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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING MEN/FATHERS AS SPIRITUAL LEADERS  
IN THE HOME IN KITSAP COUNTY, WASHINGTON

by

Tobin K. R. Dodge

Adviser: Larry L. Lichtenwalter, PhD

## ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-Day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: DEVELOPING MEN/FATHERS AS SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE HOME  
IN KITSAP COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Name of researcher: Tobin K. R. Dodge

Name and degree of adviser: Larry L. Lichtenwalter, PhD

Date of completion: January 2015

### Problem

The Adventist church, along with most religious organizations today, struggles to develop a multigenerational faith vision and practice among its believers. Fewer Adventist youth and young adults appear to have an Adventist worldview or share the churches core values. They are often absent from general church life and worship.

The research that has led to this project addresses men/fathers as being a primary solution in faith transmission and spiritual nurture of the next generation. Yet, the current vacancy of fathers in the homes and churches has created some of the greatest social needs in American society today. Literature is replete with information regarding the absence of men/fathers. However, literature is sparse on why men are absent from their

roles both in the church and in the home. This project seeks to address the issues of why youth and young adults are leaving our churches by focusing on the spiritual role of men/fathers in the transmission of faith, core values and spiritual experience to their families.

### Method

The task of this project is to develop a strategy to inspire, train, and empower men/fathers in Kitsap County, Washington to be the spiritual leaders in their home and church. The initial method employed was programmatic in nature, but it was soon abandoned in favor of a focused one-on-one approach. This second more personal approach proved more effective in inspiring and nurturing men/fathers as a key leadership influence in the transmission of faith, core values, and spiritual experience to his family.

### Results

The initial methodology utilizing programming as a key component in developing men/fathers as spiritual leaders has proven significantly less productive than did the one-on-one mentor/coaching that this project shifted towards. As a result, many men/fathers who experienced only the initial programming stage of this project missed altogether the individualized attention that has proven most effective in both inspiring and nurturing men as a spiritual leader in their homes. Each of the men/fathers who kept engaged long enough to experience the one-on-one focus, demonstrated improvement in both their personal and family's spiritual growth.

## Conclusion

This project led to four conclusions: a) a programmatic approach to nurturing or men/fathers proves ineffective; b) a personal one-on-one method evidences significant personal faith development and spiritual leadership vision on the part of men/fathers; c) Men/fathers need both factual information and continued one-on-one personal inspiration to make a life altering decision; d) all men/fathers need a mentor/coach to succeed in a spiritual transformation. There might be a few exceptions, however there is still an external driving factor in their lives (i.e. money, wife, friend, passion for something, learned discipline, etc.).

The topic of developing men/fathers as positive spiritual leaders is not popular in the American culture. There is a general diminishing of the male role and identity as well as a negative portrayal of weak men/fathers and the problems they create especially in the home. Why? Why are men disinclined to be a spiritual leader in the home? Is there a unique natural tendency or personality in men to facilitate this condition? There are many ideas and timelines as to when man/fatherhood began to decline. Yet, few authors both religious and secular indicate a reason for the decline of men/fathers.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

DEVELOPING MEN/FATHERS AS SPIRITUAL LEADERS  
IN THE HOME IN KITSAP COUNTY, WASHINGTON

A Project Document  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by  
Tobin K. R. Dodge

January 2015

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DEVELOPING MEN AS SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE  
HOME IN KITSAP COUNTY WASHINGTON

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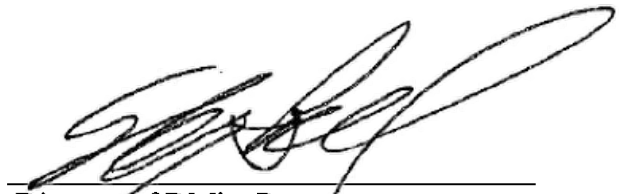
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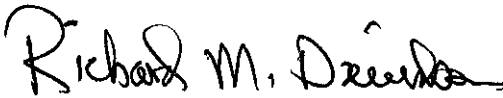
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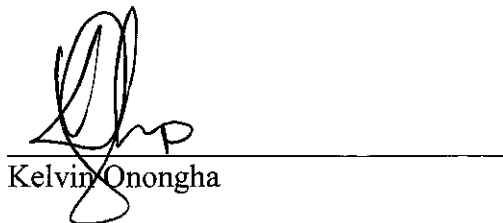
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## CHAPTER 1

### DEVELOPING MEN/FATHERS AS SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE HOME

My formal training at the undergraduate level and a Masters of Divinity emphasis was in Youth Ministry. Not only did I study about youth culture and patterns, I also witnessed an alarming trend in the dropout rates of the youth in our churches. The statistical data suggested the Adventist church along with all other religions had a significant problem keeping their youth. Millions of second or third generation believers were leaving and only a fraction of them returned after starting a family of their own.

Having experienced several years as a youth pastor, working at summer camp and studying the various viewpoints of youth ministry, many issues became clearer. The mass exodus of Christian youth initially appeared to be a fault of the church: the cold and uncaring structure, the dry and liturgical services, and the judgmental people. Religious organizations, especially Christian churches, seemed to be losing most of their children during the teen years.

In the excitement to help save the children, and keep them from leaving, churches began to cater to the youth and young adult population by hiring youth pastors, making church more entertaining, separate services for the youth, and many other youth oriented programs. This new youth friendly model did little to limit the continual departure of

Christian young people into the world. So the question remains; why are Christian churches losing so many young people and how can it be reversed?

Family ministry leaders and authors (see appendix D) advocate the home as a pivotal indicator in the breakdown of the church and the future faithfulness of its children. As a pastor, I was perplexed and frustrated by our churches inability to successfully preserve the interest of our young people – and did not at first understand the implications of the home.

It was while attending a family discipleship conference that I was challenged to consider Malachi 4: 5, 6 as a central theme in the evangelism and discipleship of our children. The presenter encouraged us to consider our homes as the place where children learn faithfulness to God and ultimately make their decisions to stay in church. The presentation triggered in me, a new way of thinking for the church and how we address the loss and retention rates of our youth. The family of origin has a greater impact on a child's ability to stay passionate for God and find meaning and purpose through the church and it's ministries than I once thought.

Multigenerational faithfulness does not happen by accident. Keeping children involved in church is a complicated and sensitive topic. The issue of faith transmission affects families from the local church member in rural Alaska to the top Conference administrators. It is within this framework of multigenerational faith transmission that men/fathers must be an active part. Men/fathers need to worship alongside the whole family, yet in many churches, the mother comes alone with the children.

The active attendance of men in church on a given weekend hovers around 39% (Church for Men, n.d.; see appendix D), which means that many fathers are not present in



the pew. Pastoral observation suggests that when a father is uncommitted to church, it is only a matter of time before his sons follow his example.

Is there a direct link between our children leaving the church and fathers abdicating their roles? Researcher David Blankenhorn claims that fatherlessness is the greatest social problem in America today. He writes, “If this trend continues, fatherlessness is likely to change the shape of our society. Consider this prediction... the United States will be a nation divided into two groups, separate and unequal... The primary fault line dividing the two groups will not be race, religion, class, education, or gender. It will be patrimony. One group will consist of those adults who grew up with the daily presence and provision of fathers. The other group will consist of those who did not” (1995, pp. 1-2).

Blankenhorn’s conclusions force us to consider the urgent task ahead for the church: how can we encourage and equip fathers to step into their biblical roles at home? It is necessary for a man/father to see his intrinsic value as a man/father both in the eyes of God and his family. A father must see the significance in transmitting faith, core values and a personal experience with Jesus. This eternal goal is part of the role of the father within the family and is his highest and most important calling.

For exactly this reason, Margret Mead (*see appendix D*) and others have observed that the supreme test of any civilization is whether it can socialize men by teaching them to be fathers – creating a culture in which men acknowledge their paternity and willingly nurture their offspring. (Blankenhorn, 1995, p. 3)

Though Mead is not a Bible believing Christian, her observations hit the bull’s-eye of father-engagement at home. Religious organizations must seek and find ways to lead men/fathers to willingly disciple their children.

## **Personal History**

There are probably three defining events in my life, as I look back, that brought me to the realization that the issues in our homes and churches were not isolated cases. It appeared to me that the circumstances pertaining to the fathers in our society were across all people groups without exception. It was after this realization that I said, something has to be done about it and I am ready to do my part.

### **Event #1**

I was 14 years old and my father and I were at odds with each other. I received the worst spanking of my life (in my 14-yr-old opinion). Instead of seeing the error in my ways and correcting my attitude and behavior, the experience hardened my heart. I became angry and distant from my father. I felt that my father could have done things differently and handled certain difficult situations better. Even though my father was physically present in our home, it felt like he was not as emotionally engaged in the evangelism and discipleship of his children as he could have been. To me, he appeared to be more concerned about right behavior and the public's perception of his family, than being connected to our spiritual and emotional needs.

### **Event #2**

December 1, 1999, will go down in history as the day my life changed forever; I became a father. It was an emergency birth, so I was the first to really hold our new baby boy. Both sets of grandparents were just outside, anticipating the life and health of their newborn grandson. As I gazed transfixed on this little life, I was overwhelmed with a

sense of awe and joy. Little did I know that this pint-sized bundle was the beginning of the greatest and most challenging assignment of my life: being a father.

Even though I was excited for our growing family, I felt inadequate as a father. Thousands of questions both applicable and irrelevant came flooding in. What am I to do? How will we pay for college? Who will he marry? Did we get the right sized diapers? Did I remember the car seat? What kind of father will I be? And this proved to be just the beginning of my questions and journey as a father.

### Event #3

In 2007 I attended the annual Christian Heritage Family Discipleship Conference (see appendix D) near Seattle, WA. During that conference I was challenged to look at being a father as more than just keeping our children alive and out of jail. What would it look like if parents birthed, trained, and raised their children to love God and serve their fellow man? What would it look like if children did not rebel against their parents' authority? What would it be like if both parents and children considered it a privilege to work, live, and worship together as a family representing God? More importantly how would that change the evangelistic nature of the Adventist church? What would our church look like and be able to accomplish if we did not lose our youth at the alarming rates, which we are currently?

Following this conference I felt it was necessary to ask some pointed questions and seek counsel from godly and scholarly people to find the best way to deal with this issue. I interviewed Adventist scholars and church administrators regarding their observations on this issue and the best way for me to proceed. It was a conversation with Dr. Roy Gane (see appendix D), professor at the Adventist Theological Seminary in

Berrien Springs, Michigan that convinced me I needed to enroll in a formal educational program to deal with these questions properly. So I decided that in order to properly address this concern, I needed to enroll in the Doctor of Ministry Program for guided study on this subject.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the project is to address men/fathers as a primary contributor to the transmission of faith and core values to each emerging generation within the Adventist faith. It is also a concern of this project to urge men/fathers to develop a multigenerational vision as it relates to faithfulness to God. Adventist people no longer appear to be the peculiar remnant of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Adventist homes do not appear to be the center of the evangelism and discipleship of faith to the next generation. Mentoring our youth and passing the mantle of faith to our children with urgent desperation has waned in recent decades.

There are a significant number of pastors and youth professionals that believe it is only a matter of time before the teenaged children leave their churches? Because of an apparent high failure rate of Adventist homes transferring a passionate faith to their children, this project deems it necessary, to create awareness that urges men/fathers toward a vision where the home is central to the evangelism and discipleship of their children.

The goal for each family is to identify the root causes and work toward intentional solutions – solutions that consider a return to live as God's covenantal people. These solutions are pivotal for creating awareness in each man/father. Due to the obstacles children face every day, it is paramount to engage men/fathers who have become

spiritually lazy, agnostic or even humanistic in their orientations, while not neglecting the men/fathers who earnestly seek a better resolution.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Malachi 4: 5, 6 imply that God's faithful people will have a mutually beneficial relationship between a man/father and his children. This reconciliation comes as a result of the return of the Elijah message being preached and practiced from one generation to the next. Elijah's message initiates a revival and reformation among God's people; one father at a time. Resulting with families being reunited.

