

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

FACILITATING A CHANGE OF MIND ABOUT FATHER GOD
THROUGH MENTORING OF THE FATHERLESS

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

by

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Liberty University School of Divinity

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the most influential people in my life. First off to my grandmothers, Mary Madosky, who prayed for my soul every day of my life and successfully prayed myself and many of her children and grandchildren into the Kingdom. To my grandmother Mary Sciscio (Logan) who showed me the love of Christ in the way she lived out her unconditional commitment to me over her still thriving ninety-five years of life. To my parents, (George and Barbara), who gave me life and many opportunities to experience success. To my wife (Teri) aka saint Theresa, who made me a father and encouraged me to be the best father I could for my kid's sakes. To my children who have shown unwavering dedication to each other and to myself throughout my belated higher education endeavors and who have encourage me throughout this entire process. I love you with all my heart and I am proud to dedicate this work on fatherlessness to each of you; Lauren, Grace, Stephen II, Alexandria, Victoria, and Angelina.

ABSTRACT

FACILITATING A CHANGE OF MIND ABOUT FATHER GOD THROUGH MENTORING OF THE FATHERLESS.

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Liberty University School of Divinity 2015

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The consensus of published research has proven beyond question that fatherlessness is a crisis in America. Textbooks and autobiographies have covered and reported the statistical effects of fatherlessness; nonetheless, there is far less literature dealing with the solution of fatherlessness and even less literature from Church scholars on how the Church may participate in its correction. This thesis presents an understanding of fatherlessness and proposes a resolution to act on behalf of fatherless children. The resolution will be comprised in preparing Church leaders to equip Church laity to understand and to minister to the fatherless in their affliction effectively.

Word Count: 100

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Importance and Purpose of Research

The purpose of this thesis is to research and identify the Church's strengths and weaknesses to minister to fatherless children as commanded in James 1:27 to minister to the widows and orphans in their affliction. This thesis project will focus specifically on at-risk youth and the effects of fatherlessness resulting in incarceration. The result of this project is to challenge the church to develop a mentoring program that helps the mentor (disciple) to understand the problem of fatherlessness and thereby help to mitigate the effects of fatherlessness and its extenuating circumstances. This church program will be developed to support and equip the church to make disciple and mentors that are prepared to enter into a prison setting well equipped to share the freedom of Christ with at-risk young men and woman. This task will be accomplished through on the job training and classroom education, which will be combined with small group and relationship building skills.

Although fatherlessness extends to every economic and geographical area, the pilot of this program will be the heart of New Orleans, Louisiana, specifically, the inner-city district of the Ninth Ward.¹ In the hopes of bridging the gap between at-risk youth and their Savior Jesus Christ, the Board of Elders at RebuildNOLA embarked on the venture of producing a Strategic Ministry Plan.² This plan will be entrusted with the development of an all-encompassing youth ministry and outreach that identifies disciples and rehabilitated adolescents in the Ninth Ward of

¹ Pastor Richard Johnson of RebuildNola.org will partner with this thesis project to build an equipping ministry to make disciples who are prepared to share the Gospel in a prison setting with fatherless children. This will be done in conjunction with an already existing youth outreach ministry.

² Richard Johnson, pastor and founder of "RebuildNOLA" church and ministries. Accessed July, 25, 2015, <http://www.RebuildNOLA.org>.

the city of New Orleans, specifically “Desire” projects. This journey begins in the streets of the inner city by researching the negative influences that result in the incarceration, under-education, and high-risk behaviors of youth. The lifestyle of trauma and generational dysfunction leads these youth to at-risk lifestyles. These bondages can at times disproportionately culminate with incarceration for inner-city youth. These are the very same traumas (behaviors) that create barriers to a life changing relationship with Jesus Christ. These same behaviors hinder all at-risk adolescents while they navigate the critical transitions into adulthood and begin the formation of self-identity. These behaviors, dysfunctions, or dilemmas can cause road blocks or detours for the adolescent as they make critical life choices; however, the adolescent often lacks the critical skills to differentiate between valid information and things that can be harmful and manipulative.³

The circumstances in which these struggles will be identified are fatherlessness, poverty, crime, drugs, family dysfunction, and other undesirable influences. These are the same struggles that bring at-risk adolescents to a life of despair, unemployment, lack of education, addictions, incarceration, and worse yet, continued separation from their Creator. Some youths are able to build relationships within social and economic networks that can assist them in becoming successful adults and productive parts of society, while others never acquire the skills formed from these relationships, or turn away from, or fail to seek the skills from such networks. According to Clark’s *Inner City Disadvantage and Family Functioning*, greater familial disadvantage or adversity was clearly linked to increased risk of disturbance within these children.⁴ Research has shown that these very real disadvantages turn into perceptions, which

³ Gary Collins, *A Comprehensive Guide to Christian Counseling* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 241.

⁴ A. I. Clark, “Inner City Disadvantage and Family Functioning,” *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 9(2), (2000), 77.

quickly become maladaptive behaviors and erroneous thought processes.⁵ This strategic youth ministry program sets out to re-program these thought processes and point the adolescent to their Redeemer, their Savior, and His transformative power.

The stated purpose of this research is to address the responsibility of the Church to father the Fatherless. The purpose of this thesis includes ministry building development that will assist the Church to help alleviate and or mitigate the effects of fatherlessness that leads to at-risk behavior and incarceration. The importance of this thesis paper is to aid in a facilitating a change of mind in the Church so that it may in turn facilitate a change of heart in Fatherless children.

This thesis is important because unless the Church can facilitate a change in the mind of its people about their heavenly Father, these believers can never truly surrender to His Lordship; without Lordship there can be no significant transformation. Sanctification is the process all believers enter into after conversion; however, for the Fatherless, transformation is of mind (*Metanoia*) first. Understanding Jesus and His relationship with the Heavenly Father is either too difficult or sometimes even impossible to comprehend in the mind of the Fatherless child. Fatherlessness has so stripped the vision of Father that salvation and subsequent redemption are roads less traveled by Fatherless children.

It is of utmost importance for the Church to begin to grasp the depth of the Fatherless issue in America or the Church will continue to be ineffective in its (fatherlessness') eradication. Research supports that the problem is not simply that the Church lacks a heart for the Fatherless, but nonetheless contains a Fatherless heart. This thesis does not focus on curing the heart of the entire Church; instead, it begins with mentoring of a select group of men with a heart for Jesus and a desire to carry the gospel message into prisons everywhere. The problem is worth stating

⁵ Clark, "Inner City Disadvantage and Family Functioning," 77.

again. The Church does not contain a heart for the Fatherless and, even worse, research points to it containing a fatherless heart.

Statement of the Problem and Limitations

This thesis project addresses the stated issues and limits the development of ministries within an existing church model to programs that support incarcerated youth who are suffering from problems directly related to fatherlessness. This thesis will not develop church structure or deal with any doctrinal issues in the protestant or any other denomination. This thesis focuses on building and equipping a mentoring ministry by developing a six-week program to equip lay people to address the problem of Fatherlessness in a prison setting. The program equips mentors to work alongside God's Spirit to free those same youth from the bondage and suffered due to the church's inability to follow the James 1:27 model of true religion.

This thesis project does not focus on developing or equipping disciple for all Church ministries; however, this equipping curriculum could support all ministries. It focuses on an adult mentoring program that speaks to and helps alleviate the effects of Fatherlessness that lead to incarceration. This research primarily focuses on youth prison ministry and reentry lifestyle issue that leads to a reduced recidivism rates among youth offenders. The paper addresses the Church and the need for church-based mentoring programs to support these ministries to orphaned youth.

Theoretical Basis

This author spent over two years ministering to fatherless people in both adult and juvenile prison settings. The effects of Fatherlessness remained the most common denominator in both prison settings. The same hopelessness and generational confusion was common in inner-city youth that the author and his son observed in some of the ministry in which they participated. These ministries include working alongside Rebuild NOLA and other inner-city

youth ministries over the years. Fatherlessness knows no racial boundaries; the same behaviors and effects that culminated in incarceration were present in the youth of all ages, colors, and socio-economic levels.⁶ Fatherlessness affects all father absent children in a relatively similar fashion.⁷

The church's prison ministry that this author was actively involved in was Basic Christianity and Reentry Lifestyles;⁸ this was the focus of the federal prison ministry along with and salvation and discipleship being the focus of the juvenile detention camp. This ministry will focus on the Desire Project located in the Ninth Ward of New Orleans.⁹ This neighborhood is plighted with drugs, crime, and poverty; all the residual effects of fatherlessness. This author's son spent two years living in the desire projects. His residence was two blocks from where the levy broke during hurricane Katrina. Pastor Richard Johnson started a church plant in the Desire Projects and will look to disciple the people of the Ninth Ward.¹⁰ Although this program will be designed specifically for the inner city of New Orleans, this ministry can also be implemented in any geographic area as the effects of a Fatherless home knows no boundaries.

This thesis project links with the church in establishing a discipleship program geared toward building mentors, fathers, and leaders to mitigate the effects of Fatherlessness. This

⁶ Mark Strong, *The Church for the Fatherless: A Ministry Model for Societies Most Pressing Problem* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 14.

⁷ David Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem* (New York: BasicBook, 1995).

⁸ Reentry lifestyles is a lesson plan developed and modified by (FAC) Fellowship Alliance Chapel. This program is a modification of ALPHA, a church outreach program and a prison fellowship module. This program is design to address life outside of prison and how God and Jesus can help them to life a better life that keeps the prisoners from returning to former lives of crime and therefore subsequently returning to prison (recidivism).

⁹ Desire project is a government housing project built in the heart of the 9th Ward of New Orleans. This project was the center of the disaster from flooding due to levy damage during hurricane Katrine.

¹⁰ Pastor Richard Johnson was raised in the Desire projects and returned and remained after hurricane Katrina to minister to the people of New Orleans and specifically the 9th Ward. He was Stephen Madosky II's Pastor and founder of RebuildNola.org.

project's goals are to help the church do a better job at being a surrogate parent for Fatherless children, especially the inner city fatherless. James wrote that true religion, that which is pure and undefiled, is to take care of the fatherless and widows in their afflictions.¹¹ The purpose of this thesis is to do just that. It will accomplish this by helping the church to be better prepared to visit incarcerated youth; specifically, speaking to the issue of fatherlessness. These visits will have the specific objective to deliver the hope of the Gospel of Christ through the ministry of mentorship.

Statement of Methodology

The initial reasoning for the planning process was to develop a prison ministry to support an associated church plant and the inner-city ministry named RebuildNOLA. This organization was formed after the devastating effects of hurricane Katrina and focuses on supporting the youth of New Orleans, specifically in the Ninth Ward. After careful evaluation, this plan will develop a prison ministry alongside an existing youth program. These programs will be supportive of each other and embrace Bible study, sports training, educational tutoring, and discipleship programs. These programs will help alleviate the symptoms of inner-city life and to mitigate the long term effects of hopelessness due to the circumstances surrounding life in New Orleans' Ninth-Ward. This ministry will focus on incarcerated and or adjudicated delinquents, known as *at-risk youth* (those displaying high-risk behaviors; many inner-city youth are at-risk), all the while addressing the problems of broken families, fatherlessness, under and uneducated citizenry, drug and alcohol use and abuse, crime, and social decay.

This thesis will develop a discipleship and mentoring ministry that will disciple to youth through equipped mentors who are prepared to speak to the heart of fatherlessness. Mentoring

¹¹ James 1:27, The Holy Bible, New Living Translation. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishing, 2008.

and relationship building will be the centrality of the outreach to inner-city youth. The leadership outreach will begin with Richard and April Johnson and four identifiable adult disciples.¹² These four leaders will be the first to take a leadership role in this ministry expansion. Interviews with Richard and April Johnson will be conducted. Outside interviews with specific outside ministry leaders will review past plan strengths and weaknesses along with evaluation of resources and ministry's that are available to RebuildNOLA post Katrina.

This thesis project is broken down into six chapters starting with this introductory chapter. These introductory issues include a statement of the problem (skewed view of fatherhood). This thesis will then address the Church's ineffectiveness with Fatherless children in prison. The Statement of Limitations as read above has set the boundaries for this project. The theoretical basis outlines the reason for this study and the biblical and/or clinical support for this research. The statement of methodology will present the outline of the core of the paper. This methodology section deals directly with the accumulation of information and design of the research that will be used in this thesis. The introductory section culminates in a literature review. This review included an examination of current scholarship and pertinent information written on the specific topic of Fatherlessness, mentoring, church discipleship, and prison ministry.

The body of the thesis begins with presentation of the understanding of Fatherlessness and the picture of the battle that needs to be waged. This picture is presented in Chapter Two. Chapter Three lays out the research design and methodology, which includes thesis a 50-question survey that was sent out to ministry leaders across the United States covering a majority of demographics. These questions addressed the knowledge and availability of church leaders and

¹² Richard and April Johnson are co-founders of RebuildNola.org and Pastors of the local church in the 9th Ward.

their ability to address the problem of Fatherlessness in both their own churches and in their ministries. It was the intention of this project to accumulate information based on demographics as to the preparedness of the church to minister to the Fatherless in order to develop and provide information for building a well-prepared mentoring model that may facilitate a better equipped congregation.

Chapter Four addresses the finding of such research and the interpretation of the data. This summary supports or rejects the thesis problem, and summarizes the results from Chapter Three. The summary data will be used in preparation for the curriculum building of the proposed mentoring ministry in Chapter Five, which will be followed by the conclusion in Chapter Six. Chapter Four tells the reader the significance of the research and review up until this point and what this paper proposes to be done about the problem. This data is critical in assisting the Church in being part of the solution to this problem. Chapter Five will present the actual six-week ministry model and Chapter Six concludes with a review of the thesis.

Review of Literature

The purpose of the literature review is to discover and uncover the research sources that present information addressing the topic of the thesis. The specific intent of this research was to examine current literature in order to identify information that was written or being written about mentoring the fatherless heart in a prison. The review of literature proved that current scholarship and ministry established a very effective and efficient overview of the problem of Fatherlessness. The current literature included some of the primary and speculative causes to the problem.

The reviewed literature includes theses, dissertations, memoirs, therapies, books, autobiographies, biographies, manuals, handbooks, scholarly evaluations, articles, and journals.

This researcher also reviewed guidelines, workbooks, and workshops along with some of the life stories of pertinent and current authors on the problem of fatherlessness. The current reviews of topics included church structure, prison ministry, mentoring, discipleship, attachment theory, equipping handbooks, and outdoor mentoring programs. This review proved that a thorough overview and evaluation into the issue of fatherlessness exists, as well as an evaluation and overview of the ministry of mentoring, other church ministries, not to mention fatherlessness causes, effects, and statistics. The literature review proved that there is a deep concern for those in prison; however, much of the literature dances around the problem and the statistical proof of the problem without driving home an applicable solution to the problem of ministering to the Fatherless and incarcerated persons.

This thesis addressed specifically the ministry of preparing and equipping church members to mentor the fatherless heart in a prison setting. This review did not uncover research that has spoken directly to the heart of the Fatherless in prison. Better yet, no literature was identified showing how to equip church laity and ministers to better speak to the heart of this crisis. These ministries and literature end where this thesis begins, in prison, with those who answer God's call to mentor fatherless youth. The literature review begins with writings and authors that identify and quantify the problem of fatherlessness, then moves on to present writings that move to the heart and effect of the problem. The review concludes as it moves towards a review of more solution-focused literature that can help redeem the heart of the fatherless.

Books

David Blankenhorn is the author of a key piece of literature on Fatherlessness. In his writing *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem*, Blankenhorn

presented the facts on Fatherlessness.¹³ Blankenhorn is the Founder and president of the Institute for American Values and the Chief Editor of *Rebuilding the Nest: A New Commitment to the American family*.¹⁴ In his book Blankenhorn posited questions like why is fatherhood declining? What are the consequences of this decline? What can be done about it? Blankenhorn went beyond statistics as he attacked the ideal and institution of Fatherhood. Blankenhorn analyzed five almost-Father types: Deadbeat Dad, Visiting Dad, Sperm Father, Step Father, and finally, Good Family Man.¹⁵ It is this final father that Blankenhorn laid out the goal of a father for every child. Blankenhorn posits that society can be quickly divided into two sections, not race or gender, or education. It can be divided by those who grew up with a father and those who did not. Blankenhorn is one of the premier and frequently quoted sources on the topic of statistics and effect of fatherlessness. The book stands as the basis of this paper and its statistical proof of fatherlessness and the long-term and short-term effects of the behavior.

Donald Miller and John Sowers are the men of *The Mentoring Project*.¹⁶ These men are not only authors, but have built an organization to support fatherless youth across America. Sower is the current president of *The Mentoring Project* based in Washington State and has written many books, such as *Fatherless Generation: Redeeming the Story*, *The Mentoring Field Guide*, and *The Heroic Path: In Search of the Masculine Heart*.¹⁷ Miller, the founder of *The Mentoring Project* has written books such as *Father Fiction: Chapters for a Fatherless*

¹³ Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America*.

¹⁴ This organization was founded by Blankenhorn to promote a think tank between citizens and government <http://www.americanvalues.org/about/>.

¹⁵ Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America*.

¹⁶ Mentoring project is the organization that Miller started and Sowers late came to run.

¹⁷ John Sowers, *The Fatherless Generation: Redeeming the Story* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010); The Mentoring Project, *Mentoring Field Guide: Rewriting the Fatherless Story through Mentoring* (TMProject, 2014); John Sowers, *The Heroic Path: In Search of the Masculine Heart*. New York: Jericho Books, 2014.

Generation, along with others that this thesis will not review. *The Mentoring Project* was founded by the fatherless man, Donald Miller and was headed up by another fatherless man, John Sowers. Both of these men are prominent writers on the topic of fatherlessness and both men have a heart for mentoring the fatherless.

The book *Father Fiction* by Donald Miller is a call to arms for men to stand up and talk about and deal with their father issues.¹⁸ It's a call to reverse the tides of fatherlessness and to bring recovery to those men and woman who grew up without a father. Miller defines the problem of fatherlessness as a crisis of manhood that is filling prisons, and breaking the spirits of children. Miller opens the books with a list of the cast of characters who stepped in as a father figure of his own because of his biological father's absence. As a fatherless boy, he equates having a father with stories of dragons and fairy tales. This father is mythical, not real, something that only exists in a child's imagination. Miller is an excellent wordsmith using real life stories to describe the plight and the hopes of the fatherless. Sowers and Miller support the statistical proof of fatherlessness, yet they propose an outside the church correction that focuses on mentoring a fatherless child. These authors never touch incarcerated youth and they outsource the training and solution because the church appears to be a difficult place for this mission to be accomplished.

This paper reviewed several of Dr. Tim Clinton's books, and primarily focuses on the information found in his book *God Attachment* and *Turn Your Life Around: Break Free from Your Past to a New and Better You*.¹⁹ In his writings, Clinton peels back the layers of pain and suffering that are a direct result of the fatherlessness condition. Many of Clinton's books are

¹⁸ Donald Miller, *Father Fiction: Chapters for a Fatherless Generation* (New York: Howard Books, 2010).

¹⁹ Tim Clinton and Joshua Straub, *God Attachment* (New York, NY: Howard Books, 2010); Tim Clinton, *Turn Your Life Around: Break Free from Your Past to a New and Better You* (New York: Faith Words, 2006).

clinical and deal with a variety of issues; he has a heart for the fatherless and exposes the disease of fatherlessness at its deepest point. Dr. Clinton is the president of the American Association of Christian counselors and author of many books.²⁰ He is a professor of counseling pastoral care. He is also the Executive Director of liberty University Center for Counseling Family Studies and he is married and has two children.²¹

Dr. Clinton stated that he wrote *Turn your Life Around* for those who are primarily facing tough times, so that they could be released from their pain in order to peruse their God given destinies. His book describes a personal descent into pain and then the recovery process as Clinton is helping his reader walk out on to the other side. The hurting person's heart grows cold towards God and he or she feels unloved. These feelings open people to try to fill that void in their hearts with other things, which God refers to as idols. All of Clinton's reviewed books focus on the suffering and the effects of the brokenness of fatherlessness and how it changes the course of a child's life through faulty attachments.

Robert S. McGee is the author of *Father Hunger: A Search for Significance*. This book delved into the immediate and long term problems of Fatherlessness. It spoke to the void that is left in abandoned children. McGee called this void the *Father Hunger*. McGee is the founder and president of Rapha, a Christ-centered dual diagnosis (psychiatric and addiction problems) health care facility. He is the author of several books such as *Getting Unstuck* and *The Search for Significance*. The author proposed that his book would help the reader to recognize, release, and subsequently get past the pain of Fatherlessness. Father hunger is described as that deep craving or longing for a child to experience the love that only a father can give. In many fatherless children, this unfulfilled craving gnaws at their very soul and is perpetuated in hopelessness and

²⁰ Clinton, *Turn Your Life Around*.

²¹ Ibid., Back inside cover.

culminated many destructive behaviors. This knowledge is important when training mentors and helping them build empathy and rapport for the cause of the fatherless.

Charles Ryrie, in *So Great Salvation*, confirmed that coming to Jesus requires a change of mind, in the Greek language *metanoia*, not necessarily a change of behavior, or *repentance* to receive salvation.²² Many fatherless girls and boys have trouble understanding and receiving Christ. The barriers are poor when understanding the father, nonetheless the wrong understanding of salvation. Salvation is about what Jesus did to make you right with God, not what you did on your own to get right with Him. Many kids feel unworthy and live less than exemplary lives. So a proper understanding of salvation could make the difference to accepting Jesus or continuing to live without the freedom that can be had in Christ Jesus.

David Stoop's literary contributions to this thesis are twofold; his contributions deal with forgiveness and walking the survivor through a process that brings them closer to their creator and closer to recovery. Stoop clarifies the problem in *Making Peace with your Father*.²³ He accomplished his goals by beginning with the core of the problem, stating that people have a distorted view of God. He wrote that people were not ready to internalize the truth about God's fatherhood until they have worked out their issues with their earthly father.²⁴ Many people do not truly understand who God is and what their relationship is with Him. They see God as a continuation of their earthly father. The hurts and the imperfections of their earthly fathers are projected onto their heavenly fathers. This attitude or phenomenon many times is carried forward in a dysfunctional and unhealthy relationship with the Heavenly Father. Stoop posited that the earthly father is not the model for fatherhood; it is the Heavenly Father that is the perfect picture

²² Charles Ryrie, *So Great Salvation* (Chicago: Moody, 1997).

²³ David Stoop, *Making Peace with Your Father* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1992).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 252.

of fatherhood and unconditional love. The understanding of the Fatherhood of God is paramount in this theses curriculum development.

Stoop's other literary contribution to this project came in the writing of *Forgiving Our Parents and Forgiving Ourselves: A Definitive Guide*.²⁵ Stoop is the founder and director of the Center for Family Therapy and is also a prolific author. He and his wife Jan have teamed up to conduct seminars across the United States. They have addressed topics such as marital relationship, parenting issues, men's issues, and fathering and forgiveness. This book was about uncovering the root of your pain and how forgiveness can set you free from that pain. Stoop concluded that running away does not free people from the influences of a dysfunctional family. Many times people take that dysfunction and repeat the behaviors. This understanding is critical in know what the future holds for fatherless children.

Dr. Strong's book spoke to the issue of fatherlessness and the heart of the Church. This writing was the most pertinent to the issue of mentoring the fatherless heart in prison, because it spoke to the fatherless heart in Church. Dr. Strong earned a Doctorate of Ministry in leadership and spirituality from George Fox Seminar and is currently on the Board of Regents at this same seminary. *The Fatherless Church: A Ministry Model for Society's Most Pressing Problems*²⁶ was written because Strong believes that every child has a right to a Father experience and to be exposed to the blessing of a father. Strong's book attacks the problem at its heart – the Church. This book provided the best insight to the focus of this thesis, nonetheless it does not cover prison ministry at all.

²⁵ David Stoop, *Forgiving Our Parents and Forgiving Ourselves: A Definitive Guide* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2011).

²⁶ Mark Strong, *The Fatherless Church: A Ministry Model for Society's Most Pressing Problems* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012).

When Prisoners Return: Why We Care and How You and Your Church Can Help is written by Pat Nolan, who was a long time California State Assemblyman incarcerated for 25 months in a federal prison for racketeering.²⁷ Nolan was a friend of Chuck Colson (Watergate and Prison Fellowship) who ran the criminal justice arm of prison fellowship. Nolan stated that in order for a prisoner re-entry program to be successful, government support is not enough; a prisoner needs a loving citizen to put his or her arms around them and show them the love of Christ. This love is communicated and provided for by the local church community. Nolan called for a church-based ministry that is focused on re-entry lifestyles to help with the moral aspects of crime. Prisons are doing very little to transform prisoners into law-abiding citizenry. Many come out of incarceration learning more antisocial behaviors than when they arrived.

Statistics show as many as 75% of prisoners have addiction problems. Only 20% or 1 in 5 actually receives help. They have lost most of their rights, which would include driving, voting, student loans, and residency restrictions. The odds are stacked against the released prisoner. With a 67% recidivism rate, the best thing society can do is to prepare the released prisoner to be successful when they arrive home.²⁸ This writing provides concrete actions that the Church can carry out to help returning offenders.

This thesis performed many ministry evaluations, and this researcher read or spoke to ministry leaders and founders and includes a literature review of many of their writings. The writer visited numerous ministry sites and spoke to men with a heart for fatherless boys and incarcerated individuals. It was not the attempt of this review to evaluate the quality of these ministries, but to evaluate the Church and its ability to effectively minister to these children.

²⁷ Pat Nolan, *When Prisoners Return: Why Care and How You and Your Church Can Help* (Merrifield, VA: Prison Fellowship, 2004).

²⁸ Ibid.

