method to defend the Bible itself for them to be able to address one of the more significant objections to the biblical worldview, the erroneous view that the Bible is not reliable.

Conclusion

This DMIN project will address the identified problem at Asbury Church of men needing help articulating and modeling the biblical worldview of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration to their teenagers. This problem has been expressed by the lack of college students continuing to practice their Christian faith as they leave for college. This project will develop and

¹⁶⁸ Barna, *Raising Spiritual Champions*, 110.

implement focused biblical worldview training so fathers can be better prepared to mentor their teenagers into faith ownership. It is proposed that if biblical worldview training is developed and implemented, fathers will be better prepared to model the Christian faith and be more successful in mentoring their teenagers into faith ownership.

Current literature describes a worldview as the underlying principle that guides an individual's decisions. The worldview serves as a narrative of the individual's life as it addresses the big questions consciously or unconsciously asked by every person. The questions are: where are we, what is wrong with the world, how did it get this way, and what is the solution? Therefore, even though an individual does not have to examine their worldview, if he or she wants to live life on purpose, analyzing their worldview can help him or her to determine how consistently they are living out the worldview he or she professes to hold and believe.

Worldviews are often handed down to children from their parents, and there are transition points in the life of every individual where the individual would be more open to having their worldview up for reconsideration. One universal time of transition is when children age into their teenage years and prepare to leave home. This stage of development, as it relates to an individual's faith and worldview, is often called the stage of faith ownership. During these years of transition, individuals will consider what they have learned from their parents about faith and worldview and determine if it is the worldview they want for the rest of their lives. Research has shown that teenagers with an encouraging relationship with a mentor/parent will have the support they need to strengthen their worldview. Teenagers will also be more likely to continue to develop in the biblical worldview if their fathers had been consistent in their faith practices and supported their children's development in the biblical worldview.

Scripture makes clear that it is the father's responsibility to train their children in the ways of the Christian faith. Fathers are to instruct their children and guide them in their growth by encouraging them to live in Christ. Fathers should also help their children learn the benefit of being a part of a faith community that can support continued growth. Scripture also explains that if a father fails to take this call to disciple their children seriously, the child may fail to continue in the Christian faith as they experience the challenges and pressures of the world. The primary way a father can equip their children with the biblical worldview is by taking their worldview development seriously as they grow in the love of God, increase in the knowledge of God's word, and happily share their experience of Christ with their children.

Researchers have explained faith development in two primary ways, theory and model, with three predominant stages: childhood, adulthood, and parent. As a theory, faith development is based on an individual's age and potential to achieve certain milestones. Theories of faith development are criticized for their rigidity. As a model, faith development is loosely based on an individual's age while providing some flexibility, allowing for an individual who comes to faith later to begin at an earlier stage. Then, once the necessary development has been achieved, the individual has the potential to progress to the next stage. Research has also shown that teenagers moving into the adulthood stage of faith development, where they are expected to take ownership of their faith, are more likely to do so if they were given a positive example by their parents and were trained in the biblical worldview.

Fathers should instruct their children with a biblical worldview. Scripture provides clear guidance that it is the father's responsibility to train their children in the ways of God and that they are to do so by modeling this faith to their children. Research shows that if a father can

instruct their children and model the biblical worldview, the child is more likely to take their faith development seriously. Also, with the father's positive example, a child transitioning into adulthood will be more likely to take ownership of their faith. However, suppose a father is not prepared to instruct or model the biblical worldview to their children. In that case, an intervention should be made to help these fathers be better prepared to be the spiritual leaders Scripture calls them to be. Fathers should also be trained to handle some objections that might arise when instructing their children in the biblical worldview, such as how to defend the Bible from its critics. Therefore, the purpose of this DMIN action research project will be to develop and implement a program to help men who are not prepared to model or instruct their children in the biblical worldview to gain knowledge and ability.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This DMIN project aims to help fathers develop a more robust biblical worldview so they can mentor their teenagers in that worldview so their teenagers can take ownership of their faith as they grow into young adulthood. The intervention that will be described below will address this purpose by recruiting men who will be trained through a seven-week program that will challenge them to learn about the biblical worldview and participate in some activities throughout the week that will help them to model and mentor this worldview to their teenagers and family as they participate in Christian activities together. The intervention will focus on the participant's learning, which will be supported through reflection, leading, reinforcing, and a second reflection.

Intervention Design

Following the DMIN mentor and Internal Review Board (IRB) approval (see IRB Approval Letter at the end of the thesis), the recruitment process for this DMIN project will begin by July 15, 2023. After the IRB and mentor approve the intervention plan, the DMIN candidate will secure facility use at Asbury Church by requesting permission from the Asbury Church Leadership Team (see Appendixes A and B). Since the focus of this project is to help men with teenagers prepare to develop a robust biblical worldview that will help the teenager be better prepared for taking the step into faith ownership as they prepare for young adulthood, the success of this project will depend on recruiting men (over the age of eighteen) with teenagers. However, research also suggests that individuals who are new to the faith benefit from the

mentoring and guidance of others who are further along in the journey; therefore, men who do not have a teenager at home will be allowed to participate in this action research if they are willing to discuss what they have learned with another individual outside of the research group.

Efforts will be made to begin recruiting members of Asbury Church in the Sunday school classes and the men's group through a personal invitation from the DMIN candidate. As the invitation is extended, information about the project and its purpose will be shared (see Appendix C). This first invitation will be followed up with an email to these men and other men in the congregation who have been identified as men with teenagers. The email will contain information from the handout shared with the previous group. The DMIN candidate plans to include fifteen to twenty men over eighteen as participants in this action research project. If less than fifteen participants are recruited after the first week, a second email will be sent to individuals who have not yet shown interest in participating. If no other interest is shown after the second week of recruitment, the DMIN candidate will call individuals identified within the desired participant group until enough participants are recruited. Once an individual determines that they will participate in the project, they will be given two copies of the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix D), one to complete and turn in to the DMIN candidate and the second for their reference.

Once the participant completes the Informed Consent Form, the DMIN candidate will schedule an introductory interview and orientation with the participant that will last up to thirty minutes. The participant will bring the signed consent form to this meeting and give it to the DMIN candidate. These interviews will begin after the first week of recruitment. The researcher will explain the project's purpose and answer any questions about what is expected of the participant during the seven weeks of the project. The DMIN candidate will also explain to the

participant how the weekly schedule intends to build on the weekly lesson by providing opportunities to learn, reflect, mentor, reinforce, and reflect again on the information learned each week (see Figure 3.1).

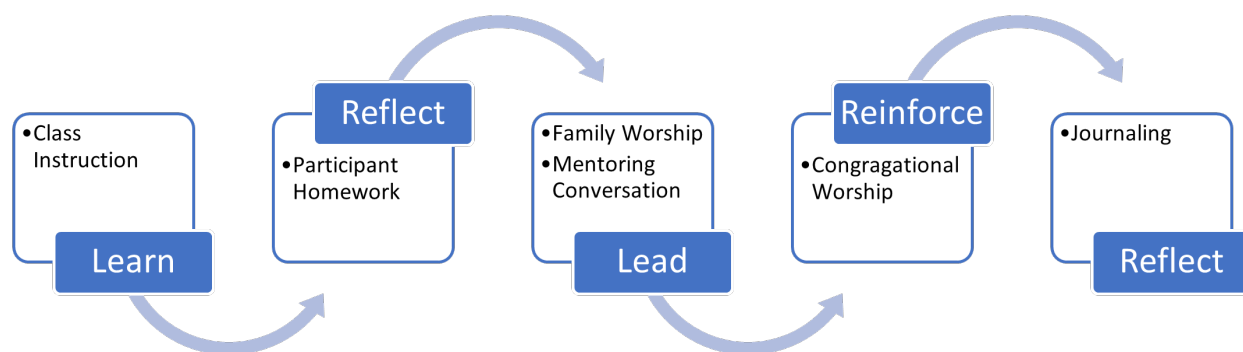


Figure 3.1: The Weekly Process for Participants

During the introductory interview, the DMIN candidate will also ask several questions about the participant's regular habits related to the project's focus (see Appendix E). The DMIN candidate will journal the answers given by the participants for future reference and comparison to any new patterns formed during this project. After the interview, the participant will be given the Pre-Training and Biblical Worldview Assessment Survey (see Appendix F), which the participant will complete and return to the DMIN candidate by the beginning of the first teaching session. This assessment will measure and provide a baseline in four areas of the Christian life (Christian discipline, Christian morality, Christian witness, and Christian community engagement) and provide a baseline on each participant's worldview. The portion of the assessment that will measure marks of the Christian life was developed by the DMIN candidate

during previous research (see Appendix J), while Summit Ministries developed the Biblical Worldview Assessment.¹

The interview and orientation process will take place for each participant up to the start of the training beginning on August 21, 2023. The participant group will meet from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. at Asbury Church in a large classroom in the Family Life Center. The project group will continue to meet for this DMIN project for seven weeks, ending on October 2, 2023. During the weekly gathering, there will be a time of intentional instruction developed by the DMIN candidate to support the project's goal of training men in the biblical worldview so they can lead their teenagers into faith ownership. At the beginning of each training session, the participants will also be given a weekly packet outlining their training and assignments for the upcoming week. Both the weekly training and packet will be designed and written by the DMIN candidate following the outlined training schedule (see Table 3.1). The DMIN candidate will also record an example mentoring conversation with his son (who is eighteen years old) for the participants to have an example of how a mentoring discussion could be held over the topic for that week.

Table 3.1: Seven-Week Training Schedule

Week	Class	Lesson Plan	Assignments
August 21, 2023	Introduction to Stages of Faith, Mentoring Faith in Others, Introduction to Worldview	Willet's Stages of Faith: Childhood, Young Adulthood, & Mature Adulthood. Basic Mentoring. What is a Worldview, and why does it matter?	Study Guide Family Worship Mentoring conversation Attend worship Journal questions

¹ "Summit Ministries," Summit Ministries Worldview Checkup, accessed June 1, 2023, <https://www.summit.org/checkup1/>, used by permission, <https://www.summit.org/copyright-information/>.

August 28, 2023	Biblical Worldview Topic #1 – Creation	Where are We? And Who are We? What was God’s original intention for humanity? Apologetic Focus: Existence of God: Naturalism vs. Theism	Study Guide Family Worship Mentoring conversation Attend worship Journal questions
September 5, 2023 *Tuesday	Biblical Worldview Topic #2 – Fall	What went wrong, and how did it happen? What does this mean for us now? Apologetic Focus: The Possibility of Miracles	Study Guide Family Worship Mentoring conversation Attend worship Journal questions
September 11, 2023	Biblical Worldview Topic #3 – Redemption	What is the solution to our problem? How do we live into this solution? Apologetic Focus: The New Testament as Historically Reliable	Study Guide Family Worship Mentoring conversation Attend worship Journal questions
September 18, 2023	Biblical Worldview Topic #4 – Restoration	What is our hope? How do we live in this hope? Apologetic Focus: Miracles Confirm Jesus is God	Study Guide Family Worship Mentoring conversation Attend worship Journal questions
September 25, 2023	Evaluating Other Worldviews	How the “Big Worldview Questions” are used to understand others and defend faith. Apologetic Focus:	Study Guide Family Worship Mentoring conversation Attend worship Journal questions

		The Case for the Old Testament	
October 2, 2023	Wrap-up	Group Evaluation.	Post-Project Survey

At the beginning of each weekly training session, each participant will be given their weekly packet, including a handout for that week’s training, a take-home Bible study that will provide a way for the men to continue reflecting on the theme for the week, and the weekly journal report which they will complete before the following week (see Appendix I). At the beginning of sessions two through seven, the DMIN candidate will request that the men return the weekly journal report, and a copy of this report designated for the previous week will be attached to the front page of the weekly packet in case the original was left at home. At the end of the weekly time of teaching, the participants will be reminded of their expectations for the upcoming week, which will include leading a family time of worship, completing their weekly study, listening to the example mentoring conversation, holding a conversation with their teenager (or other identified adult), participating in congregational worship, and completing their weekly journal (see Table 3.2). After each weekly session, the DMIN candidate will journal the attendance and any questions asked by the participants while noting any outlying factors that should be remembered at the end of the project to remove potential bias from the findings.

Table 3.2: The Recommended Weekly Schedule

Monday	6 a.m. to 7 a.m. – Participant Group Training
Monday-Tuesday*	Home Study to be Completed Bible Study & Mentoring Demonstration
Tuesday-Wednesday*	Family Worship – Minimum 15 minutes Scripture/Devotion/Prayer
Thursday-Saturday*	Mentoring Conversations with their Teenager or identified Adult

Sunday	Congregational Worship with Family
Sunday	Weekly Reflection Journal
*These activities can occur any day, but this schedule is recommended to maximize learning.	

The last training session (week seven) will serve as a wrap-up and conclusion for the project participants. During this session, the DMIN candidate will answer any questions the participants have about the training and the possible next steps if they want to continue learning about the biblical worldview. The participants will also retake the Pre-Training and Biblical Worldview Assessment Survey (see Appendix F) to determine the progress they have made personally through this project. The participants will also participate in a group evaluation to determine how well the project worked, any weaknesses, and any potential areas of reconsideration if this program were to be used again. The participants will also be asked to complete a questionnaire that will model the pre-training interview questions to determine if they had developed any new faith formation habits and if there was growth in their comfort level in sharing the biblical worldview with others (see Appendix G) as well as a questionnaire that will evaluate the project itself (see Appendix H).

Once the project is completed, the DMIN candidate will collect the Biblical Worldview Assessment Surveys and the Post-training questionnaire to evaluate growth in the participant's ability to identify and articulate the biblical worldview and to determine their comfort in mentoring others in this worldview. The DMIN candidate will also consider his weekly journal entries and the information shared during the group evaluation to determine if any additional information was gleaned during this project that might help future projects in biblical worldview development in men and teenagers. The DMIN candidate will then report his findings and develop the remaining sections of this DMIN Thesis.

Table 3.3: Project Action Steps Overview and Design

Research Project Overview and Design	
Step 1	Mentor and Internal Review Board approval.
Step 2	Secure facility usage at Asbury Church.
Step 3	Record six mentoring sessions with the DMIN candidate's son as an example for the participants.
Step 4	Recruit participants for the project. Beginning July 15, invitations will be made to one Sunday school class and the Men's group at Asbury Church.
Step 5	Recruitment week one – email will be sent to members who have teenagers.
Step 6	Recruitment week two – if fifteen individuals have not agreed to participate, a follow-up email will be sent to members who have not responded.
Step 7	Recruitment week three – if fifteen individuals have not agreed to participate, phone calls will be made to likely participants until fifteen participants agree.
Step 8	Informed Consent Forms are shared with individuals agreeing to participate.
Step 9	Informed Consent Forms are to be collected.
Step 10	Pre-training interviews and Introduction meetings with each participant. These interviews will begin immediately after the first week and continue until completion. They will be concluded before the beginning of the start of the training. These interviews will last up to thirty minutes.
Step 11	Interview responses will be recorded in the DMIN candidate's journal.
Step 12	Biblical Worldview Assessment Survey will be given to each participant during the Pre-Training interview and will be collected by the beginning of the first training session.
Step 13	August 21 to October 2 – Training sessions will be conducted.
Step 14	August 21 to October 2 – Participants will complete their weekly tasks.
Step 15	October 2 – Last training session. This will serve as a wrap-up and group evaluation. The Biblical Worldview Assessment Survey will be given to the participants to determine growth. A Post-Training Questionnaire will also be provided and completed by the participants.
Step 16	Data from the action project will be analyzed.
Step 17	Data from the action project will be reported.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

Having received mentor and IRB approval to begin the intervention step of this project (see last page of thesis for IRB approval), the DMIN candidate started the recruitment process in mid-July 2023. Since the intervention design was thoroughly explained and presented previously, this section will consider the execution of the proposed plan of action. Consideration will first be given to the DMIN candidate's recruitment process, explaining the minor modifications to the pre-training procedures (i.e., the pre-training interview changing to a pre-training questionnaire). Additionally, details of the learning environment will be provided, including an explanation of how the weekly training sessions were recorded. Attention will then be given to the weekly training itself, with a brief description given for each week's emphasis (for a detailed look at the second week of training, see Appendix I). This section will conclude by examining the data collection, evaluation tools for the project, and how data triangulation was handled to prevent bias.

Recruitment Process

Recruiting for the intervention project began as close to the scheduled expected date of July 15, 2023, as possible. Permission for the DMIN candidate to use the facility at Asbury Church and the church's membership roll was requested on July 18, 2023 (see Appendix A), and permission was granted on July 19, 2023 (see Appendix B). The DMIN candidate made the first announcement of the project to the Sunday school class on July 23, 2023. Information about the project was shared with the class, and the recruitment letter (see Appendix C) and the consent forms (see Appendix D) were handed out to the men who would consider participating. Since the men who would be able to participate in the project were also part of the Monday morning men's

group where the project would be carried out, this was the only time that recruitment took place during this Sunday school class.

The second announcement about the start of this project was made on Monday, July 24, 2023, to the men gathered for the Monday morning men's group. Information about the project and its purpose was shared, and consent forms were handed out to each man gathered that morning. Instructions were given to the men that if they were willing to participate, the consent forms would need to be turned in to the DMIN candidate as soon as possible. Having presented information about the project to ten men, recruitment was put on hold for the next week and a half as the DMIN candidate attended a scheduled family vacation.

Once the DMIN candidate returned from vacation, follow-up conversations were made with the men participating in the Monday morning men's group about the project on August 7, 2023. Consent forms were once again handed out to the men who were gathered, and they were reminded that the DMIN candidate would need these forms returned as soon as possible to begin the pre-training interviews with each of the men who would be participating. Several verbal commitments were made at this meeting for those who planned to participate. On Wednesday, August 9, 2023, the DMIN candidate followed up with the ten men who had previously been informed about the project and thirteen other men within the congregation of Asbury Church who fit the project's criteria. The email included the necessary attachments for the men to consider participation in the project, including the recruitment letter, consent form, pre-training interview questions, and the pre-training survey.

Over the next week, consent forms still needed to be submitted. Therefore, on Monday, August 14, 2023, the DMIN candidate discussed the project with the men gathered for the men's group. Once again, these men were reminded that these forms would be necessary to participate

in the training project. Three of the men had their consent forms ready to turn in, and each of these three, along with the other nine, were given the pre-training surveys (see Appendix F) and the form that would be used to complete the pre-training interviews (see Appendix E). Since the project would begin in a week, the DMIN candidate determined that there would not be enough time for individual interviews with each participant and decided to utilize the interview form as a questionnaire instead. Changing the pre-training interview into a questionnaire allowed additional men to be added to the project over the next several days so a larger participant group could be recruited.

On Wednesday, August 16, 2023, the DMIN candidate began following up with the twenty-three men contacted about participating in the project. Many of the men gave reasons why they would be unable to participate, including work travel and their children's activity schedules, and they could not imagine adding anything else to their schedule. Two of the men who were regular participants in the weekly men's group also declined to participate due to their current schedules. The reasons given by several men for not participating in this training project support the information presented in Chapter One of this thesis, and why this problem of men not being involved in the spiritual development of their children needs to be addressed. Five men, who are regular participants of the men's group, committed to participating and said they would bring their consent forms, pre-training surveys, and questionnaires with them on Monday, August 21, 2023. One other individual recruited through email also agreed to participate in the project. He said he would bring a friend from the community who he believed would also benefit from participating in the training. Only ten men agreed to participate by Friday, August 18, 2023, while fourteen others declined.

Hoping to have a minimum of fifteen participants, which would accommodate some men dropping out of the project before its conclusion, the DMIN candidate spent the next two days recruiting men that he knew from the community. Eleven additional men were asked if they would be willing to participate, and the recruitment letter and consent forms were also shared with them. Out of these eleven, five other men agreed to participate in the training project. The DMIN candidate recruited fifteen participants out of the thirty-six men who were informed about the project. Each of the fifteen participants turned in their consent forms by the beginning of the training on August 21, 2023, and all but two of them also turned in the pre-training interview and pre-training surveys by the first day of training. One of the men submitted his pre-training questionnaire and survey by email the day after the first session. The other man never turned in any additional paperwork for the project's duration. Therefore, the official participant count for this project was fourteen. Eleven of the fourteen men who did turn in paperwork have a child at home that they could mentor in the faith, while three identified another adult (or their adult child) whom they would visit with during the training.

Room Setup and Recording of Training

During the seven weeks of the project, a large room in the Family Life Center at Asbury Church was used and set up in the same manner each week (see Figure 3.2). The room included a coffee bar, where fresh coffee was provided weekly, and five eight-foot tables in a horseshoe shape with three cushioned chairs at each Table. The DMIN candidate set up a podium at the end of the tables facing the fifteen men and set up a tripod directly in front of the podium to record the training using the DMIN candidate's iPhone for future reference. The DMIN candidate decided to video record the weekly presentation to allow one participant to begin the training as they were unexpectedly called out of town for work the day before the first session. The weekly

training recordings were filmed so that no individual other than the DMIN candidate could be identified, as they were never on camera.