Malachi's prophecies are spoken to a generation of the children of Israel who had forgotten and defamed the name of God. It was a time when both the people and the spiritual leadership exhibited a general disregard for God's values and standards.

The key ingredient for resolving the current mass exodus of the youth and young adults is best understood within the social context of fatherlessness in the homes and churches across North America. Malachi 4: 5, 6 directly imply fathers as the instigators of the restoration for God's people. This project seeks to address the issues related to men/fathers becoming spiritual leaders, as an indicator of the restoration in the church's youth.

This project also seeks to discover how a fatherless family affects both church growth and church health. It is necessary to measure father involvement and how it affects the ability of his family to maintain a multigenerational vision and faithfulness.

The lack of men/fathers in Christian institutions has left this generation of children powerless to understand and resolve their spiritual identity; who am I in relation to God and what is my purpose?

Spiritually absent and unengaged men/fathers produce widespread distrust and skepticism in the children of today. Though a man/father may be physically present at home with his family, many of these men/fathers are over-committed at work, absorbed in their hobbies or a slave to media. No matter which distraction applies, the spiritual and emotional needs of children are being neglected.

### **Contributing Factors to Father Deficiency**

Ever since the beginning of recorded history, it appears that men have chosen not to stand for truth in defense of family. Adam could have begged God for mercy, but instead he chose to go against God's will.

Adam had enjoyed the companionship of God and of holy angels. He had looked upon the glory of the Creator. He understood the high destiny opened to the human race should they remain faithful to God. Yet all these blessings were lost sight of in the fear of losing that one gift which in his eyes outvalued every other. Love, gratitude, loyalty to the Creator--all were overborne by love to Eve (White, 1890. p. 56).

In addition to our human proclivity for sin, pastoral observation suggests two factors that contribute to the lack of men/fathers' initiative at home in the evangelism and discipleship of children. This deficiency of spiritual leadership creates an effect similar to the days of Nehemiah, Ezra and Malachi.

Factor #1 – Death, divorce, teenage or illegitimate childbirths, all contribute to fatherlessness in the church; leaving the child's mother and the church community to raise the children.

Factor #2 – Men/fathers who are physically at home, yet not emotionally or spiritually engaged with their children, thus, neglecting the opportunity to disciple them.

## **Adventist Culture: Seeking a Purpose**

Men/fathers have been called and tasked with the duty of training, equipping, and empowering their children to live faithful lives according to God's Plan. For Seventh-day Adventists, this comes in the context of repeating the Elijah message while waiting for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Christians of all Faiths have interpreted the soon return of Christ differently; some feared the end of the world would come with a variety of catastrophic end-time events of doom, while others believe in a secret rapture theory. Adventist history began with the belief in the immediate and literal return of Christ. Those passionately hopeful believers set about putting their hearts and homes in order. Many left their crops in the ground and terminated all long-range plans associated with earthly existence.

The passion to tell the world that Jesus is coming, should be the bedrock of Adventist people today. Jesus is coming; preparing hearts and homes because the end of the world is near should be a vital part of the message. However the urgency prior to the "Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844," appears to have become for many a disillusioned apathetic coma. Revelation depicts it as Laodicea, the lukewarm church of the end times (Rev 3: 14-22).

The apparent lack of urgency since 1844 produces generations of Adventist people who say they believe in the imminent and literal Second Advent of Christ, yet are unable to develop a long-range faithfulness for both the physical and spiritual aspects of God's Remnant. Our orthodoxy points to the soon return of Christ. However, our orthopraxy or discipleship shows that we are not able to instill this same urgency and resulting identity and purpose in the children of emerging generations.

In today's culture it seems that the idea of waiting is no longer part of our DNA, we expect things to be immediate, with minimal thought of delayed gratification. Adventist youth believe they can find relevancy and purpose in the world. Many of these young people who have left do not have an Adventist worldview. Nor do they have the knowledge and ability to pass on genuine biblical faith to the next generation. Even within the Adventist community, statistical data points to the man/father as a pivotal role in the breakdown and restoration of family faith. Many men/fathers have abandoned their role as the spiritual leader in the home to seek worldly satisfaction and achievements. This passiveness to spiritual matters is damaging to the family and an urgent faith is lost in the confusion of culture.

### **Statement of the Task**

This project seeks to discern if there is a connection between strong spiritual paternal leadership at home, church growth and the youth abandoning the faith. It is also the goal of this project to equip men/fathers, in the Washington Conference territory, with the tools and information to stem or limit the negative effects on their family. The task of this project is to develop a strategy that will bring awareness, inspire, train, equip, and empower men/fathers to be the spiritual leaders in their home and church. This project will be evaluated to determine its effectiveness in terms of its ability to engage and develop men/fathers as spiritual leaders; both in the home and their readiness for church leadership.



## **Justification for the Project**

Malachi 4: 5, 6 says that when Elijah comes right before the end of the world; his message will transform the hearts of men/fathers. They will lay aside the trivial things of this world and get serious about the salvation of their children. As fathers turn their hearts and actions toward home, they will gain their children's hearts.

All across North America research shows that men/fathers are absent from home (Barna Group; 2007; Church for Men, n.d.; National Center for Fathering, 2014; Rudder, 2002). Many men/fathers that remain at home lack effectiveness in raising their children to follow Christ and stay involved in church. A man/father's primary purpose in the evangelism and discipleship of his children is to create a vision for eternity. With this vision, he understands the spiritual aspects of *his* children's life and works to help *his* children discover their own relationship with God (Canfield, 1992, p. 180).

The construction of the family and leadership of fathers have diminished greatly over the past 65 years. In North America, 40% of homes are fatherless (Canfield, 1992, p. 223), and over 41% of marriages end in divorce (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013), leaving a large percentage of mothers as single parents. Adventist homes have not been immune to the societal effects of dysfunctional families. Pastoral observations over the past decade have seen the social norms creeping into the church; broken homes, single mothers and many grandparents raising or helping to raise their grandchildren.

Over \$100 billion dollars is spent every year through the Department of Social & Human Services (DSHS), and Child Protective Services (CPS), on single mothers for what in the 1950s was considered to be the father's responsibility (Nock, 2008, p. 3).

Ineffective and absent fathers have an impact on the church as well. Children will often emulate their father's actions. A father models his spirituality to his children, and in doing so he must be consistent in living biblical principles at home. This is a key factor of how or if children will continue in their parents' faith throughout their lives. Whether a man/father passionately seeks a relationship with Jesus or lacks an interest in spiritual things altogether, his consistent example has a profound effect on his children.

Ephesians 6: 4 commands fathers to raise their children in the training and instruction of the Lord; while Deuteronomy 6:7 challenges fathers to teach their children in all areas of life and as often as possible. Not just for his children, but future generations depend on his ability to instruct in the ways of the Lord. "Be careful never to forget... And be sure to pass them on to your children and grandchildren" (Deut 4:9, NLT).

Many homes and churches today are an example of men/fathers not maintaining a multigenerational vision and practice. This is in part why millions of grandparents are raising their grandchildren. Not as extended family supporting the immediate family structure, but as the primary caregivers. If a man/father remains committed to the biblical mandate, it is far less likely that his children and grandchildren will stray from faith.

Furthermore, Deuteronomy 11:19 explicitly calls fathers to teach the commandments and ways of the Lord to their children. Talk about them when at home and when on the road, when going to bed and when getting up (Deut 11: 19). This instruction is a proven method of instilling God's ways; "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov 22: 6). Instilling a biblical faith, core values and personal experience with Jesus becomes the primary goal

of instruction so that children will remain faithful to Christ till He returns at the Second Advent.

Not only is it important for men/fathers to lead their homes, it is equally important that they lead in ways from which their children can learn. Such leadership needs to be personal: “My son, pay attention to my wisdom; listen carefully to my wise counsel” (Prov 4: 20). Likewise, it needs to be positive and inviting rather than confrontational, overbearing, or critical: “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by thy way you treat them, Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord”(Eph 6: 4). Sadly however, many fathers are not the loving spiritual leaders that are needed in their home. Furthermore, many men/fathers feel inadequate to affect the climate at home and are often ill equipped to change the spiritual temperature of their family.

Since it is imperative for men/fathers to become spiritually involved in the lives of their family, this project will spend considerable time examining the role of fathers from a biblical perspective. The theological reflection will attempt to demonstrate the biblical view of the role of men/fathers as spiritual leaders of the home as the training ground for their roles in the church as ministers for Christ.

### **Task of Equipping Men/Fathers to Lead Spiritually at Home**

The task of equipping men/fathers to lead their homes with a zeal for God’s character is of great importance. “If ever there was a time we needed men to know their purpose and be men again, it’s now... too many men have great gaps between their beliefs and behaviors on biblical manhood. We need men of God who are active and

consistent in living out their faith” (Stinson & Dumas, 2012, p. 4). We are called to be devoted to the Word of God in faith and action. Our beliefs need to be exercised by our behaviors. This daily living example is a first step in biblical fatherhood; to be consistent with James 1:22 that we should be doers of the Word and not just hearers (“But be a doer of the word and not only a hearer, and do not deceive yourselves” *Aramaic Bible in Plain English*).

There are many works of Christian literature that has been written from the National Center for Fathering, National Center for Family Integrated Church, Vision Forum, Institute for Basic Life Principles, (see appendix D for information on these entities), and a few others. Until recently there has not been any complete works dedicated to fatherhood from a Seventh-day Adventist’s point of view. David Tasker comes the closest to addressing this theme from an Adventist perspective.

Tasker’s particularly strong emphasis on the fatherhood of God asks us to consider how earthly fathers approach their families. God’s example challenges men/fathers to a strong, but loving servant leadership in their homes (Tasker, p. 174).

The message of God’s fatherhood to mankind is often referenced in general Christian literature, and several Christian authors correlate God’s fatherhood as a mandate for men/fathers in the evangelism and discipleship of the family. Except for Tasker, this emphasis seems absent in Adventist literature. Additionally, while several Adventist authors and speakers have addressed issues such as, marriage, family and parenting, a review of current church publications does not exhibit material specifically related to the topic of fathers as leaders and disciplers of their families – or specifically the paradigm of the Fatherhood of God.

Current literature of the role of men/fathers in both home and church will be reviewed and evaluated on the merit of how they impact healthy families and ultimately the ability for a church to maintain and grow; both spiritually and numerically. Biblical reflection will showcase examples related to the dynamics of fathers attempting to pass on faith from one generation to the next. The literature review of chapter three, will look for principles and ideas from different areas of faith and culture to better understand the process of transferring a biblical worldview into the next generation.

Since it is my desire to help the Adventist church grow and learn about this systemic problem, as much data as possible will be collected from Adventist sources. For example, The Center for Youth Evangelism, John Hancock Center, and individual sources such as Roger L. Dudley (see appendix D, in regard to these examples), who dedicated his life's work to understanding why teens leave the church. But this project will also assess other Christian denominations and sources including, but not limited to, the Nehemiah Institute, and Barna Research Group (see appendix D).

This project seeks to locate and invite men/fathers associated with the Adventist church. Each man/father will take the challenge to grow spiritually while seriously putting his family first, both in principle and practice. Then immediately commit to attending or increasing his participation in church. The spiritual resurgence of each man/father is a goal that will assist every man to become the father his children need him to be and for his wife to see him as the man of her desires.

As part of the task of this project, there will be an opening "Seminar/Workshop" that will detail the challenges men/fathers face in the evangelism and discipleship of his family. This seminar will provide an opportunity for each man/father to join in the

research project and begin a personal life journey. Each man/father will be given a survey at the end of the seminar. The questionnaire is to help determine the depth of spirituality and types of interactions each man/father has with his family on any given week.