There are many prison ministries such as Karios, Bill Glass, Prison Fellowship, Alpha Prison Ministry, and numerous others.²⁹ There are also quality ministries and governmental agencies and groups using a multitude of events and opportunities to help with the issue of fatherlessness. Some of the organizations this thesis found helpful were KOZ (Kids Outdoor Zone), Fathers in the Field, Fathers Matter, and more; however, none of these organizations addresses the heart of the problem, which is the Church's inability to equip mentors to address the issue of fatherlessness in prison or in fact anywhere else. These ministers are doing good works and it appears they are stepping up their game to fill in the gaps for a church that is lacking in its very commission.

David Murrow is the author of the book *Why Men Hate Going to Church*.³⁰ This book was written to address the problem of men and church. Murrow is a family man and an award-winning television producer based in Alaska. Murrow is the director for the Church for Men, which is an organization, created and designed to help congregations reconnect with the world's largest unreached people group (men). His book *Why Men Hate Going to Church* does not call men back to church, but calls church back to men. Murrow's message exhorts churches and congregations to rethink their approach for attracting and discipling men. Murrow asserted that growing churches attract men while shrinking congregations lack a male presence. The purpose of the book is not to place blame, but to offer up solutions that may attract and keep men in the church. Men are the key to changing fatherlessness and the Church is the catalyst to changing the hearts of men.

²⁹ These ministries are specific to fatherless youth or prison ministries they are mostly outside organizations who are using Church and Church people to support their ministries to the fatherless.

³⁰ David Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011).

Tony Dungy and Nathan Whitaker wrote *The Mentor Leader: Secrets to Building People and Teams That Win Consistently*. Tony Dungy was the first African-American head coach to win the Super Bowl; he was also the first head coach to lead his team to the playoffs for 10 consecutive years. He is currently retired and a football analyst for NBC. Nathan Whitaker is a Harvard Law School graduate and currently represents the NFL and many college coaches. “Conventional wisdom says that leaders are born, but I don't believe that’s true,” says Dungy. “From what I've seen, positive, life-changing leadership is an acquired trait, learn from interaction with others who know how to lead and lead well.”³¹ Dungy wrote, “Mentor leadership is all about shaping, nurturing, empowering, and growing. It's all about relationships, integrity, and perpetual learning. Success is measured in changed lives, strong character, and eternal values, rather than material, temporal achievement, or status.”³² This secular book with Christian foundations speaks directly to mentoring of fatherless children outside the Church. The Church can learn much from this approach to mentoring.

Gregory Bradley grew up in Richmond, Virginia and Johnson City, Tennessee. He completed a Ph.D. in the Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism at the University of Notre Dame with a dissertation on the topic of generosity to the poor in the book of Sirach.³³ Before coming to the Catholic University of America in 2014, he was an assistant professor at the University of Scranton and has served as a visiting faculty at the University of Notre Dame and St. John’s School of Theology (Collegeville, Minnesota).³⁴ His article titled *The Postexilic Exile in Third*

³¹ Tony Dungy and Nathan Whitaker, *The Mentor Leader: Secrets to Building People and Teams that Win Consistently* (Winter Parks, FL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010), x.

³² *Ibid.*, xviii.

³³ The Catholic University of America, “Bradley C. Gregory, Ph.D., Biography,” September 8, 2015, accessed October 15, 2015, <http://trs.cua.edu/faculty/Gregory/index.cfm>.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

*Isaiah: Isaiah 61:1-3 in Light of Second Temple Hermeneutics*³⁵ refers to Isaiah the prophet along with Jesus' use of the words recorded in Isaiah 61 to announce His ministry in Luke 4. A further look into Christ's announcement promises freedom to captives referencing the Jewish year of Jubilee. Christ promise to return the prisoner from exile and return to them that which was taken; because of their disobedience. This is a promise of Christ's that everyone who is in bondage should understand. It is for this that Christ sets people free; stand firm and do not submit again to that yoke of slavery (Gal. 5:1). This is the foundation of this thesis prison ministry.³⁶

The Reverend Alicia Vargas is Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Multicultural and Contextual Ministry Studies at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, a member of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California.³⁷ Dr. Vargas served as prison Chaplain in several institutions and teaches Ministries across cultures with a background in Spanish worship and theatre. Dr. Vargas currently teaches Ministry Across Cultures, Public Ministry, and Spanish for Worship and directs individual student projects in jail/prison ministry and public ministry.³⁸ She has published articles in the area of Mujerista Christology, and the book published by Augsburg Fortress: *Como Estudiar la Biblia/ How to Study the Bible*. She has served as a Jail and Prison Chaplain in several correctional facilities and previously, taught Spanish Theatre at St. Olaf and Vassar Colleges. Her article titled *Who Ministers to Whom: Matthew 25:31-46 and Prison Ministry* shows the duality of ministering in Jesus' name. When Jesus states that visiting

³⁵ Gregory Bradley, "The Postexilic Exile in Third Isaiah: Isaiah 61:1-3 in Light of Second Temple Hermeneutics," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 126 No. 3 (2007): 475-496.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Alicia Vargas, "Who Ministers to Whom: Matthew 25:31-46 and Prison Ministry" *Dialog* 52, no. 2 (2013): 128-137.

³⁸ Graduate Theological Union (GTU), <http://gtu.edu/academics/faculty-directory/o-q/vargas-alicia>, accessed February 10, 2015.

someone in prison and ministering to them; it is like ministering to Him. The encouragement behind Jesus' message and the paradox of the Kingdom of God is that when the servant thinks he is blessing others in God's kingdom, it is actually he is who is being blessed. The scripture that supports this idea would be Jesus' very words to encourage his disciples to put themselves last and to serve others (Mark 9:35). This is a missionary call by Jesus directing His disciples to minister to people in specific ways and specific places. Sadie Cantone Pounder graduated from John Harris High School in Harrisburg, PA; Gettysburg College (BA); George Mason University (MA); and, the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (Masters of Divinity), Pounder also earned a Licensed Professional Counselor and was ordained a Lutheran pastor in the ELCA in 2009.³⁹ Her article titled *Prison Theology: A Theology of Liberation, Hope and Justice* adjoined prison ministry with the theology of liberation. Pounder posited that prison theology is one of liberation theology and liberation from the oppression of prison life and the criminal justice system. Pounder wrote to encourage Christian to get involved in prison ministry to help liberate prisoner from the prison culture by sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.⁴⁰

Stephen T. Hall is the director of religious services and community involvement at Indiana Department of Correction.⁴¹ His experience as a prison chaplain and state director of prison chaplaincy services has made this author uniquely qualified to address prison life and ministry. Hall, in his article titled *A Working Theology of Prison Ministry*, lays out expectations for the prison minister as he distinguishes proper protocol for particular settings as he address the major issues facing a prison ministry. Hall singles out hope, worthiness, presence, forgiveness,

³⁹ Sadie Pounder, "Prison Theology: A Theology of Liberation, Hope and Justice," *Dialog* 47, no. 3 (Sep 1, 2008): 278-291.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Stephen Hall, LinkedIn Profile, LinkedIn.com, accessed February 9, 2015, <https://www.linkedin.com/pub/stephen-hall/29/a20/934>.

power, and inclusiveness in his topics in his article. Hall looks at the unique setting of prison life and tackles topics in a theological context in the midst of that prison life.⁴² “My experience after making the transition from parish to prison was that I had entered an arena in which the needs were so great that never again would I question whether I was in a place that I was needed and could make a difference.”⁴³

Luis Villarreal is the founder and president of Save Our Youth Mentoring. This is a 17-year-old ministry that mentors at-risk urban youth in the Denver-Metro area.⁴⁴ Villarreal and the Save Our Youth staff developed a practical mentoring ministry model to address the basics of startup, mentor and staff development, and ongoing management for mentoring success that keeps mentor match longevity as a priority for spiritual and emotional growth. Villarreal is a licensed clinical social worker and was the pastor of two urban churches serving impoverished Latino individuals and their families. He writes of the Christian reluctance to address the inner-city and its problems and also equates the inner-city ministry with the ministry of grief. The focus of the article is the inability to move beyond the problem of poverty in the inner city. Villarreal’s article covers mental health issues facing inner city people taking into account the environmental factors stemming from the inner-city situations. “Inner-city clientele do not frequently respond to the conventional modes of treatment. Community work and crisis intervention seem more relevant.”⁴⁵

Review of Scripture

⁴² S. Hall, “A Working Theology of Prison Ministry,” *The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling* 58, no. 3 (2004):169.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Luis Villarreal, <http://speakerpedia.com/speakers/luis-villarreal>

⁴⁵ Luis Villarreal, “Models for Effective Inncercity Ministry,” *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 6, no. 4 (Sep, 1978): 298-304.

The foundational scripture of this thesis work is found in James 1:27: To minister to the widows and orphans in their affliction. This is a call to the Church to deal with the problem of fatherlessness and to serve, minister, and share the love of Christ so that those affected can be lifted them out of their afflictions. This foundational scripture forms the basis for all the research presented.

The prison ministry that the thesis idea is founded on is found in the book of Isaiah, specifically Isaiah 61:1-3. In Luke 4:18 it is written: “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.” Isaiah announces a reversal of “blessing for cursing” to an exiled (imprisoned) Jewish people. Isaiah and Jesus alike are announcing the year of the Lord’s favor (Jubilee). This proclamation is imperative for fatherless incarcerated youth to grasp. God’s wrath would be turning from his people towards their enemies. Jesus announcement of His coming to take God’s wrath and to replace it with blessing through faith in him is the very promise of Luke 4:18. This freedom is the hope of all who want to rise above their eternal situation. This verse is important to this thesis since it is the name of the prison ministry, “Isaiah 61 Ministries,” setting the captives free.

The Old Testament contains many verses that support the idea that God will stand in for and father the fatherless. Psalm 10:14 states that “You, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand.” The victims commit themselves to you; you have been the helper of the fatherless.⁴⁶ The New Living Translations translates this verse as “He defends the orphans.”⁴⁷ Hopelessness is the foundation of fatherlessness. The Bible is replete with verses that assure the fatherless that God is on their side. This is a call to take refuge in the Lord all who

⁴⁶ Psalms 10:14 The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (Crossway, 2011).

⁴⁷ Psalms 10:14 (New Living Translations).

are oppressed, and afflicted by the loss of their earthly fathers. Jesus identifies with the brokenness of the human condition and he promises rest to all those who find refuge in Him. Jesus sees the injustice and promises to make it right. He is the perfect Father that promises to step in when the earthly father abandons their responsibility.

The New Testament also supports the fatherless as well as fatherhood. Paul writes in support of fatherhood,

I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.⁴⁸

Paul had full confidence in Timothy. He had enough confidence to send Timothy to communicate to others as to what it looks like to remain in Jesus. Paul was the spiritual father to Timothy and the Corinthians and he exhorted them to do as he did and be imitators of him. This is the crux of mentoring, being an example for someone to see and to learn from them. Timothy was a second generation mentor, as he was mentored by Paul and then Paul sent him to mentor others.

In the Gospel of John, the apostle John wrote, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”⁴⁹ Jesus had promised not to leave his disciples as spiritual orphans. He had promised His Spirit would come and dwell in the hearts of the believer. Not only would they not be left alone, but the Spirit would remind them of all the things Jesus taught them. He also let them know that He would remain in the Father and if they would remain in Him they too would be with the Father. That’s a great promise for a fatherless child to always have the Father at his or her side. This is what Jesus promised them. Jesus said He would never leave or forsake them.

⁴⁸ I Corinthians 4:14-18(ESV).

⁴⁹ John 14:18-20 (ESV).

The effects of fatherlessness can damage a young child's heart; however, Ezekiel wrote a promise of God's when he penned, "I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh."⁵⁰ God the Father promises a new heart, a heart that is drawn with affection towards the Lord. This new heart will be the very heart of His Son; a compassionate and loyal heart. This new heart will enable God's child to obey Him, turn towards Him, and away from his wayward patterns. At Pentecost, God sent the Spirit to indwelt believers, giving them a new heart. When a believer accepts Jesus they receive God's Spirit along with a new heart. They are a new creation the old is gone and the new is here to stay.

Samuel tells of a father that may discipline His children, nonetheless He will never take His love from His child. He records this promise, "I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he sins, I will correct and discipline him with the rod, like any father would do. But my favor will not be taken from him."⁵¹ God's covenant with David is never based on David's worthiness, but on God's faithfulness. God said that he would be David's father and although He would discipline him He will never remove his commitment and blessing from him. Children of God have that same promise today in Jesus Christ.

God does not leave fate to one's abilities. He provides His saving grace in the midst of the fatherless condition. Paul told His readers this when he wrote the book of Ephesians. Paul recorded, "For by grace you have been saved through faith."⁵² Only by God's grace have believers been chosen, forgiven, and adopted into God's family. It is not by any great feat of their own ability, but because God so loved the world, He sent Jesus. Even after all unrighteous

⁵⁰ Ezekiel 36:26 (ESV).

⁵¹ 2 Samuel 7:14 (NLT).

⁵² Ephesians 2:8-10 (ESV).

acts, the believer is made righteous in God sight through the shed blood of His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus has paid the price for all believers' sins; past, present, and future. Knowing that this is the case Jesus has set the believer free and they are to rest securely in His arms, because nothing can separate them from the love of Christ.

The injuries inflicted by fatherlessness can be devastating and leave lifelong scars that affect all the fatherless child's relationships. Joel wrote, "I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you."⁵³ God can restore the person that he created, back to wholeness through faith in His Son. The damage of fatherlessness is very much like the devastation of the plague of locust, nonetheless the God of the fatherless can restore the fatherless child.

Apostle Luke told his readers, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He visited and redeemed His people."⁵⁴ God through Jesus is the redeemer of the believer's life story. He is the author and finisher of humanity's faith. When believers come to faith in Jesus they are new creation and God uses their past story to fulfill His plan. Like the devastation that Joel spoke of as the locusts devoured everything in its path, sometimes fatherlessness can have destructive consequences as well; however, God can restore everything that fatherless has taken.

Paul stood in the gap for Onesimus when he wrote to Philemon, "For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a bondservant, but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother."⁵⁵ Paul pled his case to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus a possible offender of Philemon. Paul urged Philemon to receive Onesimus back, not as a returned offender, but as a brother in Christ. Paul went even

⁵³ Joel 2:25 (ESV).

⁵⁴ Luke 1:68 (ESV).

⁵⁵ Philemon 1:15-16 (ESV).

further and asked Philemon to count any offense that Onesimus may have perpetrated against Philemon to Paul's account. This is an example of men standing up for other men who may have made mistakes. This relationship shifted from offender to brother in Christ.

Paul told his church that God has given gifts to His people. These gifts were to edify and build up His bride, the Church. Paul writes to the Ephesians, "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry."⁵⁶ Men are not a by-product of church growth; they are the cause of it. Jesus focused on a group of men and built His Church from there. Informal worship, on the job training, and ministry projects are more conducive and attractive for men. Small group weekly worship is more intimate as this is a successful practice in the mega church model. Pastors mostly have traits that favor women. Men are attracted to men who are appropriately masculine. Jesus exhibits traits revealing both the lion and the lamb. Creating a masculine environment does not chase women away; instead, they find it attractive. Paul supports this church structure in his writings to the Ephesians.

Mentoring is imitating. The apostle Paul's told his readers to be like him as he is being more like Christ. He writes, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." Paul exhorted the Corinthians to imitate him as he imitated Jesus. Paul mentored people and entire churches by being a proper example of what it was like to follow Jesus. He told the people, "If you are not sure what it looks like to be a Christ follower, just keep your eyes on me as I keep my eyes of Christ."⁵⁷

Jesus told his disciples that they should serve each other and serve people. He promised them a great reward for this activity. Jesus was recorded as saying, "For I was hungry and you

⁵⁶ Ephesians 4:11-13 (ESV).

⁵⁷ 1 Corinthians 11:1 (ESV).

gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”⁵⁸ In order to be great in God’s Kingdom, one must serve. Jesus rebuked two of His disciples for seeking to sit at His right hand in heaven. Jesus’ words encouraged His disciples to serve others, just as He came to serve. This verse reveals the blessings that come by faith in Jesus and those blessings are released through obedience to Jesus in servitude. Jesus called His disciples to carry out works of mercy in light of the coming of the Kingdom of God and pending judgment. The sheep and goats were reflective of those who trusted Jesus and whose deeds supported that commitment.

The Apostle John exhorted his readers not to get enmeshed in the world and its desires. John writes, “Do not love the world or the things in the world.”⁵⁹ The Christian Church of the new millennium did have a biblical obligation to liberate the world’s people from poverty and oppression; the deliverance is not in the eradication of social injustice, but through the delivering of the Good News of Jesus Christ. From the beginning of Judaism through present day Christianity, God’s people have looked forward to a better time and place. This paradisiacal location was thought to come with its economic freedom and deliverance from a government of persecution. Much to their dismay the Messiah came and ushered in a very different freedom, built not on a kingdom tied to this world, but of the next. He delivered a promise of the freedom from the oppression of sin. This promise was combined with a promise of reconciliation with God, which included the abolition of animal sacrifice. God called His people to faith and trust in the one true sacrifice that eliminated oppression and delivered freedom on and through the cross at Calvary.

⁵⁸ Matthew 25:35-46 (ESV).

⁵⁹ 1 John 2:15-17 (ESV).

Christ is the emancipator; he has delivered humanity from slavery to sin, an exodus from the depraved condition of all mankind. The promise of a new life in grace and freedom is delivered through faith in Jesus, freedom from the worst form of slavery; slavery to sin. Liberation theology defines sin in terms of man's inhumanity to man. However, while liberation theology focuses on the Christian doctrine of sin, as pertains to the flesh, this theology put in the back seat the works of the devil and the works of sin as a blatant hostility towards God.

Fatherless children are made in the image of God. Although they can bear the scars and marks of fatherlessness, they are still God's creation. Moses recorded God's words that confirm these statements, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."⁶⁰ The climax of creation is man. God created human beings in His image and even in their fallen state that spirit and image still exist inside each and every human being alive. This includes prisoners and poverty stricken inner city youth. God called His creation good and loved them so dearly that He made them and gave them dominion over the earth.

⁶⁰ Genesis 1:26-27 (ESV).

CHAPTER 2

FATHERLESSNESS

The State of Fatherlessness

The problem of fatherlessness is not a new problem. This issue has evolved in western civilization over the past few hundred years. It started with the death of the patriarchal system that was replaced with a Fraternal Republic. This change shook fatherhood to the core of its being.¹ Over 40% of children in the U.S. do not live with their birth father. By age 18, half of all children will have lived apart from him for some or most of their lives.² The trend is directly related to rising divorce rates as well as the increases in unwed maternity. The latter phenomenon accounts for one third of all American birth.³ Much of the research on fatherlessness ties this problem to much of the social and moral decay of western civilization. Many agencies, including this researcher, believe that the fix for this problem is restoration and recognition of the importance of fatherhood. This would include enacting proper legislation that provides restrictions on divorce and places mandates on father involvement in his family. The decline of the institution of fatherhood slipped even further during the industrial revolution. This reduction has led to a decrease of father influence that is a direct consequence of taking the father out of the home. The progressive change of the institution of fatherhood would continue into the 21st century.

¹ John R. Gillis, "Marginalization of Fatherhood in Western Civilization," *Childhood*, no 7 (May 2000): 226.

² *Ibid.*, 228.

³ *Ibid.*

Traditionally the leading cause of single parenthood or fatherlessness was death of a partner.⁴ Recently the players in this phenomenon have changed to include divorce, separation, unwed-mothers, single motherhood, single parent adoption, incarceration, as well emotionally detached fathers in the house.⁵ In 2010, 40.7 % of all births in the United States were to unwed women.⁶ FastStats proposed that 27% of children in America are raised in single parent homes, compared to 16% worldwide.⁷ This research also concludes that over 50% of single parent homes fall below the poverty level in most countries while 27% of them do in the United States. In America 80% of single parent families are headed by mothers; 45% are the result of divorce, while 1.7% are widowed, and 34% and rising have never been married⁸ (What Do Single Parent Statistics Tell Us?, www.singleparentcenter.net/single-parent-statistics.html Single Parent Center, 2011). Over 80% of these single mothers also work, and as high as 50% work full time.⁹

Finances are only part of the problem of single parenting. Insufficient parenting time is the largest problem. This lack of parenting time or guardianship is directly correlated to social and moral ills. Choosing single motherhood and divorce are the largest contributors to single parenting of children.¹⁰ Many of the consequences of single-parenting are the same no matter what the cause of the singleness; nonetheless divorce has a unique set of correlative circumstances.¹¹ These circumstances are as follows; depression, anger, suicide, identity crisis,

⁴ Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America*.

⁵ FastStats, Birth & Natality, cdc.gov, accessed May 14, 2015, www.cdc.gov/nchs/fast%20stats/births.htm.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ “What Do Single Parent Statistics Tell Us?” Single Parent Center, August 3, 2011, accessed March 11, 2015, www.singleparentcenter.net/single-parent-statistics.html.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

and at-risk behaviors that can derail the normal growth process of children depending on the age and coping ability of the child.¹²

Some attempts at solidifying, restoring, and rebuilding the institution of fatherhood through legislation were drafted in the 1920s and 30s. This was a reaction to nineteenth century social decay. The difficult decline for fatherhood and manhood was seeded in the promoting of a single man society. American society supported industry and singleness over family and fatherhood.¹³ By the 1950s and 60s a resurgence of the family and fatherhood was underway; seeing singleness as a defect instead of a chosen lifestyle.¹⁴ Although the 1950s and 60s brought restoration, liberalism, and feminism changed the structure of this restoration.¹⁵ These philosophies introduced a watered-down version of the father. According to Gillis the home became more feminized as men became strangers in their own homes, competitors with their own children for the attention of their housewives.¹⁶ This system set fathers as rivals their own children.

The problems of fatherhood and family seem to culminate in the 1970s. The Industrial Revolution, the capitalist economy, the introduction of women into the workforce, and the promotion of single life in manhood were all behaviors that supported the culture of war and industry that brought the fatherhood crisis to ahead in the 1970s.¹⁷ The dynamics and statistics in the United States began to change, as the rising levels of fatherlessness, the crisis of

¹² “What Do Single Parent Statistics Tell Us?” Single Parent Center, August 3, 2011, accessed March 11, 2015, www.singleparentcenter.net/single-parent-statistics.html.

¹³ Gillis, “Marginalization of Fatherhood,” 226.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 228.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 232.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 235.

marriageability, and the delay or even decline of marriage statistics has increased dramatically.¹⁸ Being married with children has shifted away from being the norm of socially accepted behavior. Gillis later posits that men have developed a love relationship with their work since it is an easier task than managing a marriage and a family because of the recent history of strife and failure in marriage. The effects of this strife are realized in divorce and broken homes. Gillis calls this phenomenon a “Non-Familial Masculinity.”¹⁹ The crisis of fatherlessness calls for a rethinking of the norm of fatherhood. The American social and cultural frontiers need to be revisited in order to reestablish masculinity and fatherhood, to create this reality not just as a norm, nonetheless as a doable norm.

Many authors are putting more of the blame for decline of the family and the father’s image on social and political reform; rather than on lifestyle choices. One writer stated that it is not homosexual marriage or single motherhood that has led to the decline in the family; it is poor public policy and social stigma that have damaged fatherhood and contributed greatly to the crisis of fatherlessness. The past 20 years have shown a substantial increase in single motherhood, leaving 20 million children to be raised in a single parent home. Of those families, 17 million consist of mother only.²⁰ This leaves one in four children without a father figure in the home. Fatherlessness can be subtle as well as physical. Fathers as workaholics, emotionally distant, and abusive authorities can be examples of fathers that contribute to the fatherless dilemma.

In 1965, Senator Patrick Moynihan equated fatherless homes with social chaos; today the fatherless figures have almost double and society is reaping the consequence of not heeding a 50-

¹⁸ FastStats, Birth & Natality, cdc.gov, accessed May 14, 2015, www.cdc.gov/nchs/fast%20stats/births.htm.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

year-old warning.²¹ It would appear that anger is a core emotion in a fatherless child. This is derived from not knowing more than the absence of the father. The need for acceptance and the sense of family has driven fatherless boys to the arms of gangs all over the America.

Fatherlessness does not only affect boys; it destroys the dreams of young women and drives them to many of the same social and personal problems that culminate, less in anger, and more in social and moral decay. Fatherlessness ends in abusive and self-destructive behavior; this generation embraces pain to escape the hopelessness of fatherlessness.²²

Children who grow up in fatherless homes are five times more likely to be poor, than children in a household with an active father figure.²³ These fatherless children had significantly higher odds of incarceration than those in two-parent families. Teenage girls in the United States and in New Zealand who grow up without fathers are twice as likely to be involved in early sexual activity and seven times more likely to be pregnant as an adolescent.²⁴ Researchers at Columbia University found that children living in a two parent household with a poor relationship with their father are 68% more likely to smoke, drink, or use drugs compared to all teens in two parent household. Finally, in the study of criminal statistics of 39 countries, it was found that single parenthood ratios were strongly correlated with violent crimes. Daly writes in his article *The fatherless family* that fatherlessness is becoming an increasingly difficult problem in U.S. culture.²⁵ He later concludes that the United States leads fatherless families with roughly 24,000,000 children or 34% being fatherless. Although statistics may differ, no one can deny the

²¹ Gillis, "Marginalization of Fatherhood," 234.

²² Sowers, *Fatherless Generation*, 40.

²³ Kevin Denee and H. Chris Lomas, "Fatherless: The Nuclear Family Meltdown," Real Truth.org., August 12, 2003, 1-5.

²⁴ Gillis, "Marginalization of Fatherhood," 235.