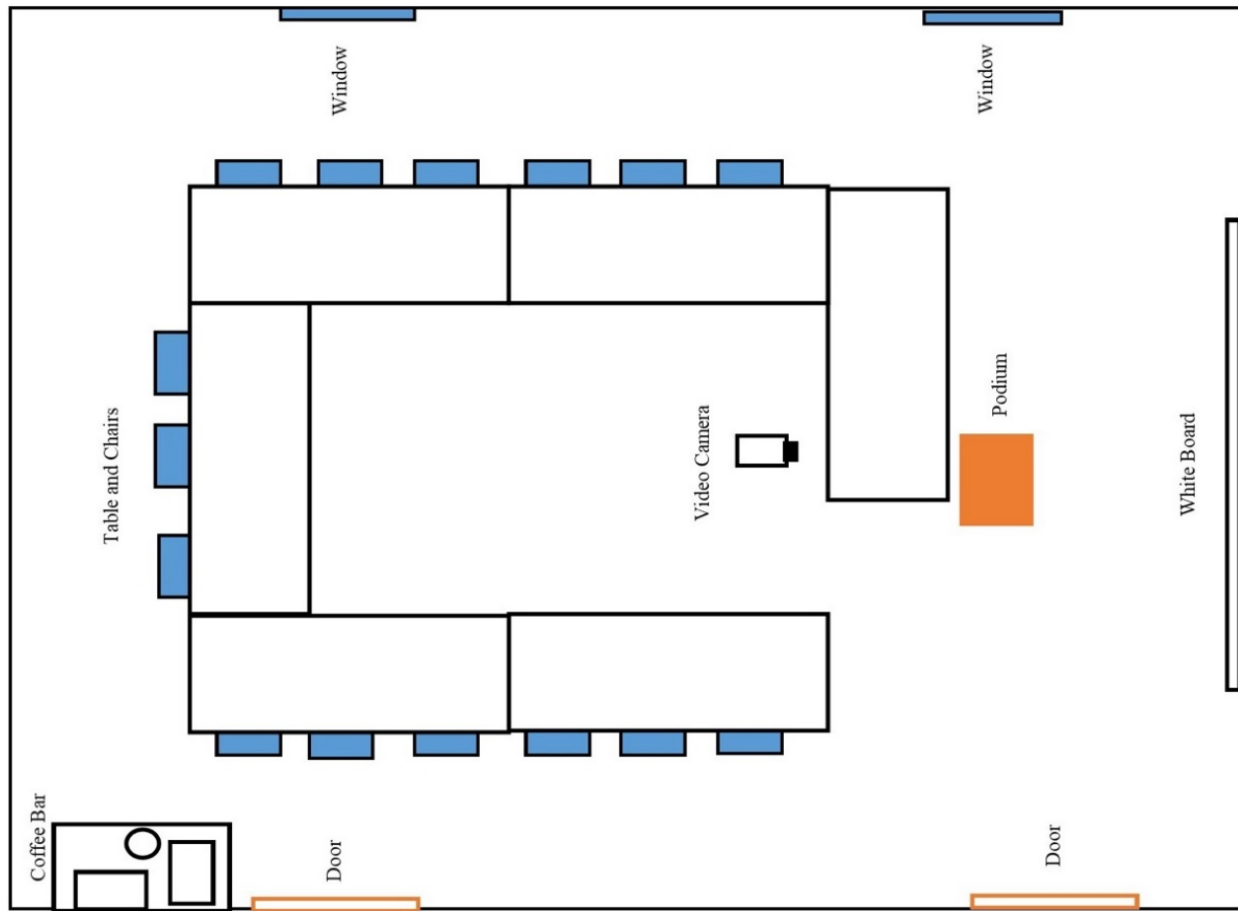


Figure 3.2: Classroom Setup

The DMIN candidate scheduled a weekly ZOOM meeting with his college-aged son on Tuesdays to provide the men in the training project with an example mentoring conversation on the topic presented in class each week. The ZOOM conversation was recorded and uploaded immediately after to a private YouTube channel that the DMIN candidate had set up for this purpose. Each week, the video recording of the training was also uploaded to this private YouTube channel. The project participants were given the access code at the beginning of the project to watch or rewatch the training and view the example conversations between the DMIN

candidate and his son. The access code was also emailed to the participants once a week, along with a copy of the weekly packet and training outline that was handed out on Monday morning.

Weekly Training

Beginning Monday, August 21, 2023, the weekly classes carefully followed the seven-week training schedule in Table 3.1. The training was carried out primarily in lecture style. While an opportunity for discussion was presented several times each week, the participants typically kept the conversation to a few comments. Noticing this trend, the DMIN candidate asked the participants if the training format was helpful, and they reported that it was and that they were grateful for the information and the method in which it was delivered. One participant noted on the project evaluation form that they wished they had entered the discussion more, but knowing only a few of the men, they were more timid than they would have been in a group where they had known more individuals. A second participant stated on their project evaluation form that they were grateful for the weekly handout, which included an outline for the training, as it helped them stay focused early in the day.

During the first week of training, the DMIN candidate prepared the men for the remaining six weeks by describing the training schedule, the weekly handout packet, and the weekly assignments and expectations. The weekly assignments and expectations were explained using Table 3.2, “The Recommended Weekly Schedule.” The purpose of the weekly schedule was reinforced by explaining the intended process of this schedule and sharing information in Figure 3.1, “The Weekly Process for Participants.” A summary of the weekly training is as follows:

- 1.) After the men were introduced to the project and reminded of the expectations for the next several weeks, instruction covered an introduction to the stages of faith development

and the biblical precedent for fathers to nurture their children in the faith. Basic mentoring skills that could help them facilitate conversations with their children (or another adult that they would be working with), and the primary topic of worldview was also discussed, with an explanation of the four questions that worldviews are attempting to answer (i.e., “Who are we?” “Where are we?” “What is wrong?” and “What is the answer?”). The weekly study guide focused on biblical passages that addressed the responsibility of fathers to train their children in the faith.

- 2.) Week two’s training began with a case for the Bible by first addressing the argument for God against the naturalist case of a closed system. The training then continued as God’s creation was examined along with the first two questions of the biblical worldview, “Who are we, and where are we?” It was argued that these questions are answered with a proper understanding of creation. Specifically, humanity was created in the image of God for God’s purposes and was placed in God’s good creation. The weekly study guide focused on biblical passages that addressed the Creation and humanity’s role and responsibility within God’s creation. The men were encouraged to think about a favorite story and describe its beginning.
- 3.) Week three’s training began by continuing the case for the Bible by addressing the possibility of miracles. The training focused on the possibility of miracles by building on the argument for God from the previous week. The biblical worldview was explored as the third question asked by a worldview was addressed, “What went wrong?” This question was answered by the biblical understanding of the Fall and how all of creation was affected by the sin of Adam. The weekly homework examined the Genesis story of the Fall, its repercussions in the lives of Adam and Eve’s children, and the New

Testament's understanding of the Fall and sin, as several passages from Romans were considered. The men were also encouraged to think about their favorite story and describe the problem that is present within the story that must be overcome.

- 4.) Having defended the case for miracles in the previous week's training, week four began with an argument for the New Testament as historically reliable based on the miracle of Jesus's resurrection. Evidence for the resurrection was presented to make this case. The biblical worldview training focused on the first part of the answer to the problem of the Fall and sin discussed in the previous week as the question "What is the solution?" was addressed. The biblical understanding of redemption history was explored, beginning with God's call of Abraham, Moses, and the prophets. It was argued that God's work of redemption was finally completed through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross and that the real gospel is not just about receiving Christ for the forgiveness of sins but also about living the life Christ has called people to live. For homework, the men were encouraged to continue thinking about their favorite story and describe the solution to the problem they had described the week before. They were to consider the struggles and challenges the main character had to overcome to make things right. The men were also challenged to think about portions of Scripture, including Hebrews eleven and First Corinthians fifteen, and how these passages explain God's work in redemption.
- 5.) Training for week five began by continuing the defense of the Bible by investigating the miracles performed by Jesus Christ and how these miracles prove His divinity and support His teaching. The biblical worldview training continued the conversation around the worldview question "What is the solution?" as the biblical teaching on the final restoration was considered. The topic of restoration was reflected upon to help the men

develop an adequate understanding of why sin and brokenness still exist in the world and to discover the hope that Christians have in the second coming of Jesus Christ when everything will be put right once and for all in His eternal kingdom. The homework for the week encouraged the men to consider a new story that they enjoyed and to attempt to answer the worldview questions from the perspective of this story. The biblical passages considered for this assignment had the men reflecting on passages that discussed Christ's second coming, such as Second Peter chapter three and Revelation chapter 21.

- 6.) Having provided a case for the New Testament during the training over the last four weeks, a case for the Old Testament was made based on the teaching of Jesus Christ and His reference and defense of the Old Testament within His teaching as training began on the sixth week. The training that focused on the biblical worldview shifted during training for this week as it began to consider how the biblical worldview can be defended against other worldview systems. Time was given to analyze various worldviews and how they would answer the big questions. The homework for the week encouraged the men to read Paul's letter to the Ephesians and to begin answering the four worldview questions based on this letter.
- 7.) During the last training session, time was spent considering a few extra worldview systems, determining how they would answer the big worldview questions, and looking for how these systems were inconsistent within themselves. The remainder of the time together focused on evaluating the project from the men's perspective and for the men to complete the post-training evaluation tools, including the post-training questionnaire, post-training Marks of a Christian Survey, and Summit Ministries Worldview summary. The post-training questionnaire was slightly modified from the pre-training questionnaire

as most men had misunderstood one of the questions about family worship/devotionals. The men answered the question based on their attendance as a family at community worship. Therefore, question four was divided to reword the question about the average of family worship/devotionals pre-training (Four A), and an additional question was added to ask how often the family was now participating in family worship/devotionals after the training (Four B). A project evaluation questionnaire was also added to help determine how the men experienced the project and to allow them to share feedback less intimidatingly for those more reluctant to speak out during training.

On the last day of the project, three men who had attended the previous six weeks of training could not participate in the final session. One of the men knew they would be out of town and visited with the DMIN candidate on Friday, September 29, 2023, to complete his end-of-training paperwork. The other two men were unexpectedly absent and were given their paperwork that evening. One of these returned their completed evaluations and questionnaires within the next two weeks and returned them to the DMIN candidate; a follow-up email was required to help the second man remember to turn in his forms and documentation, which he did within another week. The other eleven men were present during the final session, completed all the paperwork, and turned it in before they left on the morning of October 2, 2023. Overall, there was a 92.9 percent attendance rate for the entirety of the project.

Data Collection, Evaluation, and Triangulation

Data collection for this project began as candidates were recruited to participate in the training. As the participants were recruited, they were given two copies of the consent form, the pre-training questionnaire, and the pre-training surveys. Once the consent forms were completed and turned in along with the questionnaire and surveys, the DMIN candidate created a folder for

each candidate. The folders were labeled with the expected paperwork to be turned in throughout the project so the candidate could keep each participant's paperwork separate and organized. Once a piece of paperwork was turned in, the DMIN candidate would mark out that expectation to make it easier to see what had and had not been turned in by the participant.

The DMIN candidate examined the pre-training interview questionnaires as they were turned in to determine if anything should be noted about the participant's responses as training began. The DMIN candidate noted that several participants had misunderstood one of the questions about their participation in family devotional/worship time at home. As stated previously, this question was restated at the end of the training to clarify what was being asked originally. Then, an additional question was added to determine if there was any change in the family's pattern of behavior related to the practice of family devotional/worship. The DMIN candidate also noted that most men struggled to describe/explain the biblical worldview briefly. Eight of the men's responses to the question did not pertain to the biblical worldview, five had responses that contained a partial understanding of the biblical worldview, and one had a response that exhibited a proper understanding of the biblical worldview.

Once the surveys were submitted, the DMIN candidate began to score each participant's responses. For the portion of the survey that involved the marks of the Christian faith and practice, the DMIN candidate added their responses and divided them by the proper number as indicated on the score sheet. For the portion that Summit Ministries developed to measure biblical worldview, it had been the DMIN candidates' original intent to have the participants take the test online using Summit's small group biblical worldview survey. A webpage link would be shared with the participants, who would then complete the survey, and the results would be calculated by the webpage and emailed to the DMIN candidate automatically. Unfortunately,

between the time of developing the intervention design to submit for mentor and IRB approval and the beginning of the recruitment, Summit Ministries ended the ability for small groups to utilize the biblical worldview survey in this way. Instead, paper copies of the survey were given to the participants along with the marks of a Christian disciple survey.

To score the biblical worldview surveys, the DMIN candidate utilized the Summit Ministries online survey and recorded everyone's responses to the questions within the online survey form. The DMIN candidate then printed off the results for each participant, which included the percentage of their responses to the Christian worldview as well as other religious and secular worldviews for future reference, and the results were recorded on the summary page along with the results for the survey portion that measured the marks of a Christian disciple. This process became more time-consuming than expected and took a few days to complete to prevent the DMIN candidate from making mistakes upon data entry. There also happened to be a few days extra due to the unavailability of the webpage to enter and score the survey results as the webpage had been taken down. Fortunately, the webpage was made available for the remainder of this project and the evaluation time.

Weekly journal logs were collected at the beginning of each training session, beginning on the second week of training. The weekly participant journal asked the participants to record their participation in the various aspects of the weekly homework, such as their participation in the training, completion of the homework, the family devotional time, congregational worship participation, as well as the opportunity to record any questions that they or the individual that they were mentoring had about the homework or the topic for the week. The information in the weekly participant journal will be used to correlate whether participation in the homework helped to increase a biblical worldview understanding among the participants in the training. The

weekly training logs were also filed in each participant's folder. Eleven of the participants turned in all six of the expected weekly logs, two turned in five, while one who was unexpectedly called out of town for work but watched the weekly videos only submitted two, for 92.8 percent of returned expected logs.

On the last training day, the participants were asked to complete the updated post-training questionnaire, the two surveys they completed at the beginning of the training, and a post-survey evaluation form. The post-training questionnaire will be compared to the original questionnaire to determine if the participants noted any changes in their weekly habits and if they could better summarize the biblical worldview in an open-writing response. As stated, this questionnaire restated a question regarding weekly family devotionals before training. The revised question clarified that family devotionals were home-based worship opportunities, followed up with an additional question to determine if there was a different response after training.

At the beginning of the training, the DMIN candidate scored the two surveys that measured the marks of a Christian disciple and the percentage of biblical worldview (and other worldviews) from the Summit Ministries online survey. The scores for these two surveys were also recorded on a summary sheet marked post-training to compare the pre-training scores with the post-training scores. Every participant submitted these forms even though it took a few weeks to collect them from two who were unexpectedly unable to attend that last training session. The scores from these surveys will also be compared to the questionnaires to determine if those participants who had a change in their biblical worldview scores or an increase in the marks of a Christian disciple had changed their weekly habits and were better able to summarize the biblical worldview in a short answer response.

Even though there was an opportunity to evaluate the project during the last training session, a written evaluation was also given to the participants to complete. The written evaluation allowed the participants to share any feedback they would like to share with the DMIN candidate that they either needed more time to share than was available during the one-hour time or would prefer to communicate privately. The questions on the project evaluation form also allowed the participants to determine how this project had helped them to form new habits for themselves and their families and to provide feedback on details of the project that could be improved upon if this training were to be offered again to a different group of participants. The project evaluation form also provided ways for the participants to reflect on ways that they would be able to maintain some of the positive developments that they would like to keep in their daily and weekly habits.

Tim Sensing explains data triangulation as the ability to collect multiple forms of data that will help the researcher to be able to “measure a single concept or construct” from various angles.² The process of data collection for this project used a form of methodological triangulation identified by Denzin as data collection used multiple sources of information gathered from the participants that could then be used to measure both pre-training and post-training baselines for each participant.³ This approach to data collection addressed the concern for data triangulation by providing multiple ways to collect and measure the progress, development, or regression in the participants' ability to identify, summarize, and articulate the biblical worldview.⁴ By using pre-training questionnaires and surveys, weekly journal logs, and

² Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 72.

³ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

post-training questionnaires and surveys the DMIN candidate has been able to collect several sets of data that will allow for a richer understanding of the success or weakness of this project and will allow for a deeper understanding of the project as a whole, as it is not possible to understand how this project was able to be of benefit for each participant individually.⁵

Conclusion

This section has presented the proposed intervention to train men to identify, summarize, and articulate the biblical worldview to help them teach their children their worldview as they help these children take ownership of the Christian faith for themselves. The proposed intervention conveyed the plan to recruit and evaluate the participants before training, train them, and then reevaluate them after the training. The proposed intervention was submitted to the mentor for approval and then to the IRB for approval. Once the project intervention was approved, the participants' recruitment, evaluation, and training occurred. This section has also considered how the project was carried out based on the proposed plan, and changes and adaptations to the proposed training and evaluation were noted. The process for data collection has also been described. The results from the project will now be considered in the next section.

⁵ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 54.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Collective Results

As this research project aimed to help men articulate and model the biblical worldview, there were several desired outcomes. The first expected outcome was for the participants to understand and articulate the biblical worldview more consistently. This will be identified through the score on the pre- and post-training surveys and pre- and post-training interview questionnaires. The surveys were developed using a Likert scale and other answer selection formats. The questionnaires asked both Likert scale-type questions and provided opportunities for some questions to be answered in a short-answer style. Being structured with Likert scales and short answers, these surveys provide a way for the DMIN candidate to determine if there is growth in the participant's ability to identify and articulate the biblical worldview.

A second desired outcome for this action research project was for the participants to become more successful in modeling for and training their teenagers (or other adults) in the biblical worldview. This desired outcome will be measured in several ways. First, the pre- and post-training surveys will provide a baseline score on the comfort of each participant in sharing their Christian beliefs with others before and after the training. There should be an expected increase in the participant's self-reporting of their comfort in discussing the biblical worldview. Consideration will also be given to other ways that the participants of this project showed growth in other areas that are a part of the Christian life and should be modeled to those disciples are mentoring in the faith, such as discipline, morality, witness, and community engagement.

Likert scale questions were measured from one to seven, with one being the lowest and seven being the highest. The Likert scores were then turned into percentages to allow for comparisons in percentage growth in each of the measured areas. Short answer questions, specifically those that pertained to the participant's ability to summarize the biblical worldview, were given point values based on how the answer addressed the four worldview questions described earlier in this thesis. Zero points were given to an answer that did not address any of the questions, and twenty-five points were given for each worldview question answered in the summary for a maximum of one hundred points/percent total. Therefore, the scores for each participant were measured comparatively, and they were given a percentage that could be evaluated for pre-training and post-training ability to articulate and summarize the biblical worldview. Anonymity for the participants was kept by assigning each participant a random letter from A to N.

Data Analysis

Participant Demographics

The original commitments for participants in the training program consisted of fifteen adult men. Only fourteen submitted the necessary paperwork to participate in the project's data collection. Out of these fourteen men, eight were under forty-five, three were between the ages of forty-six and sixty, and three participants were over sixty-one (see Table 4.1). All the men participating under the age of sixty had a child or teenager at home that they would be able to mentor during the duration of the project. The three men who were over sixty-one were willing to mentor another adult during the duration of the training program. Having fourteen participants, eleven of whom have children at home, will allow for general statements about the

training itself and specific consideration given to the targeted group for the project (men who have children/teenagers at home).

Table 4.1: Study Group Demographics

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>% of Participant Group</i>
<i>Age</i>		
31 to 45	8	57.14
46 to 60	3	21.43
61 to 73	3	21.43
<i>Education</i>		
High School Diploma	1	7.14
Some College or Technical Degree	3	21.43
Bachelor’s Degree	5	35.71
Master’s Degree	2	14.29
Doctoral Degree	3	21.43
<i>Child at Home</i>		
Yes	11	78.57
No	3	21.43

Another item of note is that out of the fourteen men participating in the training program, ten have completed a bachelor’s degree or higher in their education. These ten men with college degrees have children at home, while the other participant with a child at home has completed a technical degree and now serves as a trainer and educator in his profession. While these various degrees are non-theological, this group of men does represent a highly educated population group within the church and community itself and are not typical of the 26.3 percent of the general population of Greenwood, Arkansas, over the age of twenty-five who have achieved a college degree of some sort. In comparison, 92.4 percent have completed high school.¹ While this does not necessarily mean that the men participating in the program would have an

¹ “QuickFacts: Arkansas,” accessed January 9, 2024, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/greenwoodcityarkansas>.

advantage over the general population in completing the program, their education level should be kept in mind as it is not fully representative of the surrounding community.

Quantitative Results of Biblical Worldview Identification

The primary objective of this training program was to help men articulate and summarize a biblical worldview. Therefore, it is necessary to determine if men can first recognize and identify a biblical worldview and then consider whether they can successfully summarize the worldview. Consideration will first be given to the participants' pre- and post-training results of the biblical worldview inventory. Then, their pre- and post-training results of the biblical worldview summary will be considered. Focus will first be given to the results of the entire group of participants and then to the target group of men with children/teenagers at home.

Overall Biblical Worldview Identification Results for All Participants

Cumulative pre-training biblical worldview scores from the Summit Ministries Worldview Survey ranged between fourteen and one hundred percent, with a mean score of 87.43 and a standard deviation of 22.58. Thirty-five point seven percent of the scores were at one hundred percent identification, 85.7 percent were above eighty, one score was at seventy-six percent (7.14 percent of the scores), and one outlier occurred at fourteen percent. Cumulative post-training biblical worldview scores ranged between thirty-five and one hundred percent, with a mean score of 90.07 percent and a standard deviation of 19.02. Fifty percent of the scores were at one hundred percent identification of the biblical worldview, 85.7 percent of the scores remained above the eighty percent mark, one score was sixty-one percent, and one outlier was at thirty-five percent biblical worldview. It should be noted that the sixty-one percent score was originally above the eighty percent mark, while the previous score of seventy-six increased to

one hundred. A comparison of pre-training versus post-training biblical worldview identification scores is provided in Table 4.2, Figure 4.1, and Figure 4.2.