Following the kickoff seminar, there will be one follow up session each month for the next six months. After the first six-month follow-up session, a two to three-month gap will be given before the final session. This final session will be a graduation or rite of passage type event as well as finalizing the project. The goal of this final event is to assess the progress of each participant, in spiritual growth, family participation, and overall spiritual/mental health as a result of their participation in the project.

A process that encourages each man/father to consider the following elements will be implemented: a) awareness of the issues and challenges, b) agreement to find methods to improve, c) commitment to take action in personal spiritual life and family activities, and d) willingness to be held accountable to personal goals in these areas. The goal of this strategy is to intentionally help men/fathers move along a path toward stronger spiritual leadership in the home, and a deeper commitment to leadership in the local church. As part of the overall strategy, a notebook will be created by each man/father to journal his experience for personal growth. The exercises and reading material combined with monthly accountability meetings and an accountability/prayer partner will be critical in helping each man/father develop stronger skills in leading and discipling his family in Christ.

This project seeks to be the first step in a life-long process for fathers to be more directly involved in the spiritual and character development of their children. As men/fathers become strengthened in their commitment to the family discipleship process,

it is a goal of this project to see the loss of young people in church drop significantly. In addition to loss-retention, this project seeks to increase involvement of the youth in church as a result of the positive impact of men/fathers as spiritual leaders at home.

As men/fathers catch the vision for the family, they will seek to have direct impact for several generations to come. It is my hope that families with a balanced biblical perspective will emerge; worshiping, studying and ministering together as God's faithful people.

This multigenerational vision--to be faithful to our future generations--is in part only a first step. It is necessary in the leadership and character development for me as a father, husband and specifically a pastor to equip other leaders as well as myself for this task at hand. So I will seek to find other pastors and church leaders who are willing to be lead to an effective multigenerational vision of a genuine family discipling process that keeps children involved and leading in Adventism.

If other church leaders were to be so equipped, this project could very well help the Washington Conference churches reverse the absence of men in church and develop men/fathers as retainers and sustainers of faith, both in this generation and generations to come. This project seeks to be the first step in the process of uniting of the church and home.

### **Delimitations**

This project would have been more comprehensive had every man/father in the Washington Conference territory participated. This clearly was not feasible. The focus of this project was on men/fathers within a reasonable time and manageable geographic proximity. I could connect through community contacts, church affiliation, or other

ministry related contexts to make the results of the project realistic.

I contacted the Washington Conference and a few other conferences to see about operating the research element of this project within their territory; all of them agreed. However as I developed a more detailed plan, I faced two decisions relating to the scope and reach of the project.

Decision 1: The local church was not a big enough sampling to get scientific results to the data desired.

Decision 2: The personal nature of the project became more important than the raw data. It was decided not to include multiple churches or conferences, to better manage, measure and track the interpersonal impact of the research. Only men/fathers within the Western Washington territory were included in the project.

A second delimitation involved the personal nature of contact with each man/father. Each man/father had personal time with me as the researcher (mentor/coach), one-on-one and in a small group. It became apparent early on in the project that the most effective way to reach men/fathers is to have personal one-on-one or small group interaction.

In today's culture, it is rare that one finds a household that does not have internet/email access. So for the purpose of convenience and accessibility, an internet survey will be used to collect data. A paper copy of the survey was available for those few who did not have internet access.

Mothers are a pivotal and irreplaceable part of the family, yet they are not included as part of the research or discussion in this project. Mothers do not carry the same societal scourge that men/fathers do and often are the ones faithfully raising the



children when the father goes absent (either physically or emotionally). Yet, in several cases, mothers have helped to contribute to fatherlessness, by enabling their male counterpart to disengage. However needed and important godly mothers are, that topic is not addressed in the project; the focus is developing men/fathers as the spiritual leaders within the home.

In addition to the above constraints, there is the question of why should this project focus the theological and biblical foundations on only one biblical book as opposed to using the entire Old Testament or even the complete Bible to make the case. I have chosen to allow the exegetical contents of the Book of Malachi to make the case for responsible godly men/fathers and multigenerational faithfulness—because that is what Malachi appears to do as it culminates significant themes running throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. Within the Old Testament support can be found to magnify the context in the oracle of Malachi. It is exegetically responsible to allow these points to emerge from a single book of the Bible, and then to amplify and augment these references elsewhere.

The dilemma of men/fathers being multigenerationally faithful include fathers and sons, grandfathers and grandsons. However this project specifically targets the role of the father, even if the father no longer has children at home or has become a great-grandfather. This is not to say that these other roles are not equally important, but this project does not seek to address the expansive nature and variety of the role of a man/father either before fatherhood or later in life. For this reason, the four biblical principles in Malachi are applied to the male spiritual leadership roles throughout his life regardless of the stage his family is in.

## **Limitations**

This project is limited in its ability to reach thousands of families with solutions for their spiritual leadership needs because it requires a personal touch. Every man/father must have a mentor/coach to be successful. The scope can broaden as more men/fathers become involved, yet empowering a man/father to lead his home can take years to accomplish with potentially hundreds of hours invested.

Ideally a man/father would come to faith as a young boy, growing up in a loving home where his father passed on the family faith, core values and spiritual practices of his father and grandfather before him. But this is no longer the condition we find within the American Christian culture today.

This project seeks relationships with men/fathers for the purpose of equipping each man/father to design and implement a discipleship process in his home. The quantity of men/fathers is limited by the scope of the researcher's ability to personally engage each father.

Although the assertions of this project have come from strong biblical principles, it is quite possible that two types of exceptions apply. The first is in relation to a godly father who raises children to follow Jesus, yet they repeatedly choose to rebel and walk away from the faith despite every attempt to encourage them to return. The second and equally peculiar is that of an unbelieving or irreligious father who's children choose to follow Jesus and remain faithful in spite of their father.

## **Description of the Project Methodology**

In chapter two's theological reflection the focus is on Malachi 4: 5, 6 in relation to Adventism being faithful to each generation of children. It will also address the Elijah

message part of that text and his call to return faithfulness to God. In the context of Malachi, this chapter will also look at the biblical role of fathers and how they were able to live, communicate and pass on their faith to their children and grandchildren.

In chapter three, books, articles, websites and other literature will be reviewed concerning fathers and their roles as related to raising and training their children. Additional consideration will be given regarding the issue of the role a father has in multi-generational faithfulness and his vision for the home and the competing voices as it pertains to his ability to lead his home effectively.

The main target of the project is Adventist Christian homes; so data and resources will be collected from such sources in order to best ascertain the true dilemma in the Adventist church. Sources such as The Center For Youth Evangelism, The John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry, Roger L. Dudley, who dedicated his life's work to helping us understand why teens leave the Adventist church, Barry Gane (see appendix D) and a few others. But this project will also assess other Christian material from sources, which include The Nehemiah Institute, Gallup Polls and Barna Research Group, National Center for Fathering and Malachi Global Foundation (see appendix D).

A workshop will be offered to local churches and pastors as the primary method for obtaining participants (men/fathers) in this research project. During each workshop, the participants will be challenged to go through a step-by-step process.

The Process includes three key elements:

1. Engage – Connecting with men/fathers in the local church.
2. Inform – Providing information and interaction on the issues.
3. Commit – Challenge men/fathers to improve their families' context.

Step one: ENGAGE – connecting with men/fathers in local churches, involves meeting men/fathers where they are and presenting them with a new or expanded way of being involved with their families.

Step two: INFORM – providing information and interaction on the issues related to healthy fathering, challenges faced and course correction options. Most men/fathers are aware they need improvement, yet many lack the character or support to make the hard decisions to change themselves or their family's situation. The information phase puts fathers in touch with their context in perspective of the national fathering issues, and gives them a chance to meet other men on the same journey.

Step three: COMMIT – Each man/father will be asked to make a commitment to his own personal moral/spiritual growth, improvement in his family interaction, and lead/participate in some capacity in the local church. It is a presupposition of this project that not all men/fathers will participate in church, but the primary context for learning and expanding for this research project is rooted in the church environment.

A personalized strategy will be implemented for each man/father to help guide him along the path of intentional spiritual growth, interpersonal relationships with his family and eventually to local church and community leadership. Each man/father will have ongoing support to maintain and grow in his leadership ability in the evangelism and discipleship his family.

CHAPTER 2

THE ORACLE OF MALACHI AS  
BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

The mission of the Adventist church as stated in the Three Angels' messages of Revelation 14, closely correlates not only with Elijah's cry on Mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18), but is directly connected as well to the end-time restoration spoken of in the book of Malachi. "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse" (Malachi 4: 5, 6. *NASB*<sup>1</sup>).

This biblical/theological chapter explores the ability of God's people's to maintain, a faithful zeal to God across generations. It considers the role, which the father plays in the responsibility of passing on the faith to the next generation. This section will also wrestle with the tension between looking forward to the soon and literal return of Christ, yet preparing our children to be faithful in their daily lives if Jesus does not come.

In order to build a framework for families and address the challenge of the church—that is, meeting the needs of today's youth-- it is imperative that this chapter

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<sup>1</sup> All references from the book of Malachi are from the *New American Standard Bible*, unless otherwise noted.

addresses the issue of the faith of fathers (2:10). With each new generation of potentially dedicated disciples, it is necessary to find ways to develop an active faith. However, it is much easier for weak and faithless children to emerge by being lazy about religious affairs and living inconsistent spiritual lives (2:11, 12).

Why do children reject their parents' religion? What role do fathers have in restoring faith to future generations? Pastors have long spoken to the apathy and Laodicean (Rev 3:14 – 22) attitude of God's people which in many ways mirrors the same kind of lukewarm apathy of God's people in the time when Malachi was written (2:17). The biblical narrative of Malachi provides a platform of hope for these difficult issues of faith (3:1). These examples are of similar struggles in the ancient stories that better prepare fathers and sons to live in our modern world.

Although there is a multitude of biblical examples of God's faithfulness to His covenants with men, this project seeks to predominantly display the themes of Malachi only. It is the assertion of this project's author that Malachi is to the Old Testament what Revelation is to the entire Bible. Malachi stands to extract God's covenant-faithfulness in the past while looking forward to the future (4:6). The oracle also demonstrates a faithful remnant of God who proclaims His acts among humanity (3: 16, 17). In particular, the role of men/fathers factors largely in Malachi's closure to the Hebrew Scripture and its pervasive themes. This includes God's fatherhood (2:10).

### **The Oracle of Malachi as the Biblical Foundation**

The moral/spiritual decay addressed in the book of Malachi, compels one to ask how it could get so bad. Even Yahweh was exasperated by the apostasy in Israel (3:4 –

15). The bases for the issues within Israel at the time of Malachi are the issues formulated in this dissertation project. The oracle chronicles the children of Israel in a desperate state. At this time in its history, Israel had degenerated to the point that as a nation they had no regard for God's statutes or ordinances (3:7). No matter their role, from the priests to the commoners, they rejected God's leadership and held contempt for His law (2:8, 17), which had been personally given to them by God, twice in fact, in a previous generation (Exod 32; 34).

The closing words of Malachi are a well-known Scripture among Christian believers. It states, "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse" (4: 6). However they are often pulled out of context. Doing so neuters the truth and purpose of the prophet's message. In that final verse, the word "turning" is from the Hebrew word, שׁוּב *shûb* that is best explained; to do an about-face or a complete 180° turn to a positive direction (3:7). The implication is that there are problems with family relationships and Elijah's return will not only prepare for the coming of day of the Lord, but also repair the damaged family infrastructure of those who take heed to the prophet's words.

This is the vehicle with which the final Elijah message is to be delivered; a multigenerational vision for the restoration of homes among God's remnant people (4:6). Sadly, with each passing generation, God's people look more like the world as they continue to compromise. Compromise is exactly what God tried to prevent by His covenants with humanity (2:5).

The heart of this final call is for fathers to take serious their positions and take back their homes and communities for the cause of God; no more excuses and no more compromise. Because Malachi says, “He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their Children” (4:6), it signifies that each father is not actively seeking a covenantal relationship with his children. As the message of Elijah returns, the resulting restoration causes each father to do all things necessary in order to be faithfully engaged at home. This engagement requires a vision and plan for his children’s children (Prov 13: 22), it also includes living a passionate godly life in his current context, while actively engaging in his children’s emotional, spiritual and character development towards eternity.