²⁵ Jim Daly, "The Fatherless Family," *Focus on the Family* (Jan 2006), 1-3.

problem of fatherless is a real and growing crisis. The mental health aspect, specifically the identity crisis that is caused by fatherlessness is only beginning to rear its ugly head.

It is only common sense that two parents are better than one; however, when readers peer into the statistical backdrop of fatherlessness, the view is staggering. The statistics show that the social and emotional challenges that face the fatherless child can be overwhelming to both the child *and* society. Harper and McLanahan of Princeton write in the article “Father Absent and Youth Incarceration” that young men who grow up in homes without fathers are more than twice as likely to end up in jail, than those who come from a traditional two-parent family.²⁶ Those boys whose fathers were absent from the household had double the odds of incarceration. This statistical variable was more influential than other factors such as race, income, parent education, and urban residence.

Parker in an article titled *Statistics on Fatherless Children in America* references many reliable sources to paint the picture of fatherlessness and its devastating effect. Parker goes on to expose these statistics, such as 63% of the youth suicides are from fatherless homes, 85% of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes, and 71% of all high-school dropouts come from fatherless homes.²⁷ Kids living in single-parent homes or even stepfamilies report lower educational expectations on the part of their parents, less parental monitoring of schoolwork, and less overall social supervision than children from intact families.²⁸ Evidence shows that 70% of juveniles in state operated institutions come from

²⁶ Cynthia Harper and Sara McLanahan, “Father Absent and Youth Incarceration.” *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 14(3), 369.

²⁷ Wayne Parker, *Statistics on Fatherless Children in America*. Accessed May 1, 2015, http://fatherhood.about.com/od/fathersrights/a/fatherless_children.htm

²⁸ Ibid.

fatherless homes.²⁹ Much of Parker's information comes from an article "What Can the Federal Government Do to Decrease Crime and Revitalize Communities."³⁰

Children who grow up in father-absent homes are more likely than those in father-present homes to have trouble establishing appropriate sex roles and gender identity. In a longitudinal study of 1200 fourth-grade students, researchers observed greater levels of aggression employed by boys from mother only household, then from boys from mother/father household. Children from low income two-parent families outperformed students from high income single-parent families. Almost twice as many high achievers come from two-parent homes as one-parent homes. Only 13% of juvenile delinquents come from families in which the biological mother and father are married to each other; in contrast 33% of parents whose children are delinquents are either divorced or separated, and 44% have parent that were never married. The likelihood that a young male will engage in criminal activity doubles if he is raised without a father and triples if he lives in the neighborhood with a high concentration of single-parent families. These statistics are from an article by Wayne Parker titled "Statistics and Fatherless Children in America."

Fatherlessness is a substantial problem in the neighborhoods of the inner city adolescent; however, analysis shows that a sizeable portion of the risks that appear to be caused by the absence of fathers absence were actually due to other causes.³¹ In their article, Harper and McLanahan speak of absentee fathers and the correlations to adolescent incarceration. They address the effects of absentee fatherhood such as single parent homes, single income and

²⁹ Wayne Parker, *Statistics on Fatherless Children in America*. Accessed May 1, 2015, http://fatherhood.about.com/od/fathersrights/a/fatherless_children.htm.

³⁰ "What Can the Federal Government Do to Decrease Crime and Revitalize Communities" (The National Institute of Justice, 1998), 11.

³¹ Harper and McLanahan, "Father Absence and Youth Incarceration," 369.

poverty, less supervision, step parents, low education levels of mothers, negative peer influence, and other problems that are plaguing the inner city.

Although the research in Harper and McLanahan's article covers the major factors that lead to incarceration, the author puts forth the fatherless hypothesis as a rhetorical chicken and egg syndrome. The author questions whether it is fatherlessness that leads to incarceration, or the effects of fatherlessness that cause the risk of incarceration to rise. The question this author posits is whether it is fatherlessness that causes most of these symptoms of at-risk behaviors related to inner city adolescent incarceration, or is it social problems that cause fatherlessness? This latter scenario would leave the social problems to be blamed. The fact is fatherlessness is directly correlated to youth imprisonment so which ever cause came first, the father does not get off the hook by this author's mincing of words.

Children in disadvantaged populations are more likely to grow up in father-absent households.³² Harper and McLanahan question whether poverty and racial inequality causes father-absence, therefore increasing incarceration, or is father-absence the cause of racial inequalities and poverty, which in turn cause adolescent incarceration. No matter how you skin the cat, the fact is that fatherlessness leads to the degradation of the family, which leads to poverty, and subsequently to fatherlessness.³³ The argument is circular; nonetheless someone has to jump off the merry-go-round to solve the problem. Harper and McLanahan express in great detail the problems facing inner city adolescent such as father absence, common background or similar community experiences, low income, family instability, and additional caregivers. Parrot

³² Harper and McLanahan, "Father Absence and Youth Incarceration," 369.

³³ Ibid., 370.

argues that unstable families are a significant cause of adolescent rebellion.³⁴ Whereas Clinton and Clark express concern that fatherlessness leads to emotional instability, relational problems, and difficulty trusting others.³⁵

The fact is that engaged fathers produce children who have better cognitive achievement while children of disengaged fathers tend fair far worse cognitively, as their fathers tend to continue to fade out of the child's life.³⁶ Clinton and Clark go on to call fatherlessness and absolute tragedy in the life of and adolescent.³⁷ Many fatherless families experience one or more types of environmental disadvantage. In A.F. Clark's research the common disadvantages were dependence on social welfare, poor quality of mothering, and educational disadvantages.³⁸ Although Quane and Rankin agree, in their article titled *Neighborhood Poverty, Family Characteristics, and Commitment to Mainstream Goals: The Case for the African American Adolescent in the Inner City*, they contend that even with the negative effects of welfare and environment, their studies show that welfare families may develop better than non-welfare inner city single mother homes. It is surmised that welfare benefits relieve the pressures to work outside the home. This relief may outweigh the negative stigmatism of welfare.³⁹

Much of the research has shown that inner-city youth are more likely to yield to negative peer pressure than positive parent pressures, which may lead to higher dropout rates that are prominent in inner-city teens. Inner-city parents are more inclined to have to protect their

³⁴ L. Parrott III, *Helping the Struggling Adolescent: A Guide for Thirty-Six Common Problems for Counselor, Pastors, and Youth Workers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 302.

³⁵ Tim Clinton and Chap Clark, *Counseling Teenagers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010), 135.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 136.

³⁸ Clark, "Inner City Disadvantage and Family Functioning," 79.

³⁹ James M. Quane and Bruce H. Rankin, "Neighborhood Poverty, Family Characteristics, and Commitment to Mainstream Goals: The Case of African American Adolescents in the Inner City," *Journal of Family Issues* 19, no. 6 (1998), 11.

children from the lure of street culture and malevolent peer associations. Parents focus on protection rather than developing a spirit of academic achievement.⁴⁰ Drugs and alcohol can be devastating to any family; nonetheless, research has shown that residents living in disadvantaged urban neighborhoods have a greater likelihood of witnessing addiction and experiencing violence. This fact of experiencing violence combined with a likelihood of having an affiliation with delinquent peers delivers these youths to the increased likelihood of experiencing poverty. They are also more likely to experience high risk family factors, such as coercive or aggressive parenting styles, parental substance abuse, and parental criminal activity.⁴¹

Whitaker writes in the article *Neighborhood Disorder and Incarceration History Among Urban Substance Users* that African American males are six times more likely to be incarcerated than white males. Black females are four times more likely to be incarcerated than white females. Despite high rates of out-of-wedlock births and other self-defeating behaviors among black females, studies show that girls are still more inclined to form positive relationships, and to value academics more so than boys.⁴² These studies show that just living in these neighborhoods with concentrated incivility increases the odds of having an incarceration history.⁴³

The Christian argument for support of the poor has been going on for centuries; however, recent studies have delivered the debate back into the public forum. Quane (1998) quotes Oscar Lewis in his coined term “Culture of Poverty” to describe certain observed values and behaviors among the poor in advanced capitalist societies are not keeping up with those of mainstream

⁴⁰ Quane and Rankin, “Neighborhood Poverty, Family Characteristics, and Commitment to Mainstream Goals,” 3.

⁴¹ Damiya Whitaker et al., “Neighborhood Disorder and Incarceration History Among Urban Substance Users,” *J Correct Health Care*, 17, no. 4 (October 2011), 29.

⁴² Quane and Rankin, “Neighborhood Poverty, Family Characteristics, and Commitment to Mainstream Goals,” 10.

⁴³ Whitaker et al., “Neighborhood Disorder and Incarceration History,” 35.

society. Lewis contended that these deviant tendencies were adaptive strategies developed by the poor in the context of their disadvantaged social environment.⁴⁴ Many professionals would agree that the inner city adolescents are in need of an exodus and liberation. The Old Testament exodus from Egypt is an example of godly liberation and it is an expressive example of God's saving grace from oppressive rule. Today, Jesus Christ represents that struggle over sin's tyranny and death via His resurrection, also known as liberation.

Liberation Theology is defined as a political movement that understands the revelations of Jesus in connection to liberation from prejudicial economic, social, and political circumstances.⁴⁵ This theology is worldwide and crosses denominations. It has roots that lie within the Catholic Church and a Peruvian priest named Gustavo Gutiérrez. Gutiérrez coined the phrase, *liberation theology* in 1973 when he wrote his book, *The Theology of Liberation*. This political liberation movement struggles, not because of a lack of compassion, but because of a lack of focus. Jesus came to set the captives free not from the temporary poverty of life, but from eternal poverty of the spirit. Jesus' focus was humanities need for a redeemer and deliverance from their state of perpetual sin. Christian theology expresses that the solution for personal sin is not found in understanding the root cause of sin; it is in understanding the doctrine of original sin.⁴⁶ The solution for sin is wrapped up in the grace of God as revealed through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. As Kollar later explains the solution, "it is turning from sin to God's

⁴⁴ Quane and Rankin, "Neighborhood Poverty, Family Characteristics, and Commitment to Mainstream Goals," 1.

⁴⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, Cardinal, "Instructions on Certain Aspects of 'Theology of Liberation,'" *Sacred Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith*, August 6, 1984.

⁴⁶ Charles A. Kollar, *Solution – Focused Pastoral Counseling: An Effective Short-Term Approach for Getting Back on Track* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 38.

grace, being thankful for forgiveness, acting upon this forgiveness, and maturing in God's grace in a constructive and creative way."⁴⁷

The world is a hopeless place and without Christ; it is eternally hopeless. The Bible's truths are built line upon line and precept upon precept and according to the many verses of wisdom in the book of Proverbs, on what and how the foundation of an individual's identity affects lives. Proverbs 22:6 exhorts parents to "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." Although good parents can raise bad adolescents, the likelihood of adolescent problems diminishes the stronger the relationship is with the parents. Including God, Jesus Christ, and His Word in marriage and in family will lay the foundation of a strong house. Matthew's Gospel reports, "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock."⁴⁸ Scripture has little meaning to the lost soul. God's word contains power; nonetheless, until the lost soul accepts Jesus, not only as savior, but nevertheless as Lord of their life, there will be very little and or no true life transformation.

Jesus Christ is the best option for both the father and fatherless. Without Jesus, the lost soul can only hope for temporary behavior modification. Jesus said, "I am the way."⁴⁹ The apostle Paul explains for believers what is necessary for salvation, "You must confess with your mouth and believe in your heart."⁵⁰ Paul explains the consequences of that confession, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the

⁴⁷ Charles A. Kollar, *Solution – Focused Pastoral Counseling*, 38.

⁴⁸ Matthew 7:24 (ESV).

⁴⁹ John 14:6 (ESV).

⁵⁰ Romans 10:9-11(ESV).

new has come.”⁵¹ It is the paradox of God that allows people to see their depravity in the face of a perfect, holy, immutable God. This paradox helps them to understand that He loves them and that they are created in His image. Furthermore, it is sin that has put the sinner in this predicament and it is the fact that God’s love for humanity forces Him to send His Son to redeem them; not out of obligation, but out of love. God’s love is a covenant love based on His promise; not on human merit. This promise extends to the fatherless and all who call on the name of the lord.

The Biblical View of Fatherhood

God’s relationship with David is the perfect example of a father/son relationship. David was the youngest of the brothers and yet God adopted him as His son and raised him up to be the greatest king in Israel’s long history. God also promised David that he would have someone to sit on his throne forever. This promise is the prophetic revelation of David’s earthly lineage realized in the God/man Jesus Christ. In the book of Second Samuel the author writes speaking of David,

I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he sins, I will correct and discipline him with the rod, like any father would do. But my favor will not be taken from him as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from your sight. Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.⁵²

God’s covenant with David is never based on David’s worthiness. It is formulated in God’s faithfulness. God said that he would be David’s Father and having God as Father came with a promise. The promise was that although David would be disciplined for his sin, nonetheless God confides that He will never remove His commitment to David. This same promise is extended to today’s children of God through faith in Jesus.

⁵¹ 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV).

⁵² 2 Samuel 7:14 (ESV).

The Psalmist expresses that God will be Father to the fatherless.⁵³ The Bible expresses both in the Old and the New Testament that God “Is” the Father of the fatherless. Old Testament times were replete with war, famine, and disease. This left many to be widowed and orphaned. In the New Testament the picture of biblical fatherhood is expressed in Matthew when he wrote the words of Jesus describing the Love of the heavenly Father. The Gospel writer expresses earthly fatherhood in comparison with Godly fatherhood when he penned,

Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will when he your Father who is in heaven gives good things to those who ask him.⁵⁴

No one understood the stigma of fatherlessness more than the carpenter’s son. Mary was a virgin betrothed to Joseph and she became pregnant before her marriage was consummated. Although Joseph was told by God of His plans, many outsiders may have seen this situation a little differently than Mary or Joseph. Years later during Jesus’ ministry He had a discussion with the religious leaders about who their father was; they quickly threw in His face the gossip about his illegitimate birth. They professed that they were not born out of fornication "like He was" fatherhood confusion was the insinuation. So Jesus was quite aware of the stigma of fatherlessness, He also knew its pain and consequences. Furthermore, He knew what it looked like to be separated from God; He experienced it at His crucifixion. Jesus also knew the pain of betrayal (Judas) and He knew sorrow of death (Lazarus). He knew the hurt of abandonment, which he experienced after His disciples left Him after his death, even though He told them over

⁵³ Psalms 68:5 (ESV).

⁵⁴ Matthew 7:9-11 (ESV).

and over again these things would take place. Jesus knows the pain of all this things including the pain of fatherlessness. Yet, He promises to never leave or forsake.⁵⁵

God is humanity's true Father. Jesus instructed His people in the adoption process. Jesus told His followers to become part of His family they needed to accept Him and His redemptive work on the cross at Calvary. This faith in Him will bring His people into right relationship with the Father. Jesus' death, and consequently His people's faith in Him, will establish them as believers and as sons and heirs to God's royal family. Jesus exhorted His disciples to love Him and obey Him and his Father will surely love them. When His people accepted Christ as their Savior, they were adopted into the royal family and their spirits were reunited with their Creator. It is in this place that their spirits cried out "Abba" Father. This Abba Father is a personal relationship connotation, meaning daddy. His children were now heirs with Jesus.⁵⁶

Paul described this adoption process when he told God's people that God's Spirit indwells them and they were the temple of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁷ Paul expressed to them that it is through this process that God becomes their Father and they become His sons and daughters. God called His people out from the unbelievers, calling them to separate themselves because He is their Father and they will be His sons and daughters.⁵⁸ The apostle John would later write, "see how very much our Father loves us for He calls us His children, and that is what we are."⁵⁹ God created humanity to reflect his image; however John Sowers proposed that man creates a "God" reflective of their father experience.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Hebrews 13:5 (ESV).

⁵⁶ Romans 8:15 (ESV).

⁵⁷ 2 Corinthians 6:18 (ESV).

⁵⁸ 2 Corinthians 6:16-18 (ESV).

⁵⁹ 1 John 3:1 (ESV).

⁶⁰ Sowers, *Fatherless Generation*, 13.

Jesus is the believer's example of the Father. The fact is that Jesus is the first to use the personal *Abba*, which is an informal description of dad, father, or daddy. According to Ralph Quere in his article titled "Naming" God as Father" this Abba Father is a designation that had more to do with a redeemer than the creator.⁶¹ The father figure is a hero figure. This figure is someone that children can always look all up to. The father would be wise to remember that his children are always watching. God has established fatherhood since the beginning of creation many verses of the Bible are supportive of a father's wisdom along with the importance of the child yielding to such wisdom. The apostle Paul wrote Ephesians as he attempted to describe what a godly family structure looks like. He established the father as the head and wife as a supporter who is subject to his leadership. Paul explained that just as Christ is the head of the Church and the Church is subject to his leadership, so should children be subject to the leadership of their parents. The problem that arises out of the fatherless experience is that there is no father to lead, or sometimes equally as bad, a poor leader in an abusive, submissive, or passive role.

Much of Scripture exhorts men to behave in a proper manner that promotes fatherhood. The Bible establishes the blessings bestowed upon children for obedience to their fathers. The example of this picture of fatherhood comes directly through Jesus, from God himself. God as Creator is the picture of fatherhood. In the first book of the Bible, God created man in His image putting him together with a woman and separating the man from his mother and father. God later stated that no one should ever come between these God-made unions. This is the biblical picture of fatherhood and the nuclear family. God perpetuates his creation through the creation power of

⁶¹ Ralph Quere, "Naming" God "Father," *Wartburg Theological Seminary*, 5.

fatherhood, as fathers beget sons and daughters, and sons and daughters further beget more sons and daughters, God created His creation so that creation can bring glory to Him.

God's relationship as Father is further expanded by his covenant with Abraham and is extended through the nation of Israel. Although the Old Testament revealed God as the creating and covenant Father, the personal relational God is more significantly described in the New Testament. Jesus continually yielded to the directions of His Father. The Gospel of John is replete with references of Fatherhood of God. The Apostle John explained that no one has seen the Father except the Son (John 4:9). However, the New Testament writer of Hebrews writes,

And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son, He (God) created the universe. The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command.⁶²

Cochran writes in his article *Remembering the Father in Fatherhood: Biblical Foundations and Practical Implications of the Doctrine of the Fatherhood of God* "it took the incarnation of Christ to display-reveal, manifest, explain, and exegete the comforting truth of the father, 'A Heavenly Father.'"⁶³

The authoritative relationship of father and son is made evident in the life of Jesus as He (Jesus) stood in reverence of the perfect creator and ruler of the universe. Earthly fatherhood should emulate this example as fatherhood is a holy and exalted institution. Jesus exhibited the qualities of the Father even though He is the incarnate Son. Earthy fathers look to Jesus to see the Father and to carry out His example in everyday life. There is a unity and harmony found in the father/son relationship. Cochran stated that fatherhood is God's identity and that Jesus is the revelation of this identity. All earthly fathers are exhorted to look toward Jesus to glean the

⁶² Hebrews 1:2-3 (ESV).

⁶³ Gregory C. Cochran, "Remembering the Father in Fatherhood: Biblical Foundations and Practical Implications of the Doctrine of the Fatherhood of God," *JFM* (Jan 2011): 18.

details on fathering from the Creator of fatherhood, who is God. The believer enters into a father/son relationship at the time the believer accepts Jesus Christ as savior.

In order to understand what it means to be a father, God's people must first be sanctified into becoming good sons. It is in this father/son-daughter relationship that God's children are exposed to the true fatherhood of God. It is also in this relationship that the believer learns what it is to be a good earthly father. Jesus expounded and transferred his authority to the earthly fathers. Jesus, through the apostle Paul, instructed the believer in the foundations of fatherhood, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord."⁶⁴

The context of God as father is a foundational part of Jesus' New Testament teaching. His teachings begin with his Sonship, as Jesus was always about his Father's business. Jesus understood the Father/Son relationship and it was evident in His announcement to his earthy parents, that they should have known He would be in his Father's house. Jesus revealed more of His yielded relationship with His Father when He asked of his father, to take this cup from Him, but only if it should be the Father's will. Jesus further revealed His relationship with God when cried out to God his Father, as He commended His Spirit back to his Father. Jesus always yielded to the will of his Father. Jesus professed that all things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.⁶⁵

God as Father is more than just the creator of all. He is the paternal Father, who, through Jesus, is committed to a loving personal relationship with all of his creation, especially His children. The incarnation of Christ is proof that God intimately loves His children as He reveals

⁶⁴ Ephesians 6:4 (ESV).

⁶⁵ Matthew 11:27 (ESV).

Himself to His creation through the God/man Jesus Christ. The incarnation rebukes the deist notions that God is the creator who yet set everything in motion and afterwards stepped back from his creation. The truth is He created everything and revealed Himself through his Word as His Word became flesh. God redeemed his fallen creation back to Himself through His Son. That is the Father God that Jesus knew; that is the Father who sent His only Son to die for his creation. The Father who stood by as His creation (humans) beat and whipped His only begotten Son (Jesus) beyond recognition. That is the Father, who stood aside and allowed it all, because He knew there was no other way to save His creation (humanity). That is the picture of Father that Jesus paints for humanity in the garden on His way to the cross.

God is the true Father who hates the sin; however, He nevertheless loves the sinner. The hatred of sin, as God experiences it, is found in the consequence of its venom on His creation. He knows the path that sin takes, however, thankfully He is longsuffering with His creation as He is hoping for the fullness of repentance and restoration through the faithful acceptance of the sacrifice that He provided in His Son. The Father never turns his back on his children even in the midst of their failure. This Father extends his healing hands down from the heavens and touches his children's wounds. The deepness of the Father/Son relationship is an offer that desperately needs acceptance. Although He is the Creator, the acceptance of the gift allows Him to be Father, or better yet Abba Father or Daddy.⁶⁶

The father/son relationship does not come without a cost to the Son. This relationship only comes through surrendered obedience that is directly tied to reverence and worship. Jesus told His disciples that if you love Him, you will do the will of His Father and follow His

⁶⁶ In the Holy Scriptures there are many different names used to describe God. Abba Father is the way Jesus refers to His Daddy. The word *Abba* is an Aramaic word that would most closely be translated as "Daddy." It was a common term that young children would use to address their fathers. It signifies the close, intimate relationship of a father to his child, as well as the childlike trust that a young child puts in his "daddy."

commands. Bennett wrote that the true father/son relationship is not without reward.⁶⁷ He encouraged the reader to become a member of the family of the Father and become brothers with Jesus. It is the Father's pleasure to give the keys to the kingdom to His children; however, just as a Father/Son response has their reward; failure to respond to the Father's offers certain judgment.⁶⁸

Christ's very incarnation forces judgment on people. People are forced to a decision to accept or reject. It is mandated by the incarnate arrival of Jesus upon earth. The Bible states that men are without excuse for all of creation cries out. Bennett later wrote that God is supremely and uniquely the Father of Jesus and Jesus reveals God as the One whose love is offered to all men; who must themselves choose either to respond to him as loyal sons or reject him as a lost son's; dead in self-determination.⁶⁹

Consequences of Fatherlessness

Stoop clarified the problem of a distorted view of God in his book *Making Peace with your Father*. Stoop wrote that people were not ready to internalize the truth about God's Fatherhood until they have worked out their issues with their earthly father.⁷⁰ Many people do not truly understand who God is, and what their relationship is with Him and to Him. The misunderstanding is based in how they see God as a continuation of their earthly fathers. The hurts and the imperfections of their earthly fathers are projected onto their heavenly Father. This attitude or phenomenon is often carried forward as a dysfunctional and unhealthy view and relationship with their Heavenly Father. Stoop posited that earthly fathers are not the model for

⁶⁷ William Bennett, "The Sons of the Father: The Fatherhood of God in the Synoptic Gospels," *Interpretation* 4, no. 1 (1950). 22.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 23

⁷⁰ Stoop, *Making Peace*, 252.

fatherhood; it is the Heavenly Father that is the perfect picture of fatherhood and unconditional love.

Fatherlessness reveals its consequences differently depending upon the moments of its infliction. Each and every stage of development comes with its own set of specific consequences as pertaining to father absence. Most research breaks down the effects of the absentee father into three stages of development; early childhood, elementary school years, and adolescence.

Absentee fathers create a number of developmental problems in those children under the age of five.⁷¹ The most prominent problem is an unhealthy attachment to mother. Girls and boys are both affected in different manners. Boys tend to remain (immature) boys and girls typically try to live up to and be like their mothers, no matter how dysfunctional.⁷²

These developmental problems of fatherlessness are often dormant, only coming to fruition later on in his or her adult life. One example would be that a son may marry or seek relationships with a woman who will be willing to “mother him” as opposed to “partner him.” Not only are children affected at different stages in their development, children in the family can see and react to the situation very differently, depending on the order of birth and their perception of the abandonment. Many daughters inappropriately idolize their fathers and create an unrealistic expectation in future and current potential partners. On the other hand, they can become overly attached to the mother and that can cause a slowing or underdevelopment of her femininity. For young boys so many issues are similar but many sexuality problems and anger issue arise from a longing for a relationship his father.