Table 4.2: Pre- vs. Post-Training Biblical Worldview Identification Score Comparisons

(All Participants)

	<i>% Pre-Training</i>	<i>% Post-Training</i>
Mean	87.43	90.07
Median	96	98
Mode	100	100
Range	86	65
Maximum	100	100
Minimum	14	35

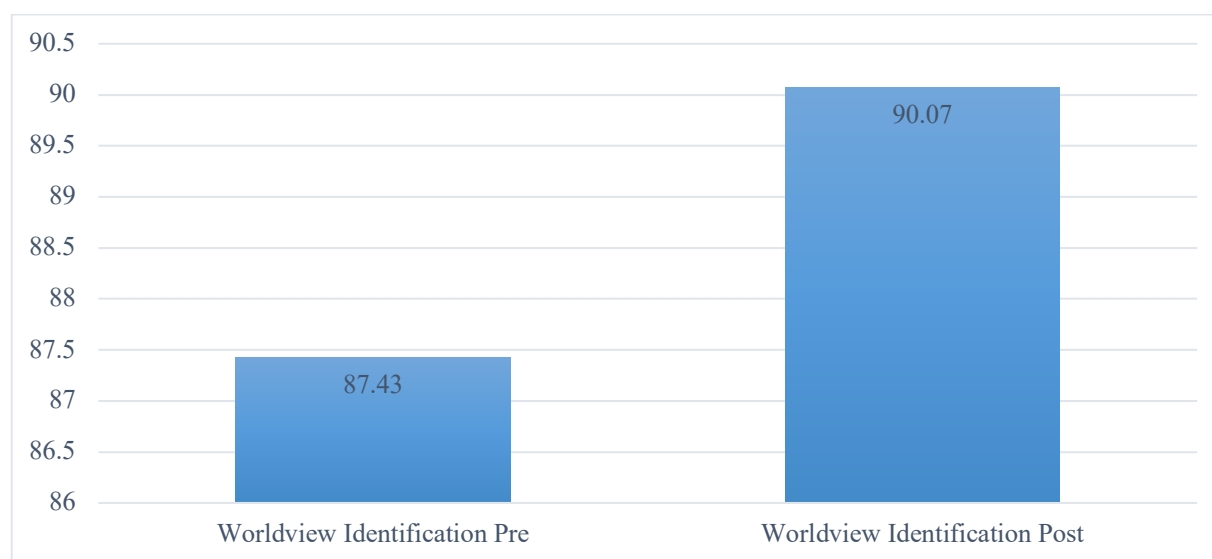


Figure 4.1: Biblical Worldview Identification Mean Scores (All Participants)

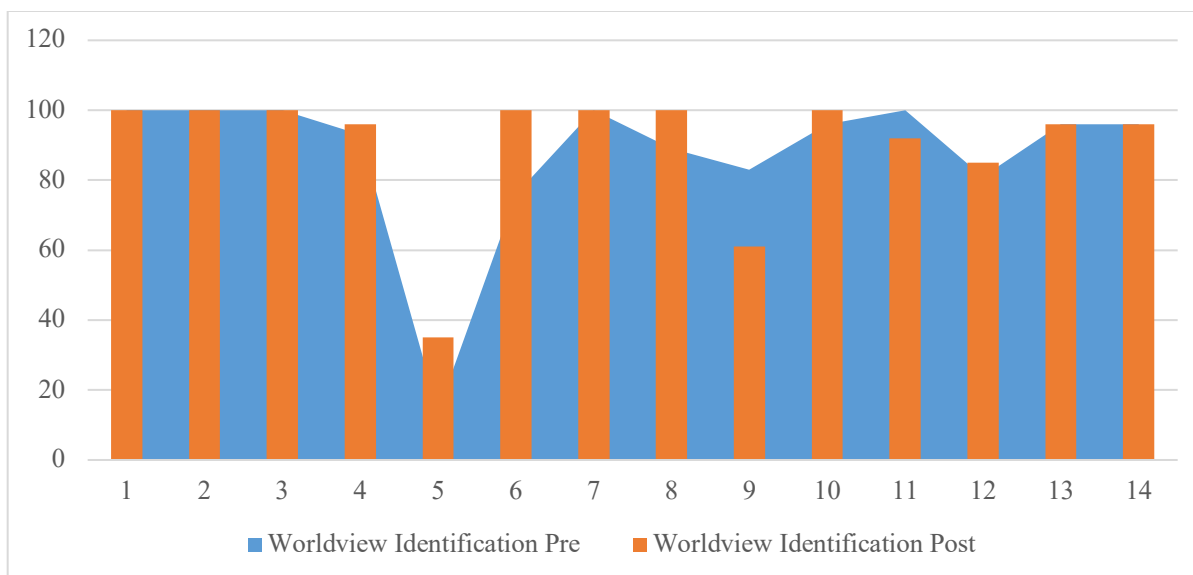


Figure 4.2: Biblical Worldview Identification Individual Scores (All Participants)

Overall Biblical Worldview Identification Results for Target Group

As the purpose of this training program was to help fathers who have teenagers develop their worldview and to help them mentor their children in this worldview, it is helpful to consider this target group of individuals. As previously reported, eleven of the fourteen participants fell within this target group. Cumulative pre-training biblical worldview scores for the target group ranged between fourteen and one hundred percent, with a mean score of 85.36 and a standard deviation of 25.19. Thirty-six point three percent of the scores were at one hundred percent identification, 81.8 percent were above eighty, one score was at seventy-six percent (9.1 percent of the scores), and one outlier occurred at fourteen percent. Cumulative post-training biblical worldview scores ranged between thirty-five and one hundred percent, with a mean score of 88.45 percent and a standard deviation of 21.3. Fifty-four point five percent of the scores were at one hundred percent identification of the biblical worldview, 81.8 percent remained above the eighty percent mark, one score was sixty-one percent, and one outlier was at thirty-five percent biblical worldview. It should continue to be noted that the sixty-one percent score was initially

above the eighty percent mark, while the previous score of seventy-six increased to one hundred.

A comparison of pre-training versus post-training biblical worldview identification scores is provided in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3.

Table 4.3: Pre- vs. Post-Training Biblical Worldview Identification Score Comparisons (Target Group)

	<i>% Pre-Training</i>	<i>% Post-Training</i>
Mean	85.36	88.45
Median	96	100
Mode	100	100
Range	86	65
Maximum	100	100
Minimum	14	35

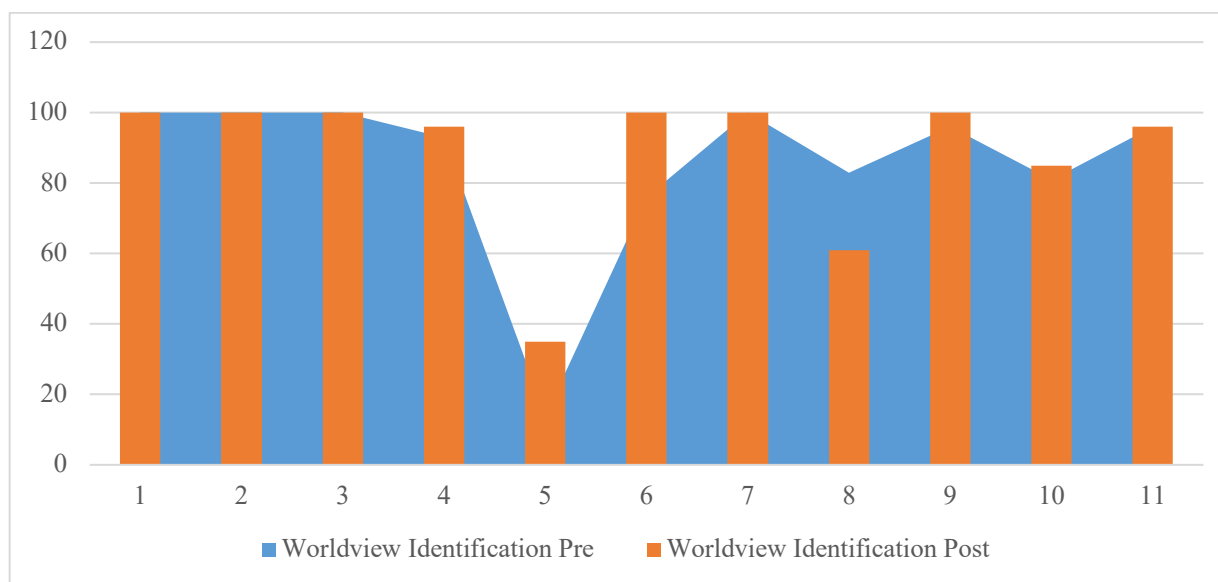


Figure 4.3: Biblical Worldview Identification (Target Group)

Quantitative Results of Biblical Worldview Summary Explanation

Having considered the participant's ability to recognize and identify a biblical worldview before and after the training project, it is necessary to consider how these same participants can summarize and explain the biblical worldview to others. The primary measure for this ability

was based on the final question of the pre-training interview form (see Appendix E) and the post-training questionnaire (see Appendix G). Each participant scored between zero and one hundred based on their biblical worldview summary addressing the four worldview questions discussed in the training. Twenty-five points were given for each worldview question summarized correctly in the participants' responses.

Overall Biblical Worldview Summary Results for All Participants

Cumulative pre-training biblical worldview summary scores ranged between zero and seventy-five percent, with a mean score of 16.1 and a standard deviation of 25.2. As can be seen from the ranged score, no participant scored above seventy-five percent. Instead, unlike the worldview identification score considered in the previous section, 64.3 percent of the participants scored zero on their ability to summarize the biblical worldview. Fourteen point three percent scored twenty-five, and 14.3 percent scored fifty. Only one individual scored a seventy-five on their ability to summarize the biblical worldview. Cumulative post-training biblical worldview summary scores ranged between zero and one hundred percent, with a mean score of 57.1 percent and a standard deviation of 25.2. Fifty percent of the scores were at one hundred percent ability to summarize the biblical worldview. In comparison, 7.1 percent of the scores fell at the seventy-five percent ability level, 7.1 percent fell at the twenty-five percent ability level, and 35.7 percent remained at zero percent ability to summarize the biblical worldview. Only six participants failed to increase their ability to summarize the biblical worldview. A comparison of pre-training versus post-training biblical worldview summary scores is provided in Table 4.4, Figure 4.4, and Figure 4.5.

Table 4.4: Pre- vs. Post-Training Biblical Worldview Summary Score Comparisons (All Participants)

	<i>% Pre-Training</i>	<i>% Post-Training</i>
Mean	16.1	57.1
Median	0	87.5
Mode	0	100
Range	75	100
Maximum	75	100
Minimum	0	0

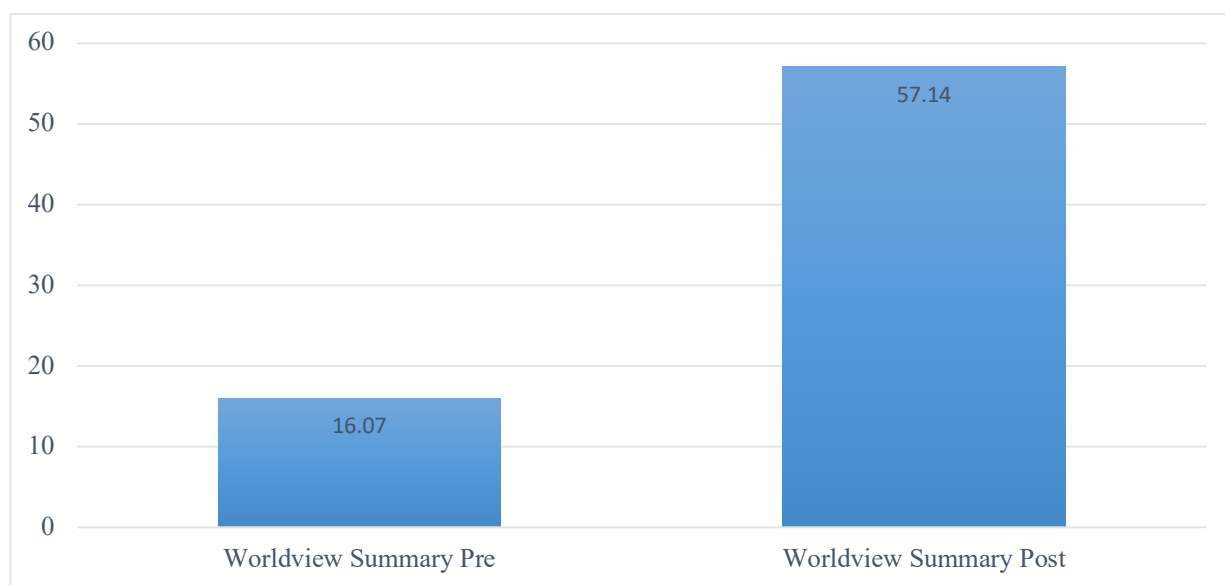


Figure 4.4: Biblical Worldview Summary Mean Scores (All Participants)

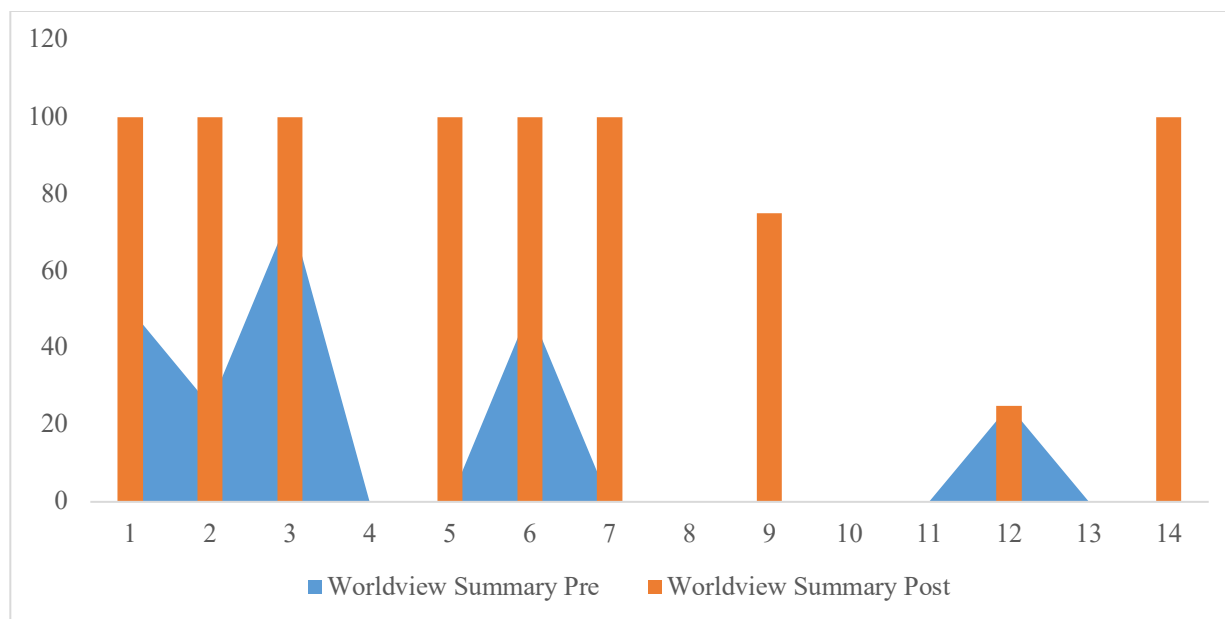


Figure 4.5: Biblical Worldview Summary (All Participants)

Overall Biblical Worldview Summary Results for Target Participants

Cumulative pre-training biblical worldview summary scores for the target participants (participants with children/teenagers at home) continued to range between zero and seventy-five percent, with a mean score of 20.5 and a standard deviation of 26.98. Fifty-four point five percent of the participants scored zero on their ability to summarize the biblical worldview. Eighteen point one percent scored twenty-five, and 18.1 percent also scored fifty. The participant who scored a seventy-five remained in this group and represented 9.1 percent of the targeted participants. Cumulative post-training biblical worldview summary scores ranged between zero and one hundred percent, with a mean score of 72.7 percent and a standard deviation of 42.5. Sixty-three point six percent of the scores were at one hundred percent ability to summarize the biblical worldview.

In comparison, 9.1 percent of the scores fell at the seventy-five percent ability, 9.1 percent fell at the twenty-five percent ability, and 18.2 percent remained at zero percent ability to

summarize the biblical worldview. Only three participants in this group failed to increase their ability to summarize the biblical worldview. In contrast, two participants maintained a score of zero, and one maintained a score of twenty-five. A comparison of pre-training versus post-training biblical worldview summary scores is provided in Table 4.5 and Figure 4.6.

Table 4.5: Pre- vs. Post-Training Biblical Worldview Summary Score Comparisons (Target Group)

	<i>% Pre-Training</i>	<i>% Post-Training</i>
Mean	20.5	72.2
Median	0	100
Mode	0	100
Range	75	100
Maximum	75	100
Minimum	0	0

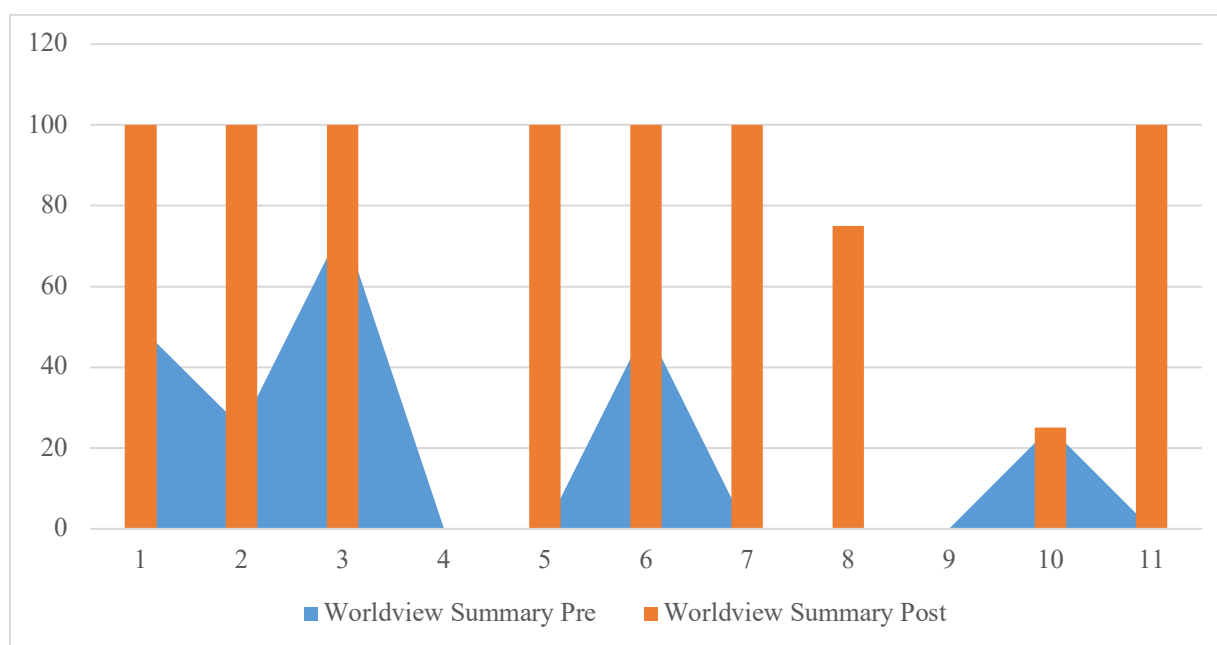


Figure 4.6: Biblical Worldview Summary Score (Target Group)

Quantitative Results of Comfort in Faith-Sharing

A second objective of this training program was to help fathers be more comfortable sharing their faith with their children/teenagers to help their children be prepared to take faith

ownership for themselves as they become young adults. To measure the change in the participants' comfort in sharing their faith, each participant was asked on the Pre-Training Interview and Post-Training Questionnaire to rate their comfort in sharing their faith on a scale of one to seven, with one being not very comfortable and seven being completely comfortable. The score was then turned into a percentage to compare the pre-score and post-score.

Overall Faith-Sharing Comfort Level Results for All Participants

Cumulative pre-training comfort in faith-sharing for all participants ranged between 28.6 and one hundred percent, with a mean score of 77.0 and a standard deviation of 18.2. Fourteen point three percent of the participants scored one hundred, fifty percent over eighty, 85.7 percent scored over seventy percent, and there were two outliers, one at 57.1 percent and one with a percentage of 28.6 comfort level in faith-sharing. Cumulative post-training comfort in faith-sharing scores ranged between 71.4 and one hundred percent, with a mean score of 88.8 percent and a standard deviation of 8.3. Twenty-eight point six percent of the scores were at one hundred percent in their comfort in faith-sharing, while 92.9 percent of the scores fell at 85.7 percent comfort in faith-sharing, and one score fell at 71.4 percent comfort for a total of 7.1 percent of the participants. Every participant but two rated their comfort in sharing their faith higher at the end of the training. One participant could not increase their score as they rated their comfort at the one hundred percent mark for both pre- and post-training, and one other participant who rated themselves at one hundred percent comfort lowered their comfort at the end of the training to a score of 85.7. A comparison of pre-training versus post-training biblical worldview summary scores is provided in Table 4.6, Figure 4.7, and Figure 4.8.