#### Date and Historical Context

The estimated date for the book of Malachi ranges from as early 520 B.C. (Welch, 1935, p. 85) to as late as 180 B.C. (Smith, 1984) depending on which scholar one reads. But traditionally, scholars put the date in the kinship with Nehemiah near or just after 444 B.C. when Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem. The culture in Jerusalem about 400 B.C. had declined to a point it was hardly recognizable as Yahweh’s people.

With each prophet reformer, there was hope of reconciliation, yet the people and their leaders stood in opposition to total restoration. During the time of Nehemiah, a reform was initiated to correct the social and religious abuses as well as some domestic issues in their marriages and families. It is quite possible that Malachi was part of this inspirational thrust (3:5; Neh 5:1–13). Though the strong words of rebuke are to a cynical nation, they are of love (1:1; I have loved you...) and restoration. Malachi speaks to a people that live like the pagans around them, all the while maintaining a half-hearted ritual at the temple. They had apostatized in their orthodoxy and orthopraxy.



God's charges against Israel do not emerge out of anger or hatred. The general posture of the book is that of a loving Father interacting with his rebellious child (1:1; 3:7; 3:17). It depicts the Father who longs to reconcile the broken and damaged relationship with his children. "The relationship that God established with Israel from their inception as a nation was that of father and son (Exod 4:22; Hos. 11:1). The Law commanded that a son honor his father (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16) and a servant respect his master (v. 6). If Judah were both son and a servant, God questioned, "Where is mine honor? And if I be a master, where is my fear [respect]?" (v. 6)" (Levy, 1992, p. 25).

The ability to return love and honor to God, is the heart of God's appeal to His people in this Malachi prophecy (1:1). It must come in the context of restoration in a parent-child type relationship. This parent-child type relationship is the key to generations of those that Love me and keep my commandments (Exod 20:6; Deut 5: 10). When this healthy and balanced relationship is adversely tested, the results can be catastrophic to the family. This breakdown directly affects the stability of a nation.

This problem begs a question about Malachi 1:6 and this parent-child relationship. What is the purpose in stating it the way it is? Answer: 1:6, establishes the basis for Israel's rebellion. A child or children in rebellion have no honor or respect toward any leader or authority including their parents. "The word "honor" <sup>כבוד</sup> is parallel to "fear" in 1:6. The root in <sup>כבד</sup> means "to be heavy, weighty, burdensome, honored." It is the word used in the fifth commandment, "Honor your father and mother" (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16). That commandment might have been the basis of the premise stated in 1:6. (Levy, 1992)

Malachi implicitly presents his counsel regarding family in the context of creation (Gen 1-2), when he alludes to Genesis 2: 24 in stating that God is One and He makes them (husband and wife) one (2:10, 15).

Since the beginning in Genesis 1-3, the divine ideal was clear. Scholars have argued persuasively that the used of the term "One" [Heb 'ekhad] in Mal 2:10 for God and in Mal 2:15 for the one-flesh of marriage ("But did He not make them one...?") is an

intertextual linkage with the “one-flesh” divine ideal for marriage in Gen 2:25. Walter Kaiser’s rhetorical question summarizes well: “what could be more natural in a disputation on covenant-breaking divorces then for the prophet to return to the originating passage where the biblical norm for marriage had been set forth?” The Sovereign Lord calls for a return to the divine ideal in Eden! (Davidson, p. 422)

God labored with Israel because they were profaning His name and actively bringing disgrace on the encampment and His covenants. His desire was to have a covenant relationship with Israel, so that all nations would witness His chosen people living in harmony with each other and in obedience to their God.

### Broken and Corrupted Covenants

“Besides the three specific covenants mentioned, the covenants of Levi (2:8), the fathers (2:10), and marriage (2:14), covenant references can be inferred from other passages” (McKenzie & Howard, 1983, pp. 549–563). These covenantal relationships are portrayed throughout the oracle of Malachi as being broken or corrupted by God’s people (1:6, 10; 2:8).

### **Abrahamic Covenant**

The first covenant relationship, in chapter one of Malachi, addresses the Covenant with Abraham (Gen 12–17), continued with Isaac as told to Sarah (Gen 17:21) and further cemented in Jacob (Lev 26:42) and his descendants. God elected Jacob over Esau (1:2–4), He declared His love and devotion by His sovereignty; allowing Edom to be devastated and be laid to ruins. God’s covenant with Abraham, Jacob’s grandfather, was unconditional (Gen 12:1 - 3), he would be made a great nation, his descendants would be numerous, and all peoples of the earth would be blessed through his descendant; Jesus. This covenant relationship with God was hotly disputed by the people, yet God’s actions in daily life proved Him to be correct.

## **Mosaic Covenant Corrupted**

The second and possibly most comprehensive indictment against Israel was corruption of the Mosaic Covenant. It was through this covenant that the order of Priesthood was established and a system of worship had been erected. The Mosaic covenant (Exod 19–24) is the foundation for the written and oral Torah. In these chapters, God covenants with Israel to make them a “treasured possession” (Exod 19:5) among all people and a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exod 19:6). As part of the terms of the covenant, they would have to follow God’s commandments, which were elaborated on in the Torah, with Deuteronomy being the fullest account given.

## **Aaronic Priesthood and Levitical Covenant**

The corrupted Levitical covenant (2:8) between God and Levi (Deut 33), appears to be an inclusion of the Mosaic covenant with all Israel, however by representative position and authority over the people, the Priests had brought disgrace to God and his people.

The highest office in Israel was not the king or governor, it was that of the Priesthood. The priests who offered the atoning sacrifice for sin were also responsible to convey God’s love and mercy and ultimate blessing to the people. The Priest was the instructor of spiritual thought and the law at the same time functioning as the judge in Israel’s court.

The priests had allowed defiled worship; indicating the lack of respect for God to whom they were bringing their offerings and withheld the tithe (3:8-10). Out of duty they brought their shameful sacrifices, then God calls them out by saying, if I be your master,

then where is My deserved respect (1:6)? The people would not dare try to disrespect their earthly authority (1:8), however God's sanctuary services had become mere formalities that lacked meaning and purpose in the heart of the people (1:9; 2:4).

Not only did the Mosaic covenant provide the moral codebook, it held religious practices and acted as a relational superintendent. Moreover, its blueprint provided a spiritual accountability for all emerging generations. Despite its infallible nature, the people and leaders cast aside God and his covenants. Corruption and treachery were normal (2:10) among the people. The people had traded good judgment and morals for evil and then pronounced them to be righteous (2:17).

The spiritual life and national religious identity had been corrupted by the lazy-self-indulgent practices of Abraham's descendants. The general attitude disregarded any higher power above them as absolute authority.

### **Marriage Covenant**

One of the more destructive elements to the family is the broken marriage covenant (2:11). God calls this treachery (בגדוּת; *bagedah*, the Hebrew word meaning to act or to deal treacherously; to be deceitful or unfaithful) (Biblos, 2013), unfaithfulness to Him and an obscenity in Israel. Their disloyalty to the marriage covenant allowed idolatry and moral judgment to lapse into mainstream society. The deluge of filth from generations of unfaithfulness to God and His covenants, kept the encampment in a destitute separation from God.

Breaking the marriage covenant not only affected the immediate family structure, it altered the family industry, the relational bonds, objects of protection and provision, not to mention the ability of opening the family group up to predators to snatch the wife or

young ones from the proverbial fold. Malachi implores fathers to protect against these adversaries attempting to be unfaithful with the wife of “your youth” (2:15). She is the companion of a binding marriage covenant that remains in effect throughout all life till separated by death. Yet, the families had experienced the devastating results of broken homes and wilful sinning lifestyle of their parents (Ezra 9: 1,2; Neh 13: 23 - 28).

Every time one of the patriarchs broke a covenant with the Lord, it brought shame and sometimes judgment upon his household. (For example, Genesis 16:1, 2, Abraham took Hagar to provide a son instead of trusting God to give Sarah a son. Genesis 46:28–30, Jacob left the safety of the land of promise to be with Joseph and have the desired comforts. Though it may seem innocent; that act caused Israel to become slaves years later because there was no longer a Pharaoh that knew Joseph or revered his God.) Malachi states, “Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me” (3: 5), says the LORD of hosts. It is a given that the erosion of the home effects community and society. The role of fathers positively or negatively reaches beyond the family to society as a whole via their example and how their children then mirror such values in society.

The last words of the oracle of Malachi indicate something had been lost; something of value and it is obligatory to reconcile accounts through future narrative. The words of Malachi 4:5, 6 echo through the canyons of dysfunction within the family context. This call permeates all Christian thought; “He will restore the hearts” (4: 6)... This speaks to the restored emotional connections and openness to embrace renewed

relationships, yet it can only occur with moral integrity and keeping promises. The need is to fix what had been damaged and to restore the emotional and spiritual structure of the God and human connection. The greatest need for all living generations is a call back to a simple lifestyle of Godliness by the faithful workings in the family context, while addressing fathers as the bridge to this restoration process. This ancient context in the camp of Israel was the same state of affairs we find families in today.

### **Covenant of Presence, Provision and Protection**

The final debate begins in Malachi God says, “Return to me and I will return to you” (3:7). Often it is considered to be a heart issue, yet this is really the beginning of the section about robbing God. They have been robbing God of his honor and now the tithe and offering become examples of such dishonor.

God is merely pointing out the covenantal providence of His continuance for generations. He was there at the Exodus, and at Sinai, and all through the wilderness, God was always there in the cloud and the pillar of fire. Despite all He provided, He only asks for a tenth to be returned to Him. He is emphatic that if the people will but trust Him and His sustaining power, He will open the windows of Heaven (3:10) so much that we cannot handle it.

In Malachi’s day, it had become customary to withhold tithe (3: 8). God rebukes them for robbing Him of the tithes and offerings that were part of the covenantal relationship with Him. But this was more than just tithe, it was about trusting God for life and provision of which tithe is a point of reference. They were so materialistic and worldly oriented in their value system that they felt they had to go it alone. Buying and

selling and accumulating wealth was the supreme value.... Such is mirrored unwittingly by many fathers who are workaholics, work on Sabbath or try to keep up with Hollywood.

The people did not trust God to provide if they lost 10% of the gross income. So God pointed out that the whole nation is currently under a curse because of this practice, yet not to be unmerciful, He extends a challenge with a promise (3:10). He will go to work against the devourer so that all nations will call them blessed (3: 11, 12).

### **Theology of Fathers From Malachi**

Woven in the fabric of Israel's ancient culture is a theme that is often forgotten. Intertwined in the oracle of Malachi, there is a framework to better understand the father's role in his family and society. Who is he? What is he to do? What kind of place in society and family is he to fill? A proper theology of fathers addresses his role as it pertains to spiritual leadership in the home, while extending his influence beyond the family gates. It develops a model for what God desires in all faithful generations for each family living within their community.

In the Message of Malachi, there are four basic requirements of a godly Father.

1 – Intimacy with God. (1:2; 2:6; 3:7; 1 John 4:10, 19).

2 – Promise Keeping. (1:2; 2:4, 8, 14; 3:6).

3 – Practical Wisdom. (2:5 – 7; Deut 6: 6, 7; Eph 6:4).

4 – Interpersonal Engagement. (2:15; 3:2, 3; 3:16 -18; 4:6; Prov 27:17).

With each new generation the duty to keep the covenants and instruct his children while preparing them to govern and direct the affairs of God within his domain is the

calling of every Christian father. He must hold fast to these principles and diligently prepare his family.

### Principle #1 – Intimacy With God

The basis for any relationship is love. A man/father cannot lead his home biblically without a deep sense of love for God and his family. The commitment necessary to keep a family intact requires love. Malachi 1:2, says, “I have loved you, says the Lord.” Though the people dispute it, the proof God gives, refers to His presence, provision, protection, and providence. Because of His election of Jacob, not Esau, God has proven that He is steadfast and trustworthy.