Examples of crises experienced by elementary school children are abandonment, death, severe emotional detachment, and divorce. When this trauma is inflicted on children who are

⁷¹ Stoop, *Making Peace*, 105.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 109.

above the age of five it can impair the child's physical, emotional, and mental development. This can have devastating effects at this phase of the child's life. The absence of the father can wreak havoc and have immediate and long-term effects on the child's development. According to Stoop, it is at this stage where children are moving from magical thinking to a generalize sense of reality (life lessons).⁷³ It is imperative that these life lessons are taught in a safe environment; where the father can contribute to the process. Stoop later went on to describe father absent in this stage of development as a "broken team."⁷⁴

For young girls, father absence can have overwhelming relational consequences.⁷⁵ The main factors that can perpetuate generational curses on her mother can alter the healthy formation of relationships that are equally devastating to young girls, now and later on in life. This generational wreckage includes events such as marrying the father that she never had. This reenactment or fantasy marriage is a recipe for disaster. Elementary school father absence for girls looks like a future consisting of improper development of femininity and later sexual problem.⁷⁶ This broken attachment can lead to father fantasies that culminate in perfectionism, intellectualism, and procrastination, along with problems relating to men in relationships that tend to lead to promiscuity and or insecurity. This overcompensation in relationships climaxes in a passive aggressive type style of relating. For boys in elementary level of development, the abandonment by a father can lead to later crises of anger and or passivity, unsatisfactory surrogate fatherhood, unsatisfied work experiences, problems relating to their jobs, and intimacy

⁷³ Stoop, *Making Peace*, 107.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 144.

issues with women. The hero worship stage of development for young boys creates a sense of identity for young boys that can set the stage for the later engagement in the reality of manhood.

Adolescence is the journey from childhood to adulthood. Adolescence can be an exciting and promising time; however, for the fatherless this experience can be riddled with identity confusion that can lead to a rocky and even dangerous experience. Nonetheless, adolescence is a trip that must be undertaken because if this journey is derailed or detoured, the consequences can be lived out in this life and in the next. Successful arrival into adulthood can set the tone for a proper understanding of many issues and the most important of which is the accepting of God as Father via faith in His Son Jesus. Stoop equates the father during adolescence as a rudder is to a ship. The rudder helps the ship stay the course just as the father will guide the adolescent on a course that will help navigate the confusion and emotional turmoil known as adolescences.

For daughters it is important that fathers create a stable environment for them to experience their emerging sexuality.⁷⁷ This is a time when daughters may be more susceptible to develop eating disorders such as anorexia, over eating, and bulimia. An identity crisis for girls may take the form of confused maturation, which will reveal itself as immature or overly mature adults along with suppressed or repressed sexual feelings. Another side effect of an absentee father is romanticizing (fantasy) of the absence of father by the developing girl, as she may be projecting that unrealistic fantasy image on to other prospective males. Depression, at-risk behaviors, suicide, and greater vulnerability to peer-pressure are some of the many symptoms and dangers of father absence or abandonment during adolescents.

⁷⁷ David Stoop, *Making Peace*, 133.

The adolescent male almost always faces disturbing consequences with father abandonment at this stage.⁷⁸ At this later stage the father is called to provide healthy boundaries for the young men that are advantageous to a healthy understanding of human sexuality. Fatherly discipline is an important aspect of this stage of the developmental process for the young adolescent male. Stoop equated absentee fatherhood and developing adolescents with trying to develop muscles in an arm wrestling contest by wrestling someone who isn't there.⁷⁹ This adolescent and father confrontation is a necessary passage into manhood. Improper guidance or abuse from a father or father figure will leave lifelong scars that will not be easily overcome.

Unhealthy transition from adolescence to adulthood can lead to a double life, one of conformity and another of rebellion.⁸⁰ This confusion is fed by anger and is realized in high-risk behavior. In conclusion the absence of fathers in the life of the adolescents can lead to high-risk behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse, gambling, sexual promiscuity, and general intimacy complications. Father-abandoned adolescent males often struggle with success issues, relationships difficulties, as well as problems with authority figures. It is these hurdles that may inhibit the adolescent male's entrance into adulthood in a healthy and productive manner. It is important for young man to be ushered into adulthood by their fathers; Stoop calls this process receiving his "father's blessings."

The struggle with self-identity affects all adolescents and the attainment of this identity is crucial for a successful realization of knowing the self. This identity allows a person to develop the confidence to navigate through the toughness of life. The difficulties that occur in

⁷⁸ Stoop, *Making Peace*, 142.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁸⁰ Parrott III, *Helping the Struggling Adolescent*, 22.

adolescence are due in part to lack of experience.⁸¹ Experience has shown that kids today are facing adult situations with sex and drugs at a much faster rate and a much earlier age. The issue of experience is critical as many of the children are not emotionally able to handle these situations, even if they are physically entering adult hood. The bombardment of information and the pressure from their peers to perform, or to conform, is overwhelming.

Parrott stated “adolescents try to establish themselves as individuals through prestige.” They accomplish this by seeking out behaviors and possessions that are readily available and observable.⁸² The world is moving at hyper-speed and adolescents today are facing issue that past generations never imagined. The teenager’s world can be confusing and changing so quickly that immature young people aren’t always able keep up and often do not adjust efficiently.⁸³ This is the point where peer groups can influence and or assist in the adolescent’s ability to “keep up.” Many parents can attest that peer-pressure is not usually a positive influence. According to Parrott young people look for identity in uncounted ways. In his section on peer pressure, Dr. Parrott discusses the many factors that influence the adolescent’s struggle with negative peer pressures. The following are a few causes that Parrott addresses insecurity, parental relationships, lack of assertiveness, and faulty thinking. Parrot goes on to reveal the following techniques that he believes will help a teen struggling with negative peer pressure. These applications are pinpointing severity, easing parents’ concerns, exploring helpful pressures, taking inventory of experiences, questioning self-talk, helping teens to challenge systems, and teaching assertiveness.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Parrott III, *Helping the Struggling Adolescent*, 22.

⁸² Collins, *A Comprehensive Guide to Christian Counseling*, 235.

⁸³ Parrott III, *Helping the Struggling Adolescent*, 316-318.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Insecure teens are more susceptible to negative peer-pressure.⁸⁵ In their quest to belong or fit in, they can develop a false sense of belonging that is fragile at best, and destructive at its worse. Parrot believes that weakened family relationships (parent-child) due to antagonism, rejection, authoritarianism, divorce, abandonment, or permissiveness are strongly linked to peer-influence. This effect and influence is compounded by the adolescent's inability to stand their ground and express their genuine feelings, sometime due to irrational or faulty beliefs.⁸⁶ Clinton and Clark identified peer pressure as a social pressure on somebody to adopt a type of behavior, dress, or attitude so that person will be accepted as part of a group. Early adolescents are less able to resist peer pressure, while mid-adolescents mostly exhibit negative influence such as cheating, stealing, and other types of antisocial behaviors. Late adolescents have developed their identities enough to resist these pressures.⁸⁷

Peer pressure and its negative behavior can affect the adolescent and can also snowball into many other types of risky behavior. These behaviors are not limited, but include such things as premarital sex, drugs and alcohol, risky behaviors such as listed above, and more serious issues as teenage pregnancy, addiction, and delinquency.⁸⁸ Students cannot avoid peer-pressure; however, they can learn new ways of identifying and coping with negative peer-pressure. They can practice these coping mechanisms along with behavior techniques that instruction the adolescent on how to locate and follow positive peer-influences. Unfortunately father absent homes are not conducive for this type of learning. Even though teens are spending less time with their parents, the parents are still very influential in the adolescent's life.

⁸⁵ Clinton, Clark and Straub, *The Quick Reference Guide to Counseling Teenagers*, 213.

⁸⁶ Parrott III, *Helping the Struggling Adolescent*, 317.

⁸⁷ Clinton and Clark, *Counseling Teenagers*, 213-214.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 214.

Exploring the ways in which friends influence teens and empowering the teen to identify, inventory, and qualify these influences can help the adolescent to perceive their harmful effects. Parrot identifies ways to boost self-confidence through the use of positive self statements. This practice can be helpful when added to the introduction of acting out scenarios, and replacing faulty thinking and erroneous thought patterns with new thought patterns and healthier thinking. Parrot works toward success by helping the adolescent to challenge the system through teaching the adolescent to be more assertive. The Church can and must play a big part in this learning process for all developmental levels. The Church has more than just an obligation of making disciples it is commanded to bringing the Gospel to all, this commission is one of Jesus most heartfelt commands. Yes, it is more than a suggestion it is a command.

The Church and James 1:27

George Barna stated that discipleship is about becoming a devoted and mature follower of Jesus Christ. Discipleship is an artful blend of what you know and what you do.⁸⁹ Disciples are leaders and also followers as it were with the 12 Apostles who followed Jesus and led the new world of Christianity into the future. Believers are called to reproduce in others what they themselves are in Christ. In the original biblical text, the term used for disciple refers to someone who is a learner or follower who serves as an apprentice under the tutelage of a master.⁹⁰ Jesus Christ is that Master and to be a disciple you must choose to follow Him. It is the Church's responsibility to make disciple as commanded by Jesus in Mathew's Gospel. Jesus gives instructions to his disciples to go and to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name

⁸⁹ George Barna, *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2011), 31.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.⁹¹ Making disciples would undoubtedly include the fatherless given James' instructions to visit them in their affliction.⁹²

John Sowers explained that this fatherless generation, like the Old Testament son Esau, was unable to get to be blessed and the difference with this generation is that their blessing was stolen by absentee fathers.⁹³ However, God promised them a new name written on a white stone in heaven that is blessed by their Father in heaven. All people face crisis in their lives. Believers and unbelievers are subject to the pains and losses of life. When Church members experience pain and suffering during crisis, Christian's can share how an understanding of religion can play a supporting role in the afflicted person's recovery.

Crisis is defined as a loss of coping capabilities in response to an external event. A Father absence is certainly a crisis in the life and eyes of the abandoned child. The individual's perception, proximity, support systems, and capacity to cope with crisis determine the severity and longevity of that crisis. The church can provide immediate and long term relief to those who are suffering. It is the very act of caring that shows the expression of God's love for the fatherless; it is the act of becoming more like Jesus for the Church, that delivers the fatherless child into a potential relationship with their Creator.

In *Growing True Disciples*, Barna addressed a response to polling that shows 20% of Christians believe that the Bible teaches that God helps those who help themselves; specifically, that this idea is a direct contradiction to biblical truth. Barna wrote,

as fallen creatures who receive what they have by the grace of God, we are incapable of helping our selves. It is only our arrogance and self –absorption that causes us to believe that God allows us to determine our reality and that he will simply play along.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Matthew 28:19 (ESV).

⁹² James 1:27 (ESV).

⁹³ Sowers, *Fatherless Generation*, 43.

⁹⁴ Barna, *Growing True Disciples*, 68.

Mitchell wrote that Psalms 119:11 exposes the action of the Psalmist, “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you,” the Psalmist’s statement is the cornerstone of the pillars of which a personal ministry is constructed.⁹⁵ The Bible states with fervor, “The fear of the “LORD” is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!”⁹⁶ Godly wisdom is what the church must seek in developing a ministry to the fatherless in America.

Luther and Calvin were in general agreement regarding the total depravity of man and his utter inability by himself to affect his own salvation. Both also acknowledge that because of man’s total depravity; the grace of God is necessary to redeem fallen man. Every child born into the world has been born into a depraved condition.⁹⁷ Calvin said, all men are conceived in sin, and born the children of wrath, indisposed to all saving good, propense [sic] to evil, dead in sin, and slaves to sin; and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither willing nor able to return to God, to correct their depraved nature, or dispose themselves to the correction of it.⁹⁸

According to Mitchell, “A biblically based perception of a learner is as a created human being in God’s Trinitarian image, fallen in sin, yet choosing correction and submission to discipline, in order to worship Jesus.”⁹⁹

Choosing to learn is part of the transformation process that brings believers closer to God, and makes them more like Christ. A disciple receives and accepts the message from the

⁹⁵ Michael R. Mitchell, *Leading, Teaching, and Making Disciples* (Bloomington, IN: Crossroads, 2010), 391.

⁹⁶ Psalm 111:10 (ESV).

⁹⁷ Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2008), 475.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 509.

⁹⁹ Mitchell, *Leading, Teaching, and Making Disciples*, 401.

Master, but is nonetheless accountable to think clearly and choose wisely, engaging not only the senses to receive, but also the soul to reflect. Humans are image bearers made in His likeness created by Him, distinct from all other animals, with God's law written on their hearts.¹⁰⁰ The Spirit of God is the difference maker, for the Lord formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. No other animal has God's breath or Spirit breathed into them (Gen. 2:7). It is this very Spirit that makes man different and this same Spirit that makes man eternal. It is by this Spirit that man is driven to wisdom, Isaiah say about Jesus, "And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD."¹⁰¹

All men have that same Spirit inside them, this includes the fatherless. Jesus said, if men abide in Him and His word abides in them, men will be His disciples. John's Gospel writes of Jesus that He told His disciples, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."¹⁰² It is true that man was created and that they are sinful at birth; however, at the cross they (believers) are washed as white as snow; therefore, they are no longer lost and fatherless children; they are children of God. Believers are adopted into His family as they are gifted with the all the right of adoption. One of the biblical rights of adoption is to be disciplined and to be transformed into His (Christ's) likeness. Again, it is not by human merit, but by His grace.

In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul presses his readers to be devoted to one another, exhorting them to give preference to one another, love and not judge one another, to pursue

¹⁰⁰ Mitchell, *Leading, Teaching, and Making Disciples*, 401.

¹⁰¹ Isaiah 11:2 (ESV).

¹⁰² John 13:3 (ESV).

peace and build up one another and to accept and admonish one another.¹⁰³ The New Testament is full of “one anothering” and that is the crux of discipleship. Do nothing out of selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind, let each of you regard one another as more important than himself.¹⁰⁴

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.¹⁰⁵

Summary

In *Fatherless Generation: Redeeming the Story*, John Sowers described rejection as the key characteristic of fatherlessness. Sower titled this child’s craving for a father as *Father Hunger* and this hunger is realized through lives of pain, shame and damage. One third of today’s youth have lost their fathers to divorce, drugs, death, and prison; and the number and percentages are growing.¹⁰⁶ The odds and the tables are stacked against the fatherless. They are against them graduating, against them becoming fathers who are present for their children, and against them ever escaping the bondage of the poverty mindset that is established in fatherlessness. However, all hope is not lost because with God on their side, all things are possible.

¹⁰³ Romans 12:10; 12:16; and 13:8-14:19 (ESV).

¹⁰⁴ Philippians 2:3-11(ESV).

¹⁰⁵ Philippians 2:5- 11 (NIV).

¹⁰⁶ Sowers, *Fatherless Generation*, 20.

With God as the author of the fatherless child's story, fatherless boys and girls can be written into a success novel—not unlike that of the life of a young seemingly lowly shepherd boy who defeated a lion and a giant, who then went on to be crowned the most renowned king of Israel. Who would have thought that an abandoned and adopted Jewish boy named Moses could one day lead God's people out of bondage and on their way to the Promised Land? Who could have imagined 12 mismatched and confused disciples could change the world with the promise of the Gospel? The world and the curse of fatherlessness may have intended harm, but just as in the life of Joseph, what the devil meant for bad God used for good.

The best example of God's sovereignty and redemption is the expressed in and through death of Jesus on the cross. This may have appeared to be a victory for Satan and a failure for God; however, that tragic moment on the cross began humanities greatest victory, reconciliation with God was made possible and eternal and abundant life was made available through that so called "failure." Kollar announced that meaning is perception; this may be true for a mind set on the things of this world, however, now is the time for the fatherless and the Church to set their minds on things above and change their perception along with their eternal destination, legacy, and destinies.¹⁰⁷ God will meet the fatherless and the Church right in the midst of their struggle; the key is to trust in Him through faith His Son Jesus Christ. The hardest thing for the fatherless children to do is to shake the jaded view of their earthly fathers. The proper view of the Father is important so that the erroneous view is not projected onto their heavenly Father. A proper father view will help the child with the uninhibited acceptance of the free gift of grace that God is offering. This "Jesus," working through His Church is the only hope that the fatherless have to shake the curse of fatherlessness. It is the realization and redemption of the fatherless story. God

¹⁰⁷ Kollar, *Solution – Focused Pastoral Counseling*, 43.

has chosen His Church as the vehicle to deliver this Jesus to the world and its time that the Church has stepped up its effort.

CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH SURVEY

Methodology

The methodology used in this research survey was a quantitative and qualitative analysis of how the church addresses the problem of fatherlessness. This anonymous survey emailed in the month of July 2015 attempted to discover the church's ability to identify the problem of fatherlessness and its preparedness to actually make a difference in an afflicted child's life. The survey also attempted to measure the ministry position of the church to affectively minister to the fatherless in a prison setting. The emailed anonymous survey consisted of 50 questions; the first of which asked readers to participate in the survey. The potential participant received a recruitment letter from the author of the paper along with the contact information of Liberty University and Dr. Davidson (mentor). The participant was asked to answer the questions in order to help the researcher garner information from the data acquired. This information helped the author to understand the church's position and preparedness on fatherless issues. The author hoped to build a ministry training module from the information gleaned from this survey and from a thorough review of literature that was discussed in an earlier chapter.

This chapter includes detailed analysis, along with charts and graphs accompanied with each question. The 50 questions are broken into four basic sections: demographics, understanding and structure, preparedness, and ministry effectiveness.¹ The participants were emailed using a list of over 500 potential participants. The author hoped to achieve a minimum of 10% of responses to the survey request.

¹ This list of 50 questions was developed with the help of Chris Russell, from Chris Russell Consulting and Pastor Erik Rebstock of Fellowship Alliance Chapel. The structure and conceptual outline of the questions was supported and directed by Dr. David Hirschman in a conversation on how to develop a survey.

Questions one through 12 addressed the demographics of the participant. Questions 13 through 21 exposed the participant's position and understanding of the issues related to fatherlessness. Questions 22 through 31 revealed the church's or ministries preparedness to minister, and questions 32 through 50 divulged the church's behaviors that help them to overcome the problem of fatherlessness in their church and specifically in a prison ministry setting.²

Hypothesis

If this thesis discovers that the church is unaware of the problem of fatherlessness, then the broader question can be asked, will training and equipping enlighten the church to the needs of the community? If the research uncovers that the church is ill equipped to tackle the problem of fatherlessness, will training and ministry development better prepare the church? If research discovers that the church is equipped for ministry, can and will they address the issue of fatherlessness in any setting, nonetheless in a prison setting? Finally, if the church is willing and prepared to minister to the fatherless in prison, will this course curriculum better prepare the hearts and minds of the church to minister to the fatherless in prison? This thesis and research concludes with answering all of the above questions.

Approach

This "Heart of the Church" survey was emailed to over 500 pastors and ministry leaders. The list of leader was accumulated over the years of seminary attendance and also purchased through a list company.³ The list company's search asked for head pastors or ministry and church leaders. The list provided names, current addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers. This

² Sara Dolnicar, "Asking Good Survey Questions," foundations in Tourism Research, *Journal of Travel Research*, 52(5). 551-574.

³ John Johnson, Integrated Lists, Inc., Medford, NJ 08055. Integrated List provides personal and organization information based on specified criteria for a price. This list was purchased for .20 cents per name.

list was primarily accumulated in the northeast region of the United States; however, the author's seminary list (approximately 50 contacts) is diverse as to national geography.

This survey was emailed and a follow up email was sent to encourage participation. Once 50 or more responses were received, then the data was analyzed and phone calls were made to solicit participation until the desired number of participants was reached. The data accumulated from the 51 respondents was charted in the matrix listed below. The information was broken down by number of respondents. Of the respondents, 51 is that baseline; however, not every respondent answered every question. Most of the questions had full participation and the ones that weren't answered by everyone had an average of one to three participants opt out.

Research Results: Questions/Matrix

Table 3.1

Response Breakdowns

1. Do you agree to the above terms? By clicking yes you consent that you are willing to answer the questions in this survey.	Yes 51	No 0		
2. What is the geographical setting (location) of your Church or ministry?	Urban 12	Suburb 33	City 3	Rural 3
3. What part of the country is your ministry located?	Northeast 27	South 17	Midwest 4	West 3
4. Please identify your race.	White 40	Black 6	Asian 3	Other 2
5. Please provide a description of your area's average household socio-economic status.	25 6	25-50k 17	50-100 24	100+ 4
6. Please estimate the size of your Church congregation.	100 14	1-499 21	5-999 7	1000+ 8
7. Please identify your denominational affiliation.	Baptist 14	Lutheran 5	Non-Den 18	Other 12

8. What is your age?	18-34 6	35-54 23	55-74 21	75+ 1	⁴	
9. What is your gender?	Male 46	Female 5				
10. What is your current relationship status?	Married 45	Widowed	Divorced 3	Single 5		
11. What is the marital status of your parents?	24	14	6	2		
12. What is your highest level of completed education?	High 2	College 14	Graduate 28	Other 8		
13. How severe is the problem of fatherlessness?	Not 0	Slight 3	Moderate 11	Crisis 37		
14. How severe is the problem of fatherlessness in your Church or ministry?	5	15	17	13		
15. Do you have an intimate and/or personal experience with fatherlessness?	Person 19	Experience 23	Intellect 5	None 4		
16. What percentage of the Church would you say has experienced fatherlessness?	10% 20	25% 16	50% 8	75% 7		
17. Where would you say fatherlessness is the biggest problem?	Rural 1	Urban 36	Suburb 0	Nation 9	Int. 4	
18. What culture or race is most affected by fatherlessness?	White 0	Black 31	Asian. 0	Hisp. 1	All 18	
19. Where is the problem of fatherlessness most lived out?	Home 5	School 3	Relations 9	Prison 3	All 30	
20. What is the main cause of fatherlessness in your Church or ministry?	Divorce 20	Unwed 8	Death 0	Abandon 13	Passive 8	
21. What is the most devastating effect of fatherlessness?	T. preg 3	Addiction 6	Prison 3	Poverty 3	All 36	
22. How would you define the core structure of your Church?	S.Group 8	Congreg. 19	Mission 4	Disciple 13	Evan 7	
23. How motivated is your Church leadership to minister to the fatherless in their affliction?	Not 4	Some 20	Very 18	Extreme 7	N/A 2	
24. Does your Church have a venue for at-risk youth?	Yes 18	No 33				
25. Does your Church have a	12	38				

⁴ Heart of the Church Survey. This survey was developed for this thesis on Fatherlessness. Administration of the survey was done by Survey Monkey a webbed based facilitator of surveys. The survey was open on July 1 and closed on July 30, 2015.

prison ministry?					
26. What percentage of inmates would you say are fatherless?	10% 0	25% 1	50% 20	75% 18	75+ 12
27. How prepared is your Church to minister to fatherless youth?	Not 9	Slight 22	Moderate 11	Very 8	N/A 1
28. How prepared is your Church to minister to lost people in prison?	14	17	13	5	2
29. How prepared is your Church or ministry to minister to the fatherless in your congregation?	4	26	12	6	3
30. How prepared are your people to minister to the fatherless in prisons?	17	22	8	2	2
31. What discipleship programs (training) are available that would prepare your people to be more effective to deal with the problem of Fatherlessness?*	Educate 17	Mentor 18	Small G 15	Religion 15	Counsel 10
32. What type of counseling does your Church offer to at-risk youth?	Disciple 16	Lay 8	Pastoral 15	Prof. 1	Mentor 5
33. How difficult will it be for the Church to effectively deal with the problem of fatherlessness?	Not 2	8	Some 20	4	Very 7
34. What do you see as the biggest hurdle to successfully mentoring and making disciples of Fatherless children?	Money 2	Time 7	People 28	Training	Struct. 7
35. On a scale from 1 (Not at all interested) to 5 (extremely interested), what is your Church's level of interest in Prison Ministry.	1 6	2 28	3 16	4 1	5 0
36. What programs, resources, or services does your Church provide to prisoners seeking to turn their lives around?	Counsel 15	Job Train 0	Mentor 12	Housing 0	Educate 8
37. What would you say is the Church's most effective way of dealing with the problem of Fatherlessness?	Mentor 17	Marriage 13	Educate 8	Ministry 5	Counsel 4

38. If you had unlimited resources what ministry would you create in your Church?	Mission	Staff	Homeless	Addiction	youth
39. What in your estimation are the top three issues keeping men from pursuing God in your Church today?	Selfish	Time	Apathy		
40. In your estimation what are the top three things keeping men from serving in the Church today?	Time	Time	Role Models		
41. What percentage of men in your Church is actively involved in a discipleship program?	0% 2	10% 13	25% 24	50% 6	75% 5
42. Do you currently have a program that addresses fatherlessness?	Yes 6	No 45			
43. Do you feel that mentoring is a valuable tool in the solution to many of society's problems?	Yes 49	No 2			
44. How difficult would it be to implement a mentoring program in your Church?	Not 9	11	Some 20	1	Very 0
45. How prepared is your Church to minister to people in the community?	0	13	27		8
46. What is the biggest problem facing your Church today?	Commitment	Complacent	Apathy		
47. What do you see as the biggest problem facing the Church as a whole today?	Gay Mar 4	Porn 7	Addict. 15	Fatherless 8	Divorce 10
48. How equipped is your ministry or congregation to share the Gospel with an unsaved person?	Not 1	Some 8	Moderate 21	Very 21	N/A
49. How well is your Church equipped to carry out the great commission?	2	9	25	15	

Data Presentation

Question one asked for agreement to the terms of the anonymous survey. The 51 participants all answered *yes* to terms and participation of the survey. The geographical setting of

the participants is 71% suburban and 29% urban. The geographical location of the survey participants mainly fell in the greater Northeast 53%, South 33%, and the remainder residing in the Midwest and Western United States. A large portion of the responders were Caucasian 78%, while 12% were African-American and 6% were Asian.

Q2 What is the geographical setting (location) of your church or ministry?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 10

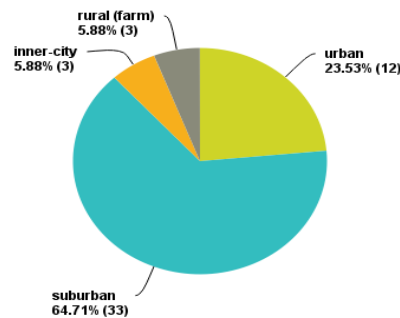


Figure 3.1 Q2: Geography

Socio-economic data, Church denomination, and Church size were addressed in questions 5, 6, and 7.⁵ The economic profile of the survey participants demonstrates an average income between \$25,000 and \$100,000. A majority of the survey pool fell in the \$50,000 to \$100,000 range with 33% compared to 45% under the \$50,000 range and 8% falling in the over \$100,000 economic range. Of the population of Churches 70% fell below 500 members in attendance range. While 15% of respondent Churches had 500 to 1,000 attendees, and 16% ranged from 1,000 to 5,000 attendees.