Table 4.6: Pre- vs. Post-Training Comfort in Faith-Sharing Score Comparisons (All Participants)

	<i>% Pre-Training</i>	<i>% Post-Training</i>
Mean	77.0	88.8
Median	82.1	85.7
Mode	85.7	85.7
Range	42.9	28.6
Maximum	100	100
Minimum	57.1	71.4

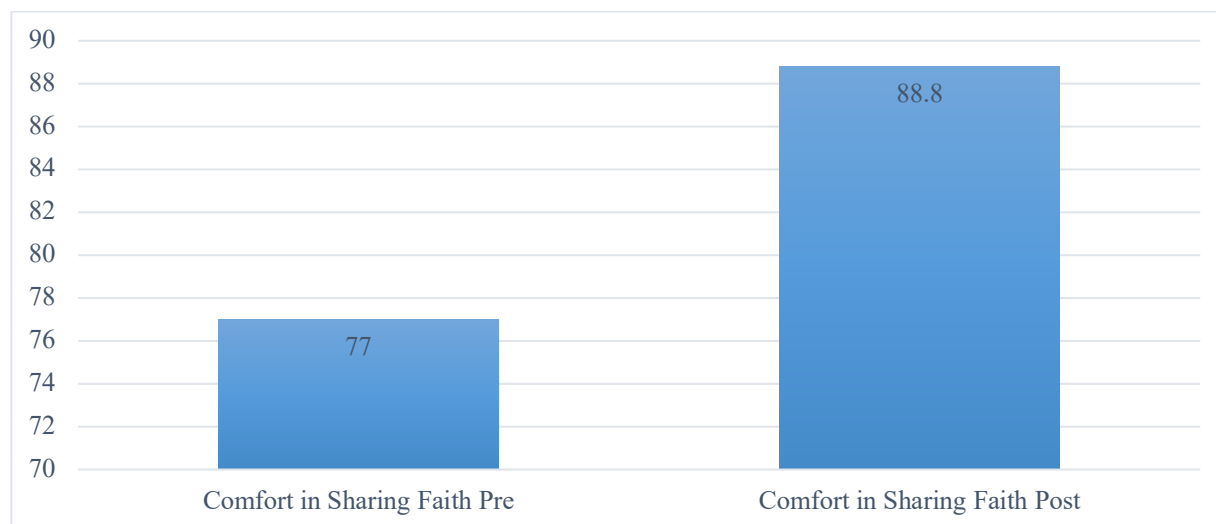


Figure 4.7: Comfort in Faith-Sharing Summary Mean Scores (All Participants)

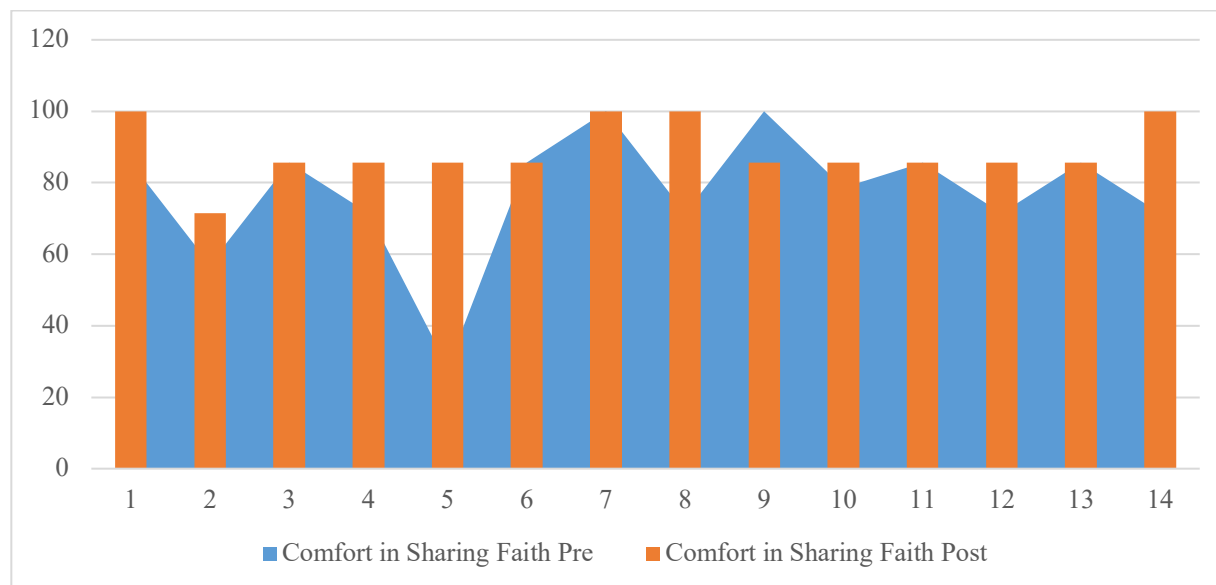


Figure 4.8: Comfort in Faith-Sharing Individual Mean Scores (All Participants)

Overall Faith-Sharing Comfort Level Results for Target Group

For the target group, cumulative pre-training comfort in faith-sharing ranged between 57.1 and one hundred percent, with a mean score of 75.97 and a standard deviation of 20.3. Eighteen point two percent of the participants scored one hundred, 27.2 over eighty percent, 81.8 percent scored over seventy percent, and there was one outlier with a percentage of 28.6 comfort level in faith-sharing. Cumulative post-training comfort in faith-sharing scores ranged between 71.4 and one hundred percent, with a mean score of 88.8 percent and a standard deviation of 8.3. Twenty-eight point six percent of the scores were at one hundred percent in their comfort in faith-sharing, while 64.3 percent of the scores fell at 85.7 percent comfort, and one score fell at 71.4 percent comfort for 7.1 percent of the participants. Since the two participants who did not raise their score fell within the target group, every participant but these two rated their comfort in sharing their faith higher at the end of the training than they did pre-training. A comparison of pre-training versus post-training biblical worldview summary scores is provided in Table 4.7 and Figure 4.9.

Table 4.7: Pre- vs. Post-Training Comfort in Faith-Sharing Score Comparisons (Target Group)

	<i>% Pre-Training</i>	<i>% Post-Training</i>
Mean	75.97	88.3
Median	78.6	85.7
Mode	85.7	85.7
Range	42.86	28.6
Maximum	100	100
Minimum	57.1	71.4

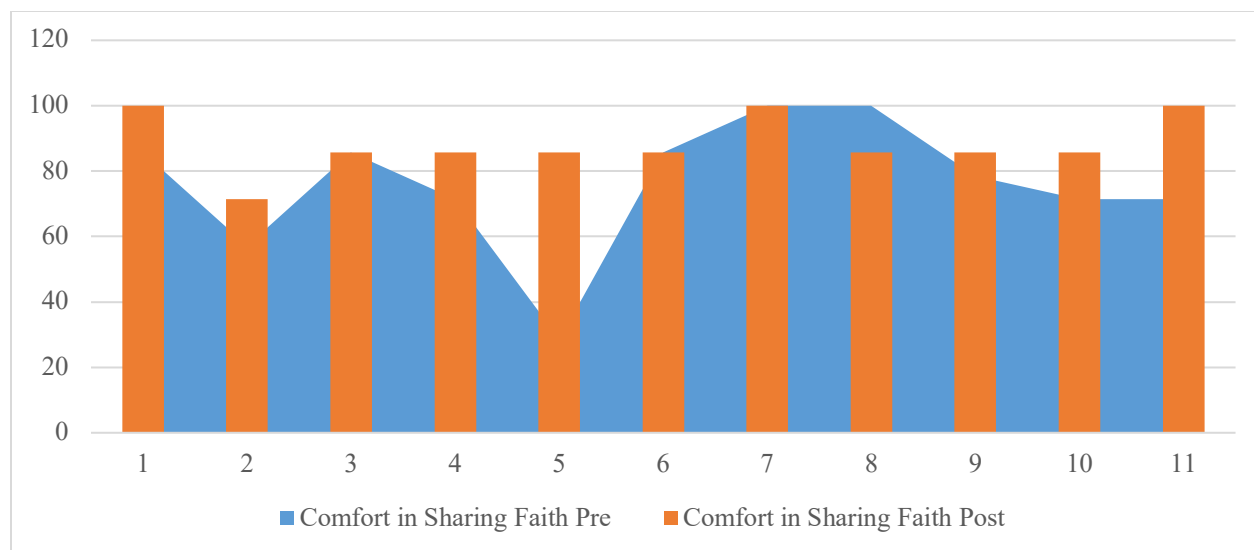


Figure 4.9: Comfort in Faith-Sharing Individual Mean Scores (Target Group)

Quantitative Results of Marks of the Christian Life

As a part of the pre- and post-training information gathering, the participants were given a Likert scale survey (see Appendix F) that measured different areas that should be present in the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ: Christian discipline, Christian morality, Christian Witness, and Christian community engagement. The Likert scale survey consisted of answers rated from zero to four, with zero being “strongly disagree” and four being “strongly agree.” The scores were added for each area and divided by the total number of questions to get the average for each area. For this project, the scores were converted to percentages for easier comparison.

The Mark of Christian Discipline

The portion of the pre- and post-training survey that measured the mark of Christian discipline for each participant focused on how their life was structured around Christian practice and discipline. For fathers to be able to mentor their children in the Christian faith and the biblical worldview, they need to be practitioners of their Christian faith so they can set an example for their children. Cumulative pre-training Christian discipline for all participants

ranged between zero and 78.5 percent, with a mean score of 61.4 and a standard deviation of 19.7. Seventy-eight point six percent scored between sixty to 78.5 percent, 14.3 percent scored near fifty (fifty and 53.5), and one participant scored zero (7.1 percent of the participants). Cumulative post-training Christian discipline scores ranged between 35.8 and 92.8, with a mean score of 72.96 percent and a standard deviation of 14.2. Each participant ranked themselves higher post-training, with 28.6 percent of the scores falling over eighty in Christian discipline. In comparison, fifty percent remained between sixty and seventy-nine, and only two scores remained below sixty (57.3 and 35.8) for 7.1 percent of the participants, respectively. Scores for the target group (men with children at home) were consistent in the range of scores and had a standard deviation of 21.7. A comparison of pre-training versus post-training Christian discipline summary scores is provided in Table 4.8, Figure 4.10, and Figure 4.11.

Table 4.8: Pre- vs. Post-Training Mark in Christian Discipline Score Comparisons

	<i>(All Participants)</i>		<i>(Target Group)</i>	
	<i>% Pre-Training</i>	<i>% Post-Training</i>	<i>% Pre-Training</i>	<i>% Post-Training</i>
Mean	61.3	72.96	59.7	72.4
Median	64.3	73.3	64.3	75.0
Mode	64.3	85.8	64.3	75.0
Range	78.5	57.0	78.5	57.0
Maximum	78.5	92.8	78.5	92.8
Minimum	0	35.8	0	35.8

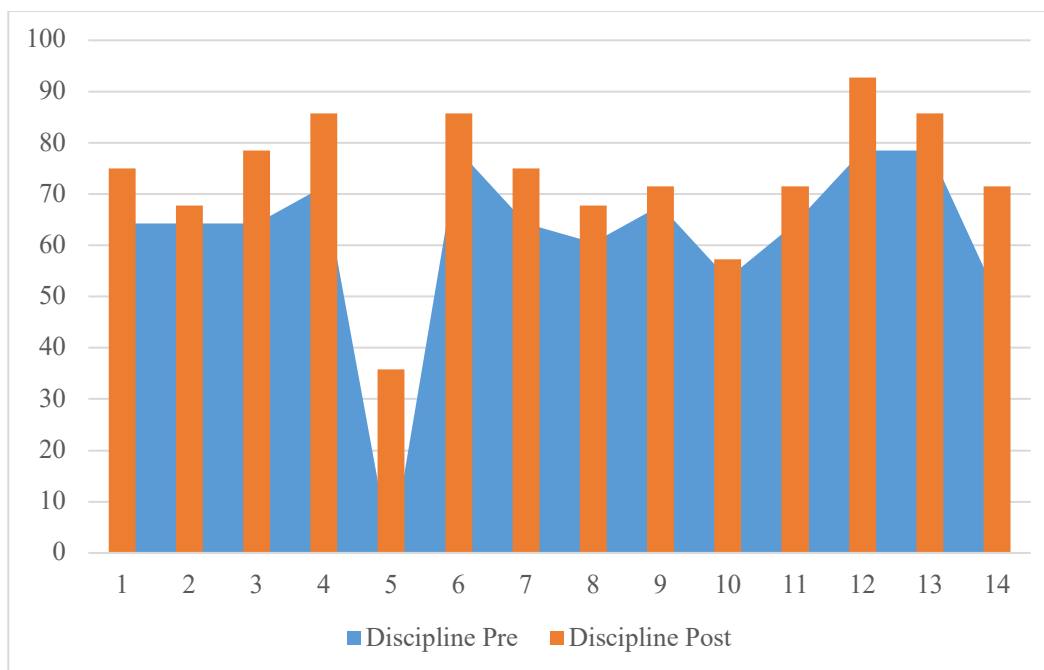


Figure 4.10: Christian Discipline Individual Mean Scores (All Participants)

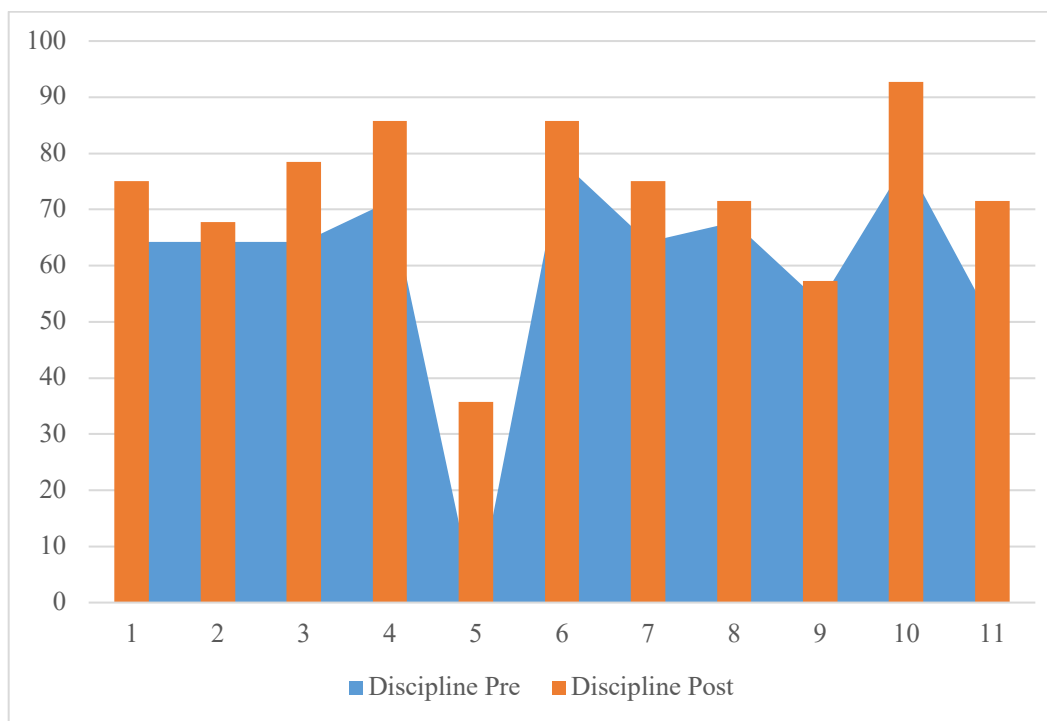


Figure 4.11: Christian Discipline Individual Mean Scores (Target Group)

The Mark of Christian Morality

The portion of the pre- and post-training survey that measured the mark of Christian morality for each participant focused on the way in which the participants use their faith to make life decisions and how they display the marks of the Christian life. Cumulative pre-training Christian morality for all participants ranged between fifty and eighty-nine percent, with a mean score of 70.3 and a standard deviation of 13.3. Twenty-eight point six percent scored over eighty percent, 57.1 percent scored over seventy, 92.9 percent scored over fifty, and one participant scored 44.5 percent (7.1 percent of the participants). Cumulative post-training Christian morality scores ranged between 61.0 and 91.8, with a mean score of 77.2 percent and a standard deviation of 10.8. Eleven of the fourteen participants ranked themselves higher post-training, while three ranked themselves with a lower score. However, every score was over the sixty percent mark, with 35.7 percent of the scores falling over eighty in Christian morality, 35.7 percent between seventy and seventy-nine, and 28.6 percent between sixty and 69.5. Scores for the target group (men with children at home) were consistent in the range of scores for the entire group. A comparison of pre-training versus post-training Christian morality summary scores is provided in Table 4.9, Figure 4.12, and Figure 4.13.

Table 4.9: Pre- vs. Post-Training Mark in Christian Morality Score Comparisons

	<i>(All Participants)</i>		<i>(Target Group)</i>	
	<i>% Pre-Training</i>	<i>% Post-Training</i>	<i>% Pre-Training</i>	<i>% Post-Training</i>
Mean	70.3	77.2	69.7	78.3
Median	72.3	73.6	72.3	72.3
Mode	72.3	72.3	72.3	72.3
Range	57.0	39.0	38.8	30.8
Maximum	92.75	100	83.3	91.8
Minimum	44.5	61.0	44.5	61

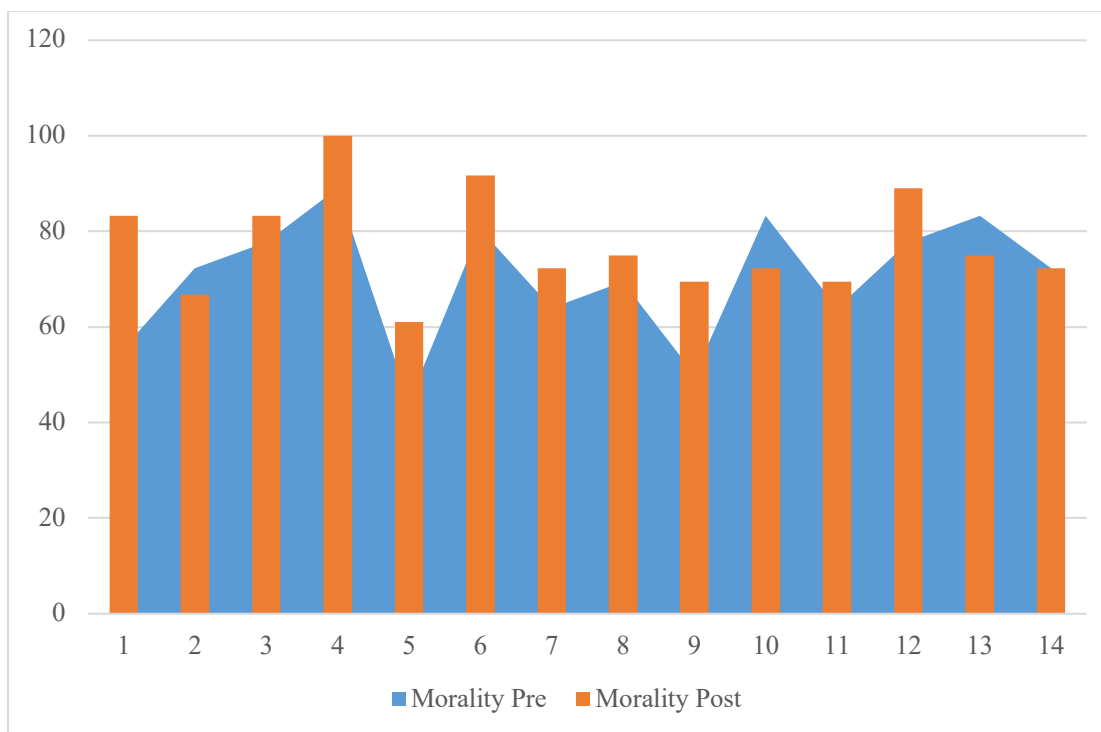


Figure 4.12: Christian Morality Individual Scores (All Participants)

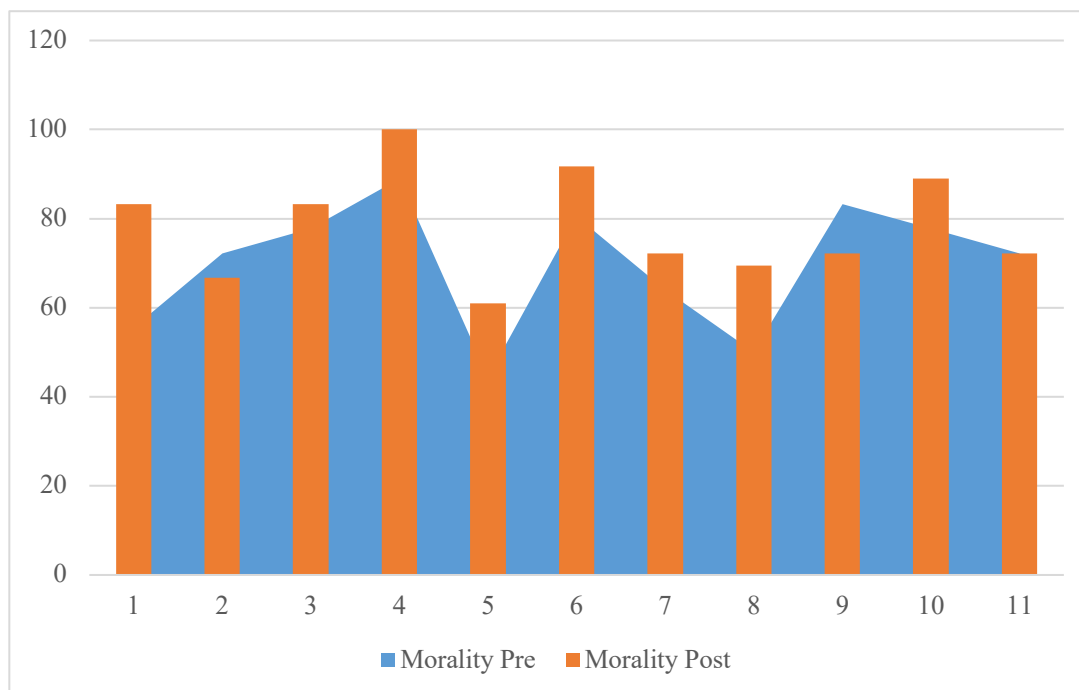


Figure 4.13: Christian Morality Individual Scores (Target Group)

The Mark of Christian Witness

The portion of the pre- and post-training survey that measured the mark of Christian witness for each participant focused on how the participants shared their faith with others. Cumulative pre-training Christian witness scores for all participants ranged between 2.8 and 91.8 percent, with a mean score of 58.7 and a standard deviation of 24.4. Twenty-one point four percent scored over eighty, 35.7 percent scored between sixty and seventy-nine, 21.4 percent scored between fifty and fifty-nine, and the final three scores were thirty-nine, twenty-five, and 2.8, representing 7.1 percent of the participants each. Cumulative post-training Christian witness scores ranged between 16.8 and 97.3, with a mean score of 63.7 percent and a standard deviation of 24.18. Three participants lowered their scores on the post-training survey between 5.5 and 11.5, while one lowered his score by 22.3 percent. Scores for the target group (men with children at home) were consistent in the range of scores for the entire group; however, there is a significant change overall when only the target group is considered, which will be discussed in detail later in the thesis. A comparison of pre-training versus post-training Christian witness summary scores is provided in Table 4.10, Figure 4.14, and Figure 4.15.