Not only is this the call of fathers for their family, it is paramount that he recognizes this calling from God upon him. Every Christian father must acknowledge God’s sovereignty and walk in a close relationship with Him. This is the close relationship that his children must see to keep them from or turn away from iniquity (2:6). God’s preterit actions (experiencing that love, conveying that love, nurturing that love and living that love) towards Israel are demonstrated by these words, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with loving kindness” (Jer 31: 3).

Malachi’s expressions of God’s love and election- covenants with Israel necessitates a like response in order to have and maintain any sort of relationship. There are several additional biblical references that exhort men to put God as the first and highest priority in his life; no exception or distractions (Deut 6: 4-9; 11: 18-22; Mark 12: 29-31; Luke 10: 25-37).



## Principle #2 – Promise Keeping

The second element of a theology of fathers originates with his understanding of who he is in relationship to God. What is his character; the mental and moral qualifications that enable him to love and lead his family. To understand who he is in this complex world, “True instruction was in his mouth and unrighteousness was not found on his life; he walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many back from iniquity” (2: 6). This important role determines the path his family will take for generations.

He must walk with God daily and live uprightly so his children can see his integrity as he interacts with people in the community. His life will be a great example to those he comes in contact with and the ungodly and he will intentionally seek them out and teach them to follow the ways of the Lord, just as he does his own children.

Being a promise keeping father means that he will recognize God’s covenant with man and seek to live in an active relationship with the Lord. God says, I will be their God (Gen 17:7; Exod 16:12; 20:1; 29:45) and you will be my treasured possession (3:17; 1 Pet 2:9; Exod 19:5; Deut 7:6; Ps 103:13; 135:4). God wants a relationship with humanity, Malachi 3:17 says, “They will be mine... and on that day I will prepared my own possession” (3: 17). I have loved you God says (1:2). I have chosen life and peace for you and your descendants (3:5). I have been a loving father (1:6; 3:17). I want to save you on the day of destruction. This is the same thought that is echoed in Philipians, “And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns” (Phil 1:6).

God speaks in an intimate and personal way through Malachi. His message is a call to regain a personal living relationship with God where faith and love motivate life and spill out as a shining example to those around.

In this final book of the Old Testament Scriptures, God personally engages His people, and calls them to return to an intimate relationship (3: 7). The genuine love of God (1:1) is apparent in the book and it is no wonder that God would be excited when He found a few speaking frequently about Him (3:16, 17).

This is a two-way relationship for fathers; he must be intimate with God who desires to personally engage with His people, yet he must have this same love and connection with his own family. His zeal for God must be the cornerstone of his life; nothing else matters unless he has a personal connection to God.

### **A God of Covenants**

God is the model of all covenants he is the only true covenant keeper. God's faithfulness to his covenants makes him the one and only promise keeper. God is faithful he does not change with time and circumstances (3:6).

God proclaimed his love (1:1) for all humanity through Christ by the covenant of election (Gen 12 - 17) to Abraham and that his SEED (Gen 12:3) would bless all families of the earth. He further uses the covenant of election of Jacob over Esau and compares the desolation that Edom experienced.

Yahweh acted as a God of presence, through the generations of their coming and going, the Exodus and providence in the wilderness. By contrasting the plight of the Edomites, God was reminding His people of His Provision, giving them an inheritance of the land flowing with milk and honey (Deut 26:9), while Edom lay in waste. He Provided

protection by the land conquest (Josh 23:5), pillar and Cloud in the wilderness (Exod 13:21), and helped to fight their enemies (just one example; Josh 10:13).

It was God's desire to bless the children of Israel, to make them a special people a treasured possession (3:17; Exod 19:5; Deut 7:6; Ps 135:4), as a nation they would honor Him as their Father and respect Him as their Master (1:6). Yet the story tells of a people who constantly reject him in favor of other gods and other forms of authority (1:6; 1:10; 2:8; 2:11; Story of Hosea). This is a great God that in spite of all the rejections and philandering of his chosen people, he goes back after them and seeks to rebuild a relationship, a reconciliation of the original covenantal relationship (1:1; 2:4, 5; Deut 33:8-11).

It is vital that every father be informed of God's faithfulness to His promises of the Bible. This awareness not only builds a father's faith, it enables him to live a godly life. By faith, every father will see God as a father and master and live each day by this example. He will live and mentor his children just as God leads him.

### **A Covenant of Spiritual Leadership as Zeal for God**

The second element of a covenant-keeping father is related to his spiritual leadership. A father is to be the priest of his home, teaching and instructing his children in the ways of the Lord. Just as priests were the spiritual leaders of Israel and helped connect people to God (2:6-9), so fathers are to passionately lead their families in the journey of a relationship with Jesus.

Malachi 1:6 addresses the priests who despise the Lord's name and 2: 4 points to the covenant with Levi that will continue. Both the covenant of the Aaronic/Phinehas and

Levitical (Exod 32: 7-24) Priesthood comes because of their zeal for God; by defending the name of Yahweh.

Part of the responsibilities of the Priesthood was to live in such a way to not bring dishonor to the name of God (1:6). There was a high standard of expectations for maintaining not only the covenant, but also the family name. They were to walk with God (2:6), to be honest in living a godly and righteous life while living in such a way to pass on their good example of God's truth. His character, the mental and moral qualifications were what kept him faithful to the covenants (2:9).

He must be consistent and disciplined (3:6), God says that He is the same, he does not change, or otherwise they would have been destroyed. Their undisciplined life, their inconsistent ways of living the laws and statutes of God had caused disruption in Israel and its covenants.

### **Covenant Relationships: Till Death do us Part**

The third element and most significant to the family, is the marriage covenant (2:14). This was an original covenant with the first parents in Eden; Adam and Eve (Gen 2: 21 - 25). To leave ones parents and begin a new family to be united with ones spouse till death terminated the relationship. A covenant keeper who desires to follow God faithfully will also not marry an unbeliever (2:11). Moreover, he is to protect his wife from ungodly influences of the world and intentions of worldly men (2:15). The concept of protecting her from treachery means that he will be considerate of her emotional condition, by being attentive to her needs. He will never be cruel or violent towards his wife. He is a husband of presence, never to abandon the family or send her away.

As a faithful husband, he is to seek godly offspring (2:15b); meaning he is to have children either by natural birth, adoption or fostering (further discussed below).

Additionally, he is to use his influence to help strangers beyond his gates (1:5), as well as widows and orphans (3:5). He and his family are to reverence God; continually walking in peace and uprightness so as to cause many to turn from their wickedness (2:6).

### Principle #3 – Practical Wisdom

A father is a warrior in the sense that he stands to protect amidst spiritual battle with and for his family. He stands on the practical wisdom of God's word and seeks to defend against the pervading powers of darkness (Eph 6:12) that attempt to destroy. This third role that further develops the theology of fathers, demonstrated in Malachi's message, is that of an instructor and expert in the Law of Yahweh. A man/father seeks to use practical godly wisdom gained over a lifetime of learning to instruct his family.

### **A Brief Description of the Covenants of the Priests and Levites**

After Moses came down from Sinai, he was forced to address the wickedness in the camp (Exod 32: 7-24). The sons of Levi answered the call to be executioners of the 3000 people who choose corrupted worship. Because of their Zeal for God they were set apart, blessed and given a distinct work to do (Exod 32:29).

Also in Numbers 3: 5-13, Levites were set apart as the firstborn of all Israel as representatives of each tribal family. Instead of taking a spiritual leader from each tribe to make the priesthood, the Levites became the ambassadors to every clan.

God's contention with the priests is in the heart of the covenant (2:2, 3), God needs their promises to continue in order for the people to remain faithful (2:4). He

reverenced God and honored his name (2:5), yet he was to pass this on to all Israel (2:6, 7). In Deuteronomy 33: 8 - 10, “Levi is given a place of spiritual leadership with the functions of determining God’s will, teaching the law, and serving at the altar” (Watts, 1970, 2:293).

### **Priestly Leadership**

In the camp of the Israelites, the priests and Levites were the religious representatives for each family. The priest actions of spiritual leadership require him to govern with the biblical precedent (Deut 6:6-9). He cannot set the example if he does not know whom he is following and what the vision is (Deut 6:4-6). So a Covenant father must create and teach with a spiritual plan and vision (2:5-7; Prov 29:18). Each father’s curriculum includes him as a covenant steward (Prov 22:6), and thus increases his credibility with his family and the community (Exod 3:8; Deut 6:3).

As he walks with God (2:6), accepting him as Father and Creator (2:10), he will actively instruct those within his scope of leadership to model God’s laws. (1:5; 2: 5 - 7).

Just like the spiritual leadership of Israel had degenerated into offering sub-standard worship to God through their sacrifices (1:7, 8), modern men relinquish the role of Spiritual leader. Yet fathers desiring to live a godly example to their children must rise up and genuinely practice their faith openly (Deut 7:11, 12). He must attend worship services regularly, participate and help where needed (1:11).

He must carefully consider his lifestyle choices, as an instructor of God’s written word (Deut 7). The choices that he makes not only affect him as a teacher (2:3) but also ultimately affect his family and potentially the whole community (1:8-10). What he

teachers must be right and moral according to the Covenant of God. His activities before God and his family must guide him to instruct with those same high standards.

Israel had become lazy and undisciplined before the Lord, in their education of the children. (1:7, 8, 10 - 14). They were to be messengers of the life and peace (2:4), to preserve knowledge with their mouth, and men would seek their instruction (2:7). However, because of their wicked leadership and instruction, they had taught the children of Israel the ways of iniquity.

In order to maintain integrity over generations, a clear standard of living and personal sacrifice was necessary as part of the training to the people (Deut 8:1, 2). Each member of the priesthood was to listen and act swiftly (2:2) meaning to honor the name of Yahweh and be decisive. He was to call people to repentance (2:6), never ignore portions of the law (2:9), love his brothers (2:10), and be a student of the ways of God.

As a scholar of God's law, he was to learn and anticipate His actions (3:1), by studying the Torah (Deut 4:45; 5:1) and more specifically prophecy. He was able to see what God was doing and entreat the others to participate (1:5). He was to prepare himself and the people for the coming messenger (3:1a) and receive him as part of preparing for the Lord himself (3:1b).

Though the priesthood had been corrupted, God wanted to continue the covenant (2:4). His desire was for anyone to have the courage to stand up and defend His name (1:10; 2:2), along with correcting the course of the people. This courageous person quite possibly would be the one to stand up and call sin by its name and provide correction and discipline for the purpose of reconciliation to God (3: 2, 3).

These godly leaders must only speak well about God and not profane his name (3:13). They must lead with humble hearts and seek justice (3:15) against those who defile God and His ways.

Though a leader of influence, integrity requires him to offer acceptable worship to God (3:3), as well as return tithes and offerings (3: 8 - 12). Since God brings swift judgment against the wicked, He is expected to be upright in his dealings as an employer giving a fair wage, in philanthropy to the widows and orphans and to bring justice for the foreigners even if they do not know God (3:5).

As a man of integrity, these acts are done with no strings attached, meaning he does them out of the graciousness in his heart and for the Honor of God--his father and master. If he is to be a covenant-keeping father who instructs his children in the ways of the Lord, he develops ways to pass the mantle to his children's children.

#### Principle #4 – Interpersonal Engagement

The fourth and final element of the theology of fathers requires the spiritual leader to step up and fulfill his role as mentor/coach. It is not enough to just teach or exhort the law and principles, but to give opportunity to the children to practice faith in a meaningful way. When one person or group ignores the time-honored covenants (2:4; 2:10; 2:14) the lineage stops and the mantle of faith is not passed. Malachi speaks to the need for love in and for our fathers as being exemplified in our respect and general family ethos (2:10, 11).