⁵ Alexander A. Weinreb and Mariana Sana, "The Effects of Questionnaire Translation on Demographic Data and Analysis," *Popular Res Policy Review* (2009) 28: 429-454.

Q3 What part of the country is your church or ministry located?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 10

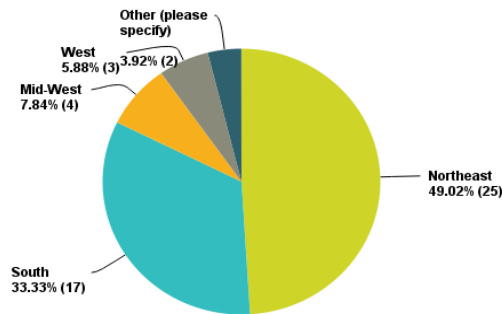


Figure 3.2 Q3: Regional Location

Of the respondents 36% were non-denominational, with Baptist as a close second at 27%, and the Lutheran population representing 10%. The age groupings presented from 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, and 75 and older. The age information was evaluated in compressed groups as 18-34, which represented 10% of the total, 35-54, which represented 46% of the total, 55-74, which represented 42% of the total, and 75 and older, which represented 2% of the total.⁶

Q6 Please estimate the size of the church congregation.

Answered: 50 Skipped: 11

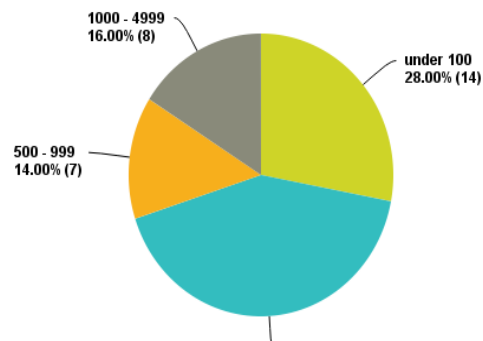


Figure 3.3 Q6: Size of Church

⁶ Gerald Vinten, "The Art of Asking Good Questions" *Management Decisions*, Vol. 32, No. 9 (1994), 46.

The population of survey responders was heavily male (90%) over female (10%) with a nine to one ratio. The percentage of married responders fell at 88%, while divorced and never married ministry leaders fell at 6% and 4% respectfully.

The marital history of the parents of ministry leaders was slightly different in percentages.⁷ The parents that were married (50%), divorced (12%), widowed (16%), unwed, separated, and other were (5%) cumulative. A major portion of the population of survey participants had completed a graduate or higher level of education (52%), while (27%) completed college and (18%) some college education. Only (2%) had only a high school diploma and (0%) had a GED or less.⁸

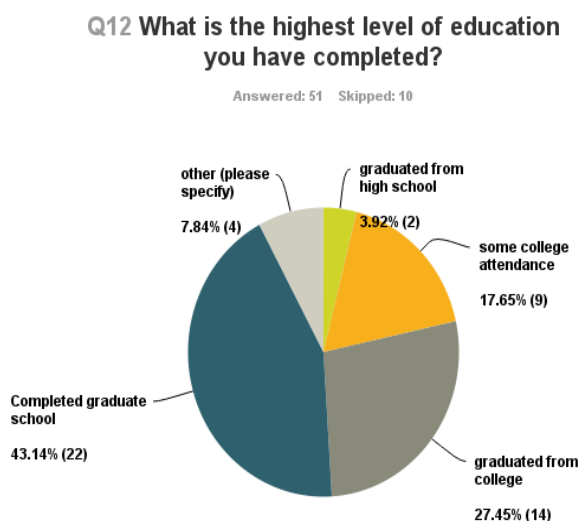


Figure 3.4 Q12: Education Level

The collection of data considering the understanding the problem of fatherlessness in Church is covered in questions 13 through 21.⁹ The overall severity of fatherlessness in the eyes of the ministry leaders ranges from not severe to crisis. The population found fatherlessness to be

⁷ Margaret Wynn, *Fatherless Families: A Study on Families Deprived of a Father by Death, Divorce, Separation, or Desertion, Before or After Marriage*, London: M. Joseph. (1964).

⁸ Heart of Church Survey, Survey Monkey July, 2015.

⁹ Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America*, 11.

extremely severe or at crisis levels were 73%, while the population finding the problem of fatherlessness as limited to moderately severe was 27%.

Questions 14 and 15 discuss the problem up close and personal. Fourteen asks *How severe is the problem of fatherlessness in your Church or ministry?* Question 15 asks *Do you have intimate personal knowledge of this problem?* The problem of fatherlessness in the responder's ministry or church was extreme or crisis (26%), moderate of slight at (64%), and not a problem at (10%). Personal knowledge of fatherlessness was (37%), second hand knowledge was (55%), and no knowledge (8%).

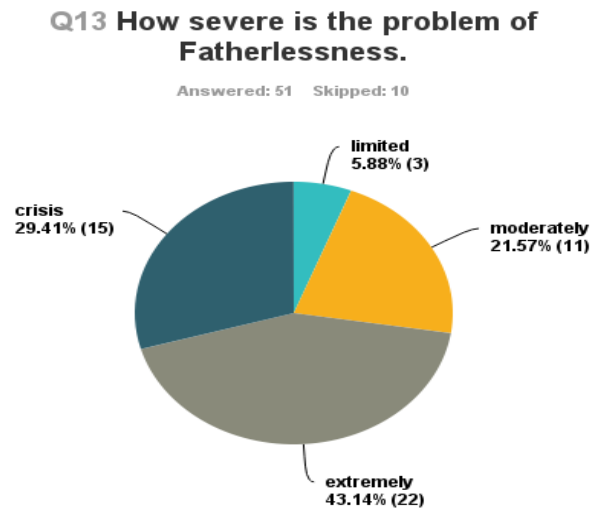


Figure 3.5 Q13: Severity of Fatherlessness

Ministry leaders were asked to evaluate the rate of experience of fatherlessness in the church and the outcomes were 70% of the church leaders believed that 25% of their congregation experienced fatherlessness. Fifteen percent felt that 50% had experienced fatherlessness, while 15% percent felt that 75% or more experienced the problem of fatherlessness. According to respondents, fatherlessness was predominantly an urban/inner-city problem (72%), with only one

respondent acknowledging fatherlessness as a suburban problem. The survey discovered that 62% of respondents believed that fatherlessness was mainly and African American problem; however, 36% felt fatherlessness was a problem that affected all races.¹⁰

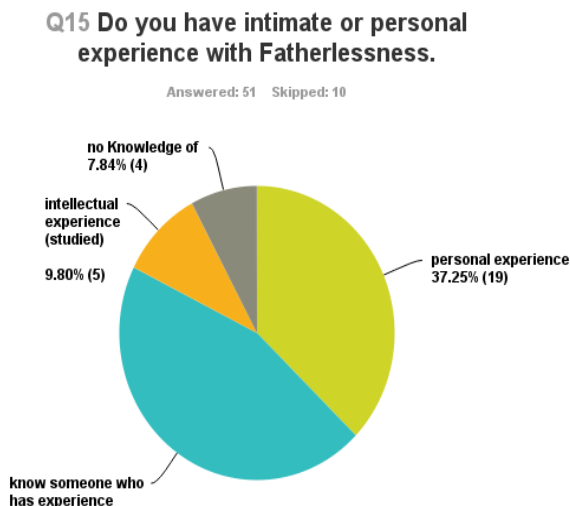


Figure 3.6 Q15: Experience

Thirty percent of those surveyed concluded that this problem of fatherlessness is lived out in every aspect of the affected child's life. Home, school, and prison shared the burden more equally, while 18% of respondents claimed relationships were most affected. The main cause of fatherless was led by divorce (40%), followed by abandonment at (25%), un-wed mothers (16%), passive fathers (10%), and addiction (6%). Two respondents felt this question was not applicable to their ministry.

¹⁰ Strong, *Church for the Fatherless*, 14.

Q20 What is the main cause of Fatherlessness in your church or ministry?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 10

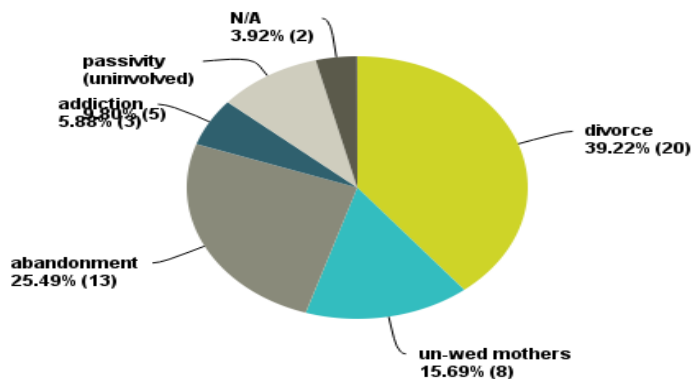


Figure 3.7 Q20: Causes

The most devastating single effect of fatherlessness according to the survey was drug addiction (12%), while teen pregnancy, prison, and poverty shared a 6% finding.¹¹ Thirty-six percent of those surveyed answered all of the above to these devastating effects of the fatherless experience.

Q21 What is the most devastating effect of Fatherlessness?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 10

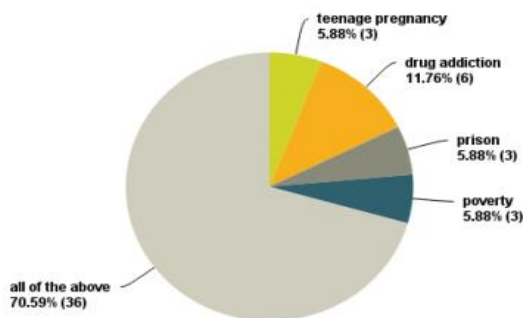


Figure 3.8 Q21: Effects

¹¹ These questions and outcomes fall in line with the effects of fatherlessness according to Drs. Tim Clinton and Chap Clark in their book on *Counseling Teenagers* and the effects of Fatherlessness. The information from this line of questioning was gleaned from the Chapter on Fatherlessness found on page 135 – 141.

Questions 22 through 31 will reveal the churches or ministries preparedness to minister. Question 31 asks about the core structure of the church. Most of the leaders that were surveyed were shepherds of congregational churches (40%) with, discipleship (18%), small group (16%), and evangelical (14%) in focus.¹²

Motivation of the church and its people are addressed in question 23 and 24. The church is split in ministry motivation to fatherless individuals with approximately 50% were slightly motivated and 50% were very motivated. The church laity lagged slightly behind the leadership in motivation, with leaders believing their people were less motivated than their leadership. Surveyed churches responded no (65%) to having a venue for at-risk youth and yes (35%).

Churches with prison ministries were even less likely to exist with respondents answering no (76%) and yes (24%).

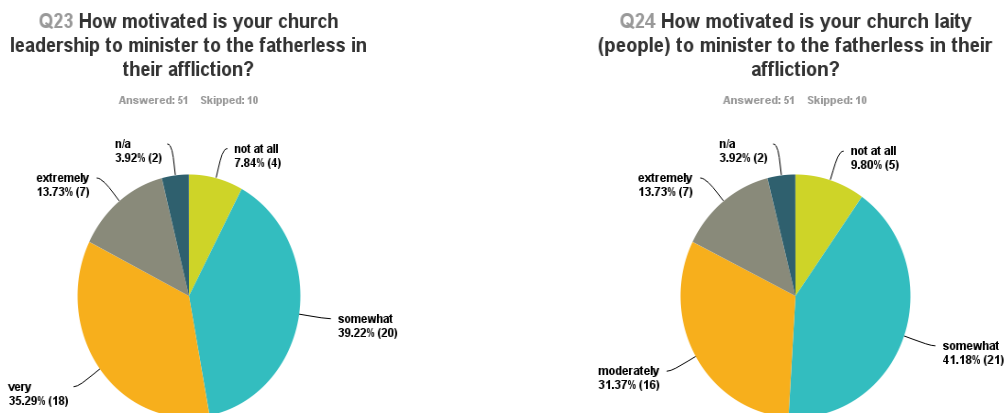


Figure 3.9 Q23 and Q24: Motivations

¹² This line of questioning was developed in and through information derived from Dave Early and David Wheeler (2010) in their book *Evangelism Is: How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence*. Many of these questions were compiled based on Early and Wheeler's diagnosis of the Church's failure to minister to their community and thus the world.

Forty-one percent of leadership believed that 50% or lower of inmates are fatherless, while 59% responded to 75% or more.¹³

The next four questions address the issues of church and church people's preparedness. When asked *How prepared is the church to minister to fatherless youth?* 18% answered not prepared, 43% slightly, 22% moderately, and 16% very prepared.

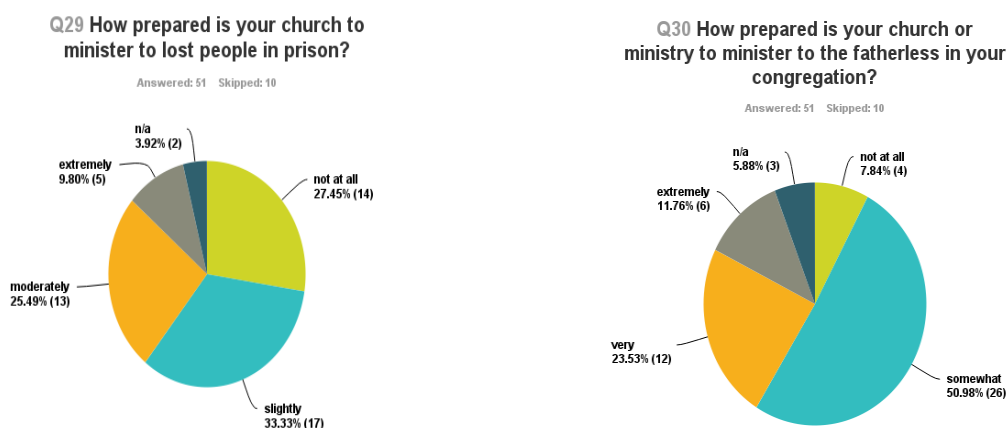


Figure 3.10 Q29 and Q30: Preparedness

When it comes to lost people in prison the churches preparedness looks like, 50% of respondents were not at all, or just slightly, prepared to minister in prison compared to 22% moderately and only 8% very prepared. Question 29 asks about preparedness to minister to the fatherless in the congregation.¹⁴ Fifty-nine percent of respondents were not prepared to moderately prepared and 36% were very or extremely prepared. The question asking about the preparedness of people to ministering to the fatherless in prison exposes 76% of respondents feel that their people are not prepared or only somewhat prepared, the breakdown is as follows, 33%

¹³ Vargias, "Who Ministers to Whom," 139.

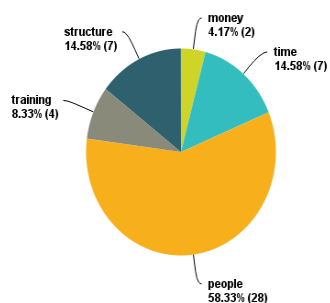
¹⁴ Mitchell, *Leading, Teaching, and Making Disciples*.

were not prepared, 43% were somewhat, 16% were moderately, and 4% were very prepared with two respondents answering not applicable (4%).

Survey questions 32 through 50 divulged the church's behaviors. It was these activities that help them to overcome the problem of fatherlessness in their church and specifically in a prison ministry setting. Mentoring (37%) is leading the pack in ministries that church leaders feel would help prepare church people to be more effective in their battle against fatherlessness. Educational ministries (35%) were followed by religious and small group training (31%).

Q35 What do you see as the biggest hurdle to successfully mentoring and making disciples of Fatherless children?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 13



Q36 On a scale from 1 (Not at all interested) to 5 (extremely interested), what is your church's level of interest in Prison Ministry

Answered: 51 Skipped: 10

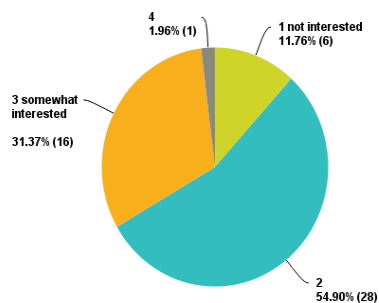


Figure 3.11 Q35 and Q36: Mentoring and Church Interest

The surveyed churches ministered to at-risk youth through youth discipleship (36%), pastoral counseling ministries (33%), lay counseling (18%), mentoring (11%), and professional counseling (5%). The respondents felt that addressing the problem of fatherlessness within their respective churches would be (60%) not very, to somewhat difficult, and 40% felt it would be difficult to very difficult.¹⁵ The survey revealed 58% of respondents felt the biggest hurdle to effective mentoring and discipling was people. Structure and time fell in the 15% arena, while

¹⁵ Paul Adams and Jeffrey Horovitz, "Psychopathology and Fatherlessness in Poor and Strategies for Change," *Sex Roles* 52, no. 9 (2005), 715-16.

training (8%) and money (4%) were at the bottom of the hurdle list. When asked to answer scaled questions ranging from one to five, one for not at all interested and five very interested; survey respondents interest in prison ministry were decisively, not interested to slight interest (77%) and somewhat interested (31%) and only very interested at (2%).

Ministry leaders provide the following programs, resources, and services to help prisoners with their re-entry into society.¹⁶ The available ministries were counseling (43%), mentoring (34%), education and re-entry information (11%), and housing and job training (0%). Ministry leaders felt the most effective way to deal with fatherlessness was through the following ministries, matching children with adult mentors (36%), promoting marriage (28%), Bible studies (14%), ministry (11%), counseling (9%), abstinence (2%), and birth control (0%).

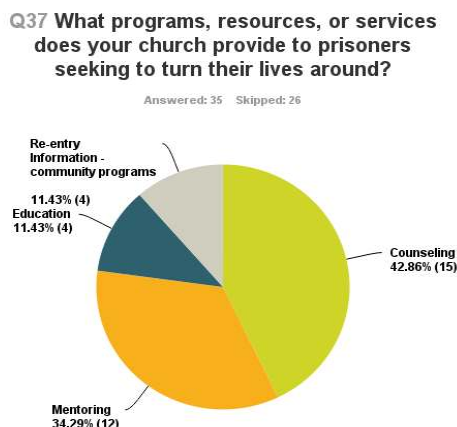


Figure 3.12 Q37: Prisoner Programs

When leaders were asked if they had unlimited resources what ministry would they create the answers were almost as varied as the number of respondents. Sixteen categories were represented amongst the 51 respondents.¹⁷ The top responses were youth ministries, mentoring

¹⁶ Joseph M. Stowell, *Redefining Leadership: Character Driven Habits of Effective Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014).

¹⁷ Much of the questioning in Church Leadership was acquired through the reading of Stowell's book on redefining leadership along with Tim Clinton and Ron Hawkins' book of Biblical Counseling.

programs, additional staff, addiction ministries, and homeless service. Other ministries that leaders would support if they had the resources were family skills and fathering education, missions, fatherless ministries, and music support. Other ministry responses cover the gamut of church possibilities such as; small groups, training, discipling, church plants, and specialized training.

In questions 40 and 41 the survey asks *What are the top three issues that keep men from pursuing God and serving others in the Church?*¹⁸ Although there were a variety of answers, the focuses of the top three answers for pursuit of God were selfishness, lack of time, and apathy. The focus of the top three answers for services were, time constraints, time, and lack of role models. Question 42 sums up the leaders' perception of men involved in discipleship programs. Seventy-six percent of the leaders felt that less than 25% of their men were actively involved in being discipled, and 29% of leaders felt that the number of men involved in discipleship was 10% or less. Twelve percent of those surveyed believed the rate of involvement was at 50%, and 10% felt the number was 75%. Not one leader felt that their church had 100% involvement.¹⁹

Q42 What percentage of men in your church are actively involved in a discipleship program?

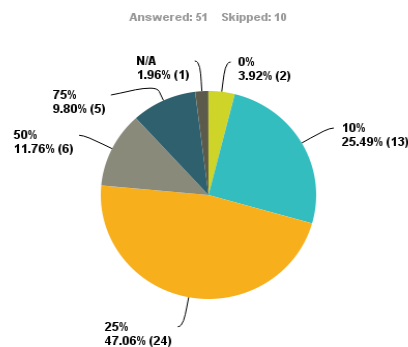


Figure 3.13 Q42: Discipleship

¹⁸ Dave Murrow, *Why Do Men Hate Going to Church*, 29.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 209.

When pastors and ministry leaders were asked if they had a program to address fatherlessness, 88% of the responses stated no, while 12% responded yes to the question. When asked if mentoring would be a valuable tool in the fight against society's problems, 96% of leaders felt that mentoring would provide relief to many of the problems.²⁰

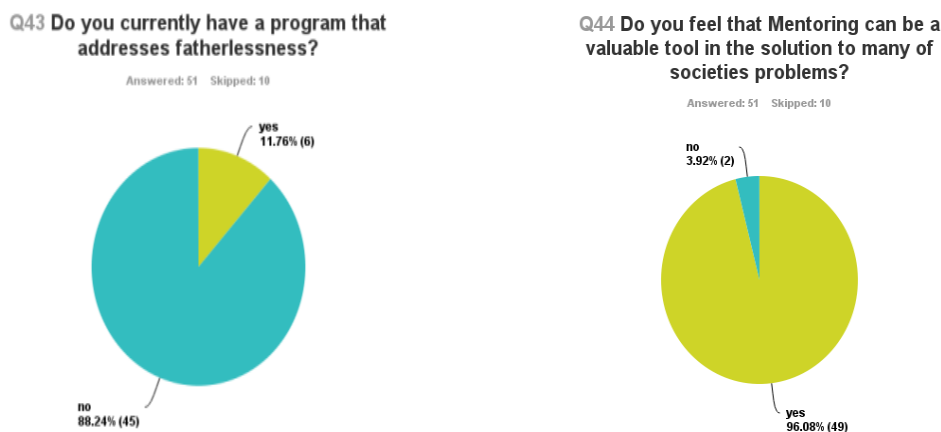


Figure 3.14 Q43 and Q44: Fatherless Programs and Mentoring

However, implementation of a mentoring program was considered a little more difficult. Of the respondents, 58% answered that it would moderately to extremely difficult for the church to implement a mentoring program, while 2% felt that mentoring implementation was impossible.

Forty percent responded that it was not difficult or was only slightly difficult to implement a mentoring program.²¹ Pastors and leaders responded that their congregation was only somewhat (27%) or moderately (55%) prepared to minister to people in their community.

²⁰ Kimberly D. Dodson., Leann N Cabage, and Paul M. Klenowski, "An Evidence Based Assessment of Faith-Based Programs: Do Faith-Based Programs "Work" to Reduce Recidivism?" *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 50, no.6 (2011), 367-71.

²¹ Dungy and Whitaker, *Mentor Leader*. Insight into proper mentoring and questioning on mentoring was derived from Tony Dungy and much of what Sowers and Miller wrote in their efforts at The Mentoring Project.

Those who answered that their church was very prepared to minister made up 16% of the respondents.

Q46 How prepared is your church to minister to the people in the community?

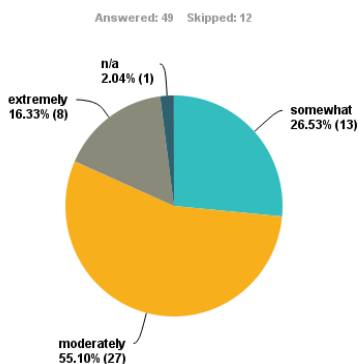


Figure 3.15 Q46: Church Community

According to the survey the biggest problem facing their individual church today was commitment, complacency, lack of understanding of God's word, and apathy.²² Other responses to this question were no evangelism, divorce, world's influence, vision, lordship, and lack of discipleship. When ask what is the biggest problem facing the church as a whole, the respondents answered to the six predetermined responses were gay marriage (8%), pornography (14%), addiction (31%), divorce (20%), fatherlessness (16%), and finances (8%). Leaders were allowed to answer or check as many boxes as pertains to this question. Thirty times respondents picked other as a response and those answers were as varied as reflected in prior question about problems in the church.²³

²² Will McRaney, Jr., *The Art of Personal Evangelism: Sharing Jesus in a Changing Culture* (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 43.

²³ Daniel Bennett, *A Passion for the Fatherless: Developing a God-Centered Ministry to Orphans* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2011).

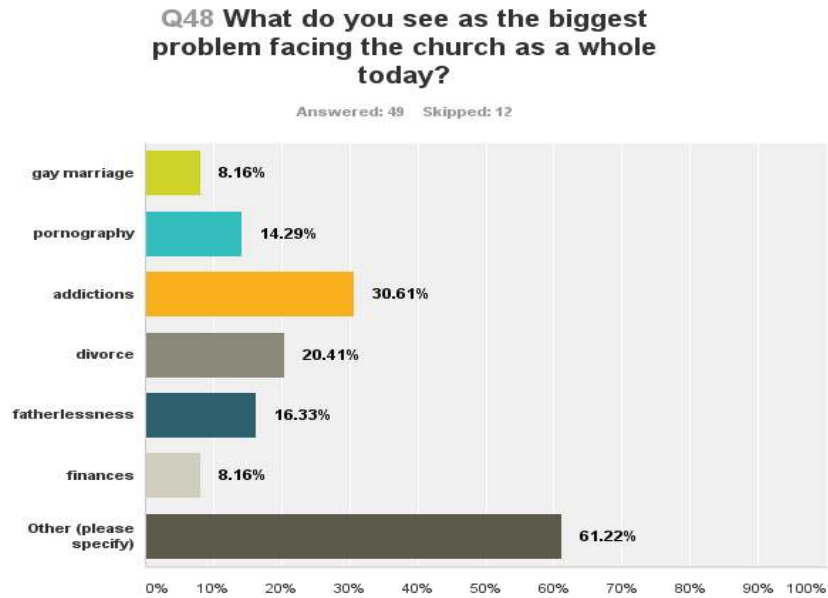


Figure 3.16 Q48: Church Problem

The final two questions in the survey address the Church's preparedness to share the Gospel of Christ and to accomplish Jesus' command to go and make disciples in His Great Commission.²⁴ Pastors and leaders answered that their congregation was not at all (2%), somewhat (16%), moderately (41%), and extremely (41%) prepared to share the Gospel with unsaved people.