Table 4.10: Pre- vs. Post-Training Mark in Christian Witness Score Comparisons

	<i>(All Participants)</i>		<i>(Target Group)</i>	
	<i>% Pre-Training</i>	<i>% Post-Training</i>	<i>% Pre-Training</i>	<i>% Post-Training</i>
Mean	58.7	63.7	56.6	65.2
Median	63.9	65.4	61.0	72.3
Mode	69.5	N/A	69.5	N/A
Range	89	80.5	66.8	52.8
Maximum	91.8	97.3	91.8	97.3
Minimum	2.8	16.8	25.0	44.5

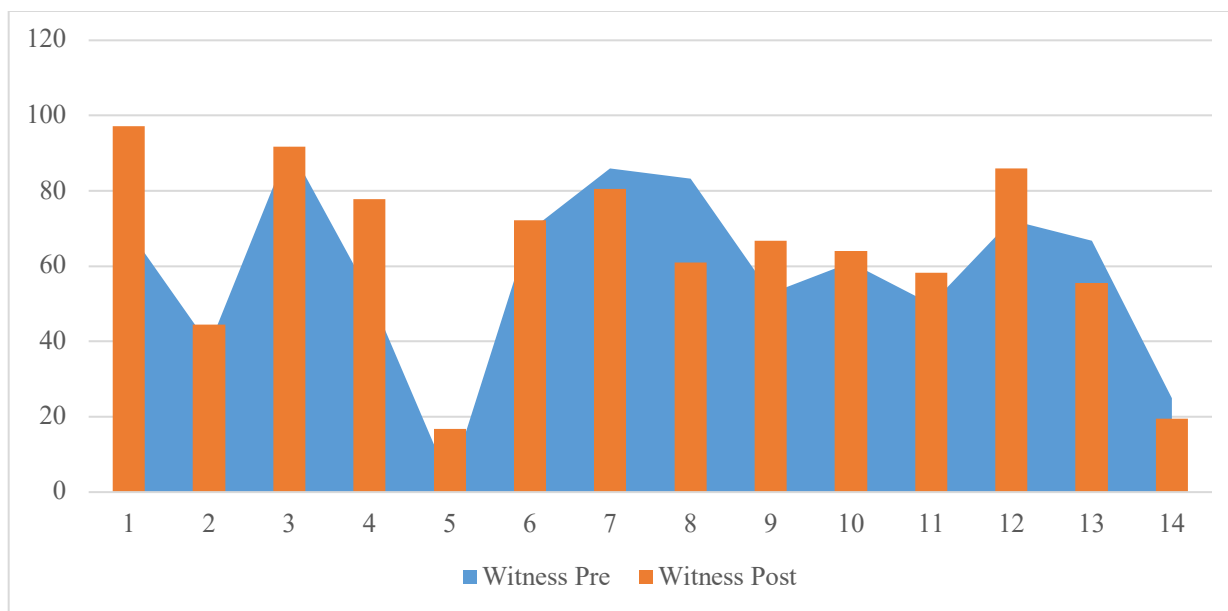


Figure 4.14: Christian Witness Individual Scores (All Participants)

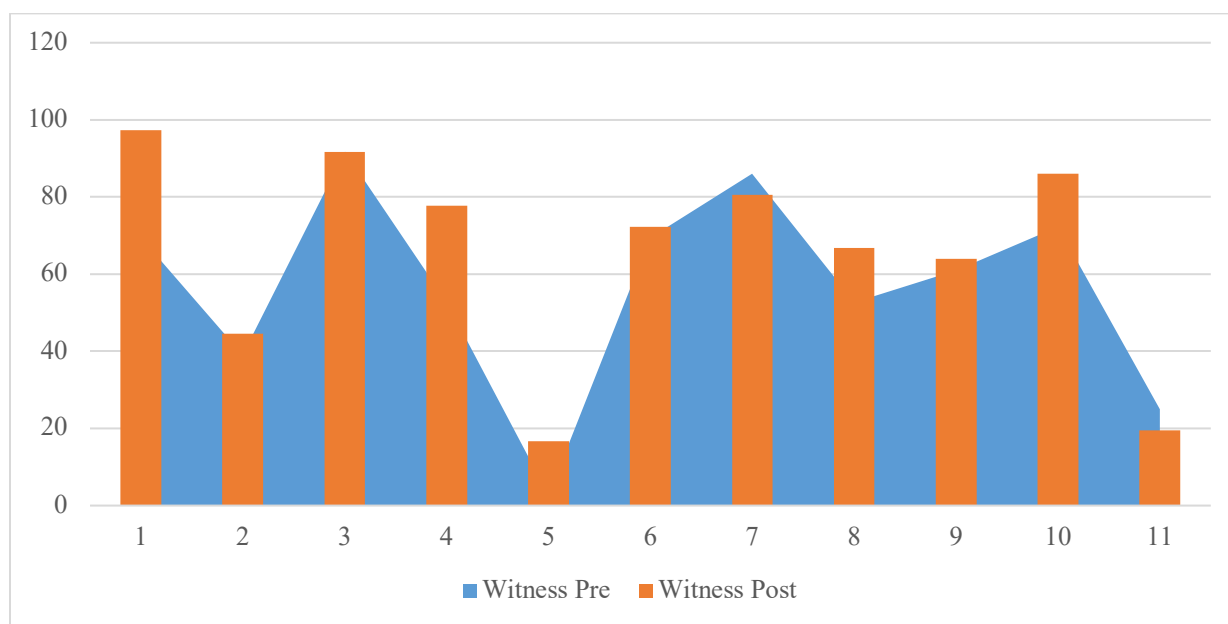


Figure 4.15: Christian Witness Individual Scores (Target Group)

The Mark of Christian Community Engagement

The final mark of the Christian life measured by the pre- and post-training survey was the mark of Christian community engagement. The mark of community engagement considered ways in which the participants prioritized participation in a Christian community, as this aspect

of the faith is essential for all believers (Heb 10:25). Cumulative pre-training Christian community engagement scores for all participants ranged between fourteen and 92.7 percent, with a mean score of 73.7 and a standard deviation of 22.9. Fifty-seven point one percent scored over eighty, 35.7 percent scored between fifty and seventy-nine, and one outlier of fourteen represented 7.1 percent of the participants. Cumulative post-training Christian community engagement scores ranged between 53.5 and one hundred, with a mean score of 81.1 percent and a standard deviation of 16.7. Fifty percent of the participants scored over eighty, and fifty percent scored between 53.5 and 78.5. Scores for the target group (men with children at home) were consistent in the range of scores for the entire group. A comparison of pre-training versus post-training Christian witness summary scores is provided in Table 4.11, Figure 4.16, and Figure 4.17.

Table 4.11: Pre- vs. Post-Training Mark in Community Engagement Score Comparisons

	<i>(All Participants)</i>		<i>(Target Group)</i>	
	<i>% Pre-Training</i>	<i>% Post-Training</i>	<i>% Pre-Training</i>	<i>% Post-Training</i>
Mean	73.7	81.1	73.3	83.4
Median	82.3	83.9	82.25	89.3
Mode	82.3	100	92.8	100
Range	82.5	46.5	78.8	46.5
Maximum	96.5	100	92.8	100
Minimum	14.0	53.5	14.0	53.5

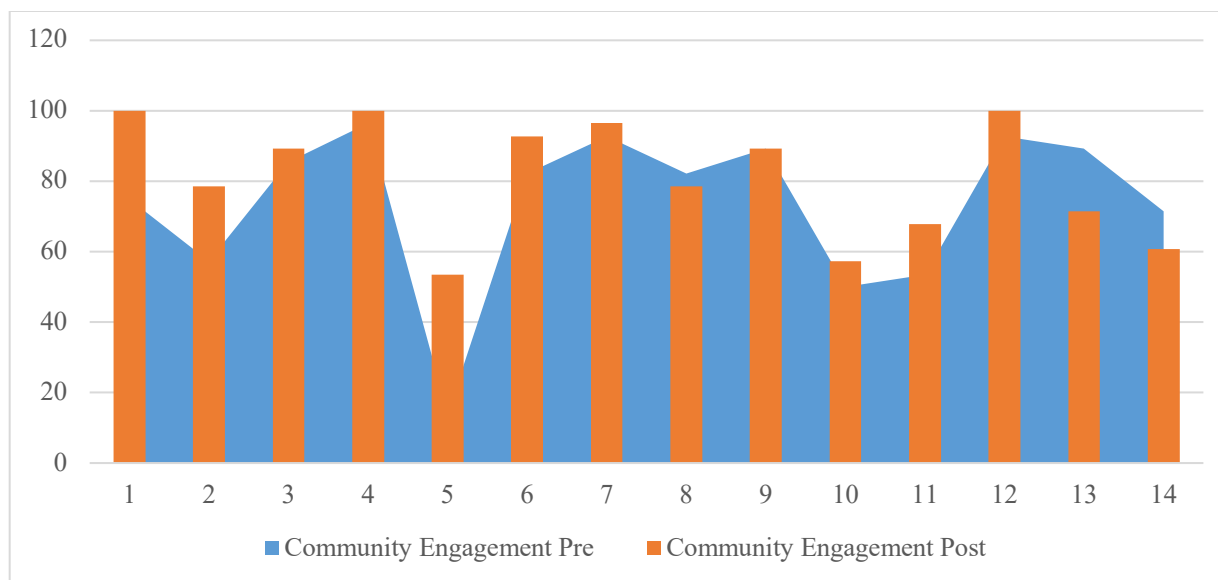


Figure 4.16: Christian Community Engagement Individual Scores (All Participants)

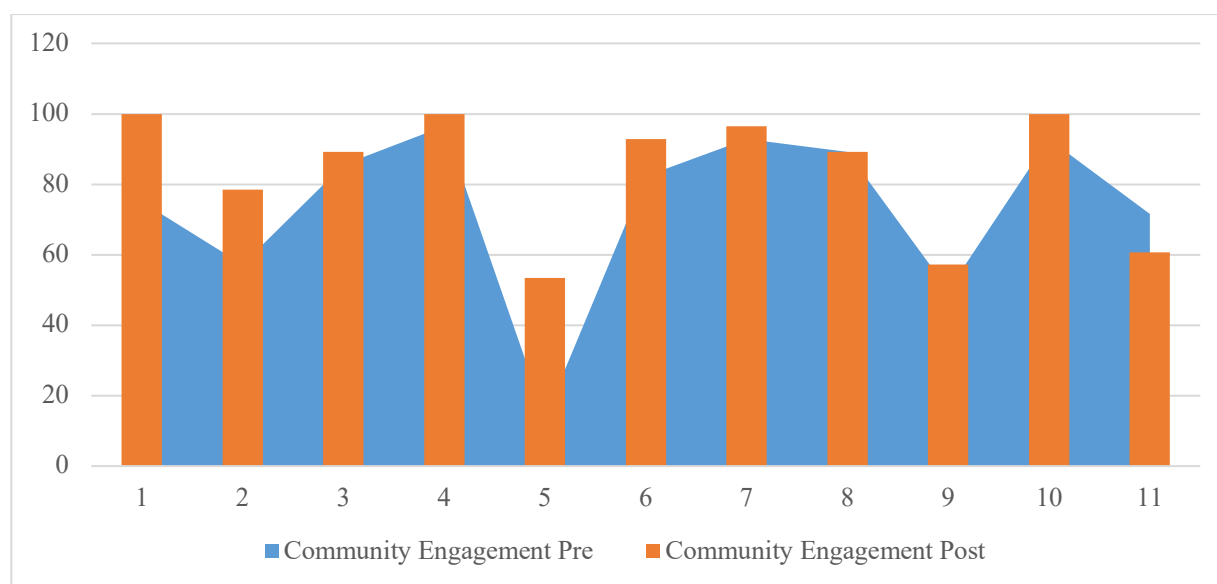


Figure 4.17: Christian Community Engagement Individual Scores (Target Group)

Average Growth and T-Test Results

Having considered seven individual pre-training and post-training areas of measurement, it is now possible to consider these areas together. This section will consider average growth in these several areas for the entire participant group and compare those in the target group. Having converted all scores into percentages, looking at the t-test data for these seven areas is also

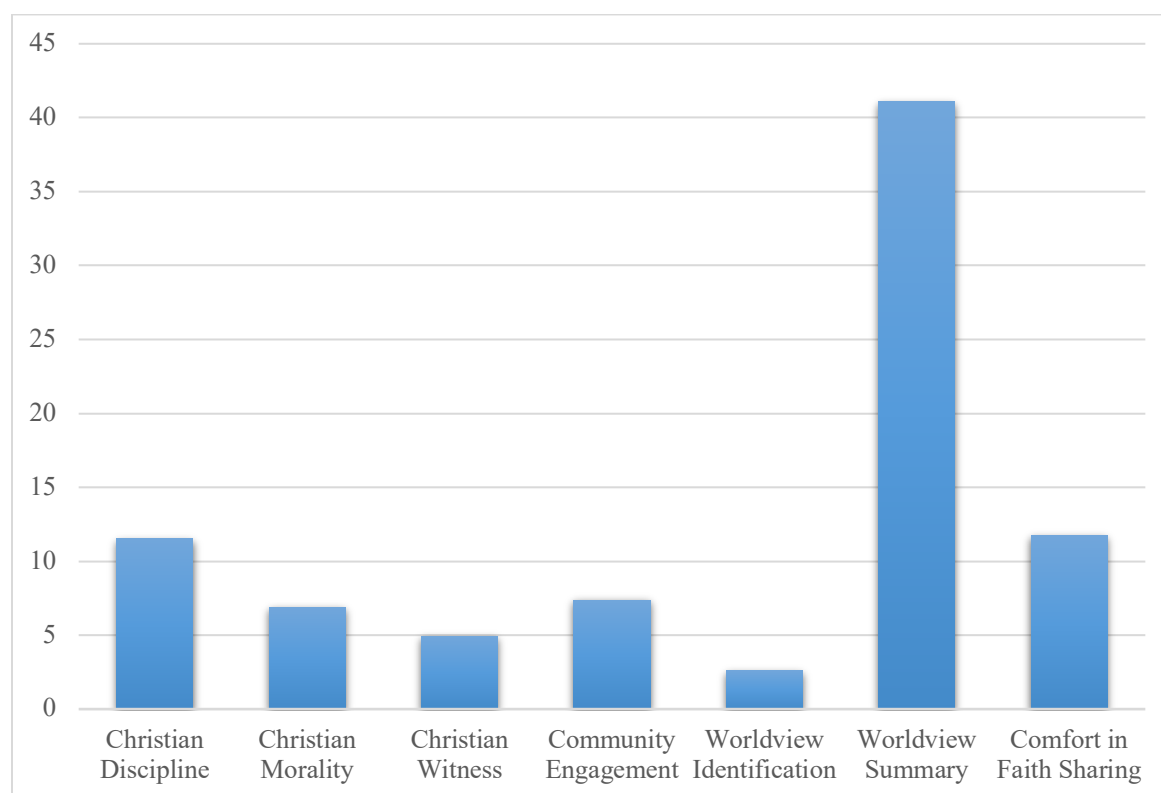
possible. T-test scores will also be considered for the entire participant group, as well as for the target group itself. As was mentioned in the section that considered the scores from the mark of Christian witness, it is in the targeted group that the most significant change from the entire group to the targeted group can be observed.

Average Growth in All Measured Areas

Considering the average pre-training scores and the average post-training scores for all the participants, growth was exhibited in each of the measured areas. For the entire group of participants, the most average growth was found in the participant's ability to summarize the biblical worldview for 41.07 percent growth, while the least amount of growth was found in the participant's ability to identify the biblical worldview for 2.64 percent growth. Growth was found in the measure of Christian witness at 4.96 percent, Christian morality at 6.94 percent, Christian engagement at 7.41 percent, Christian discipline at 11.53 percent, and comfort in faith-sharing at 11.73 percent. Average growth in the target group followed a similar pattern, with biblical worldview summarization remaining the largest area of growth for a total of 52.27 percent and biblical worldview identification at 3.09 percent. Growth was also found in the other five areas: Christian morality at 8.59 percent, Christian Witness at 8.61, Christian engagement at 10.09 percent, Comfort in faith-sharing at 12.34 percent, and Christian discipline at 12.70 percent. A comparison of growth averages between the entire group as well as the target group can be seen in Table 4.12, Figure 4.18, and Figure 4.19.

Table 4.12: Pre- vs. Post-Training Average Growth Comparisons

	<i>% All Participants</i>	<i>% Target Group</i>
Christian Discipline	11.53	12.70
Christian Morality	6.94	8.59
Christian Witness	4.96	8.61
Christian Engagement	7.41	10.09
Worldview Identification	2.64	3.09
Worldview Summarization	41.07	52.27
Comfort in Faith-Sharing	11.73	12.34

**Figure 4.18: Average Growth in Measured Areas (All Participants)**

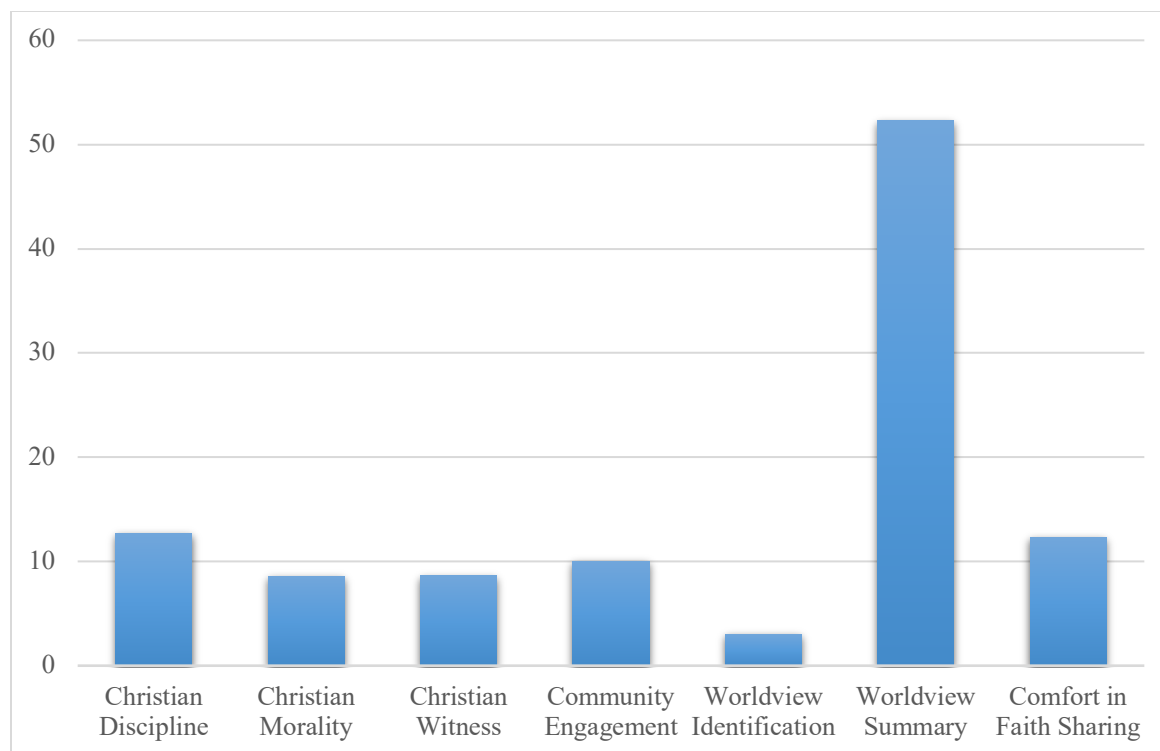


Figure 4.19: Average Growth in Measured Areas (Target Group)

T-Test Results

As the sample size of participants was fourteen for the entire participant group and eleven for the target group, it was possible to run a t-test to determine if the post-training scores were statistically significant. For these t-tests, a paired sample was used because the same people produced the pre-training and post-training scores. As the directionality of the desired outcome was predicted, a significance level of five percent was used. Using a paired sample with a significance level of five percent, if the t-test score is below the five percent threshold, it should be considered statistically significant.

Five completed t-tests for the entire participant group were found to be significant, including Christian discipline, Christian morality, Christian engagement, worldview summarization, and comfort in faith-sharing. For the entire participant group, two areas of growth, Christian witness and worldview identification, were not significant. The number of

significant paired scores increased as consideration was given specifically to the target group (men with children living at home) as the average growth in Christian witness was also statistically significant for the target group, leaving only worldview identification as not statistically significant. A comparison of the t-test scores can be seen in Table 4.13, Figure 4.20, and Figure 4.21.