The oracle of Malachi demonstrates the cultural deluge of a nation that had forsaken their God, His customs and laws, not to mention the covenants of their fathers (2:10). They had no memories of the provision and protection of their ancestors (3:6;



Exodus 20:1). The stories of faithfulness had been buried, as it seemed, in the wilderness with those who grumbled against God.

Passing the mantle of faith to the next generation includes remembering how faithful God is to do what he says he will do (3:16). Malachi 3: 18 says the ones who feared God assembled together and God wrote a book of remembrance, so that everyone will know they belong to him (3:17). God also shows that He is the one who has been instrumental in doing the work of preparing their hearts of those who fear the Lord (3:17) until the day of distinguishing between the righteous and the wicked (3:18). God the father and master (1:6) seeks to turn the wicked away from their sin (2:6), so that they may be refined in the fire (2:2, 3).

As a faithful servant of the Lord, a godly father will keep a book of remembrance as part of his spiritual heritage and inheritance, in order to tell the stories of God's faithfulness (3:16). He speaks clearly and often of the acts of God among men from his own life and family. He believes and teaches the coming salvation of the righteous. No matter how he conveys the message (i.e. book, journal, electronic devices, movie), it is vital to develop a method for each new generation to know how God has been faithful to His covenants.

Malachi provides a portrait of what is not happening among the children of Israel. In fact, it is a mirror opposite to what a faithful father is to be. Fathers like the priests are to be the spiritual head of his home (Gen 18:19; Deut 4:9; 6:7; 11:19; Eph 6: 4), providing instruction, discipline and encouragement. When the spiritual leaders neglect or abandon their roles as in the case of Israel, we see the cultural devastation. When people do not have respect for God, all social and religious integrity degenerates.

## **Examples of Biblical Fathering**

The four basic elements of spiritual leadership exemplified in Malachi are needed in every home and community. The issues faced today are similar to the biblical fathers of 2000 years ago. There are biblical examples of fathers; some are good examples of men trying to follow God and others are good examples of what not to do. The first two are examples of what happens when correct fathering does not take place. The following examples were solid yet imperfect father-types who passed on a strong, enduring faith.

### **Imperfect Fathers and Ungodly Sons**

As a result of the Levitical covenant, maintaining the priesthood required the families of priests to marry, birth and raise their children, instructing in the ways of the Lord. It was a holy duty and obligation for all Levite families. For the covenant to continue throughout all generations, it had to be reverently passed down to the children of each clan.

Even though he was not in the line of Eleazar, Aaron's chosen line for the priesthood, Eli was a Levite. Eli was chosen as High Priest since there was no qualified man for this position, from Eleazar's line.

At the age of 58 he began his role as high priest. With this honor comes responsibility to God and the people. Eli was well educated in the Mosaic Law (Lev 7:29-34), and part of his position required him to uphold the statutes and keep the temple routine. But his most influential role as priest was his duty to teach the people about God. A priest in Israel was responsible to the people for the preservation and unrelenting

leadership of the way of the Lord. He was the mediator for the people, as the uncontested spiritual leader.

Eli did not have control over his appetite, he was overweight (1 Sam 4:18). As a result, his sons lost respect for him and he was unable to teach them self-control over food and their sexual appetite (1 Sam 2: 12-17, 22). This was extremely crucial since the Mosaic Law taught that the children of third and fourth generations would be affected by the sins of their fathers (Exod 20:5; Num 14:18; Deut 5:9).

Because of the nature of his problem, it is conceivable that he was weak in dealing with his sons since he was unwilling to discipline himself. Deuteronomy 21: 18-21 outlines clear action steps for dealing with this rebellious situation.

First, the father is instructed to confront his stubborn and rebellious son with his wrongdoings. After refusing to obey, the son was to be brought before the elders of the city. The Lord's judgment on Aaron's two sons when they rebelled against their father in performing the tabernacle ceremonies was a sobering example which Eli should have learned (Lev 10:1, 2). (Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1979, 1:89)

His sons Hophni and Phinehas became the priests in Shiloh (1 Sam 1:3), partly as a result of Eli's inability to sufficiently carry on the tasks of the priesthood. He was aging and grossly overweight (1 Sam 4:18). Eli's sons' sins were great before the Lord. They held contempt for God's sacrifices, mistreated the worshipers and seduced the women at the entrance of the Tabernacle (1 Sam 2: 12-26). Eli spoke to them, but did not rebuke or discipline them according to the law.

Yet Eli did not manifest true repentance. He failed to renounce his sin. Year after year the Lord delayed His threatened judgments. Much might have been done to redeem the failures of the past, but the aged priest took no effective measures to correct the evils that were polluting the sanctuary of the Lord and leading thousands in Israel to ruin. The forbearance of God caused Hophni and Phinehas to harden their hearts and become still bolder in transgression. (White, 1983, p. 42)

His inability to deal with his sons was possibly his normal pattern of parenting throughout their growing up years when it would have made the greater impact.

It was because of his disregard for the sacredness of the covenant with God that Eli had to be replaced by a more faithful priest (1 Sam 2:31,32). He was the high priest for 40 years, but when news came to him that his sons were killed and the Ark of the Covenant had been taken (1 Sam 4:18), he fell back, broke his neck and died.

Up to his death at 98, Eli was like a foster/adoptive father to Samuel who became the faithful prophet/judge and priest that replaced Eli. Eli raised the prophet Samuel, who anointed the first king of Israel.

For Eli, it is probable that raising Samuel in the temple was an opportunity to make things right, But the biblical account seems to indicate that God had His hand on Samuel. At an early age Samuel was visited by God at night and spoke to him regarding Eli the Priest. So he knew Eli was doing wrong in the sight of the Lord both as a father and in his leadership of Israel. Yet, Samuel was destined to repeat the failures of his father figure he witnessed every day.

Samuel was born to Elkanah and Hannah by a miracle of the Lord. Samuel's mother promised and his father agreed to dedicate him to God and give him to the service in the temple at a very young age (1 Sam 1: 24).

Although for the first years of his life, Samuel's biological father, Elkanah, participated in raising him for service to the Lord. Once Samuel came to live in the temple, his father was no longer physically present day by day, and only saw him each year when they brought the annual sacrifice to the temple.

While the daily instruction and fathering was left to Eli, Samuel saw first-hand what happens when leaders abandon their spiritual role. And like both Samuel's earthly examples, it is apparent this fathering model would be repeated. Samuel's sons were dishonest to the people at Beersheba (1 Sam 8:3). So the people came and requested a king (1 Sam 8). Samuel warned them and tried to dissuade them, but in the end, God allowed them to have what they wanted (1 Sam 8: 21, 22).

Had Samuel been a more dedicated father with a passion and zeal for God's ways, he would have been able to prevent the children of Israel from turning to earthly royalty. "...they said to him, 'behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations'" (1 Sam 8:5). Since Samuel and Eli were dedicated to the tasks of the ministry, it seems plausible that each would exemplify a strong personal spiritual relationship with the God of their service. However, it appears that they did not intentionally portray a loving and intimate God that disciplines those he loves (Deut 8:5; Ps 94:12; Prov 3:12; Heb 12:6). They continually disseminated information to their children, yet were unable to mentor or reproof them to maintain the integrity of God's legacy (Prov 3:12; 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23: 13, 14).

In the case of both Eli and Samuel, they were faithful workers for the Lord, but at the expense of the education and training of their sons. "The warning given to Eli had not exerted the influence upon the mind of Samuel that it should have done. He had been to some extent too indulgent with his sons, and the result was apparent in their character and life" (White, 1890, p. 604). Workers for the Lord cannot be too caught up in the work and forget their most important work at home; the living, training and empowering their children to fervently follow God.

Though Eli was over indulgent, he tried to train his children in the ways of the Lord. Yet his ability to show a passionate personal commitment to God seemed to be lacking. Of the four basic principles of a godly father, Eli because of responsibilities of his job, was partly required to train his children (Principle #3), and eventually passed on the mantle of leadership (Principle #4), but his sons were not ready nor spiritually mature enough to be the godly leaders Israel needed.

Samuel in contrast to Eli, once his sons went off the path, stepped in with a strong rebuke (Principle #1), which is a parents' role in growing strong in the faith. Samuel instructed his sons (Principle #3), and was faithful to covenant (Principle #2), but he was weak just like Eli in mentoring the next generation in passionate spirituality and growth.

## Faithful Fathers and Godly Sons

### **Abraham Faithful Patriarch**

The Jews claim “our father Abraham” as the origin of their lineage. He found grace in the eyes of God and covenanted to live and have children according to this agreement (Gen 12-17). As an old father, when Isaac was finally born, he lived and taught the ways of the Lord to him.

There are many biblical examples of Abraham living as a man of integrity: but that trust came over time. Not because God was not worthy or ever let Abraham down, no, because Abraham's character needed refinement. Finally when Abraham was an old man, God fulfilled His covenant with Him and Isaac was born.

Ishmael was the first born, but according to biblical teaching, not the son in line of the covenant (Gen 18:14, “...Sarah will have a son.”; Gen 21:12 “...for through Isaac your descendants shall be named.”). Isaac was considered to be the son of promise and

despite differences between the boys and their mothers, Abraham loved Ishmael and it was with a heavy heart he sent them away.

Ishmael lived a life devoted to self (Gen 16:12), but when Abraham died (Gen 25: 11), both sons took part in the burial of their father (Gen 25:9). Ishmael honored his father's legacy at his death, by helping to transport and inter his father with his half-brother, Isaac. And though the effects of Abraham and Sarah's decision drove Ishmael from their home, "In his latter days he repented of his evil ways and returned to his father's God" (White, 1890, p. 174).

The proof of Abraham putting his whole trust in God came when God asked him to kill Isaac on an altar of Sacrifice (Gen 22: 1 - 18). Abraham's experience with God and his ability to instill these same values in his son gives us the greatest typological example in scripture. Isaac was not the sacrifice, nevertheless, his faith was tested and both father and son were rewarded with a ram, which was the symbol of the ultimate Lamb (Jesus) sacrifice to come.

This lesson on Mount Moriah no doubt was never forgotten by anyone present. Abraham's trust in God was strong enough not to keep his beloved son, Isaac from sacrifice (Gen 22:12). Abraham had already left his family and homeland to follow God (Gen 12:1), learning valuable lessons of trust without compromise along the journey (Gen 20:2).

He could have escaped his doom, had he chosen to do so; the grief-stricken old man, exhausted with the struggle of those three terrible days, could not have opposed the will of the vigorous youth. But Isaac had been trained from childhood to ready, trusting obedience, and as the purpose of God was opened before him, he yielded a willing submission. He was a sharer in Abraham's faith, and he felt that he was honored in being called to give his life as an offering to God. He tenderly seeks to lighten the father's grief, and encourages his nerveless hands to bind the cords that confine him to the altar.

And now the last words of love are spoken, the last tears are shed, the last embrace is given.... (White, 1890, p. 152)

Isaac learned by watching his father that somehow God would provide (Gen 22:13). In that moment before the crafted altar, he chose to honor his father and willingly give up his life if necessary, so Abraham could remain faithful to God.

Abraham's great trust in God earned him the high commendation, "...He was called the Friend of God" (James 2:23). This dramatic episode taught all of his descendants an important aspect of the character of God. He is more concerned with the heart of the person than with the sacrifice itself. He is pleased with a heart of trust and love (Isa 1:10-17). ("Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts," 1985, Vol. 3, p. 190)

Of all the biblical fathers, it is clear that he exhibited the four basic principles of a godly father. Albeit not perfect, Abraham sought to live an authentically faithful life with God and his household.