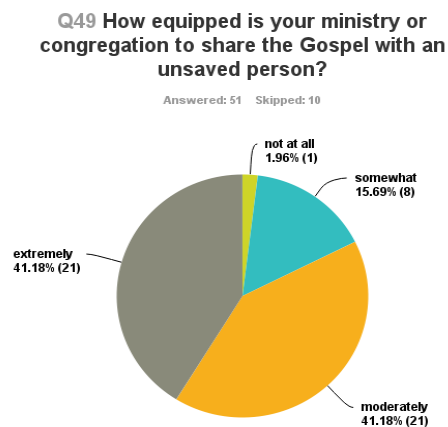


Figure 3.17 Q49: Gospel

²⁴ Early and Wheeler, *Evangelism Is*, 17.

The question on equipped to carry out the Great Commission leaders answered not at all (4%), somewhat (18%), moderately (49%), and extremely (29%) prepare to fulfill this command.

Q50 How well is your church equipped to carry out the Great Commission?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 10

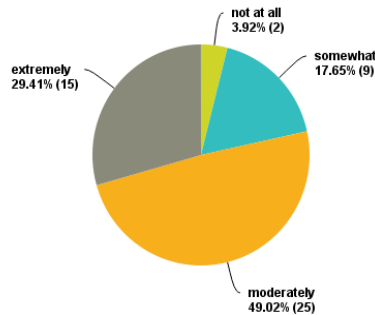


Figure 3.18 Q50: Great Commission

Summary

This survey was emailed to over 500 possible recipients. The respondents were selected from among church and ministry leaders from different regions of the United States. This survey was designed to specifically acquire data that would determine the preparedness of the church to address the problem of fatherlessness in its community and in prison. This survey was successful in gaining 51 respondents who answered the survey. The information compiled was ample in determining the answers to the problems posed in Chapter One of the theses: Is the church prepared and or equipped to deal with the problem of fatherlessness? The survey and the information that was compiled were both qualitative and quantitative. The information was ample in quantity and quality to make a determination. This determination was based on the question, is the church prepared and equipped to address the social problem of fatherlessness?

The next chapter concludes the findings of the survey to determine both meaning and pathway to a more successful outcome.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF DATA

Demographics

The statistical analysis of this thesis survey revealed the following conclusion as it pertains to the demographics of the survey respondents. The respondents were primarily from a suburban church (71%) that is mainly located in the northeastern (53%) part of the United States. The results of the survey were from predominately Caucasian (78%) respondents with only (16%) African Americans. The average income levels fell between \$50,000 and \$100,000, while the average age of respondents fell between 35-54 years. The average size of the respondent's congregation fell between 100 and 500 people (42%). The non-denominational church led the way with (36%) of respondents followed by Baptist (27%). Males outnumbered females (9-1), as (90%) of respondents were married, however the parents of respondents were mixed when it came to marital status with (50%) married, (16%) widowed, and (12%) divorced. Most survey respondents achieved a graduate level education (44%).¹

¹ Heart of the Church Survey, Survey Monkey. Administered July 2015.

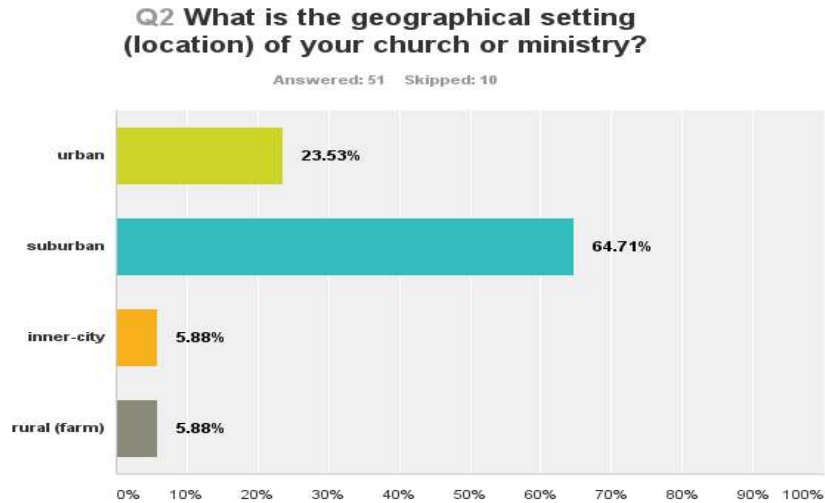


Figure 4.1. Q2: Geographical Setting

Understanding

The problem of fatherlessness was believed to be a severe problem; however, according to respondents, it was less of a problem to the individual churches and to the personal respondent themselves.² Only 19% of leaders had any personal experience with fatherlessness. The leadership's understanding of fatherlessness was consistent with the thesis research finding that most respondents felt that fatherlessness was a severe problem for society;³ however when asked how severe it was to them personally the numbers were shifted to a less than severe response. Question 16 stated the belief of the leadership.⁴ This belief was that 31% of the leaders responded that one-fourth or 25% of church people had a personal experience with fatherlessness. Statistics show that up to 40% of children experience fatherlessness; however, most statistics support one in four children are fatherless.⁵ This survey found more leaders

² Strong, *Church for the Fatherless*, 61.

³ Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America*.

⁴ Sowers, *Fatherless Generation*.

⁵ "What Do Single Parent Statistics Tell Us?" Single Parent Center, August 3, 2011, accessed March 11, 2015, www.singleparentcenter.net/single-parent-statistics.html.

thought the percentage was below 25% and more responded to 10% or less (39%). As many as 40% of respondents felt that fatherlessness is an inner-city, African American problem, that does not cross into suburban life.

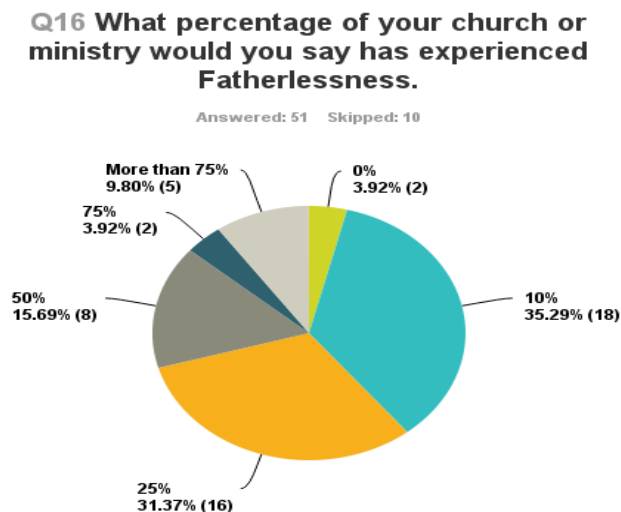


Figure 4.2. Q 16: Percentage of Church

The problem of fatherlessness is lived out in many arenas.⁶ These areas include relationships, home, school, and all of the above, whereas, the cause of fatherlessness according to this survey was divorce (40%), followed by abandonment, and un-wed mothers. The most devastating effects of fatherlessness are spread out over a plethora of symptomologies. These effects start at addictions, poverty, and teenage pregnancy and end in all of the above.⁷

Preparedness

The structure of the surveyed churches reveals a very white, suburban, congregational church who is at best moderately motivated to minister to the fatherless. Even though the

⁶ Alfred S. Friedman, Arlene Terras, and Kimberly Glassman, "Family Structure Versus Family relationships for Predicting Substance Use/Abuse and Illegal Behavior," *Journal of Child & Adolescence Substance Abuse* 10, no. 1(2000), 1-5.

⁷ Clinton and Clark, *Counseling Teenagers*, 136.

leadership felt moderately motivated they were only slightly more motivated than the laity. The feelings however do not line up with the facts. The fact is only 35% of respondent churches have at-risk youth ministries and even less than that have a prison ministry (24%). The understanding of prison ministry and inmates is weak amongst respondents.⁸ National statistics show that inmates experience fatherlessness affliction at close to a (75%) rate, yet only 50% of leaders were aware of this statistic. The survey showed that 83% of the church was moderately or less prepared to minister to fatherless children and even less prepared to minister to the lost people in prison. The church felt more prepared to minister to the fatherless in the Church's own back yard (75%); however, not at all prepared to minister to the fatherless in prison.

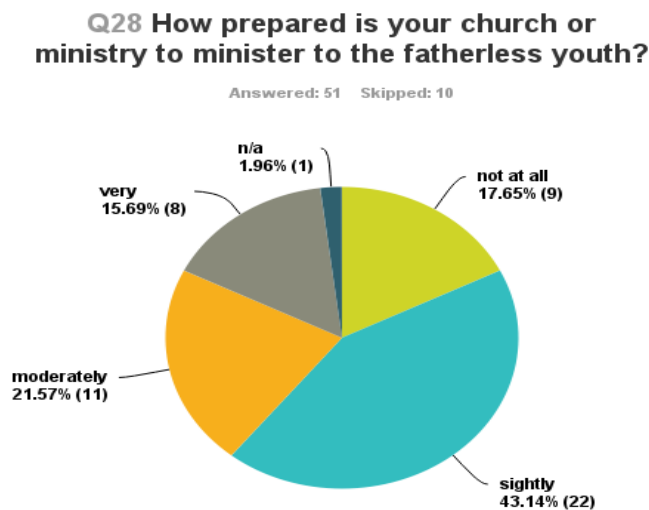


Figure 4.3. Q28: Prepared to Minister

⁸ Anne C. Case and Lawrence F. Katz, "The Company You Keep: The Effects of Family and Neighborhood on Disadvantage Youth," NBER Working Paper no 3705 (1991).

Ministry

The church leadership says they have ministries such as education, mentoring, small groups, counseling and youth discipleship available to counsel at-risk youth.⁹ Leaders responded at a rate of 40-80% that dealing with the issue of fatherlessness would be somewhat to very difficult. The leaders felt that the biggest hurdle to successfully ministering to the fatherless was their people (58%). The respondents showed very little interest in prison ministry (67%), and they also felt counseling (43%) was the best resource available to the church when helping prisoners seeking to return to be a productive member of society. The leaders felt that mentoring was the best way for the church to fix fatherlessness. The leadership also felt that supporting the institution of marriage was also a viable cure to fatherlessness.¹⁰

Questions 40 and 41 addressed men and the pursuit of God along with serving the Church.¹¹ The survey revealed that the leaders believed their people to be selfish, apathetic, in need of motivation, and lacking quality role models. Most leaders (76%) thought that less than 25% of men were actively involved in discipleship. The leadership responses (88%) showed that they had no direct ministry to deal with fatherlessness. These same leaders answered that mentoring (96%) was a valuable tool in fighting many of society's ills; however, they also responded that it would be difficult to implement a mentoring program (60%). The same respondents felt very prepared (72%) to minister to people in the community.

⁹ Mitchell, *Leading, Teaching, and Making Disciples*, 23.

¹⁰ Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher, *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People Are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financially* (New York: DoubleDay, 2000), 141.

¹¹ Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, 153.

Q42 What percentage of men in your church are actively involved in a discipleship program?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 10

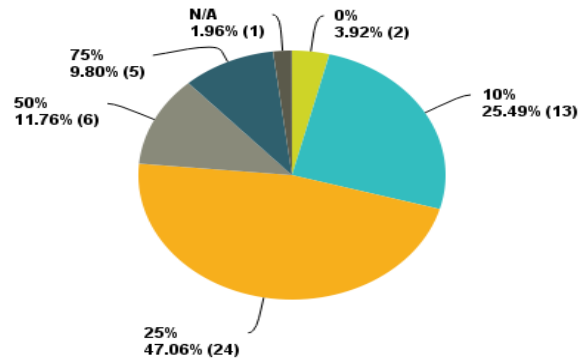


Figure 4.4. Q42: Men and Discipleship

The biggest problems facing the leadership in the church were commitment, complacency, and apathy of its people. While the leaders felt the biggest problem facing the church as a whole was addiction (31%) and divorce (20%), while the issue of fatherlessness as well as many other of the leader's answers fell at the bottom of the list of biggest problems. The respondents felt very equipped (82%) to share the gospel with an unsaved person and leaders felt equally prepared to carry out the Lord's Great Commission.¹²

¹² McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism*, 74.

Q50 How well is your church equipped to carry out the Great Commission?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 10

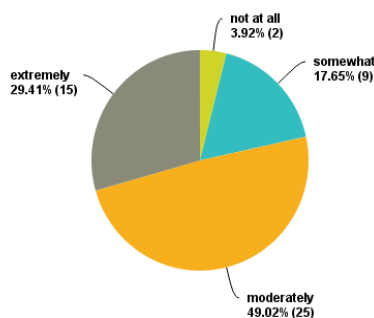


Figure 4.5. Q50: Great Commission

Summary Interpretation of Findings

In this chapter, the research methodology and hypothesis were presented. In this summary a review of the research questions asked in the hypothesis were addressed in this final summary of survey findings. If this thesis discovers that the church is unaware of the problem of fatherlessness, then the broader question can be asked, will training and equipping enlighten the church to the needs of the community?¹³ This thesis has discovered that the church is aware of the problem, although it does not truly understand the scope or the breadth of the issue of fatherlessness. The local church and its leadership are misguided as to the presence of the fatherless issues in its personal life and in that of the life of its people. The survey concluded that the surveyed churches believe that this problem is someone else dilemma and not really pertinent to them. Contrary to statistics fatherlessness is not just an inner-city black problem, it is an American and soon to be an international problem.¹⁴

¹³ Mariam J. Kamell, "James 1:27 and the Church's call to Mission and Morals," *Crux* 46, no. 4 (December 1, 2010), 15-22.

¹⁴ Mercer L. Sullivan, "Teen Fathers in the Inner City: An Exploratory Study. A Report to the Ford Foundation Urban Poverty Program," Vera Institute of Justice Website. Retrieved from [Http://vera.org](http://vera.org).

White suburbia's belief that fatherless is not their issue is nothing short of insanity. Divorce rates in the Church are as high as anywhere in society. Divorce is no respecter of color.¹⁵ That would make divorce the leading cause of fatherlessness next to single parenthood and unwed-motherhood. So with those statistics existing in the suburban church, it is somewhat confusing that the suburban church leadership misses the mark on severity and location of the problem of fatherlessness. Common sense would dictate that if there is a divorce problem, then there is a coinciding fatherless problem. Statistics show that there are 40% of children experiencing fatherlessness and its symptoms. This thesis without any doubt confirms that educating and equipping the church as to the problem and solutions of fatherlessness would benefit everyone inside and outside the church.

Question 2 and 3 posit, if the research uncovers that the church is ill equipped to tackle the problem of fatherlessness, will training and ministry development better prepare the church? If research discovers that the church is equipped for ministry, can and will they address the issue of fatherlessness in any setting, nonetheless in a prison setting?¹⁶ The church confesses to be well prepared to minister to the lost and to carry out the Great commission, nonetheless they have no prison ministry or little interest or motivation to minister to prisoners.

Jesus announced his ministry by quoting the prophet Isaiah (v.61), stating that He came to set captives free or proclaim liberty to the captives (Luke 4:18 ESV).¹⁷ The surveyed leadership found it difficult to address the problem of fatherlessness and to implement a mentoring program (remember survey show the respondents thought mentoring was a good answer); however, leaders found that people were the problem and a hurdle to the solutions,

¹⁵ Clinton and Clark, *Counseling Teenagers*, Parents Divorce, 205.

¹⁶ William Yount, *The Teaching Ministry of the Church* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2008), 16.

¹⁷ Philip T. Palacio, "Evaluation of Kairos Prison Ministry at California State Prison Sacramento: A Qualitative Case Study," PhD dissertation, Drexel University, 2012.

nevertheless mentoring is built on people and people skills. This thesis has proven that the church is ill equipped to deal with this problem and that training and better ministry equipping and development would be called for in all demographic and all geographic locations.

Next, if the church is willing and prepared to minister to the fatherless in prison, will this course curriculum better prepare the hearts and minds of the church to minister to the fatherless in prison? The bigger problem is that the church is not prepared and is not looking to be a willing participant in addressing this problem. The discussion of willingness and preparedness could be a thesis in itself. This research has found that there was a small pocket of people in every church that have a heart for the captives and that equipping those people in the area of fatherlessness would better prepare them to minister in prison. The statistics show that the problem is much greater than the Church's understanding or motivation. This is evident in the response that the church felt unprepared to minister to those in prison. Until the church comes up to speed in its calling to the lost, this data will only benefit the few who have the heart for the fatherless lost in prison.

If research discovers that the church is equipped for ministry, can and will the church leaders address the issue of fatherlessness in any setting, nonetheless in a prison setting? The survey shows that the church feels that it has many ministries in place to help its congregation, however when dealing with fatherlessness, the church responded that it does not experience the problem like the world or like other places and or people do. This is confusing and unsettling. The survey revealed that they are prepared to minister to a problem that they do not experience. The leaders also answered that counseling was their best weapon for fatherlessness, but then

again evidence and research shows that mentoring is the best venue.¹⁸ Counseling can be part of mentoring, however counseling is not mentoring.

If the church is willing and prepared to minister to the fatherless in prison; will this course curriculum better prepare the hearts and minds of the church to minister to the fatherless in prison? The question on unlimited resources to address ministry is revealing. Although literary research and statistical research show fatherlessness to be society's greatest and most pressing problem, the church is all over the map with what their biggest problem is and what the best avenue to attack their problems is. This could be one of the reasons why the church is failing in many ways in ministering to the lost, making disciples, and carrying out the Great Commission; not just in prison but anywhere in the world.

The next question to be pondered is, how does the Church fix a problem they are not sure exist in their churches with a people who leadership views as a problem and unmotivated?¹⁹ The Church may be showing signs of a bi-polar disorder that they are well prepared for a difficult problem that they do not have ministries or are equipped to fix. The answer lies in God's word and in equipping God's people to do the things that he has gifted them to do. Jesus set the captives free and James tells his readers that true religion is to minister or to visit the fatherless.²⁰ John exhorted his readers when he quotes Jesus' words, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father (John 14:12)." Did Jesus not rise? Is He not with the Father? Then why can't His believers do greater things than these by being better equipped mentors to minister to

¹⁸ Neal C. Lemery, *Mentoring Boys to Men: Climbing Their Own Mountains* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

¹⁹ Karen L. Cummings, "Motivating Urban Youth: Honoring the Experience of Adolescence. Diverse Enough Tools for a Diverse Enough Society?" *Sports in Society* 16, no 10 (2013), 1279.

²⁰ James 1:27 (KJV).

the fatherless? It is this thesis contention that a six-week mentor equipping program will help return the heart of the Father to the Church in order for the church to be well prepared to minister to the heart of the fatherless.²¹

²¹ Wayne L. Gordon, "The Eight Components of Christian Community Development," (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.nsc-Church.org>.

CHAPTER 5

THE MINISTRY

Introduction

This six-week lesson is prepared to equip those with a heart for the fatherless. This lesson introduces six biblical topics that all believers should possess in their Christian tool bag. These six lessons will complement any personality type to help the mentor prepare to understand fatherlessness, build rapport with their child, be an authentic mentor, establish godly self-worth, be an evangelist, and finally a disciple maker. The layout of this lesson plan will be founded in Christian Bible teaching principals. The conceptual architecture of the lesson is Hook, Book, Look, and Took (HBLT).¹ These qualities that will be taught and caught in the six lessons are instrumental to any Christian wanting to carry out the Lord's Great Commandment; however they are vital when mentoring the fatherless and critical when mentoring in a prison setting.

Lesson One: Understanding Fatherlessness

Lesson Plan – Hook, Book, Look, Took

Demographics for Lesson – Potential Fatherless Mentors ages 25 and up

Text – James 1:27 – True religion is to minister to the fatherless in their affliction.

Exegetical Idea – This is a call to the Church to deal with the problem of fatherlessness and to serve, minister, and share the love of Christ so that those affected can be lifted out of their afflictions.

¹ Michael Mitchell. The following are lesson formats derived from Homiletics 601, Bible Teaching and Preaching, Liberty University 2014. Hook; will get the attention of the audience, use video and any source that is relative and interesting to set the tone for your lesson. Book will choose a biblical verse that is foundational to the lesson at hand. Look, will research and uncover what the Bible and scholars have to say about the topic. Took, encourages the participant to embrace and apply the lesson in their life and to reflect on specific topics to give a better understanding of that week's lesson and how it applies to them.

Main or Pedagogical Idea – help mentors to understand fatherlessness and their responsibility so that the mentor can walk alongside the fatherless into the dark rooms of hopelessness and all the other isms that come with along with fatherlessness.

Lesson Aims (Head) – to help mentors to understand the world of the fatherless youth.

Affective (Heart) - to help mentors to emphasize with their mentee by entering into their world without judgment.

Behavior (Hands) – make commitment to enter into a six week lesson program that will help equip mentors to understand and speak into the life of fatherless youths specifically in a prison setting.

Hook

This child was born in Maryland in 1985, the third child after two older sisters, in an average, middle-class family. His father, a law enforcement officer, and his mother, a teacher, separated permanently when the child was seven. After years of fighting, his father abruptly moved out without further explanation. The children remained in the custody of their mother. When he was younger, the child was considered to be hyperactive. He jumped on furniture and broke things around the house. Teachers complained about his conduct, and one said that he would never amount to anything. He also spoke with a lisp. About the time his father left, he took up a sport in which both of his sisters also participated. His sisters helped to raise him, and served as role models, while his mother worked hard to support and encourage all of her children's efforts. Meanwhile, he rarely saw his father, who remarried and became distant and estranged.

It didn't matter. At age 15, he became the youngest person ever to set a world record in a timed sport. Over the next eight years, he kept winning more events, and he kept setting records.

His two sisters also grew up to become achieving and exemplary individuals. At age 23, in an interview with the London Standard, the world's greatest Olympian said that he owes everything to his mother. Michael Phelps, a boy from a “fatherless home.”²

To Gain a better understanding of a fatherless child watch the following Video on Fatherlessness – Fatherlessness creates a father-shaped hole in the child’s sole – video Oprah <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAptmhPxWtg>³

Book

Psalm 27:10 ESV - For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in.

The problem of fatherlessness is not a new problem. This issue has evolved in western civilization over the past few hundred years. It started with the death of the Patriarchal system that was replaced with a fraternal republic. This change shook fatherhood to the core of it being⁴. Over 40% of children in the U.S. do not live with their birth father. By age 18, half will have lived apart from him for some or most of their lives. The trend is directly related to rising divorce rates as well as the increases in unwed maternity. The latter phenomenon accounts for one third of all American birth. Much of the research on fatherlessness ties this problem to much of the social and moral decay of western civilization. Many agencies, including this author, believe that the fix for this problem is restoration and recognition of the importance of fatherhood. This would include enacting proper legislation that provides restrictions on divorce and places mandates on father involvement in his family. The decline of the institution of fatherhood slipped even further during the industrial revolution. This reduction has led to a decrease of

² Liz Library and Michael Phelps. <http://www.thelizlibrary.org/site-index/site-index-frame.html#soulhttp://www.thelizlibrary.org/fatherless/effects-of-fatherlessness.html>.

³ Iyanla, *Soothing Words to a Fatherless Son* | Oprah's Lifeclass | Oprah Winfrey Network

⁴ Gillis, *Marginalization of Fatherhood*, 226.

father influence that is a direct consequence of taking the father out of the home. The progressive change of the institution of fatherhood would continue into the 21st century.

Look

According to McGee for a Christian, *Father Hunger* often creates even more serious problems.⁵ The problems of how to approach God as a trusting father, when the memories of a father cause a vague uneasiness or even intense pain?⁶ Environment and background play a huge part in developing people's personality, however none play as an important role as parents. Parent absent specifically father absences through abandonment death, divorce, abuse, alcoholism, or other -isms can create a scenario that McGee calls "absent father syndrome."⁷ The problem arises when a child's need for love and comfort go unmet and these same children develop a mindset that tells them, they are broken, they are wrong, or they are less than. This hunger then is manifested in a lowering of expectations and substitution of satisfaction.

If a child's hunger for a father's love has not been satisfied, he will struggle to resolve the discrepancy between what he or she needed and what they actually received. These learned coping behaviors are likely to be repeated again and again. They are likely to be applied to relationships with peers, spouses, and eventually passed along to their children.⁸ According to McGee, victimization is one of the outcomes of being father deprived. Mentoring participants are asked to review the following questions and interact with these questions to the best of their ability. The list of questions is: What does fatherlessness look like to you personally; How does

⁵ Robert McGee, *Father Hunger* (Ann Arbor, MI: Rapha Resources, 1993), 19.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 31.

⁸ Ibid., 93-94.

it affect your life, in your family, Church, and community relationship? and Is absentee fatherhood the only form of fatherlessness?