Table 4.13: Pre- vs. Post-Training T-Test Comparisons

	<i>All Participants</i>	<i>Target Group</i>
Christian Discipline	0.0001	0.0006
Christian Morality	0.0154	0.0141
Christian Witness	0.0986	0.0147
Christian Engagement	0.0399	0.0176
Worldview Identification	0.1965	0.2062
Worldview Summarization	0.0015	0.0009
Comfort in Faith-Sharing	0.0135	0.0265

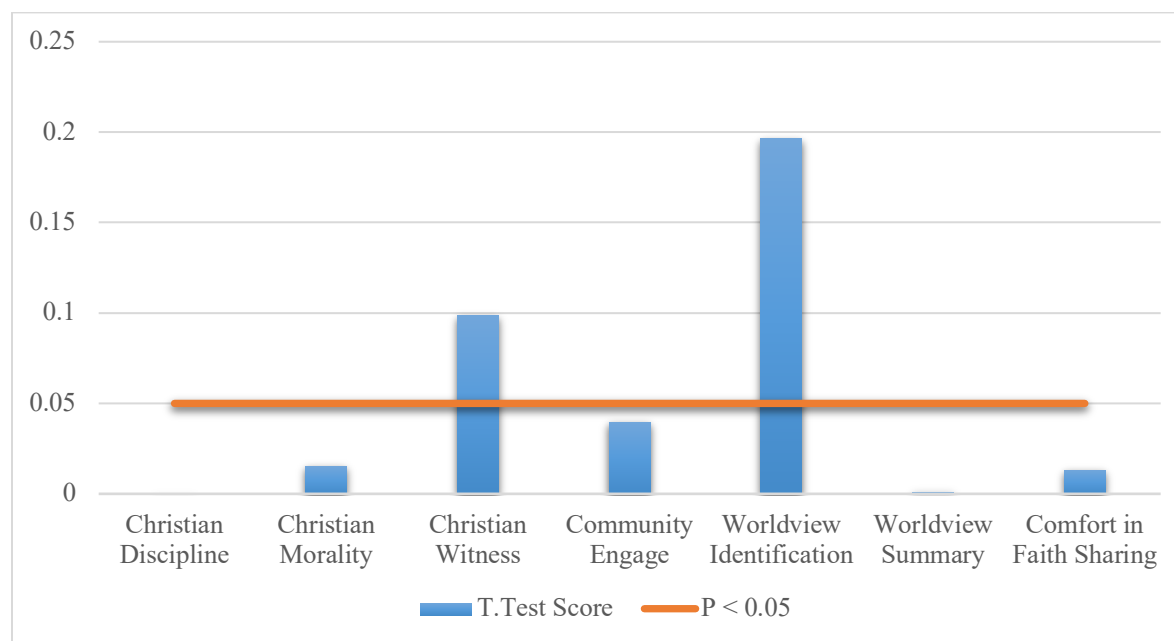


Figure 4.20: T-Test Scores in Measured Areas (All Participants)

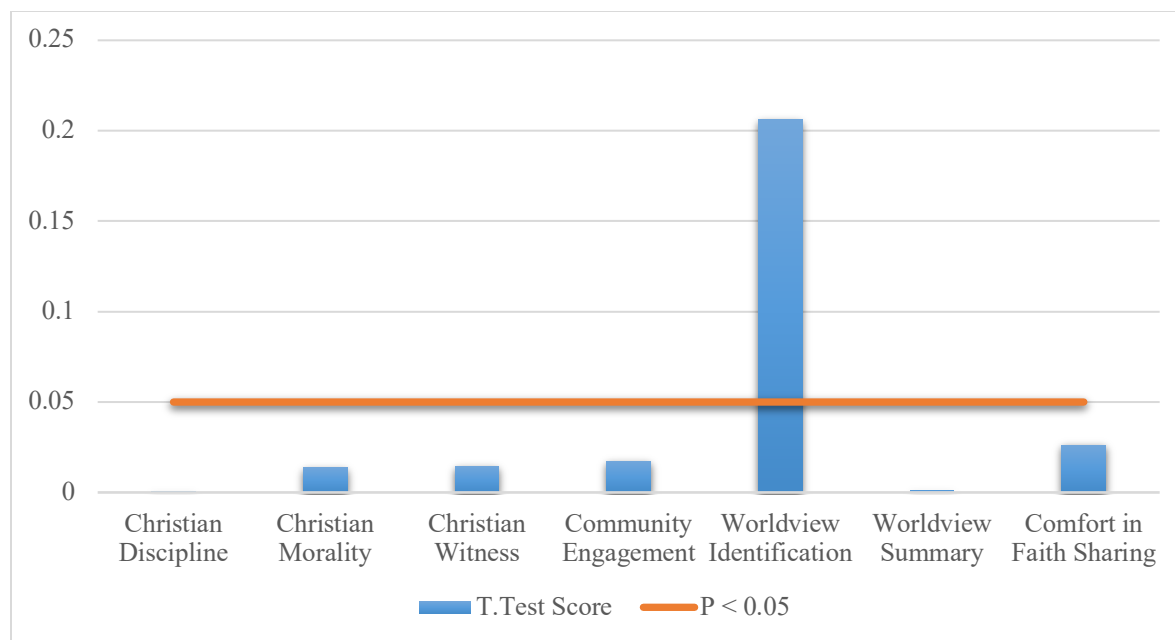


Figure 4.21: T-Test Scores in Measured Areas (Target Group)

Summary of Results

Several things should be taken into consideration based on the results of this training program. First, even though there was an increase in the average biblical worldview identification score of the entire participant group and the target group, this improvement was not statistically significant based on the t-test results. Secondly, the results of this training program show that both the entire group and the target group improved their ability to summarize the biblical worldview and that this improvement was statistically significant. Understanding that the participants could identify the biblical worldview pre-training but not summarize the biblical worldview successfully, it could be viewed that one of the primary objectives of this thesis was accomplished in helping men to be better prepared to articulate the biblical worldview to their children so that their children could be prepared to take faith ownership for themselves as they move into young adulthood.

The marks of the Christian life were also measured as a part of this project. The results from the pre-training and post-training surveys show that there was also an increase in the four areas measured: discipline, morality, witness, and community engagement. While the increase for three areas (discipline, morality, and community engagement) was statistically significant for the entire group, the fourth area (witness) also became statistically significant when the target group was separated. The increase in these areas was potentially due to the participant's participation in the weekly training and the requirement to record their weekly progress. One participant stated on their project evaluation survey (see Appendix H) that knowing that they would have to report their weekly progress made it more likely that they would attend worship that week due to the accountability the weekly journal required. As the participants attended the weekly training, completed the homework, attended worship, and led individuals through a mentoring conversation, they were also participating more frequently in the behaviors measured in the marks of the Christian life survey; therefore, by participating in the project, it should have been predicted that the participants should have increased their scores in these areas.

Finally, the second purpose of this training program was to help the participants become more comfortable sharing their faith with their children to help them be prepared to take ownership of their Christian faith. The data analysis findings for this project show a statistically significant increase in the participants' (both the entire group and the target group) comfort in faith-sharing, as measured through the pre-training and post-training interview questions. As the training helped the men increase their ability to summarize the biblical worldview, the weekly practice of leading a conversation with another individual helped them become more comfortable in carrying out a faith-based conversation and leading someone else in learning about the biblical worldview. Therefore, the two primary objectives of this training program were met as the

participants became better able to summarize the biblical worldview and increased their comfort in modeling and mentoring their children/teenagers in the biblical worldview. More consideration will be given to the implications of these findings in the next chapter, as well as the possible applications of this project.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This DMIN project considered the growing problem at Asbury Church: families are being pulled from the church due to various activities, which has led to an increase in the number of teenagers who are not remaining in the church or living out their faith once they leave home. The thesis considered one of the contributors to this problem: fathers not mentoring their children in the biblical worldview so their children will be prepared for faith ownership as they become young adults. It was proposed that fathers have struggled to perform the biblical responsibility of raising their children in the faith because they need to familiarize themselves with the biblical worldview enough to be comfortable sharing it with their children. While not considered in this thesis, it could be argued that fathers have become less able to explain and defend the biblical worldview because their fathers (and families of origin) were less likely than the generation before them to practice the Christian faith regularly, paired with current social norms has led to each successive generation from returning to church later in life.¹

As identified in this project, the biblical worldview addresses four basic questions of life, “Who are we, where are we, what is the problem, and what is the answer?” The answers to these questions provide a framework for an individual’s life that will guide their decisions and behaviors. If an individual’s worldview is not thought out, they will live an inconsistent life that may not reflect what they believe or the ultimate truth in Scripture. The inability to articulate the

¹ Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 71. Kinnaman describes the phenomenon of each generation becoming more nomadic in their faith and, due to social norms, becoming less likely to return to church in the same numbers as in the past.

biblical worldview, paired with the increasing demands on the family's time, has contributed to fathers being less able to disciple their children in the Christian faith.²

The purpose of this project was to address the concern of the fathers' inability to articulate the biblical worldview to their children and help them develop the skills that would begin to facilitate the process of disciplining their children. The developed training program, which included modules on understanding and explaining the biblical worldview and apologetic arguments to defend the Bible, provided comprehensive training for these men. This program aimed to equip the participants with the knowledge and skills to defend the Bible and to be better prepared to train and mentor their children.

Participation in the project also expected the participants to spend time each week practicing and modeling the Christian faith for their families by completing weekly Bible studies, leading family devotionals, attending worship with their families, and leading one mentoring conversation with their child to discuss the weekly biblical worldview topic. The participants would then report on these activities in a weekly journal log submitted to the DMIN candidate each week. Pre-training questionnaires and surveys were used to determine participants' baseline ability to articulate the biblical worldview and comfort in sharing their faith. Then, post-training surveys and questionnaires determined growth in these areas at the end of the project. It was proposed in the thesis that if fathers were trained in the biblical worldview and mentoring skills, they would be better able to summarize this worldview and then lead their children into faith ownership as they prepare for young adulthood.

² The Christian can briefly summarize the four worldview questions: "Who are we?" – We are God's creation, created for God's purposes, and to be in perfect relationship with God. "Where are we?" – We are in God's good creation, which God intended us to steward for God's continued purposes. "What is wrong?" – People fell into sin, which has tainted all things and led to the world's brokenness. "What is the solution?" – The saving work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and placing faith in Him for salvation so that sin can be overcome.

The precedent literature examined argued that studying a worldview is essential to help individuals live congruently with their beliefs and that there are natural times in an individual's life when worldviews are open for reexamination. Specifically, these times often occur during life transitions, such as moving away from home, and during times of difficulty, such as the death of a loved one. The literature also pointed towards an understanding that specific practices, such as the example and practice of the parents, would strengthen a worldview through participation in behaviors congruent with the worldview being practiced. Research has also shown that while mothers play an essential role in the development of worldview in their children, a child is more likely to follow the religious attitude of the father. Therefore, fathers must model the biblical worldview through their daily practice and speak positively of the Christian experience for their children to take their faith practices seriously and be more likely to continue in the faith as they enter young adulthood.

One way that fathers can encourage their children in the biblical worldview is through the practice of storytelling. Story has been shown as an essential way to develop and think through worldview concerns, and telling biblical stories and personal stories of faith can help fathers reinforce the biblical worldview in their child's life. Mentoring is also an effective way to share, develop, and support worldviews. As a father grows in their ability to mentor their child, they grow in their ability to strengthen the child's worldview and increase the chance that their child will take ownership of the faith for themselves.

Through Scripture, God has placed a responsibility on fathers to raise their children in the faith and instruct them in the ways of God. This pattern of responsibility begins in the earliest chapters of Genesis as the sons of Adam start presenting offerings to God and as Noah and Abraham are called to hand down the faith to their sons. The biblical example of handing on the

faith continues in the New Testament but also shows that spiritual fathers can be essential in mentoring spiritual sons and daughters in the faith.

The Bible also helps us to understand ultimate reality as it provides the answers to the worldview questions in a comprehensive, consistent, and harmonious way: “Who we are, where we are, what is wrong, and what is the solution?” The Bible explains this through the story of God’s creation, Adam’s fall, and the entrance of sin into God’s creation, and the redemption and restoration that, if found through God’s plan of salvation, which culminates in Jesus Christ’s life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Developing and summarizing these biblical themes can help individuals share their faith with others.

Considering the theological conclusions based on Scripture that support this project, it is also essential to consider the theoretical considerations developed to support the thesis. Faith development has been viewed primarily in two ways: theory and model. As a theory, faith development has tended to follow the psychological models of human development and has placed faith development in rigid patterns that all individuals follow. In this way, if a faith stage fails to be achieved as an individual progresses through that stage of life, the stage may never be completed. However, as this thesis supported, faith development can also be seen as a model for development, and in this way, faith development can be started at different stages of life, and instead of arriving at different points of faith development based on the age of the individual, faith development follows a pattern regardless of the individual’s age.

Understanding faith development as a model also provides ways to structure the Christian community to establish mentoring relationships with individuals in different stages of faith development to help them grow and progress into Christian maturity. Mentoring the faith in this way has been found effective in preparing teenagers to build a solid faith foundation that helps

them integrate the biblical worldview as they prepare for young adulthood. Following the model of faith development, it is also possible to work with fathers to help them develop a better understanding of the biblical worldview so they can grow in it and then model and instruct it into their children's lives. Having reviewed the problem and purpose of this DMIN project and examined the theological and theoretical framework it was built on, it is now possible to explore the project's implications, applications, and limitations.

Research Implications

The problem identified at Asbury Church for this thesis was the observation that most teenagers who have left home for college or a career have also left the church. One contributing factor to this problem was the need for more father involvement in the spiritual development of their children. This lack of participation includes the father's inability to explain the faith to their child and the father not modeling their faith for the child to observe and learn from. Fathers may fail to help prepare their children for faith ownership because they cannot summarize the biblical worldview to their teenagers. Therefore, it was proposed that if a training program was developed that could help fathers to become trained in the biblical worldview, learn to summarize the worldview and be trained in mentoring skills, they would then be better prepared and more comfortable to share their faith with their children, and others. This training program included modules on understanding the biblical worldview, effective communication of faith, and mentorship techniques.

Having considered the data gathered before and after the training program was presented to the participants, it was discovered the fourteen participants were already able to identify the biblical worldview, and many of them held to the biblical worldview, as evidenced by their high scores on the biblical worldview survey. As there was already a high percentage of correct

answers on this survey pre-training, there was little room for significant improvement post-training. The consistent pre- and post-training scores imply that the participants were already versed in the biblical worldview. The single participant whose score of fourteen out of one hundred was an outlier in the biblical worldview survey raised their score by twenty-one points post-training. This implies that six weeks of training is enough to make a difference. Still, for an individual not versed in the biblical worldview, more time may be necessary to improve their biblical worldview understanding significantly.

A second purpose of this project was to help fathers become better equipped to share the biblical worldview with their teenagers (or another adult) to help them develop and take ownership of the faith for themselves. Pre-training questionnaires showed that even though the participants in this project could identify and hold to the biblical worldview (eighty-seven percent average ability), they needed to be adequately prepared to summarize this worldview when asked (sixteen percent average ability). Once the training was completed, the men completed the post-training questionnaires, and there was over a forty percent increase in their ability to summarize the biblical worldview when asked (fifty-seven percent average ability). This significant increase implies that training men in the biblical worldview is essential in helping them to be better prepared to share their faith with their children.

Post-training data also showed that eight of the fourteen participants significantly raised their scores, and four raised their scores from zero to seventy-five or one hundred. One participant's score remained the same at twenty-five, and five participants did not raise their biblical worldview summary score from zero. Three of these five participants did not have a teenager at home and instead mentored another adult in the faith. Therefore, eight of the eleven target group participants (72.7 percent) for this project significantly raised their ability to

summarize the biblical worldview. At the same time, two remained at zero, and one remained at twenty-five.

These results imply several things about biblical worldview training. First, the target group was more likely to improve their ability to summarize the biblical worldview after six weeks of training. There are several possible contributing factors to this result. One possible factor could be the education level of the participants in the target group (all hold a college degree or advanced training) versus the education level of the older participants (who none had a college degree). A second possible factor could be that the men in the older group did not have a child at home. Therefore, they were less likely to rehearse or communicate this information on more than one occasion during the week. A third possible factor could be the age of the participants; the older individuals get, the more set they are in their worldview. A fourth factor could be the length of the training or participation in the training. One individual in the target group who did not raise their biblical worldview summary score could not participate in each of the training sessions, and it is also possible that six weeks of training was just enough for some participants to raise their scores while more time may be needed for others. From these factors, it could be argued that the sooner biblical worldview training begins, the greater the possibility that it will be successful in helping individuals learn to summarize the worldview.

A third desired result of this training program was to increase the comfort level of the participants in sharing their faith with others. Data from the pre-training and post-training surveys confirmed a significant increase in the comfort level of the participants as they completed the program. These results were consistent from the entire group to the target group, with only one individual reporting a lower score post-training and every other participant holding steady with their original score or increasing their score. Two things could be implied from this

data. First, providing individuals with information that will help them share their faith can help to increase their comfort level in leading these conversations. Second, encouraging and holding participants accountable for having a faith conversation with another individual increases their exposure to these conversations and raises their comfort level.

One result from the training that was not directly predicted by the thesis was the increase in other areas of the Christian life that were also measured by the pre- and post-training surveys. These results showed that there was a significant increase in the areas of Christian discipline, morality, and community engagement for the entire participant group, and when the target group was considered on its own, there was also a significant increase in Christian witness. Two participants commented in the project evaluation that knowing that they would have to report on these areas each week increased their accountability, so they rearranged their schedule to make sure that they participated in the project requirements. It is possible that the positive increase in these areas may be limited to the duration of the training project due to the accountability that was required and that once the participants go back to a stage of life that is not being evaluated, some of their former patterns of behavior may return.

The combined data would imply that individuals trained in the biblical worldview can better summarize it and will become more comfortable teaching and mentoring others in this worldview. Even if individuals can identify the biblical worldview or hold it as their belief system, they will benefit from this type of training. The combined findings show that biblical worldview training has the potential to be advantageous for other groups of individuals who need help learning how to summarize biblical worldview and becoming more comfortable in sharing their faith. Biblical worldview training can benefit several church programs and ministries, such as youth ministry, family ministry, discipleship, and evangelism training, especially if those

leading these ministries have shown reluctance or insecurity in sharing or mentoring the faith in others.

Research Applications

Having discussed the implications of the collected data from this training program, it is now possible to consider applications for this program within the congregation of Asbury Church. Four ministry applications will be considered for how this training program can continue to be utilized by Asbury Church. These applications should also be considered working possibilities for other ministry contexts looking to address similar concerns and gaps in their ministry setting.

The first application that this training program can have within the ministry context of Asbury Church is to provide this training for other fathers within the congregation and community. As was noted in Chapter Three, many individuals were invited to participate in this project but did not have the time or ability to do so during the offered time. Therefore, consideration should be given to providing this training program at different times of the year and possibly different times of day. With additional training opportunities being provided, consideration should also be given to expanding the training into eight weeks instead of six weeks, as that will allow for more clarification on each of the four worldview questions and answers and provide more training on how to evaluate competing worldviews.³ Having seen an increase in the participants' ability to summarize the biblical worldview and an increase in their comfort in modeling and sharing their faith with their child or another adult, it is important to offer this same training to other men to help them in these areas as well.

³ In the post-training project evaluation, one participant suggested that more time be given to helping the participants learn how to critique the worldview of other religions appropriately.

A second application of this training program would be to offer this training as an opportunity for married couples with children to learn together. One participant suggested that the participants' wives would also benefit from participating in this training. Offering this training to couples could have several benefits. First, it would provide the couple encouragement, support, and accountability as they would both be presented with the material and could utilize the weekly homework to strengthen the biblical worldview of their marriage and family, as was noted in the review of literature research found that both the mother and father contribute to the worldview development of their children. If both parents are in worldview agreement, it will strengthen the likelihood that the children will claim the faith of the parents as their own. Couples training would also allow the training to continue for the family if one of the spouses was unavailable on any given week due to work or other conflicts. Training could also provide the couple a way to strengthen their marriage as they practice the weekly habits together.

A third application of this training program would be to implement this training into the curriculum for Asbury Church's confirmation program offered to sixth graders each year. Confirmation is when children are trained in the Christian faith and are prepared by the church for faith ownership. During the time of confirmation, the parents are encouraged to have conversations with their child about issues of faith, and each confirmand typically works with another adult mentor approved by the parents of the child and the pastor of the church to walk alongside the confirmand also to help them discuss and learn the Christian faith. The training program presented in this thesis could be implemented into the confirmation curriculum in various ways. First, the biblical worldview training could be offered to the confirmands themselves as a part of the curriculum provided each year. Second, the training could be offered to the parents of the confirmands to help the parents have faith-based

conversations with their confirmands during confirmation classes. Third, this training could be provided to the men and women who mentor these confirmands during confirmation training to help the mentor have faith-based conversations with the confirmands.

A final way in which the ministry of Asbury Church could utilize this training program is to provide the training a continuing education opportunity for the program staff of the church. As noted in Chapter One, parents often depend on the church's programs to help them raise their children in the Christian faith. It was also stated that the children and youth ministers often need help to develop and hold the biblical worldview. Therefore, it is essential that program staff also be trained in the biblical worldview to ensure that the program staff can identify whether the biblical worldview is being promoted in their curriculum and to ensure that the programs they offer are biblically sound and formative for the children and youth they are responsible for in their area of ministry. By incorporating biblical worldview training into the staff development of Asbury Church, the program staff will also be able to help increase biblical worldview understanding throughout more programs within the church.

Considering the above approaches to incorporating biblical worldview training into the ministry of Asbury Church could help instill the biblical worldview and the Christian faith more deeply into the programs and ministry of the church and help the church be a more faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Other congregations considering ways for their ministries to become more faithful to the biblical worldview could quickly adapt this training to their church and succeed in helping their staff and membership be more prepared and comfortable to share their faith with others. The more churches that begin training their members in the biblical worldview, the more individuals will be formed by the biblical worldview. Actively training

church members in the faith is one step that will help to reverse the steady decline in the biblical worldview that is taking place in our country.