### **Elijah as Teacher/Mentor**

Elijah was considered to be one of the greatest prophets of all time (Mark 9:11 – 13; Matt 16:14; 17:10, 11; Luke 1:17; 9:8, 19; John 1:21, 25). God worked many miracles through him. 1 Kings 17 and 18 portray a strong relationship with the prophet and his God: he was fed by ravens during a famine (1 Kgs 17: 4-6), he raised a child from death (1 Kgs 17:17-24), presided over the showdown at Mount Carmel (18:20-46), predicted the end of wicked Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kgs 21), among many other works. Finally, at the end of his ministry (2 Kgs 2), God had prepared Elisha as the successor to Elijah's ministry. Their relationship was more like a father/son type relationship (2 Kgs 2:12), where Elijah taught and mentored his younger counterpart, and at the end of his ministry, he was carried off in a chariot of fire to heaven (2 Kgs 2:11).



Elijah is a great example of a covenant-keeping father, because he lived faithfully for God, walking in close relationship. He was able to be an example to all Israel who had forgotten the acts of God (and his zeal for God led him to be the man who killed the prophets of Baal) (1 Kgs 18). He was able to instruct the people of all the time and even in the moments of weakness (1 Kgs 18:22),

Although Elijah was not his biological father, Elisha is treated as a son and heir to throne. Not to any earthly possession or kingdom, but access of service to the Kingdom of Heaven. God told Elijah to go anoint Elisha as his successor (1 Kgs 19:16). When Elisha received the mantle of God's prophet, he followed to become Elijah's assistant (1 Kgs 19: 19-21).

During the latter part of Elijah's ministry, Elisha went everywhere his master went. He witnessed the ministry among God's people and finally when it was time for Elijah to leave for good, He was allowed to see the chariot of fire (2 Kgs 2:1). Elijah had been a spiritual father to him; using daily life and ministry as the teaching tool, and at the end, Elisha so believed in the vision, he requested to inherit a double blessing as the new prophet (2 Kgs 2: 9).

Because Elisha witnessed a godly example in Elijah (2 Kgs 2), his constant pursuit of God, there was no question what the vision was. As Elijah instructed the younger man, he was able to involve and mentor him in the work of God. So when it came time for Elijah to depart across the Jordan and be taken to heaven (2 Kgs 2:10-12), Elisha was able to return and pick up right where his master and father had left off. (This is a reference to Malachi 1:6; it says, "A son honors his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?"

says the LORD Almighty.” Elisha called Elijah both father and master, and carried on the work that was entrusted him by witnessing the departing prophet, and the passing of the mantle.)

Elijah was a deeply spiritual and passionate prophet of God. He was able to develop and maintain strong relationships (Principle #1) with both God and the people he ministered to. He was also a great prophet of the covenant (Principle #2), calling the children of Israel back to worshipping the one true God. He sought to teach and instruct both the people and specific individuals (Principle #3)--both Elisha and the Widow of 1 Kings 17. Moreover Elijah is the epitome of passing the mantle of faith to the next generation. He in principle, philosophy, spiritually, and literally give Elisha the mantle he carried throughout his ministry (Principle #4).

### **Paul as Mentor/Coach**

Whether or not Paul was the biological father of anyone mentioned in Scripture, his living example shows he was passionate about the fathering principles in Malachi. After Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus, he is almost never alone. Between Barnabas, Silas and Timothy, most of his ministry he always has a companion. Paul in a similar vein as Elijah to Elisha, decides to mentor and empower young Timothy, much like a father disciples his son. He travels with him and in several places even calls him “Timothy, my son” (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2; 2:1).

This type of father-mentor seems to be Paul’s general mode of operation. In many of his letters he greets his readers as a father or addresses the people as little children (Gal 4:19; 1 Cor 4: 15; 2 Cor 12:14). Paul actively sought to present the principles of the Christian faith to people in a way that would cause them to fervently follow God.

Just like the principles of fathering from Malachi (2:4-9), Paul exhorts both the churches and the leaders he leaves to have charge over them, to be faithful to God (Rom 12: 1, 2; 1 Cor 7:23; Gal 5: 16-26). In addition to his epistles of instructions, Paul's zeal for Christ is so strong he was imprisoned (Acts 16:22-40), for not keeping quiet and even in his dying moments he says, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Tim 4: 7-8).

Paul clearly stated to the crowds and his supporters, that they must keep the faith (1 Tim 3:9; 1 Cor 15:1; 16:13; Gal 5:1; Eph 3:16). Not only was it necessary for having a strong faith, but he also exhorted fathers specifically to train their children in the Lord (Eph 6:4). (Principle #2 from Mal 2: 4 – 9: The covenant of the spiritual instruction of Israel from one generation to another, came through the Levitical Covenant and was to be kept so that the people would not be corrupted and stumble away from the Lord.)

Paul also in his relationship with Timothy is a good example of all four of the principles of a godly father. He especially emphasizes a tight-knit mentoring relationship as he empowers Timothy to take over in leadership, even as a young person (1 Tim 4:12).

### **Jehonadab and the Rechabites**

The four commands given by Jehonadab, son of Rechab preserved the Rechabite family. For generations, their loyal testimony stands in contrast to Israel's unfaithfulness. Jehonadab had had a passion for the holiness of God. (2 Kgs 10:15-31) He was consumed with zeal for God's holiness among God's people. Jehonadab was a companion of Jehu, who helped to eliminate the Baal worshipers from Israel (2 Kgs 10). He took part in the

great reformation under Elijah (2 Kgs 10:23). Even though proper worship was never fully restored, the worship of Baal in the Northern Kingdom was extinguished.

It was believed by the Rechabite family that obedience to the Word of the Lord through the prophets was necessary, Jehonadab's descendants had been mentored this principle (1 Kgs 14:15-16; 19:15-18; 21:17-24). They were meticulous Bible students and knew the promises of God would be fulfilled.

It is evident that the Recabites ordered their family life around God's word (Jer 35:1-19). Jehonadab set house rules, and his family obeyed him. Each new generation of Recabites were consistent and faithful worshippers of the God of Israel. His descendants defended the family name and values over 200 years later.

History records the events of 2 Kings 10 as taking place around 840 BC, and the descendants of Jehonadab awaiting the fall of Jerusalem around 603 BC. The obedience of six generations was based on one man's faithfulness and his dedication to passing it to his children's children. God sent Jeremiah to test their obedience one more time by putting wine before them and they all refused.

Jehonadab set standards to preserve his family spiritually (Jer 35:1-19). The practical application is difficult to implement, but he set up strict guidelines. He wanted to ensure that his family could survive the changes in Israel that would inevitably come when the nation was destroyed. He took measures that would permanently set them apart. They were to live differently than those around them. They were to maintain moral purity; hence no wine and they were to remain a nomadic people, not building houses and not planting vineyards. These were practical plans with a spiritual goal.

Because of his faithfulness to God and consistency with instilling a zeal for God and His ways, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah and rewarded the faithfulness and obedience of Jehonadab and his descendants, saying, Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not lack a man to stand before me forever (Jer 35:19).

When comparing the ability of the Rechabites entire clan to other families in the Bible, there is no doubt that at some level, every generation for 200 year bought into the family ethos. Jehonadab son of Rechab, and his descendants remained faithful and thus actively practiced all the four principles of a godly father.

### **Mission of Reconciliation**

The coming Elijah (4:5) has the mission of reconciliation; it will result in a turning of “the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers” (4:6). This Gospel message will come right before the second-advent of Christ. Many men will hear this message and be reconciled to God and their family, as a result of their commitment to Christ.

This is the same message that Adventist have long equated as the Three-Angels’ messages of Revelation 14. It is a Gospel message that tugs at the hearts, in that faith and family are restored to those who believe. It is the promise that God gave Abraham that there would be a faithful remnant of his descendants all throughout time till the end of the earth (Gen 17:6-8; Gal 3:29; Rom 9:8).

To remain dedicated, a father recognizes his subservient role to God as the ultimate father. Christ must be the head of every man (1 Cor 11:3), so that his role as spiritual leader in the home facilitates instructing in the ways of the Lord (Deut 6: 6, 7). These instructions that were corrupted in the time of Malachi are the very character needs

Paul spoke about in Romans, “And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation” (Rom 5:4).

Both Fathers and their children need to understand that they are part of something much greater than themselves; reverence and awe for God communicates a deeper sense of purpose to each emerging generation. Furthermore, the Adventist Church has been given a distinct message for the end-times. A father needs to be proclaiming this urgently, believing that his role as defender of the covenant/faith is irreplaceable. Teaching his family that the desperate state of affairs, both in society and the church are not God’s will. He must expect his children to teach his grandchildren and future generations until Jesus returns.

The foundation of character development in each home starts with the father. As he fulfills his role as leader, instructor and intentionally passes this on to his children in a practical way, they learn to assimilate these principles over time. “The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall” (White, 1903, p. 57).

The value of fathers in their spiritual leadership role will make a resurgence before the return of Christ, but no matter how long it takes, we are entrusted to “Tell your children about it in the years to come, and let your children tell their children. Pass the story down from generation to generation” (Joel 1:3).

As the Adventist church raises the call of Elijah; preparing the way of the Lord, fathers should preserve knowledge of God, and his family should go to him for

instruction (2:7), because each father is the established priest in his home and the messenger of the LORD of heaven armies.

Not unlike the fathers of Israel, today's spiritual leaders have given God a bad name because of their sinful actions and disrespect for the Lord. These negative behaviors and activities have caused many people to stumble and fall into sin (2:8). God's last-day fathers will teach according to the advice in Ephesians. "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" (Eph 6:4, NLT).

If fathers desire to see their family remain consistent to God's remnant message, Adventist families need to develop a meaningful way to recreate family time, both at home and at church. There needs to be special times in the home that say this is God's time and designated places that say this is God's territory.

### **Conclusion**

The oracle of Malachi presents a strong case for multigenerational faithfulness among God's people. As the last book of the OT, Malachi not only presents a problem that has been ongoing since Adam in the Garden of Eden, it shows God's solutions to life's greatest challenges. Focusing explicitly on the book of Malachi gives us a clearer picture of the needs of men/fathers of today.

Had the priests and spiritual leaders of Israel lived up to the four basic principles of Malachi, they would have been a beacon of light and hope to the nations around them. Yet the men/fathers of Israel were unfaithful to the Lord, so God allowed their enemies to come and destroy them as a nation.

The solutions to these difficult discipleship issues are found in the development of fathers as spiritual leaders in the homes and in the church (Principles #3 & #4). Fathers need to instill a strong godly character in their children so that life does not pass them by without meaning and purpose. Life is not as much about how much money you make, the job you have, or the person you marry, as much as it is about how faithful you are to God and his covenants (Principle #2).

It was the faithful of Israel that got together and recounted the blessings of the Lord. It was this remnant who still honored and respected the ways of God (Principle #1). They unwaveringly and quietly lived their faith in order to call others to repentance and reconciliation (Principle #4). Adventists today face a very similar setback as ancient Israel. When the church begins to contain the ongoing exodus of our children, it will have returned to simple Godliness, where life and instruction come from the fathers (Principle #3 & #4). It will be a time when godly men of integrity hold fast to the faith until Jesus comes (Principle #1 & #2).

Real church growth and evangelism will be in the homes; children will be taught to be consistent and eagerly walk along-side their parents in the faith (Principle #3). No longer will the remnant decry the loss of our youth, they will be the ones faithfully leading a resurgence in the true worship and living of God for all nations to observe (Principle #1).

It will not only affect the church, but it will transform the community. No longer will the world see a people living inconsistent lives, they will see a resurgence in godliness and be drawn to repent and join (Principle #4). This is the heart's cry in



Malachi's final words, for the restoration of fathers and children in the eternal purpose of salvation (John 3:16-18).

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW AS IT RELATES TO DEVELOPING MEN/FATHERS AS SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE HOME

There is an unwritten embarrassment to Adventist families and the church when they cannot seem to keep their children interested in church through the teen and young adult stages of life. Most of today's religious movements have seen their children of the faith walk away in favor of pop-culture or some form of life apart from church life.

Many churches, pastors or ministries have created youth focused programs to keep the young people entertained or perceived as interested in church. However, Lale says "The way to keep young people in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to surround them with adults who acknowledge them by name, display a loving, caring attitude toward them, and show concern for them and help them whenever possible" (Tetz & Hopkins, 2004, p. 12).