Took

Fatherlessness affects all races at all socio-economic levels. Fatherlessness is inflicted on children through many venues. Destructive father behaviors can cause severe damage to a child's identity. Some of these behaviors are abandonment, addiction, absenteeism, passivity, abuse, and many others. Fatherlessness leaves a child with a feeling of hopelessness that can only be filed with loving relationship through people and God. The following questions will help the reader apply the information from the lesson into their own understanding. Each participant should contemplate the following questions and journal their answers for reflection. First mentors should ask, what have you learned about the effects of fatherlessness to children? Then mentors can make a commitment to read a book or three articles on fatherlessness this week. Thirdly, how can you address fatherlessness in your life? List one place that where your own father's shortcomings influenced your life. Finally, where and how can you serve your church and community that will help to alleviate some of the effects of fatherlessness? List three places or ministries.

Prayer

Lord Jesus – you command us to minister to the widows and orphans. Lord, please show us what it looks like to be an orphan and helps us to understand the pain and suffering that stems from fatherlessness. Please instill in us the very heart of the Father so we can be prepared to minister to the hearts of the fatherless.

Lesson Two: Rapport

Lesson Plan – Hook, Book, Look, Took

Demographics for Lesson – Potential Fatherless Mentors ages 25 and up

Text – 1 Corinthians 9:19 - Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.

Exegetical Idea – walking in another’s shoes helps the mentor to establish rapport and to earn the right to speak into their hurts and dreams.

Main or Pedagogical Idea – as a mentor it is important to empathize with your mentee; people do not care how much you know until they know how much you care. Common ground is important rapport.

Lesson Aims (Head) – to get the mentor out of his own head. He or she is not a doctor or a professor, but a listening ear who provides feedback when necessary.

Affective (Heart) – to have compassion for the mentee to walk alongside them in their journey, feeling their struggles on an emotional level.

Behavior (Hands) – to work along with the Spirit of God to help mentors learn techniques to better build relationships and to feel compassion for the people they mentor.

Hook

Daily Mentoring Quotes

"Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person." - Mother Teresa⁹

"The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own." - Benjamin Disraeli

"Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction." - John Crosby

⁹ Famous quotes by world renown and great mentor leaders to be read before the class begins in order to establish the atmosphere of mentoring and some of the great mentors who have gone before them.

"A lot of people have gone further than they thought they could because someone else thought they could." - Unknown

"One of the things I keep learning is that the secret of being happy is doing things for other people." - Dick Gregory

"We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give." - Winston Churchill

"Every Timothy needs a Paul; Every Ruth needs a Naomi." - Pastor Aaron Williams (Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Seattle WA)

Watch this video on what a bad mentor session looks like. This will help to break the ice you're your new recruits.

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=christian+mentor+video&go=Submit+Query&q=bs&form=QBVR#view=detail&mid=0D05ADA6773907213CD00D05ADA6773907213CD0>¹⁰

Book

Romans 12: 15 - 18- 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

FIT - How will you demonstrate fitness with each of the core DISC styles?

DISC Test - <https://www.123test.com/disc-personality-test/>¹¹

The objective of the mentor is to enter into the world of the mentee; this is accomplished through the use of many tools of which listening rises to the top. The goal here is to enter into his/her problem or world long enough to join with him in co-creating a solution. This act of

¹⁰ YouTube video of what a bad mentoring experience would look like. This is given as a sampling of what not to encourage in a mentor and mentee.

¹¹ DISC Testing. This will determine your personality type and present information that will be useful in how mentors interact with others. This is a free, low level, test, however there are many other more advanced testing modules available for purchase.

building rapport is critical to the success of the mentoring relationship, as you walk together with them, out from under the weight of the problem. The mentor must be prepared to respond to differing personality or DISC types with compassion that is revealed through tone and body language. Each DISC type will pose strengths and weakness and the mentor and he or she must be prepared to help address a solution by engaging these dominant styles and preparing for blind spots in both the mentor's and mentee's behavior or personality patterns. The objective is to form a relationship and the road to relationship is paved with quality listening skills. Feeling heard and understood has a lot to do with whether or not a personal connection happens. Each personality set will present its own strengths and weakness and each interaction between the same and different personalities will also create a dynamic set of issues, both positive and negative.

Look

Listening - is the most important skill – people want to be understood and cared for. Let everyone be quick to hear and slow to speak, slow to anger (James 1:19).

Empathy – letting people know you are with them. When the mentor can feel their pain it will help the mentor build rapport and enter into the life of the mentee.

Personality – understanding yours and others personality types will help to set up better communications with mentee. Jesus saw the large crowds and had compassion on them and healed their sick (Matthew 14:14).

All people face crisis in their lives. Believers and unbelievers are subject to the pains and losses of life. Some mentees are in need of direction, hope, and assistance; while at other times they need help with crisis. Crisis is defined as a loss of coping capabilities in response to an external event. The individual's perception, proximity, support systems, and capacity to cope with crisis will determine the severity and longevity of that crisis. Fatherlessness is a crisis in the

life of the fatherless. Mentoring can provide immediate and long term relief to those who are suffering. It is the very act of caring that shows the expression of God's love for the sufferer; it is the act of becoming more like Jesus for the caregiver. The mentor shows compassion and understanding when they begin building rapport as the mentoring relationship is solidified.

Took

The Apostle John wrote, "that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."¹² Sanctification or growth is found in relationship with God and with others. Jesus exhorts you to love God and to love your neighbors. Rapport is the first step in building a relationship and mentors will be well advised to acquire skills that help to establish rapport among their mentees. Mentors will be better prepared to minister to the hearts of the fatherless if they can practice the following: during this week pay special attention to listening and not building a response without actually hearing the person; make a commitment to read two articles or one book on listening skills (*Why Don't We Listen Better* by Jim Peterson), and report your progress next week in session three of equipping to be a fatherless mentor.

Prayer

Lord God, we honor you as the great relationship builder. We know that the trinity is the perfect example of Godly relationships; Father, Son and Holy Spirit all working together for our good. Please Lord, will you open our ears to hear, and our eyes to understand. Help us to be slow to speak and give us an empathetic heart, so that we may build rapport with others in order to receive the opportunity to share your love. In Jesus' name we ask this of you.

¹² 1 John 1:3 (ESV).

Lesson Three: Mentoring Authenticity

Lesson Plan – Hook, Book, Look, Took

Demographics for Lesson – Potential Fatherless Mentors ages 25 and up

Text – 1 Corinthians 4:15- For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Exegetical Idea – when mentors share the Gospel with the fatherless they become their spiritual father. This is a familial commitment. A spiritual father/son relationship

Main or Pedagogical Idea – it is a conscious effort to become a mentor. The key and the power in mentoring is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Lesson Aims (Head) – to help the mentor understand their position as surrogate fathers and understanding the power of the Gospel.

Affective (Heart) - to help mentors to have an open heart for relationship with an injured child and to be compassionate as this relationship blossoms.

Behavior (Hands) – to be available in a consistent and continuous fashion that show commitment to God and to the fatherless child.

Hook

Tony Dungy was the first African-American head coach to win the Super Bowl he was also the first head coach to lead his team to the playoffs for 10 consecutive years. He is currently retired and is a football analyst for NBC. Nathan Whitaker is a Harvard Law School graduate and he is currently representing the NFL and many college coaches. Conventional wisdom says that leaders are born, but I don't believe that's true says Dungy. Dungy says “from what I've seen, positive, life-changing leadership is an acquired trait, learn from interaction with others who

know how to lead and lead well.”¹³ Dungy wrote, mentor leadership is all about shaping, nurturing, empowering, and growing. It's all about relationships, integrity, and perpetual learning. Success is measured in changed lives, strong character, and eternal values, rather than material, temporal achievement, or status.¹⁴

Watch this video link about radical Mentoring and discuss as and ice breaker for this week's lesson.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHwHZgkSxr4>¹⁵

<https://radicalmentoring.com/mentor/?gclid=CNTCvrr8ssgCFUYXHwody9sBig>¹⁶

Book

2 Timothy 2:2 - and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Paul exhorts Timothy to be the example to his people. Paul encourages Timothy to teach the things that he was taught by Paul. The Bible is full of mentoring relationships. Some of these biblical mentoring relationships are; Paul and Timothy, Barnabas and Paul, Moses and Joshua, Naomi and Ruth, Elijah and Elisha, and Elizabeth and Mary. Paul's mentorship of Timothy was lived out in Paul's example. Paul imitated Christ and encouraged others to be imitator of him. Paul passed the torch or baton to the next generation by teaching and exhorting Timothy. Paul is committed to Timothy and Timothy is committed to Paul. This mentoring relationship is one of the most powerful examples of how the life of the mentor is poured into the life of the mentee.

Look

¹³ Dungy and Whitaker, *The Mentor Leader*, x.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, xviii.

¹⁵ Tony Dungy, a YouTube presentation on mentoring and his book.

¹⁶ Radical Mentoring is a web presentation on what radical mentoring looks like.

Mentoring purpose statement - I am dedicated to a life of discipleship to Jesus Christ that transmits the Good News of the Gospel to lost and hurting people. This Gospel is delivered with compassion and mercy; starting with my family and moving out into the world. The guiding purpose of my lifestyle is to be transformed into the likeness of Christ, by living a surrendered life to the Lordship of Christ. This purpose will be accomplished by picking up my cross daily and to moving towards that goal in a merciful and compassionate manner. There are many tools available to help today Christians “Hallmark Purpose”, is one of those tools. Mentorship is another (ministrymentors.org) in their web site uses the acrostic M E N T O R S to encourage pastors/mentors to use mentors. M stands for meet a potential mentor, E is engage in the process, N is navigate by setting goals and objectives, T is test the decision by engaging specific actions, O is organize priorities, R is revise and asses, and finally S is share the experience with others.

Jeremiah speaks of God setting pastors over his people, God is preparing away for the Savior and to redeem His people Israel. God says, God Commands, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Hebrews 13:17). In the American Church, believers tend to think of leadership development as a classroom and curriculum-based process, but Jesus had a better idea: spend time with people. Jesus allowed His life to rub off on His chosen leaders and to pour His wisdom into them, and believers can do the same. Sometimes it’s a matter of spotting the natural opportunities that come along while at other times, it’s an intentionally-planned conversation (Cox, Pastors.com 2013). The following are biblical mentor/mentee examples; at this point it is recommended that the reader look into the following relationship by 1; reading 2 Timothy and see how Paul parented Timothy, how Paul set the pace for Timothy and how he partnered with

Timothy; and 2) reading Deuteronomy 31:7 to see how Moses commissioned Joshua, which is another example of passing the baton and the blessings that comes with good mentoring.

Took

Philippians 4:9 -The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

The Mentor is encouraged to enter into a mentoring relationship with another man or woman. This week pick two or three possible mentors (for yourself) and begin the vetting process so that you too maybe under someone's mentorship. The mentor is also required to sign a one-year commitment to mentor a fatherless child. Furthermore, the mentor is exhorted to read an article on mentoring and fatherless children to enhance your skillset and be ready to discuss your findings next week. The mentor is in the discipleship process all the while working towards developing a "Hallmark Mentoring Purpose" Statement. The mentor is encouraged to use the example above and to put into writing, what their core beliefs are and how that is carried out as a mentor.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we humbly approach your throne and acknowledge that you are both Savior and Lord in our lives. Help us to have the heart of the father and help us to understand how He loves us and others with gentleness and compassion. Help us to be the mentors that you have called and equipped us to be. We thank you for giving us examples of mentors in your word. Lord please send us a Timothy and a Paul into our lives and help us to be more like your Son Jesus, in Christ Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Lesson Four: Self-Worth: You Have Value in Father God

Lesson Plan – Hook, Book, Look, Took

Demographics for Lesson – Potential Fatherless Mentors ages 25 and up

Text – Philippians 2: 5-11- 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. 8Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Exegetical Idea – God the Father and God the Son (Jesus) thought that you had value enough to come to earth as a man and die on the cross to fix your/our relationship with God. We have value to God.

Main or Pedagogical Idea – No matter what your position, background, or history; God loves us just the way we are. We have value and worth in His eyes– Romans 5:8 - but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Lesson Aims (Head) - to help the mentor to know that they have value in God's eyes, so much so that Christ came (Incarnation) to show us true Fatherly love (John 1:14).

Affective (Heart) - to help mentor feel and trust that this truth is for them: make it personal.

Behavior (Hands) – to help the Holy Spirit facilitate a commitment to Jesus (if not done so yet) and to move mentors towards a six week commitment of training, then into a twelve month mentoring program.

Hook - George Washington

George Washington was left fatherless when his father died at the age of 10. It was at this time was sent to be raised by his older half-brother. His education mostly ended at this time as he began training in the trade of surveying. By age of 16, Washington was employed full time in his trade. George was abandon again at age 20, when his brother died from tuberculosis. After his brother's death, George left his trade to join the army and he quickly rose to the rank of colonel.

Rumor has it that George Washington may have had authority issues consistently being in direct conflict with his superiors. At the age of 26 his Army carrier ended and he married an older wealthy widow. George instantly became the father of two children. George had a pronounced interest in science and agriculture and with the money that his brother left him along with the wealthy wife's money, George began farming and getting involved in politics. George Washington was subsequently called up to lead an army of revolutionaries against the soldiers he formerly had commanded as a colonel. Washington's bravery and endurance along with loyalty to troops in the midst of hardship and loss made him rise to a well-respected man of integrity. Washington is both a legend and a hero, as his name will be remembered for as long as America stands as a great nation. He became the first president of the United States.

George Washington, a boy from a "fatherless home."¹⁷

¹⁷ The Liz Library, "Famous Fatherless Stories," accessed March 15, 2015, <http://www.thelizlibrary.org/site-index/site-index-frame.html#soulhttp://www.thelizlibrary.org/fatherless/effects-of-fatherlessness.html>.

Book – Story of Jesus Birth

Background: the birth narrative in Matthew 1:18-25. Jesus was conceived under questionable circumstances as Mary was already planned to be married to Joseph and was found to be pregnant. This is a “Fatherless” scandal that would be used against Jesus most likely throughout his childhood. This fatherless scandal was evidenced by the dispute Jesus had with the Pharisee’s later during Jesus’ ministry years (John 8:41) Pharisee’s said to Jesus, “You are doing the works your father did.” They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.”

At the center of the “Image of God” is creation theology. God created the world and the universe *ex nihilo* (out of nothing).¹⁸ This theory is one of the trademarks of the Christian doctrine of creation.¹⁹ The author of Hebrews wrote, “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”²⁰ God is the source of all, since all that is, comes from God’s will as its source. Nothing in existence is in itself evil.²¹ The biblical discussion on the image of God centers on the Greek *eikon* and *homoiosis* but is crowned in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. In Genesis 1:26 and 5:3 the term “image” and “likeness” do not distinguish different aspects of the imago but states intensively the fact that men and woman quit uniquely reflect God.²² Although man lives in his fallen state, the image of God is not completely erased and is mostly substantive and is consistent

¹⁸ John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 553.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Hebrews 11:3 (ESV).

²¹ D. K. McKim, “Doctrine of Creation,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker House Company, 2001), 305.

²² C. F. H. Henry, “Image of God,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker House Company, 2001), 592.

in the very nature of being human.²³ The image of God is better explained in its implications and manifestation. “Image of God” means that His people belong to Him, Jesus is the living example of that ‘Image,’ the image is reflected in all humanity and people are not fully human until they properly understand what the image of God means to their lives.²⁴

Look

Interactive lesson- sharing and discussing causes of fatherlessness- Human Condition. Leaders and mentors are to engage the following topics and to discuss their understandings of how these issues are part of the fatherless experience. The following topics are to be discussed for no longer than ten minutes in total. The topics are unwed-Mothers – including by choice and teenage pregnancy, divorce – as many as 50% of marriages – including Church marriages end in divorce, death – like divorce death brings a unique type of crisis to fatherlessness – dependent upon growth stage of the Child, other forms of Fatherlessness – Physical Abuse, Workaholic, Alcoholic, Passive or Permissive, and Sexual Abuse.

Fatherlessness reveals its consequences differently depending upon the moments of its infliction. Each and every stage of development comes with its own set of specific consequences as pertaining to father absence. Most research breaks down the effects of the absentee father into three stages of childhood development; early childhood, elementary school years, and adolescence. Absentee fathers create a number of developmental problems in those children under the age of five. The most prominent problem is an unhealthy attachment to mother. Girls and boys are both affected in different manners. Boys tend to remain (immature) boys and girls typically try to live up to and be like their mothers, no matter how dysfunctional.

²³ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 533.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 534.

Stoop (1992) clarifies the problem of a distorted view of God in his book *Making Peace with your Father*, these developmental problems are often dormant; only coming to fruition later on in his or her adult life. One example would be that a son may marry or seek relationships with a woman who will be willing to “mother him” as opposed to “partner Him.” Not only are children affected at different stages in their development, children in the family can see and react to the situation very differently, depending on the order of birth and their perception of the abandonment. Many daughters inappropriately idolize their fathers and create an unrealistic expectation in future and current potential partners. On the other hand, they can become overly attached to the mother and that can cause a slowing or underdevelopment of her femininity. For young boys so many issues are similar but many sexuality problems and anger issues arise from a longing for a relationship with his father. Take 10 minutes to discuss the following effects and biblical references to father injuries and fatherlessness. 1) What do you think it looks like and feels like to be fatherless, abandoned, or abused? (Job 24:9) - The fatherless child is snatched from the breast? 2) What do you think people said to Mary and Joseph – what was the stigma attached to them and Jesus (Matt 1:19) and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly? 3) What are some of the consequences in your own life due to poor fathering by your father? David was a great king nevertheless as father had many failures – (1kings1:6) - Now his father, King David, had never disciplined him at any time, even by asking, "Why are you doing that?" Adonijah had been born next after Absalom, and he was very handsome. 4) Who did Jesus refer to as his father; list a few ways that he stayed in relationship with Him. (John 8:18) I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”

Took

Jesus found value in what his Father thought of Him – Jesus received a blessing and anointing from His Father at the beginning of His ministry. (Matt 3:17) - and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

Jesus reveals God as a well-balanced example of a nurturing, lawgiving, warrior, mentoring, patient, and healing Father (Stoop 1992, pg. 251-269) - Nurturing (Matt 11:28-30), Lawgiver (Jeremiah 31:33), Warrior (Psalm 68:5), Mentoring (Philippians 2:13), Patient (Luke 18:7), and Healing (Hebrews 4:15-15).

Engage the following activities to help develop biblical mentoring characteristics. 1) Pick three (3) character traits of God’s Fatherhood that you as a mentor need to improve. 2) Discuss how those traits would make you a better mentor aka surrogate father to the fatherless and what actions we can do in the next week to start to improve in those areas. 3) Bring one (1) example of each improvement of your three (3) traits that you have practiced this week. Be ready to discuss these traits and examples in next week’s lesson.

Prayer

Lord Jesus we pray that your Spirit will live with-in us as we seek to have the same heart that brought you to earth to save us from ourselves. We understand that you experienced and are empathetic to our sufferings and that you came to give us a victorious life that raises us up above our situations. Dear Lord, bless these mentors and help them to be sympathetic to the struggles of the fatherless. Help them to see your son and the value they have in your Father’s relationship as they walk out their mentorship with the fatherless.

Lesson Five: Salvation

Lesson Plan – Hook, Book, Look, Took

Demographics for Lesson – Potential Fatherless Mentors ages 25 and up

Text - Romans 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Exegetical Idea – Sin has separated us from God and we are in need of a Savior.

Main or Pedagogical Idea – That although at the fall, Adam and Eve fell from God’s grace and all of humanity was separated from God because of their disobedience, God loved the world so much He sent his only Son to offer salvation to all through faith in Him (Jesus) (John 3:16).

Lesson Aims (Head) - to help the mentor to teach about salvation and to clearly deliver the Good News in a non- offensive and clearly articulated manner. This will help the mentee to know that God loves him so much that Christ came for reconciliation. Romans 5:10- For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Affective (Heart) - to help fatherless know that God loves him and sent Jesus to die so that he could be their Heavenly Father. To help create a new understanding of Father, the one who is not like the father here on earth, the true Father God who will never leave them or forsake them (Hebrews 13:5)

Behavior (Hands) – to help the Holy Spirit facilitate a commitment to Jesus (if not done so yet) and to train mentors to evangelize and share the Gospel in a clear and concise manner with the hopes of a conversion through the mentoring process.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21 - All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

Hook

Are you without a father? - Whether through divorce, abandonment, death or neglect you may find yourself with a father, without a man to love and protect you in the way that you need. But know that there is a Father who does care, who will never leave, will never stop loving you. Forced into foster care at age 7 because of a dysfunctional family, Tyrone Flowers lived out a next decade of hell. His homes over the next 10 years: three different foster homes, residential treatment facilities, eight different group homes, and juvenile reformatory school. At 17 he was dealt an even more cruel blow, leaving him handicapped and asking, “Why me?” Yet Tyrone’s story did not end there. His self-pity turned into something else that was able to change those first 17 years into good, giving him purpose in life, and allowing him to impact the lives of others. He saw disaster changed into triumph, further reinforcing his faith and hope, and inspiring others in the process.

Tyrone Flowers - \ <http://www.iamsecond.com/struggles/fatherlessness/>²⁵ Please view the YouTube video above as the introduction to today’s lesson.

Book

Crucifixion of Jesus

Luke 24:20 – “and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.”

1 Corinthians 2:2 – “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

Jesus was sentenced to death and it was all part of God’s plan to reconcile His children back to himself – Jesus paid the price of sin (propitiation) to a holy God who demands justice.

²⁵ Tyrone Flowers, YouTube video testimony for I am Second, accessed August 21, 2015, [http://www.iamsecond.com/struggles/fatherlessness/Tyrone Flowers](http://www.iamsecond.com/struggles/fatherlessness/Tyrone%20Flowers).

The mercy of God is shown to his children through the atoning death of Christ. That while we were still sinners Jesus died for us. The Old Testament foreshadowed humanities need for a crucified and suffering Savior. Isaiah wrote,

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.²⁶

The following are additional examples of OT examples foreshadowing of salvation needs; Adam and Eve and God providing salvation clothes, the Passover, the story of the sacrifices of Isaac by Abraham, the OT example of Moses and Serpent lifted up to save those who are destined to die by snake bite

The New Testament tells the story of Jesus ministry death and resurrection. His death was payment for the penalty of sin while his resurrection brought victory to those who have faith in the one who was able to provide the perfect sacrifice. Dr. Willmington in his class on salvation said that the implications of salvation are as follows: a) Man needs to be saved because he is sick and needs a doctor, b) Man is indicted by God and needs a lawyer, c) Man is drowning and needs a lifeguard, and d) Man is hopelessly lost and needs a guide. Dr. Willmington proceeds to express that man needs saving and that God through Jesus is willing to save him. God's message of salvation comes through a man (preacher) and by the shedding of innocent blood (perfect Lamb of God). This blood must be applied by the recipient through God's grace and through man's faith in Jesus.

²⁶ Isaiah 53:4-6(ESV).

Look

God promises to look out for the fatherless. In Psalm 146:9 the Psalmist writes, “The Lord watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.” And again in Psalm 68:5, “Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.” Paul writes to his mentee in his letter to Timothy, “if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (1 Timothy 5:8.)” Paul encourages his reader to be bold and fearless when he writes,

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.²⁷

God explains to Job that he is for the fatherless and against those who do not support their cause.²⁸

The Bible is replete with scripture that show that God loves and will care for the fatherless. This lesson will show the mentor how to express to the mentee their need for a savior along with why even though their parents may have forsaken them God has promised to look out for them and deliver them from their sin. Below is a plan that will teach the mentor how to walk someone through the act of salvation. The mentor should always trust the Holy Spirit to prepare

²⁷ Romans 8:15-17 (ESV).

²⁸ Job 29:12 (ESV).

hearts for salvation nonetheless the mentor shall look for opportunities to help the mentee to accept Jesus into their hearts.

Took

The following questions are excellent avenues to open a door for a quality discussion with a mentee's need for salvation. The non-judgmental and non-confrontational approach to communication is enveloped in the following question. Remember there is no need to respond to the unbeliever's answers, trust the word of God to save them and soften their hearts. Engage the unbeliever with the following open ended questions; Do you have any spiritual beliefs? Who is Jesus to you? Do you think there is a heaven or hell? If you died where would you go? If what you believed was not true would you want to know? Do not judge answers just listen it will give you an opportunity to know where the mentee stands with God and religion. Use your Bible as the authority not just your opinion... let us see what God says about these questions. This may provoke a question and answer session, which is good! By reading the following scriptures the evangelized person gets to engage God's word by reading the following verses out loud, one at a time.

Romans 3:23...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Romans 6:23... For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 3:3... Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 14:6...Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Romans 10:9-11...9If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. 11As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.”

2 Corinthians 5:15...and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Revelation 3:20...Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

If the unbeliever understands the above mentioned scriptures and is ready to accept Jesus as your Savior, the mentor can ask the following questions in order to confirm and appropriate response. If the unbeliever or mentee is not ready, encourage them to pray and ask God to help them understand and commit. If they are ready engage the following questions, Are you a sinner? Do you want forgiveness? Do you believe Jesus died on the cross and rise again? Are you willing to surrender your life to Jesus? Are you ready to invite Jesus into your heart and or life?

Prayer

Sinners Pray... Dear heavenly Father, I have sinned against you and I want forgiveness for all my sins, I believe that Jesus died and rose again to pay for my sins, Father, I give you my life, Jesus come into my life and into my heart, in Jesus name ... Amen

Lesson Six: Discipling

Lesson Plan – Hook, Book, Look, Took

Demographics for Lesson – Potential Fatherless Mentors ages 25 and up

Text - 1Thessalonians 1:4-7 –For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

Exegetical Idea – God the Father has empowered us through His Son. We are called to make disciples by imitating Jesus and other Godly Men as we mentor the fatherless throughout the world.