Research Limitations

The thesis of this project was that if men were trained to articulate and defend the biblical worldview, they could successfully model it as they mentor their teenagers into faith ownership. The findings of the data that was collected pre- and post-training as has been presented show support for this thesis. However, as with any research project or training program, it is essential to consider the limitations present before and after the completion of the project. Several of these limitations were noted in Chapter One; however, having completed the project and reviewing the data, it is essential to discuss how these limitations could change the findings of others who may attempt to duplicate this project or develop a similar training program.

One of the limitations of this research project was that of time. Time affected this project in several ways. First, the time of day the training program took place limited the number of individuals willing to participate. Second, the time of year the training took place also limited participation as many individuals find themselves busier during this season than in other ones. While the length of time of the training program was beneficial to recruiting some individuals who may prefer to commit to shorter programs, the training was still a time limitation. The six weeks of training and the final week of evaluation prevented more in-depth training that could have adjusted some of the final scores on the biblical worldview questionnaires and comfort in sharing the faith. With more time given to the training program, some of the lower scores in biblical summary may have been improved.

A second limitation of this research project related to the previous limitation was the sample size. Like time, the training group's sample size limited the data collected during this

research project. While the size of the group was adequate as a case study and allowed for a sufficient number of participants in the targeted group of participants (men with children at home), the size of the group can only allow for general statements to be made about the other participants who mentored another adult (as there were only three of them) or a detailed comparison to the general population. The group size also served as a limitation as it did not reflect the average community of men that would be found around Asbury Church, as the education level of the participants was not reflective of the community. Therefore, while the sample size was adequate to determine significant growth in the participants' ability to summarize and share the biblical worldview, some care should be taken when generalizing this data.

Another limitation of this research project is that consideration was only given to the improvement of the participants and did not evaluate whether those being mentored made similar improvements in their ability to articulate, summarize, and share the biblical worldview. While the identified problem that sparked the initial idea of this training program was that of teenagers leaving Christian practice as they become young adults, which was addressed by leveraging fathers to address this concern, this project has not considered a way to measure if the trend of young adults leaving the faith behind has been slowed through this training program. While the teenagers mentored by their fathers during the time of this project would not make their ultimate decision for a few years (as they prepare to leave home), it could have been possible to develop and provide the fathers with an evaluation tool to help them know if they helped to prepare their children in an impactful way. Therefore, only time and continued observation will determine if the initial problem has been addressed by training fathers in mentoring skills and the biblical worldview.

A final limitation of this research project was the evaluation tools used to establish the participants' pre- and post-training growth. To capture adequate information, the chosen measurements were likely more than necessary to determine the project's final outcomes. One of the limitations of this measurement was the use of Summit Ministries Worldview Checkup. The use of this survey was limited in a few ways. First, the survey measured a few areas of the biblical worldview that were not directly covered through the training, as the training focused on addressing the Bible and the Christian faith's answer to the big worldview questions. Therefore, post-training results were not necessarily helpful in determining if improvement had been made in the participants' worldview outlook. Also, since the pre-training use of this survey determined that most of the participants were already able to identify the biblical worldview, it did not prove necessarily helpful in determining progress in the participant's ability to summarize the biblical worldview, which was the targeted outcome of the training program.

Another limitation of Summit's Checkup was that there appeared to be an issue with a few questions. At least two of the questions will allow for more than one answer to be selected and still be counted as a biblical view. This adjustment allows for some differences in secondary faith issues to be accounted for. However, when one participant's survey score dropped significantly, the DMIN candidate evaluated the answers between the pre- and post-training surveys. It was determined that one question drastically changed the outcome of the post-training results. By changing that one answer, the participant's score changed from a sixty-one percent biblical worldview score to a one hundred percent score. This drastic difference in the final score based on one question appears to be extreme and could potentially change the results and outcomes of a training program that was more dependent upon biblical worldview identification

and should be considered as a potential limitation by other researchers if they were to use this worldview checkup.

Further Research

As this thesis is concluded, it is crucial to contemplate the potential avenues for further research. The problem identified for this congregation was that teenagers transitioning into young adulthood were leaving the Christian faith, which necessitates continued exploration, as this project focused on only one way to address this problem. One promising area could be to assess the impact of training fathers in mentoring skills and the biblical worldview on the children and teenagers mentored by the program's participants. This could be achieved by measuring the worldview of the children, teenagers, and fathers at the project's inception and reassessing them at its conclusion. Alternatively, the mentored teenagers could be tracked over several years using cohort and longitudinal methods. Longitudinal research would also enable comparisons of the teenagers being followed with a selection of teenagers from the general population over time. Such research could be instrumental in determining the long-term success of helping fathers mentor their children.

A second area of further research would be to consider the length of the training provided to fathers. As was seen in the results from this project, some of the men responded very well and successfully learned to summarize the biblical worldview in the six weeks of training. However, other participants did not make any progress during these six weeks. Further research could consider the length of training in the overall improvement in the participants' ability to show growth in the measured areas. One way to measure this is to offer the training to more than one group consecutively with different lengths of training and compare the results of the various groups. A second approach would be to provide the training program to a new group of

participants, following the same methods for pre- and post-training data collection, but offer the training over eight weeks with one week of project evaluation after the training.

A third area that could be considered for further study is to widen the range of participants to determine whether certain demographic information plays a more significant role in the participants' ability to master the material presented. For instance, a noted difference was discovered between the target group for this project and the individuals who participated but did not have a child living at home. If there were more participants who did not have a child at home, the final scores of these participants could help to draw better conclusions about the data that they presented at the end of the training. Information about the empty nesters could help argue the importance of learning and developing the biblical worldview in the home before the children leave as essential for the children and the parents.

A larger group of participants would also widen the participants' educational experience. Understanding that the participants in this training program are more educated than the general population of the community surrounding the church, it is possible that they were able to master the training material within the six-week time frame due to previous learning experiences. It would be helpful to know if the education level of the participants was indeed a factor in their ability to learn the material, and if so, would more time be helpful to those who were less educated but still needed to be trained in the biblical worldview to help their children to be prepared for faith ownership as they become young adults.

Finally, as the training program developed for this DMIN project only considered four big questions of worldview development, further discussion on other faith concerns may also help train fathers to prepare their children in faith ownership. As discussed in Chapter Two, other researchers have considered additional worldview questions, such as Sire's eight questions and

Taves's six questions.⁴ As one method that was presented for determining the best length for this training program, a similar approach could be used to determine the best number of questions to be addressed in the training. For instance, two different groups could be set up for training, one participating in training that covered the four big questions as occurred in this project. In contrast, the other group covered additional training that covered an additional two or four questions. Then, a determination could be made about how many worldview questions are essential in helping fathers prepare their children for faith ownership.

Raising children in the Christian faith has become more critical than ever as the number of individuals in our society who hold to the biblical worldview is plummeting yearly. Parents must be prepared to handle this vital work, and as many of them still need training in the Christian faith, it has become more challenging for them to feel prepared to carry out this critical work. Therefore, biblically minded pastors and teachers must become equipped to help these parents, and the more information that can be researched and developed to help pastors and churches be prepared to train and assist in this work, the better.

⁴ See: Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 8–9. & Taves, "From Religious Studies," 141.

APPENDIX A

FACILITY AND MEMBERSHIP USE REQUEST LETTER

Permission Request

July 18, 2023

Mr. Phil Bunch
Chair of the Leadership Team
Asbury Church


Dear Mr. Bunch,

As a graduate student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting a project as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The title of my project is Preparing the Next Generation for Faith Ownership by Training Fathers in the Biblical Worldview. The purpose of my project is to train fathers in the biblical worldview so they can model and mentor their teenagers in this worldview, helping them to be prepared to take ownership of their faith as they mature into young adulthood.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my project at Asbury Church, to use the Family Life Center classrooms, and utilize our membership list to recruit participants for my research, and permission to contact church and staff members to participate in this project.

Participants will be asked to complete a consent form, participate in a thirty-minute pre-training interview, complete a pre-training survey, take part in a seven-week training program on Monday mornings at 6:00 a.m. beginning August 21, 2023, complete a weekly homework assignment that includes a short Bible study, leading your family in a 15-minute family worship service, having a weekly conversation with your teenager, and participating in congregational worship. At the end of the research project, participants will be asked to complete a post-training survey and interview. It should take approximately four hours to complete the procedures listed each week. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

Sincerely,


John Embrey
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX B
FACILITY PERMISSION LETTER

Permission Response

July 19, 2023

Mr. John Embrey
Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University



Dear Mr. Embrey

After carefully reviewing your research proposal entitled Preparing the Next Generation for Faith Ownership by Training Fathers in the Biblical Worldview, we have decided to grant you permission to access our membership list, contact our staff and membership, and invite them to participate in your study. We also grant you permission to conduct your study at Asbury Church utilizing the Family Life Center classrooms for the training you will conduct.

Sincerely



Mr. Phil Bunch
Chair of the Leadership Team
Asbury Church

APPENDIX C
RECRUITMENT LETTER

Recruitment Letter

Dear Potential Participant,

As a doctoral candidate in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting a project as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The purpose of my project is to help fathers better understand the biblical worldview to help their teenagers successfully take faith ownership as they prepare for young adulthood, and I am writing to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be men 18 years or older, with a child at home, or willing to identify another adult to mentor in the Christian faith. Participants will be asked to complete a consent form, participate in a thirty-minute pre-training interview, complete a pre-training survey, take part in a seven-week training program on Monday mornings at 6:00 beginning August 21, 2023, complete a weekly homework assignment that includes a short Bible study, leading your family in a 15-minute family worship service, having a weekly conversation with your teenager (or other identified adult), and participating in congregational worship. At the end of the project, participants will be asked to complete a post-training survey and interview. It should take approximately four hours to complete the procedures. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

To participate, please contact me at [REDACTED]. If you meet my participant criteria, I will work with you to schedule a time for an interview. A consent document is attached to this letter and contains additional information about my project. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
John Embrey
Doctoral Candidate
[REDACTED]

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM

Consent

Title of the Project: Preparing the Next Generation for Faith Ownership by Training Fathers in the Biblical Worldview

Principal Investigator: John Embrey, Doctoral Candidate, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Doctoral Candidate Project

You are invited to participate in a doctoral candidate project. To participate, you must be eighteen years of age or older. Taking part in this project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this project.

What is the study about, and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to help men to become better acquainted with the biblical worldview and their role in helping their teenagers to learn this worldview so that teenagers can be better prepared to take ownership of their faith as they grow into young adulthood.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in a thirty-minute orientation and interview where you will learn more about the project and be asked a few questions related to the information learned.
2. Complete a Biblical Worldview Assessment Survey before and after the training program, which will take no more than thirty minutes each time.
3. Participate in a seven-week training program which will include a one-hour class (Monday from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.).
4. During the seven weeks, complete the assigned homework, which includes a study guide, listen to a sample mentoring conversation around the weekly topic, lead your family in a time of worship, have a mentoring conversation with your teenager (or another adult), participate in congregational worship, and journal your observations. The participant should expect to spend about four hours participating in these activities each week.
5. During the last learning session, participate in a group evaluation of the project.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect from participating in this study include the ability to articulate a biblical worldview, better understand how to mentor others in this worldview, and possibly a better understanding of how to model this worldview in daily life.

Benefits to society include the ability to mentor others into the biblical worldview; therefore, increasing the capacity for teenagers to remain in the faith as they enter young adulthood.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Project records will be stored securely, and only the doctoral candidate and his faculty sponsor will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other focus group members may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data will be stored in a locked drawer. After three years, all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then deleted.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Asbury Church. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the doctoral candidate at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The doctoral candidate conducting this study is John Embrey. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the doctoral candidate's faculty sponsor, Dr. Seth Polk, at [REDACTED].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a project participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the doctoral candidate, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by students and faculty are those of the students and faculty and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The doctoral candidate will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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

The doctoral candidate has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

APPENDIX E

PRE-TRAINING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Pre-Training Interview Questions:

- 1.) How many days a week do you read the Bible?

- 2.) How many days a week do you intentionally pray for at least five minutes?

- 3.) What does your prayer time look like?

- 4.) Does your family participate in a family worship service? How often?

- 5.) How often do you participate in Sunday worship?

- 6.) On a scale of one to seven, with one being not at all and seven being completely comfortable, how comfortable are you discussing your faith with your teenager or other adults?

- 7.) What is your most significant concern regarding sharing your Christian beliefs with another person?

- 8.) Can you briefly summarize the Christian worldview?

APPENDIX F

PRE & POST TRAINING SURVEY

Name: _____ Education Level: _____ Age: _____

Instructions: This Likert scale survey aims to identify areas of maturity in the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ, the strength of an individual's biblical worldview, and their comfort in leading others in the biblical worldview. Please rate each statement by marking the box that most accurately represents your thought or feeling about each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. All that matters is that you indicate your personal belief about each statement. Don't take too much time deciding an answer; usually, the first thought is the most accurate.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	0	1	2	3	4
These Questions Measure Christian Discipline					
1. I schedule my day around my Christian spiritual practice.					
2. I read my Bible daily for at least five minutes.					
3. I use a Bible reading plan, guide, or study book.					
4. I use Scripture to discern God's guidance for my decisions.					
5. I pray for at least five minutes daily.					
6. I pray about decisions and problems I experience.					
7. I practice at least one additional Christian spiritual discipline weekly (e.g., fasting, journaling, devotional reading, etc.).					
These Questions Measure Christian Morality					
8. I consider my faith when making life decisions.					
9. I consider my faith when making entertainment choices.					
10. I would describe myself as joyful.					
11. I would describe myself as kind and gentle.					

12. I can restrain myself when tempted by sinful behavior.					
13. I give generously to my church (tithe).					
14. I give generously of my time to help others.					
15. I am patient with difficult people.					
16. I am peaceful even under challenging circumstances.					
These Questions Measure Christian Witness					
17. I look for opportunities to talk about my faith with others.					
18. I speak about Jesus to others.					
19. I invited someone to church during the last month.					
20. I pray with other people when they share a need with me.					
21. I correct a misunderstanding about Jesus or the Bible when I hear one expressed.					
22. I let others know when I have prayed for them.					
23. I share with others how God is working in my life.					
24. I provide Christian spiritual help (e.g., Scripture, testimony) when someone tells me they are struggling.					
25. I discuss matters of faith with my children.					
These Questions Measure Christian Community Engagement					
26. I attend worship weekly.					
27. I prioritize church/worship over other activities.					
28. I have (at least) one Christian friend whom I discuss my faith with at least once a month.					
29. I attend a Christian small group (where the primary purpose of the gathering is Bible study and prayer).					
30. I participate in an outreach/mission activity where I serve.					
31. I work towards reconciliation in my relationships (where it is safe to do so).					
32. I look for opportunities to serve and show care for others.					

SUMMIT MINISTRIES WORLDVIEW CHECKUP¹

The Summit Ministries Worldview Checkup was removed to comply with copyright.

¹ “Summit Ministries,” Summit Ministries Worldview Checkup, accessed June 1, 2023, <https://www.summit.org/checkup1/>, used by permission, <https://www.summit.org/copyright-information/>.

This page is to be completed by the project researcher:

Mark #1: Christian Discipline	Number
The highest-ranked question is number:	
The lowest-ranked question is number:	
Combined Average for Mark #1	Average for Mark #1
Total points divided by seven:	

Mark #2: Christian Morality	Number
The highest-ranked question is number:	
The lowest-ranked question is number:	
Combined Average for Mark #2	Average for Mark #2
Total points divided by nine:	

Mark #3: Christian Witness	Number
The highest-ranked question is number:	
The lowest-ranked question is number:	
Combined Average for Mark #3	Average for Mark #3
Total points divided by nine:	

Mark #4: Christian Community Engagement	Number
The highest-ranked question is number:	
The lowest-ranked question is number:	
Combined Average for Mark #4	Average for Mark #4
Total points divided by seven:	

Mark #5: Biblical Worldview Score	Percentage
Christian	
Postmodern	
New Spiritual	
Islamic	
Secular	
Marxist	

Summary	Avg. for each Mark
1. Christian Discipline	
2. Christian Morality	
3. Christian Witness	
4. Christian Community Engagement	
5. Predominant Worldview	

Name: _____ Education Level: _____ Age: _____

Pre-Training _____ Post-Training _____

APPENDIX G
POST-TRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant _____

Post-Training _____

- 1.) How many days a week do you read the Bible for at least five minutes?
- 2.) How many days a week do you intentionally pray for at least five minutes?
- 3.) What does your prayer time look like?
- 4.a) Before this project, how often did your family participate in a family worship service at home?
- 4.b) After this project, how often does your family participate in a family worship service at home?
- 5.) How often do you participate in Sunday worship?
- 6.) On a scale of one to seven, with one being not at all and seven being completely comfortable, how comfortable are you discussing your faith with your teenager or other adults?
- 7.) What is your most significant concern regarding sharing your Christian beliefs with another person?
- 8.) How would you briefly summarize the Christian worldview?

APPENDIX H
PROJECT EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Participant _____

- 1.) During the last six weeks, what part of this project was the most helpful to you and why?
- 2.) During the last six weeks, what part of this project was the least helpful to you and why?
- 3.) What was the most and least helpful part of the weekly instruction during class?
- 4.) What was the most helpful and least helpful part of the weekly outline for class notes?
- 5.) What was the weekly Bible study's most and least helpful part?
- 6.) What was the most challenging factor in leading a family devotional time?
- 7.) What was your mentoring relationship's most successful conversation/event?
- 8.) What was your most significant challenge during your mentoring relationship?
- 9.) Should this project be presented to other groups? Why or why not?
- 10.) What new habit did you form during the last six weeks that you plan to keep, and how do you plan to keep this habit?
- 11.) What other information should be considered regarding this project? Is there any additional information you would like to share?

APPENDIX I
WEEKLY PACKET SAMPLE
WEEKLY PARTICIPANT JOURNAL

Participant: _____

Week # 1

This Weekly Journal Report will be turned in to the researcher each week as an opportunity to follow the individual progress and to serve as an evaluation tool for the project.

I participated in the weekly training: yes ___ no ___

I completed the Home Study this week: yes ___ no ___

After completing the Home Study, I have the following question(s):

I led a family worship service this week that lasted at least 10 minutes: yes ___ no ___

*If your children no longer live at home, did you spend at least 10 minutes in private worship instead?

I spent at least 15–20 minutes in a conversation with my child (or another adult): yes ___ no ___

After completing the conversation with my child (or another adult), they had the following question(s) I could not answer:

I participated in congregational worship this week with my family: yes ___ no ___

*If your children no longer live at home, did you participate in congregational worship this week?

**Preparing the Next Generation for Faith Ownership
by Training Fathers in the Biblical Worldview
Week Two: Creation**

Prayer & Weekly Log Return

Apologetic Focus: Miracles & The Existence of God

1. Naturalism
 - a. Closed system
 - b. A natural explanation is always preferable
 - c. Natural laws cannot be interfered with

2. Pascal's Wager¹
 - a. If Christianity has at least a 50 percent chance of being true, then it is rational to commit to living a Christian life.
 - b. Christianity does have at least a 50 percent chance of being true.
 - c. Thus, it is rational to commit to living a Christian life.
 - i. Christianity is true or Naturalism is true
 - ii. Wager or not

3. Theism
 - a. Evidence for God – David Beck's threefold argument²
 - i. Cosmological argument
 1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
 2. The universe began to exist.
 3. Therefore, the universe had a cause.³
 - ii. The teleological argument
 1. The universe has features that exhibit functional and purposive structure.
 2. Features of the universe exhibit functional and purposive structures that cannot be explained by chance. (Fine-tuning).
 3. There is an intelligent source of the functional and purposive structures in the universe.⁴
 - iii. The moral argument
 1. If there is a universal moral law, there is a moral lawgiver.
 2. If there is a moral lawgiver, it must be something beyond the universe.

¹ Michael Rota, *Taking Pascal's Wager: Faith, Evidence and the Abundant Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 13, 48.

² W. David Beck, "God's Existence," in *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God's Action in History*, ed. R. Douglas Geivett and Gary Habermas (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 149–62.

³ Douglas Groothuis and Andrew I. Shepardson, *The Knowledge of God in the World and The Word: An Introduction to Classical Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2022), 84.

⁴ Beck, "God's Existence," 156–58.

3. There is a universal moral law.
 4. Therefore, there is a moral lawgiver.
 5. Therefore, the moral lawgiver is beyond the universe.⁵
- b. Natural forces can be overpowered by humans (i.e., gravity)
 - c. If humans can overpower natural force/law – God, who created the natural world, can interfere through miracles⁶

“Bad ideas are like viruses ... Bad ideas can multiply out of control, like the spread of a virus that becomes a pandemic.”⁷ - Jeff Myers.

Four Worldview Questions

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| • Who am I? | What is our nature? |
| • Where am I? | What is our world? |
| • What is wrong? | What is our problem? |
| • What is the answer? | What is our end? |

The Biblical Worldview

- Creation
- Fall
- Redemption
- Restoration

Biblical Worldview: Where do we start? Creation – Explains: Who and where we are.

Genesis 1 & 2 God’s Creation vs. Naturalism & Pantheism

The Christian understanding of creation – all things were created by God – through Jesus Christ!

God is the author of creation⁸ Genesis 1 & John 1

- Days 1, 2, and 3 are places created by God.
- Days 4, 5, and 6 filled with things the places were created for.

Days 1–3 The Creation is Ordered

Days 4–6 The Creation is given its “rulers.”

Day 7 God Rested – “The Sabbath” “Holy Day”

⁵ Groothuis and Shepardson, *Knowledge of God*, 129.

⁶ Beck, “God’s Existence,” 151.

⁷ Jeff Myers, *The Secret Battle of Ideas About God: Answers to Life’s Biggest Questions* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2017), 23–24.

⁸ Vaughn Roberts, *God’s Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible* (Downers Grove, MI: IVP Books an Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2012), 27–29.

Day 1—Light and Dark
 Day 2—Sky and Water
 Day 3—Land

Day 4—Sun and Moon/stars
 Day 5—Birds and Sea creatures
 Day 6—Animals and human beings

God is the King of Creation⁹

- God made all things
- To worship these things is to dishonor God
- Romans 1:18–23

God & Man¹⁰

- Humans are the pinnacle of God’s creation
 - Natural, Political, Moral
- We bear God’s likeness in special ways
 - Soul, Vice Regent over creation, moral–holy character
- Self-conscious, spiritual beings meant for immortality
- Designed with intelligence to be in relationship with God and to be holy
- Harmonious relationships... Man & Woman

The Covenant Relationship between God and Humanity – The Rulers

- The land grant – Care for and protect
- The Stipulation
- Humanity’s Choice – “A world of their own making.”

Adam & Adamah Humans & Planet

Rest is the Goal¹¹ On the 7th Day, God rested

Advice for the week

- Study Guide
- Family Worship/Devotional Time
- Mentoring Conversation
- Attend Worship
- Weekly-Log

Suggested Scriptures for Family Worship/Devotional Time:

Genesis 1–2

Psalm 8

John 1:1–14

Acts 17:24–28

Romans 1:18–23

Colossians 1:15–20

⁹ Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 29–30.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30–31.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 31–33.

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**Preparing the Next Generation for Faith Ownership
by Training Fathers in the Biblical Worldview**

Week 2 Bible Study: Creation

Begin this time in prayer.

Everyone has a favorite story, and every story has a beginning. Briefly describe the beginning of your favorite story. What makes this story your favorite? Is it the characters, the setting, etc.?

How does the main character in your favorite story answer the questions “Who am I, and Where am I?”

The book of Genesis begins the story of God’s creation of this world and everything in it. Genesis explains the questions of “Who are we, Where are we, and What is wrong?” The book of Genesis also hints at the final worldview question of “What is the solution?”

Read Genesis 1 & 2

What does this passage say about God and God’s creation?

What does this passage tell us about the relationship between God and humanity, and what does it mean for humanity to have been created in God’s image?

What does this passage tell us about the relationship between man and woman?

Psalm 8, a Psalm of David, is a hymn praising God for His incredible work of creation and placing humanity as a caretaker of this creation alongside God.

Read Psalm 8

What does this passage say about God's creation?

What does this passage say about humanity's responsibility as part of God's creation?

Paul wrote the letter of Colossians to a church struggling with heresy (false teaching). It is unclear what the actual false teaching was; however, from the letter itself, it appears that some of the false teaching involved giving worship to the angels and even depreciating the supremacy of Christ's role in salvation. Therefore, it is essential for us to read some of Paul's opening words to understand how he wrote about Christ's role in creation and the implications this has for us as the church.

Read Colossians 1:15–20

This passage tells us that the "Son is the image of the invisible God," how might the Son/Jesus being in the image of God impact your understanding of humanity's carrying this image?

The book of Acts contains several sermons preached by the early disciples of Jesus in various situations. One of these sermons was preached by Stephen, the first Christian martyr. A second sermon we will consider was preached by Paul (formerly known as Saul, who witnessed the sermon by Stephen). These sermons shared the salvation story but were presented to different audiences. The Audience we share the gospel with should always be considered as the salvation message is communicated.

Read Acts 7 & Acts 17:24–28

Where in God’s story does Stephen begin sharing his faith with the Sanhedrin (the Jewish ruling council), and why do you think Stephen started here?

Where in God’s story does Paul begin sharing his faith with the Athenians (Non-Jewish Greeks), and why do you think Paul started here?

Both Stephen and Paul retell the story of God but begin in different places. Context matters when telling the story of God. How might you start retelling the story of God in the context of the mentoring relationship you are cultivating during these seven weeks?

Considering this week’s Scriptures, how would you answer the question, “Who am I, and Where am I?”

Personal Reflection: Based on the above scriptures, is there anything that needs to be confessed, added, taken away, or maintained for you as a father who is a follower of Christ?

What is one thing you will do to make the necessary change you described in the above question?

Closing Prayer: Offer God thanksgiving for what He has shown you in this week's Scripture and ask God for help to share this insight with another this week.

WEEKLY PARTICIPANT JOURNAL

Participant: _____

Week # 2

This Weekly Journal Report will be turned in to the researcher each week as an opportunity to follow the individual progress and to serve as an evaluation tool for the project.

I participated in the weekly training: yes ___ no ___

I completed the Home Study this week: yes ___ no ___

After completing the Home Study, I have the following question(s):

I led a family worship service this week that lasted at least 10 minutes: yes ___ no ___
 *If your children no longer live at home, did you spend at least 10 minutes in private worship instead?

I spent at least 15–20 minutes in a conversation with my child (or another adult): yes ___ no ___

After completing the conversation with my child (or another adult), they had the following question(s) I could not answer:

I participated in congregational worship this week with my family: yes ___ no ___
 *If your children no longer live at home, did you participate in congregational worship this week?

APPENDIX J

ESSENTIAL MARKS OF A BIBLICAL DISCIPLE

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

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Essential Marks of a Biblical Disciple

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Introduction

Research conducted under the direction of George Barna on behalf of the Family Research Council has concluded that fifty-one percent of adult Americans claim to have a biblical worldview. The research also found that only six percent of American adults maintain a biblical worldview.¹ With the drastic difference between these numbers, it has become clear that there is a difference between those claiming to be Christian and those living as mature disciples in the faith. This research also points out that the need for intentional discipleship has become a necessity in our local churches. Churches must begin to focus on the essentials of the faith in a way that matures more disciples into a life that is more clearly formed by a biblical worldview.

The writer of Hebrews addressed a similar concern during the life of the early church. In Hebrews 5:11–14, the author addresses the congregation that had already devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching but had begun falling away from the truth. The author tells them that “you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word” (Heb 5:12, New International Version). The author also points out that because they no longer know their elementary truths, they will need to start all over again to be able to distinguish good from evil. As the author begins the next chapter, he encourages the church to grow beyond the basics:

Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so (Heb 6:1–3, NIV).

Following the example of the writer of Hebrews, this paper will focus on the growth of disciples who have already committed to following Jesus Christ through repentance of sin and

¹ George Barna, “Perceptions about Biblical Worldview and Its Application: A National Survey from the Center for Biblical Worldview,” *Center for Biblical Worldview* (May 2021): 4, <https://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF21E41.pdf>.

have been justified by their faith. Therefore, it is to be understood that the marks of Christian maturity discussed in this paper are primarily for the continued development of a baptized believer who has already made a profession of faith and is desiring to grow in their maturity in relationship to Jesus Christ. The goal is to help those Christians already living with a biblical worldview continue to grow in maturity and help those living among the fifty-one percent who live an inconsistent worldview but desire to live more biblically to grow in development.

Understanding that repentance entails a behavior change and a transition in the way an individual lives, it is necessary to discern what characteristics a mature disciple of Jesus Christ exhibits in their life. For this paper, four marks of a mature disciple have been identified. These marks are a disciplined God-centered life, a renewed life of virtue and fruit, a confessional life of witness, and a community-centered life of engagement. While a list of this sort could never be exhaustive while remaining brief, an effort has been made to develop this list to be both biblical and supported by other Christians throughout the ages. Individuals who are mature and maturing in the faith will exhibit these marks in their lives. This paper will consider these four marks individually by describing the mark of maturity and discerning the biblical precedent for the mark while interacting with other scholars who have also noted the importance of Christian maturity.

Disciplined God-Centered Life

Once an individual has accepted the truth of Jesus Christ, repented of their sin, and has been baptized, they have begun their Christian journey. To grow in maturity as a disciple, they must start the process of disciplining their life to look more like Jesus. As Dallas Willard states, “The disciple is one who, intent upon becoming Christ-like and so dwelling in *his* ‘faith and

practice,' systematically and progressively rearranges his affairs to that end."² This rearranging of one's life to be more Christ-like is also known as the process of sanctification. As Andrew C. Thompson states, "Our spiritual birth is the beginning of an ongoing growth in grace, which the Bible calls sanctification ... [which] happens to us when we are brought closer and closer to the heart of God by Jesus."³ Therefore, a disciplined God-centered life happens when an individual is daily focused on building their relationship with God so that the disciple is formed within a biblical worldview to live more like Christ.

To become Christ-like, a mature disciple must follow the path of Jesus Christ through a practice of spiritual disciplines that include prayer, daily Scripture reading, private worship, and fasting. The gospel stories give a clear pattern of these practices in the life of Jesus Christ, who often withdrew for personal prayer and worship (Luke 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, & 9:28), knew Scripture as He referenced it often (Luke 4:4–12, 6:3–5, & 11:30), and began His ministry with fasting (Luke 4:2). This life of discipline is also noted in the life of the disciples, who had noticed the maturity in Christ, and one day asked Him to teach them how to pray in the same way (Luke 11:1). The importance of these practices is evident as the disciples continued to practice them as they established the church, as seen in Acts 2:42–27, where the disciples gather for prayer, teaching, and worship.

John Wesley describes the importance of these marks of spiritual maturity in his sermon "The Means of Grace," first preached in 1746.⁴ Within the sermon, Wesley argues specifically

² Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2014), 7.

³ Andrew C. Thompson, *The Means of Grace: Traditioned Practice in Today's World* (Franklin, TN: Seedbed Publishing, 2015), 13.

⁴ John Wesley, Sermon 16, "The Means of Grace," in *The Sermons of John Wesley: A Collection for the Christian Journey*, ed. Kenneth J. Collins and Jason E. Vickers (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2013), 72–83.

for the importance of prayer and Scripture reading (public and private) as means ordained by Christ Himself. Wesley describes these means as ways for any disciple, regardless of their maturity, to grow in the wisdom and knowledge of God. Wesley compares these means to the example of the early church (Acts 2:42–44), who frequently gathered to practice these means of grace to grow individually as believers and increase the number of believers in the church. Whether a disciple is mature or wants to grow in maturity, these practices are essential to a disciplined God-centered life and mark maturity in the believer. These disciplines are also how a disciple grows in both “Spirit and in truth” (John 4:23) and grows in the other maturity marks.

Renewed in Virtue and Fruit

In *The Allure of Gentleness*, Dallas Willard argues that humans have been allowed to have “choice and the possibility of developing good or poor character.”⁵ As a disciple grows through a disciplined life, they will begin to discover (conviction) that there is a need to work toward and pray for renewal to happen in some regions of their life. Specifically, they will feel the call to turn away from behaviors that continue them down the path of sin and instead begin to act in more virtuous ways that lead to Christ-like behavior and kingdom-building work. As a disciple continues to grow in holiness, particular fruit will start to appear in their life, and others will see the difference that a relationship with Christ can have in the life of someone who has put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ and is willing to build on that relationship daily.

The apostle Paul reminds people that they are not to “conform to the pattern of this world, but [to] be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom 12:2, NIV), and Jesus Christ reminds people that they will know others and will be known by others by the fruit of behavior

⁵ Dallas Willard, *The Allure of Gentleness: Defending the Faith in the Manner of Jesus* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2016), 125.

(Matt 7:15–20). In Galatians 5:16–26, Paul provides a list of character traits that show if peoples' behavior is that of the world and contrasts these behaviors with those that show the work is of the Spirit. This list has become known as the fruit of the Spirit and includes love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22–23). One must be careful to limit this list to only the named fruit, as Richard B. Hays reminds people that Paul's list was not meant to be exclusive as Paul presents similar but different lists of spiritual fruit elsewhere in his epistles (Rom 12:6–8 & 1 Cor 12:7–11).⁶ With Hays's understanding, the cardinal and Christian virtues described by C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* could also be considered as ways to measure spiritual maturity.⁷

Considering that Romans lists gifts of the Spirit and First Corinthians lists manifestations of the Spirit (both of which are types of spiritual fruit), showing that a disciple not only shows maturity in specific attitudes (Gal 5:22–23) but also in ways in which they use these gifts for the common good (1 Cor 12:7) as Paul expects from disciples (Rom 12:6). Expounding on the expectations that our attitudes and actions are expected to be more like Christ, a mature disciple will also become more willing to live sacrificially in the way they serve and more generous in their giving according to their ability. This example was lived out in the early church as they came together as a community to teach, fellowship, break bread, and provide for others (Acts 2:42–47).

Even though a person who is not a committed disciple may exhibit the cardinal virtues (behaviors Lewis names as temperance, prudence, justice, and fortitude), disciples of Christ who mature in their faith will also display the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love (1 Cor 13) as

⁶ Richard B. Hays, "The Letter to The Galatians," *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 11:327–328.

⁷ C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1996), 74.

well as the other gifts and manifestations as discussed above. As Christian disciples continue to grow in maturity of trust and relationship to Jesus Christ, it will become more evident through their behavior and attitudes that they have turned their back on the world's ways and are now bearing the fruit of the kingdom as it manifests in their life. A mature disciple's life will be renewed in virtue as evidenced by Christian fruit, and it will become a life of witness to others.

Confessional Life of Witness

As a disciple has their mind transformed in both Spirit and truth through a daily practice of spiritual discipline, the disciple will not only become renewed to produce the fruit of the Spirit; they will also grow in their ability to live as a witness to Christ in all that they do. The fruit of the Spirit in the mature disciple's life will be so evident that even in times of struggle, trial, or hardship, others will notice the attitude in which the disciple handles these situations. The apostle Peter reminds believers that even in suffering, they are to "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have...do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Pet 3:15, NIV). Because a mature disciple will be so grounded in the truth of Scripture, they will be convicted to live in a way that contends for the faith daily (Jude 3), and they will make their decisions based on what they know to be true. As Donald S. Whitney reminds us, "The worship of God makes believers more godly because people become like their focus. We emulate what we think about."⁸

This is clear in the life of Jesus's disciple Peter. At the end of the gospel stories, Peter denies Jesus (John 18:15–27 & Matt 26:69–74). Even though this denial occurs, Peter is one of the first to experience the risen Christ (Luke 24:34) and is later recommissioned by Jesus to tend

⁸ Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life: Revised and Updated* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014), 114.

to His church (sheep – John 21:15–19). Specifically, on the day of Pentecost, Peter, whose life has been so transformed by the Holy Spirit that he stands amid the assembly gathered and proclaims his first recorded sermon (Acts 2:14–36). Boring and Craddock remind us that Peter’s message was both “missionary and evangelistic...[as] it proclaims the central elements of the Christian faith...calling them to repentance and faith...not presuppos[ing] faith but generat[ing] it...[as] a proclamation of what God has done in Jesus.”⁹ Through that witness of faith, about three thousand disciples were added to the church (Acts 2:41). The evangelism of the gospel would become the major work of the apostles themselves as they devoted their time to teaching others about Jesus Christ, even when they faced opposition and arrest (Acts 4:1–21).

A mature disciple may not stand amid a crowd of thousands and exponentially grow the church through one sermon; however, a mature disciple will allow the transformation in their life because of Jesus Christ to become their testimony to others. A mature disciple will share the gospel in ways in which they have been gifted, relying on their spiritual gifts and the fruit of the Spirit to guide them. A mature disciple will use the knowledge that they gain daily to grow them in evangelism. A mature disciple will live in a way prescribed by McClendon and Lockhart, as they remember that:

Every venue, every relationship is an opportunity to live out the Christian life before others and to engage them kindly, looking for opportunities to talk to them about Jesus and their walk with God. You do not have to have all the answers; you just have to shift from distinguishing between everyday activities and missionary activities. Everyday activities can become missionary activities. Everyday conversations can be missionary conversations.¹⁰

⁹ M. Eugene Boring and Fred B. Craddock, *The People’s New Testament Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 371.

¹⁰ P. Adam McClendon and Jared E. Lockhart, *Timeless Church: Five Lessons from Acts* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2020), 107.

Community-Centered Engagement

A mature disciple of Jesus Christ has also discovered the importance of engaging with a Christian community. While many spiritual disciplines can and should be practiced individually (Matt 6:6), they should also be practiced with the community. The mature disciple understands that the journey can be difficult, and traveling alone can add unnecessary spiritual peril where there is no accountability or support (Eccl 4:12). By practicing the disciplines together, the individual can learn from and teach others. Congregational worship and small groups also allow for a time of correction in practice and belief to be addressed and for the sacraments to be celebrated. For an individual to have a community where they can serve, the individual's gifts become available for the building up of the congregation. Participating in a community also allows people to practice the teaching of Jesus on forgiveness and reconciliation (Matt 5:23–24). The primary way of practicing reconciliation with God and others is by gathering in Jesus's name (Matt 18:20), even if it is a small group.

The practice of gathering for worship and instruction is essential throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament, Moses gathered the people of God for instruction and correction. A reminder to gather for instruction was part of Moses' final teaching to the people (Deut 31:12). The prophetic call for the people to gather throughout Scripture to seek God's forgiveness (Joel 2:16). In the New Testament, the importance of gathering was demonstrated as Jesus called His first disciples and appointed future leaders (Mark 3:13–19) and then sends them out in groups to be in ministry (Mark 6:6–12). After Jesus's death and resurrection, the apostles remained together for prayer. There the Holy Spirit descends upon them as a group, empowering them for the public work of the church (Acts 2:1–4). These same disciples then proclaim the gospel to Jerusalem and form a fellowship of believers who devote themselves to Jesus's teaching,

including fellowship and prayer (Acts 2:42–47). Jaroslav Pelikan highlights the importance of gathering as a community as he addresses Acts 2:42:

This verse [Acts 2:42] is...intended as a descriptive statement...for the Christian community...It explains both ‘the internal state and the external position of the church of Christ...[that] by the gift of the Holy Spirit ‘they were persisting’ and maintaining a continuity with him and with his apostles in this communion of saints. But theologically, it is also *prescriptive*, as an itemized list of the criteria by which the church in any age would both preserve and manifest its continuity with the apostles.¹¹

In his book, *Invitation to a Journey*, Robert Mulholland considers how an individual grows in Christ and argues for the importance of community. Mulholland states that “Spiritual formation is a process of being formed in the image of Christ for the sake of others.”¹² In this simple definition of spiritual formation, the development in Christ is not done for the individual alone but for the sake of others. Mulholland later argues that the purpose of the Christian community is to prevent people from developing a “one-sided spirituality” that will eventually stunt the growth in the Spirit, which may ultimately lead us to stop practicing the disciplines and even our faith.¹³ Alister McGrath also stresses the importance of community by discussing the process and development of spiritual formation in his book *Mere Discipleship: Growing in Wisdom and Hope*. McGrath notes that “Through faith, Christians develop habits of engagement with our world that allow it to be seen, understood, and evaluated in new ways. While this process of transformation and growth takes place within the individual believer, it is encouraged and informed by the community of faith as a whole.”¹⁴

¹¹ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible, ed. R. R. Reno, (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 58.

¹² M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation Expanded Edition* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 16.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁴ Alister E. McGrath, *Mere Apologetics: Growing in Wisdom and Hope* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018), 37.

As a significant factor in the growth and development of a mature disciple of Jesus Christ, it is essential to understand the role and function of the church. Considering Pelikan's discussion on Acts 2:42–47, he illustrates four primary purposes of the church: to keep believers anchored to apostolic doctrine, community and fellowship, participation in the sacraments, and prayer and worship.¹⁵ In this way, the church is an essential part of forming a disciple of Jesus Christ. The church helps the believer remain rooted in true spirituality by offering teaching and correction when necessary, providing companions for the journey, and offering a center for worship, sacrament, and reconciliation. Any believer who wants to mature in their faith will understand the importance of the faith community, realizing that they are not complete, and the church is not whole without their gifts (1 Cor 12:12–27).

Conclusion

This paper aimed to identify marks of maturity in the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ. Identifying these maturity characteristics is to discern areas in a disciple's life that should be present as one matures in the faith. If maturity marks are identified and understood, it will be possible to evaluate the maturity of a disciple. By pinpointing a missing or underdeveloped mark of maturity, it will be possible to provide suggestions to that disciple to help them in their growth area(s). For this purpose, four marks of mature faith were identified: a disciplined God-centered life, a life renewed in virtue and fruit, a confessional life of witness, and a life of community-centered engagement.

Each of these four marks was clarified to explain what should be visible in a disciple's life. The biblical precedent of each mark was then considered, and thought was given to how

¹⁵ Pelikan, *Acts*, 59–60.

other Christian thinkers have identified and explained the importance of each mark. Due to the broadness of these marks, further learning would be valuable for an individual who desires to help others grow in their maturity. By understanding each mark more fully, an individual will know more clearly what a mature disciple looks like in each characteristic. This will be especially important if it is noted that a disciple has significant potential for growth in a specified area, so the individual guiding them will be able to make practical suggestions to the disciple to help them obtain their desired development.

Further consideration should also be given to developing a survey that would help assess these four essential marks of maturity in the life of a disciple. This developed survey could then be used to identify the strengths of maturity and the growth areas for an individual. Using a survey where individuals rated themselves, a person guiding a disciple on the path to spiritual maturity would have a more informed place to start the journey. Paired with an understanding of the essential characteristics, this information will benefit the disciple seeking growth and their guide. Having a clear place to start will less likely frustrate a disciple by being able to celebrate their identified strengths in the marks of maturity and building on them to begin a maturity plan for identified growth areas. With God's help and removing any possible identified frustration, the disciple seeking growth will be more likely to continue the growth journey and ultimately be more successful.

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IRB APPROVAL LETTER

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 9, 2023

John Embrey
Seth Polk

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY22–23–1737 Preparing the Next Generation for Faith Ownership by Training Fathers in the Biblical Worldview

Dear John Embrey and Seth Polk,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds that your study does not meet the definition of human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your project is not considered human subjects research because it will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not “designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge” according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application. Any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. **If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.**

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

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office