Main or Pedagogical Idea – God has provided us with everything we need to be successful in our ministry.

2 Peter 1:3-8 - His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Lesson Aims (Head) - to help the mentor to know that God will provide the means and the desire to accomplish all that he calls us to do.

Affective (Heart) - to help the mentor feel empowered and valued by God to be a good and faithful mentor.

Behavior (Hands) – to assist in the process of yielding to the Holy Spirit while He equips the mentor with the tools and assets that are needed to accomplish mentoring a fatherless child.

Hook

Ben Carson was born in Detroit, Michigan to Sonya (née Copeland) and Robert Solomon Carson. At the age of eight, his parents divorced, and he and his 10-year-old brother, Curtis, were raised by their mother.²⁹ Dr. Carson wrote a book titled *Gifted Hand*. In his book Carson speaks about his violent temper as a youth and while in the ninth grade, he nearly stabbed a friend during a fight over a radio station. This incident caused him to seek God and he started the journey by reading the book of Proverbs. Carson testifies these verses in Proverbs had cured his anger problems. Carson attended Southwestern High school in Detroit. He was a member of the ROTC. He was quickly promoted and was offered a nomination to West Point.³⁰ Carson graduated from Yale where he majored in Psychology. Carson received his Medical degree from the University of Michigan Medical School.

Benjamin Solomon "Ben" Carson, Sr. (born September 18, 1951) is a retired Neurosurgeon. Dr. Ben Carson was the first surgeon to successfully separate conjoined twins. In 2008, President George W. Bush awarded Dr. Carson the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Dr. Carson is currently considering declaring his candidacy as a Republican for President in 2016. Carson has written six best-selling books published by Zondervan; the books are listed as follows: *Gifted Hands*, *Think Big*, *The Big Picture*, *Take the Risk*, *America the Beautiful*, and *One Nation*. One of Carson books was a bestseller for an extended period of time and another was made into a movie starring Cuba Gooding Jr.

Watch this YouTube video on Discipleship and take a moment to discuss.

Discipleship - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rk8ERxqCZqQ>³¹

²⁹Ben Carson – Biography Facts, Birthday, Life Story. Retrieved from Biography.com. 1951-09-18.

³⁰ Daniel Foster, (February 13, 2013), "Five Things You Didn't Know about Dr. Carson," *National Review*.

³¹ Discipleship video, a presentation on Biblical Discipleship, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rk8ERxqCZqQ>.

Book

Luke 4:18-19- The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Jesus's use of the words recorded in Isaiah 61 to announce His ministry revealed in Luke 4. A further look into Christ's announcement promises freedom to captives referencing the Jewish year of Jubilee. Christ promise to return the prisoner from exile and return to them that which was taken. This is a promise of Christ's that everyone who is in bondage should understand. It is for freedom that Christ set us free stand firm and do not submit again to that yoke of slavery (Gal. 5:1). John the Baptist announces, the Lamb of God, Jesus coming to take God's wrath upon Himself and to replace wrath with eternal blessing through faith in him, this is the very promise of Luke 4:18. This freedom is the hope of all (fatherless) who want to rise above their worldly and eternal situation. Like in 1Thessalonian 1 it is the power of the Gospel lived out in God's children that sets man free from his earthly circumstances and places men on their Christ powered eternal journey with their Creator and Lord.

Look

He (Jesus) sat down and called the 12. He said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me" (Mark 9:35-37). John Sowers in *Fatherless Generation: Redeeming the Story* describe rejection as the key

characteristic of fatherlessness. Sower's titles this child's craving for a father, as "Father Hunger" and this hunger is realized through lives of pain, shame and damage. One third of today's youth have lost their fathers to abandonment, divorce, drugs, death, and prison; and the number and percentages are growing.³²The odds and the tables are stacked against the fatherless. They are against them graduating; against them becoming fathers who are present for their children; and against them ever escaping the bondage of the poverty mindset that is established in fatherlessness. However, all hope is not lost because with God on their side, all things are possible.

With God as the author of the fatherless child's story; fatherless boys and girls can be written into a success novel, not unlike that of the life of a young seemingly lowly shepherd boy who defeated a lion and a giant, who then went on to be crowned the most renowned king of Israel. Who would have thought that an abandoned and adopted Jewish boy named Moses could one day lead God's people out of bondage and on their way to the Promised Land? Who could have imagined twelve mismatched and confused disciples could change the world with the Spirit of God and the promise of the Gospel? The world and the curse of fatherlessness may have intended harm, but just as in the life of Joseph, what the devil and people meant for bad; God used for good.

The best example of God's sovereignty and redemption is the expressed in and through death of Jesus on the cross. This may have appeared to be a victory for Satan and a failure for God, however that tragic moment on the cross began God's greatest victory for humanity; reconciliation with God was made possible and eternal and abundant life was made available through that so called "failure." Kollar announced that meaning is perception (p.43); this may be true for a mind set on the things of this world, however, now is the time for the fatherless and the

³² Sowers, *A Fatherless Generation*, 20.

Church to set their minds on things above and change their perception along with their eternal destination, legacy, and destinies. God will meet the fatherless and the Church right in the midst of their struggle; the key is to trust in him through faith his Son Jesus. The hardest thing for the fatherless children to do is to shake their jaded view of their earthly fathers. The proper view of the heavenly Father is important so that the erroneous earthly view is not projected onto their heavenly Father. This is important so that the child is uninhibited to the acceptance of the free gift of grace that God is offering. This Jesus working through His Church is the only hope to shake the curse of fatherlessness and the redemption of the fatherless story.

Took

The following lesson will help engage the mentor by asking them to; give an example of how Jesus set you free from a childhood father created bondage. (James 5:1), to list three things that you can do to become a better father and mentor, to also list three things you cannot do and are necessary to be a better father and mentor that you will need to trust God to do, and finally to devote fifteen minutes daily to reading your Bible and prayer on these issues of being set free and trusting God for that power. The mentor is also asked to participate in the following activities by doing something fun with God “Daddy.” These activities can be in the form of sports, fishing, etc. the mentor should report back next week on this application list.

Prayer

Dear Lord, we acknowledge that without you we can do nothing. We also stand in awe that you love us and think so highly of us that you sent your son to die for us. Lord, forgive us for striving in our own abilities lord and forgive us for living unsundered lives to your power. We know in our weakness you are strong, unfortunately God, we strive in our weakness to try to obtain whatever Gory we can get. Lord, help us to surrender to your will and help us to live a life

that brings glory to your name. Lord we know where you will something, you also give us the desire and the provision, so lord Jesus please help us in this mentoring journey, help us to be a light unto the fatherless and to bring you glory in the process. Amen.

Summary

These six lesson plans were developed to equip the believer to be prepared to minister to the heart of a fatherless. These essential skills are valuable to any believer who takes the call of God seriously. The format of HBLT sets forth boundaries to guide mentors in the discipleship and mentoring process. Lesson one establishes an understanding of fatherlessness that enables the mentor to be prepared for the journey ahead. Lesson two assists the mentor in relationship understanding, building, and skills that help the mentor to enter into the life of the fatherless child. Lesson three establishes mentoring as an answer to problem of fatherlessness, while lessons four, five, and six are rooted in self-worth, God's salvation plan, and His Great Commandment. It is essential that mentors trust prayer and the Spirit of God when it comes to fatherless children; however, being well equipped to deliver the freedom of the Gospel to those children is a godly endeavor.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The passion for this project began in the innermost part of the Ninth Ward in New Orleans, Louisiana. Stephen Madosky II was a missionary to the children of the Ninth Ward. The author of this thesis was witness to the way that Stephen shared his heart with many of the fatherless boys and girls of the Ninth Ward. The problems that were experienced in New Orleans were the very same problems that were experienced by the author of this thesis in his church's ministry to the fatherless in New Jersey's juvenile detention camps. The sense of hopelessness, disorganization, and anger were evidenced in the behaviors of these fatherless children. However, more evident was their need for a savior. It was always this thesis' contention to break down the barriers to Christ that is a direct result of fatherlessness. This thesis does not claim to be the end all to this problem. Nevertheless, this thesis is a valiant attempt to enter the ring of the battle against the problems of fatherless. It is this thesis' contention that a well-armed warrior who represents the King is the best answer to the problem of fatherlessness.

It is well documented that fatherlessness is a problem of epidemic proportion.¹ It is also proven that the institution of fatherhood is being eroded by decades of attacks through many enemies. The results of these weakened institutions have been lived out in the shattered dreams of fatherless children. These broken dreams have eroded the strength of the American society and this brokenness is live out in the homes and in the streets all over America. Lack of Church scholarly research supports the outcome that proves the Church's inconsistency proven in the results of this thesis survey research. The Church is undoubtedly lacking information and motivation to be an effective tool in the fight against fatherlessness.

¹ Robert McGee, *Father Hunger*, 187.

Fatherlessness has many faces, colors, economies, and sizes. The effects of fatherlessness are disastrous and life altering.² The Bible exhorts its readers to be better fathers and also to minister to those who are fatherless in their pain (James 1:27). The promises of God are lived out in the Father and Son relationship that is exhibited between God (Father) and Jesus Christ; His Son. These same promises are available to fatherless children everywhere. The Church is the vehicle that can tear down these barriers by presenting the very word of God to its fatherless: you are my child today I have become your father and you shall be my child (Hebrews 1:5).

True fatherhood emanates from God. God's Fatherhood reconciles the mentor's heart back to the Father. This reconciliation, along with the training, provided in this thesis will better prepare mentors to walk alongside a fatherless child. True religion calls for the believers to minister to the fatherless in their affliction. This thesis has conducted research and has produced the development of church ministry with fatherhood and the fatherless at the core of its concern. The purpose of this thesis is to set the captives free (Luke 4:18). This was the very purpose that Jesus established and came to complete.

Fatherlessness infiltrates all races and economies. The effects of fatherlessness are devastating to all children, of all backgrounds. The objective of the thesis is to remove any and all barriers to a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. This is accomplished by equipping fatherless mentors to speak into the lives of fatherless children. Another objective of this thesis is to help the mentor understand the heart of the Father, this is accomplished in a six-week training portal. The residual effects of the training will help to create in the mentor; the heart of the

² Clinton and Straub, *God Attachment*, 97.

Father. This new heart will help to open a renewed relationship with Father God; that has Life changing effects for mentor and mentee.³

The Review of literature established that fatherlessness is and has been a problem. An overview of scholarly Christian literature has shown that not much has been written by the Church to address this problem of fatherlessness. Evidence and research show that fatherlessness is growing in epidemic proportion. This thesis survey has been proven and supported by the evidence uncovered in the literature review. The results and conclusion are that the Church lacks the understanding and the preparedness to address this fatherless problem⁴. The literature has been extensive, and extended beyond dissertations, memoirs, therapies, books, biographies, books, and ministries.

The ministry development portion of the thesis will help to end the fatherless child's search for significance by preparing the fatherless mentors to walk in the shoes of a fatherless child. This reconciliation with God will begin by returning hope to the fatherless through a mentor relationship that encourages and facilitates a relationship with the heavenly father through his Son Jesus Christ. From Genesis to Revelation's the Fatherhood of God has been revealed to mankind. New Testament and Old Testament prophets have exhorted God's people better fathers. This proof extends from David to James and from Isaiah to Paul. The biblical message of fatherhood is one that should be trumpeted to all the Church. It is a call for the Church to help and assist in the support of fatherhood and in the ministry to the fatherless. Jesus' very words resound here. The words recorded by Matthew, "when you visited me in prison, you did this for the least of these, you on who did for me."

³ Clinton and Straub, *God Attachment*, 228.

⁴ Strong, *Church for the Fatherless*, 75.

Statistically speaking, whether the problem is one in or four children or that one in ten is fatherlessness; the problem of fatherlessness is devastating to society. Divorce and chosen single motherhood are leading the way by exasperating the problem and the consequences.⁵

Government programs have not solved the problem, quite the opposite they have worsened and aggravated the problem. Many people have called for more government interventions; however, the problem of fatherless needs a crisis intervention aka, a “Christ Intervention” this intervention takes place with his bride the Church. The Church is the best possible place for this intervention to happen. With all the odds stacked against the fatherless child, it is imperative that the community of believers, “The Church” becomes active in the solution to the problem of fatherlessness. Much of the survey research has concluded that the Church does not understand and is not motivated to fix the problem of fatherlessness; however, it is this thesis’ conclusion that the Church is the best venue to devise a solution, and participate in the resolution, that leads to a restoration of fatherhood and the mitigation and reduction of the effects of fatherlessness.⁶

This thesis research has established that fatherlessness is a problem. This thesis is also established that the church is not motivated or well-equipped to address this problem. This thesis has developed the six-week church discipleship equipping program will open the gates of reconciliation back to the fatherless child. The 51 survey respondents have provided ample evidence to prove that the equipping curriculum is long overdue, and a needed addition to the church.⁷ This survey has determined that the church is not prepared. This survey has also provided ample information that lead to a solution by establishing a six-week equipping curriculum. This curriculum will better prepare the church to stand in the gap for the fatherless

⁵ Louis Kriesberg, “Mothers in Poverty: A Study of Fatherless Families,” *Transaction Publishers*, (1970).

⁶ Strong, *Church for the Fatherless*, 101.

⁷ Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

child. This curriculum stands in any format; however, it is specifically effective where the problems of fatherlessness are so easily recognized. The place where the fatherless dilemma is most evident is on the halls of juvenile detention centers around the world.⁸ This thesis is a call for the Church to be doers of God's word and minister to the fatherless in their affliction (James 1:27).

⁸ William Ayers, *A Kind and Just Parent: The Children of the Juvenile Court* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998).

APPENDIX A

Heart of the Church

The Heart of the Church									
1. By clicking yes you agree that you are willing to answer the questions in this survey.									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							
Yes	100.0%	61							
No	0.0%	0							
<i>answered question</i>		61							
<i>skipped question</i>		0							
2. What is the geographical setting (location) of your Church or ministry?									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							
Urban	23.5%	12							
suburban	64.7%	33							
inner-city	5.9%	3							
rural (farm)	5.9%	3							
<i>answered question</i>		51							
<i>skipped question</i>		10							
3. What part of the country is your Church or ministry located?									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							

Northeast	49.0%	25							
South	33.3%	17							
Mid-West	7.8%	4							
West	5.9%	3							
Other (please specify)	3.9%	2							
<i>answered question</i>		51							
<i>skipped question</i>		10							
4. Please identify your race.									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							
Caucasian	78.4%	40							
African-American	11.8%	6							
Hispanic	0.0%	0							
Asian	5.9%	3							
Combination	3.9%	2							
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0							
<i>answered question</i>		51							
<i>skipped question</i>		10							
5. Please provide a description of your area's average household socio-economic status.									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							
lower income (under 25,000)	11.8%	6							
middle income (25 - 50,000)	33.3%	17							
upper middle (50 - 100,000)	47.1%	24							

high income (over - 100,000)	7.8%	4							
<i>answered question</i>		51							
<i>skipped question</i>		10							
6. Please estimate the size of the Church congregation.									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							
under 100	28.0%	14							
100 - 499	42.0%	21							
500 - 999	14.0%	7							
1000 - 4999	16.0%	8							
Over 5000	0.0%	0							
<i>answered question</i>		50							
<i>skipped question</i>		11							
7. Please Identify your denominational affiliation.									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							
Baptist	27.5%	14							
Lutheran	9.8%	5							
Methodist	0.0%	0							
Presbyterian	3.9%	2							
Pentecostal	0.0%	0							
Non-Denominational	35.3%	18							
Unitarian	0.0%	0							
Catholic	0.0%	0							
Other (please specify)	23.5%	12							

<i>answered question</i>			51						
<i>skipped question</i>			10						
8. What is your age?									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							
18 to 24	2.0%	1							
25 to 34	8.0%	4							
35 to 44	20.0%	10							
45 to 54	26.0%	13							
55 to 64	32.0%	16							
65 to 74	10.0%	5							
75 or older	2.0%	1							
<i>answered question</i>			50						
<i>skipped question</i>			11						
9. What is your gender?									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							
female	9.8%	5							
male	90.2%	46							
<i>answered question</i>			51						
<i>skipped question</i>			10						
10. Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							

married	88.2%	45							
widowed	0.0%	0							
divorced	5.9%	3							
single, never married	3.9%	2							
other (please specify)	2.0%	1							
<i>answered question</i>		51							
<i>skipped question</i>		10							
11. what is marital status of your parents?									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							
married	47.1%	24							
divorced	11.8%	6							
widowed	15.7%	8							
un-wed or never married	2.0%	1							
re-married	9.8%	5							
separated	2.0%	1							
other (please specify)	11.8%	6							
<i>answered question</i>		51							
<i>skipped question</i>		10							
12. What is the highest level of education you have completed?									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							
graduated from high school	3.9%	2							
GED - or	0.0%	0							

equivalency									
some college attendance	17.6%	9							
graduated from college	27.5%	14							
Completed graduate school	43.1%	22							
other (please specify)	7.8%	4							
<i>answered question</i>		51							
<i>skipped question</i>		10							
13. How severe is the problem of Fatherlessness.									
Answer Options	Not	Limited	Moderately	extremely	Crisis	Rating Average	Response Count		
	0	3	11	22	15	3.02	51		
<i>answered question</i>							51		
<i>skipped question</i>							10		
14. How severe is the problem of Fatherlessness in your Church or ministry.									
Answer Options	Not	Slightly	Moderately	extremely	Crisis	Rating Average	Response Count		
	5	15	17	9	4	2.84	50		
<i>answered question</i>							50		
<i>skipped question</i>							11		
15. Do you have intimate or personal experience with Fatherlessness.									
Answer Options	personal experience	know someone who has	intellectual	no Knowledge	Rating Average	Response Count			

		experience	experience (studied)	of					
	19	23	5	4	1.88	51			
							<i>answered question</i>	51	
							<i>skipped question</i>	10	
16. What percentage of your Church or ministry would you say has experienced Fatherlessness.									
Answer Options	0%	10%	25%	50%	75%	More than 75%	Rating Average	Response Count	
	2	18	16	8	2	5	3.10	51	
								<i>answered question</i>	51
								<i>skipped question</i>	10
17. Where would you say Fatherlessness is the biggest problem.									
Answer Options	rural America (farming or country)	urban (City)	inner-City	suburban	national	international	Rating Average	Response Count	
	1	11	25	0	9	4	3.34	50	
								<i>answered question</i>	50
								<i>skipped question</i>	11
18. What culture or race is most affected by Fatherlessness?									
Answer Options	Caucasian	African- American	Hispanic	Asian	All races	Rating Average	Response Count		
	0	31	1	0	18	3.10	50		
other (please specify)								2	
								<i>answered question</i>	50

<i>skipped question</i>								11		
19. Where would you say that the problem of Fatherlessness is most lived out?										
Answer Options	Home	Church	school	relationships	Prison	all of the above	Rating Average	Response Count		
	5	0	3	9	3	30	4.90	50		
Other (please specify)								1		
<i>answered question</i>								50		
<i>skipped question</i>								11		
20. What is the main cause of Fatherlessness in your Church or ministry?										
Answer Options	Divorce	un-wed mothers	death of parent	abandonment	addiction	passivity (uninvolved)	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count	
	20	8	0	13	3	5	2	2.71	51	
<i>answered question</i>								51		
<i>skipped question</i>								10		
21. What is the most devastating effect of Fatherlessness?										
Answer Options	teenage pregnancy	school dropouts	drug addiction	prison	poverty	all of the above	no effect	Rating Average	Response Count	
	3	0	6	3	3	36	0	5.18	51	
<i>answered question</i>								51		
<i>skipped question</i>								10		
22. How would you define the core structure of your Church?										

Answer Options	Small Group	Congregational	Missional	Discipleship	Evangelical	Ministry	Rating Average	Response Count
	8	19	4	9	7	4	3.00	51
<i>answered question</i>								51
<i>skipped question</i>								10
23. How motivated is your Church leadership to minister to the fatherless in their affliction?								
Answer Options	not at all	Somewhat	very	extremely	n/a	Rating Average	Response Count	
	4	20	18	7	2	2.57	51	
<i>answered question</i>							51	
<i>skipped question</i>							10	
24. How motivated is your Church laity (people) to minister to the fatherless in their affliction?								
Answer Options	not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	extremely	n/a	Rating Average	Response Count	
	5	21	16	7	2	2.51	51	
<i>answered question</i>							51	
<i>skipped question</i>							10	
25. Does your Church or ministry have a venue to address At-Risk Youth?								
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count						
Yes	35.3%	18						
No	64.7%	33						
<i>answered question</i>		51						
<i>skipped question</i>		10						

26. Does your Church have a Prison Ministry?										
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count								
Yes	24.0%	12								
No	76.0%	38								
<i>answered question</i>		50								
<i>skipped question</i>		11								
27. What percentage of inmates would you say are fatherless?										
Answer Options	10%	25%	50%	75%	more than 75%	0%	Rating Average	Response Count		
	0	1	20	18	12	0	3.80	51		
<i>answered question</i>								51		
<i>skipped question</i>								10		
28. How prepared is your Church or ministry to minister to the fatherless youth?										
Answer Options	not at all	Slightly	Moderately	very	n/a	Rating Average	Response Count			
	9	22	11	8	1	2.36	51			
<i>answered question</i>							51			
<i>skipped question</i>							10			
29. How prepared is your Church to minister to lost people in prison?										

Answer Options	not at all	slightly	Moderately	extremely	n/a	Rating Average	Response Count		
	14	17	13	5	2	2.18	51		
<i>answered question</i>							51		
<i>skipped question</i>							10		
30. How prepared is your Church or ministry to minister to the fatherless in your congregation?									
Answer Options	not at all	somewhat	very	extremely	n/a	Rating Average	Response Count		
	4	26	12	6	3	2.42	51		
<i>answered question</i>							51		
<i>skipped question</i>							10		
31. How prepared are your people to minister to the fatherless in prison									
Answer Options	not at all	somewhat	Moderately	very	n/a	Rating Average	Response Count		
	17	22	8	2	2	1.90	51		
<i>answered question</i>							51		
<i>skipped question</i>							10		
32. What discipleship programs (training) are available that would prepare your people to be more effective to deal with the problem of Fatherlessness?									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							
education classes	34.7%	17							
ministry training	30.6%	15							
mentor training	36.7%	18							

35. What do you see as the biggest hurdle to successfully mentoring and making disciples of Fatherless children?										
Answer Options	Money	time	people	training	structure	Rating Average	Response Count			
	2	7	28	4	7	3.15	48			
Other (please specify)								5		
							<i>answered question</i>	48		
							<i>skipped question</i>	13		
36. On a scale from 1 (Not at all interested) to 5 (extremely interested), what is your Church's level of interest in Prison Ministry										
Answer Options	1 not interested	2	3 somewhat interested	4	5 extremely interested	Rating Average	Response Count			
	6	28	16	1	0	2.24	51			
							<i>answered question</i>	51		
							<i>skipped question</i>	10		
37. What programs, resources, or services does your Church provide to prisoners seeking to turn their lives around?										
Answer Options	Counseling	Job Training	Mentoring	Housing	Education	Re-entry Information - community programs	Rating Average	Response Count		
	15	0	12	0	4	4	2.71	35		
Other (please specify)								16		
							<i>answered question</i>	35		
							<i>skipped question</i>	26		
38. What would you say is the Church's most effective way of dealing with the problem of Fatherlessness?										

Answer Options	encouraging abstinence	providing access to birth control	matching fatherless children with Church mentors	promoting marriage and two parent households	Bible studies	ministries	counseling	Rating Average	Response Count	
	1	0	17	13	7	5	4	4.11	47	
other (please specify)									6	
									<i>answered question</i>	47
									<i>skipped question</i>	14
39. If you had unlimited resources what ministry would you create in your Church?										
Answer Options	Response Count									
	46									
<i>answered question</i>	46									
<i>skipped question</i>	15									
40. What in your estimation are the top three issues keeping men from pursuing God in your Church today?										
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count								
1.	100.0%	47								
2.	100.0%	47								
3.	100.0%	47								
<i>answered question</i>		47								
<i>skipped question</i>		14								

41. In your estimation what are the top three things keeping men from serving in the Church today?									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							
1.	100.0%	46							
2.	95.7%	44							
3.	95.7%	44							
<i>answered question</i>		46							
<i>skipped question</i>		15							
42. What percentage of men in your Church are actively involved in a discipleship program?									
Answer Options	0%	10%	25%	50%	75%	100%	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
	2	13	24	6	5	0	1	2.98	51
<i>answered question</i>									51
<i>skipped question</i>									10
43. Do you currently have a program that addresses fatherlessness?									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							
yes	11.8%	6							
no	88.2%	45							
<i>answered question</i>		51							
<i>skipped question</i>		10							
44. Do you feel that Mentoring can be a valuable tool in the solution to many of societies problems?									

<i>skipped question</i>	14								
48. What do you see as the biggest problem facing the Church as a whole today?									
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count							
gay marriage	8.2%	4							
pornography	14.3%	7							
addictions	30.6%	15							
divorce	20.4%	10							
fatherlessness	16.3%	8							
finances	8.2%	4							
Other (please specify)	61.2%	30							
<i>answered question</i>		49							
<i>skipped question</i>		12							
49. How equipped is your ministry or congregation to share the Gospel with an unsaved person?									
Answer Options	not at all	somewhat	Moderately	extremely	n/a	Rating Average	Response Count		
	1	8	21	21	0	3.22	51		
<i>answered question</i>							51		
<i>skipped question</i>							10		
50. How well is your Church equipped to carry out the Great Commission?									
Answer Options	not at all	somewhat	Moderately	extremely	n/a	Rating Average	Response Count		
	2	9	25	15	0	3.04	51		
<i>answered question</i>							51		
<i>skipped question</i>							10		

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