The only danger of a church focusing its attention on youth is if the Youth Ministry becomes like child-centered homes, where the children are running the show; with lots of activity and noise, but no actual depth or purpose. Paul told young Timothy to not let others affect his faith and leadership, but set the example (2 Tim 4:12). This is why God-honoring fathers who acknowledge their roles as servant leaders must lead Christian homes. Effective fathers "...understand the spiritual aspects of their children's

lives, and they work to help their children discover their own relationship with God” (Canfield, 1993).

This project originally started by considering why youth are leaving the church; with the purpose of examining the evidence for such a mass exodus of faith, values, standards and attendance. One of the major motivations for children maintaining a balanced healthy faith throughout the adolescent years correlates to the father’s ability to engage his family with passionate intentionality, as it relates to his spiritual leadership.

Keeping children and grandchildren involved in the faith is not a new phenomenon. History has recorded the faith struggle since the Garden of Eden. The previous chapter on biblical foundations presents a vivid example of God’s people who were called by His name (Gen 48:16; 2 Chr 7:14; Isa 43:7), living in opposition to His instruction. This chapter attempts to bring resolution between today’s social predicaments and Malachi’s four principles of covenantal fathering.

Malachi depicted a people who lacked respect for God. God’s treasured people (Mal 3:17) had degenerated so far that the social climate was in a crisis. Israel’s spiritual leadership was no longer dedicated to the instruction of God’s ways. And it appears that the present global circumstances in the church are similar to that ancient culture. Modern spiritual leaders appear to be absent or diluted as the priests and Levites of Israel over two millennia ago.

It is the desire of this project to introduce to the conversation: a) how father involvement affects children abandoning faith in favor of secular culture. b) The literature reviewed addresses his role as spiritual leader of the home and how this role inherently has an effect on the churches ability to retain the youth? If a father is

intentionally engaged in the spiritual development of his children, will this increase the ability to grow healthy churches? c) Finally, this chapter seeks to connect the current social problems of fatherlessness with the biblical crisis in the book of Malachi.

### **The Father Impact**

My growing up years in Wyoming afforded me many adventures: One time a few of us went hiking into the hills, we plucked cactus, built a fire and roasted it over the open flames, what we failed to remember was to take out the barbs in the middle. We spent the better part of two hours plucking cactus from our tongues and mouths.

Then there was the time my friend dared me to ride the wild mule that belonged to a neighbor. We cornered it into the feed shelter, so I could drop onto its back unsuspectingly, as if somehow that would make mounting the animal better. That poor Jack shot out of the shed like a rocket on launch day, he had never seen such speeds in his life, and I am sure he got a cramp that caused him to jump and toss like a crazed rabbit. Needless to say, my friend enjoyed every moment of our long walk back to the house as I limped and wailed over my sore bum.

Why is it that boys growing up never seem to lack adventure? Boys were created to “Explore, build, conquer – you don’t have to tell a boy to do those things for a simple reason that it is his purpose” (Eldredge, 2001, p. 49). He loves risk, danger and the adventure that goes with it. But what is a man for?

Eldredge (p. 48) states, “If you know what something is designed to do, then you know its purpose in life. A retriever loves the water; a lion loves the hunt; a hawk loves to soar; it’s what they’re made for.” But what is a man made to do and become? How does a boy find his place in the story as he grows into a man?

## **The Biblical Principles of Developing men**

Training and equipping men to become the appropriate spiritual leader in the home is analogous to drawing up blue prints to build a house. The builder starts with the end in mind. A purpose for each room is a basic house design for daily family functions. It involves a vision and a plan. The family is no different, “We need to be asking ourselves: “What is the purpose of our family? What is our (this) family about? Where are we heading? When we get where we are going, where will we be and will we really want to be there?”” (Lichtenwalter, 2002, p. 147)? Although a family unit is not a physical building or structure, the care and planning analogy is kindred.

Lichtenwalter (p. 147) goes on to point out through the Psalmist, that children are a treasure from the Lord (Ps 127: 3), and that these gifts are arrows in his quiver (Ps 127: 4). “This Psalm not only reminds us that our families need God’s help and blessing... it points to a fundamental solidarity of family against its enemies” (Lichtenwalter, p. 147). “We were born into a battle” says Eldredge. And we must prepare ourselves as well as our children to be ready for the challenges ahead (p. 21).

Not only are parents responsible for the direction of their children; such children are living assets (both offensive and defensive) in the battle against that family’s moral-spiritual (and physical) enemies. Scripture and society view children as part of the family arsenal against its foes. (Lichtenwalter, p. 147)

In order for a man to become the spiritual father he is called to be, he must recognize that his ideal life requires him to develop and maintain a personal relationship with God. The apostle Paul said that the head of every man is Christ (1 Cor 11:3). If one put oneself in context to God, and deepen that awareness and understanding, life can improve.

A man/father who seeks Christ, today's culture portrays him as a loser; one who cannot think, does everything wrong and needs a woman to solve all his problems. Hollywood has helped to craft this image of the father who is incapable of anything; he is portrayed as a beer drinking, TV watching, game playing, foul-mouthed, lazy, good-for-nothing sperm donor. The caricature from popular literature and media contribute to the feminization of men, and the perceived uselessness of fathers. The assailant culture towards men/fathers makes it exceedingly difficult for them to rise above the dissidence and inspire values in their children.

### **Academic, Advocates, and Policy-making Authors**

Roger L. Dudley [*Why Teenagers Leave the Church* (2000)]

When this project began, the issue was that if the Adventist Church is the Remnant church, then why are all our youth leaving? The follow up questions led to research done by Roger Dudley and others about why our youth leave the church.

The church has grown in its understanding of why young people leave the church since the 1970s, but it has not been able to stop or even slow the mass exodus of our youth. In the decades since the publishing of his book, *Why Teens Reject Religion*, Dudley furthered the evidence and understanding of why entertainment based youth only programs have been ineffective in developing strong multigenerational faith.

As teens grow up and begin to assert their independence, the most significant factor is their relationship with adults, specifically their parents. Dudley uses a testimony-based approach in his sequel, *Why our Teenagers Leave the Church*. Sharing the stories of certain Adventist young people that have left and why. There are certain elements and

factors that relate to the church as a group or as an extension of the family, but parents' faith example is the most significant influence.

The parent's lifestyle example is the best teacher for our youth. Dudley writes that parents committed to God and the church, ones who intentionally transmit their value system to their children while maintaining a positive parent-child relationship are some of the more significant factors related to children staying in the church.

To best summarize the importance of parents actively engaging in the lives of children, Dudley states,

the offspring most at risk of dropping out are male children who have not been close to their parents, and who have not developed strong religious habits in childhood. Children raised in quasi-ethnic denominations are, if they move at all, particularly at risk of dropping out. Forming a family of their own is expected to lower the risks of dropping out. (2000, p. 22)

Moreover, it is these young male children that have become disenfranchised with religion and faith in general that reproduce further spiritual degeneration.

Researchers who have emphasized early religious socialization as a key to retention have found that commitment tends to be strongest when three factors are present: (1) parents themselves are committed; (2) parents intentionally transmit their values to their children; and (3) parent-child relationships are positive. (Dudley, pp. 22-23)

The author concludes that while weakness in family ties contributes to dropping out, the same life-course factors, marriage and parenting, tend to pull the apostate back into the church. Their research was based on the Youth-Parent Socialization Panel Study with sample statistics collected in 1965, 1973, and 1983 and focused on family issues.

For Dudley, the critical point is parents maintaining a warm and close relationship with their children throughout their entire lives. As they stay strong, parents will have the ability to influence their children both from leaving the church, or returning to it in the event one decides to leave. He points to several real or perceived negative contexts in the

church that contribute to the child and family dropout rates, but parents can help prevent long-term absence.

When parents, especially fathers know why they believe and teach biblical values in the home, it prepares children for the life ahead of them, both now and for eternity.

David Blankenhorn [*Fatherless America; Confronting our Most Urgent Social Problem* (1995)]

Blankenhorn is heralded as one of the most insightful advocates for fathers in America. His book, *Fatherless America: Confronting our Most Urgent Social Problem*, has struck a major chord since it was written almost 20 years ago. Blankenhorn points out those fathers are not just vanishing in the legal process; they are physically disappearing from the landscape of the home. What was once a father and mother struggling to raise their children as healthy citizens and future leaders is now a thing of the past. The fact that one third of all childbirths in this country occur outside of marriage, is cause for concern since more and more men are failing to support or even acknowledge their children.

For Blankenhorn, the cause of fatherlessness is almost as important as the effect it has left on American society. And though he does not specifically pinpoint the origin of the problems, he says the signs are recognizable as far back as the industrial revolution in England in the 1760s (Blankenhorn, 1995, p. 7). His attention to the issues that led to fathers being diminished is crucial. For this author, the cultural landscape has helped to create a stereotype of fathers that often feels hopeless to reverse.

If the American society cannot find a way to reverse the gaping holes in the family, it will continue to repeat this downward spiral of years gone by.



Fatherhood is a social role that obligates men to their biological offspring. There are two reasons; it is society's most important role for men... a). More than any other activity, fatherhood helps men to become good men: More likely to obey the law, to be good citizens, and to think about the needs of others... b). It privileges children... with paternal investment in children. (Blankenhorn, p. 25)

Blankenhorn (p. 201), in the final section of this book presents a picture of a good family man. Not perfect, but every bit what a father should aspire to be. This father is neither wavered by popular culture nor trendy opinions. He believes his most important work is in doing the man's work in his family.

He assumes that his fatherhood is necessary and irreplaceable. At the same time, he knows that his wife also wields authority. He knows that her work in the family, while not identical to his, is equally important and also irreplaceable. He aspires to the ideals of paternal tenderness and compassionate marriage. He believes that men who lead are men who serve. (Blankenhorn, p. 202)

This man's badge of honor comes by putting family first.

Had the fathers represented in the book of Malachi been attentive to their families as a spiritual priority (Mal 2: 1-3), it is my assertion, that Israel's social crisis would not have been so widespread (Mal 2:8). "Consider, for example, the disturbing fact that growing numbers of real-life estranged fathers – including many Deadbeat Dads – are, almost literally, going crazy. As their fatherhood decomposes, or is threatened, they lose self-control" (Blankenhorn, p. 141). This feeling of helplessness leads to acting out in ways that deteriorates families and society (p. 141).

Michael E. Lamb [*The Role of Father in Child Development* (2010)]

Understanding a father's role and impact on spiritual development and faithfulness is in part a major social and economic crisis (Lamb, 2010, p. 49). Michael Lamb is one of the leading researchers on measuring and conceptualizing the role of the

father and his impact on his children. This book is dedicated to research done on the role of the father in child development.

The main thrust of the book concerns the many roles that fathers play in the life and development of their children (Lamb, p. 2). Factors of historical, cultural and familial ideologies define the role a father will fill and shape the amount of time he spends with his children (p. 4). Each role that a father plays, from companions, care providers, spouses, protectors, role models, moral guides, teachers and bread-winners, is important and its significance varies across historical and subcultural groups (p. 7).

The primary role this book has in this overall discussion is the research and anecdotal data that suggests an increase in father's involvement is needed. The experience and collaboration of other researchers show that involvement is necessary because the roles and interactions that mothers and fathers engage in are different (Lamb, p. 59).

Because fathers more often use activity or recreation as the primary mode of interacting with their children, Lamb suggests that fathers may not only increase their influence, but also improve the overall situation by spending more time with their own children (Lamb, p. 4). What he calls "sensitive fathering" or responding to, talking with, connecting, teaching and encouraging their children to learn will, "predict the child's socio-emotional, cognitive, and linguistic achievements" (p. 18).

While the research is clear on the positive impact fathers have on the family, researchers are not in agreement regarding the outcomes of children growing up without a father. However, there is some consensus of evidence that suggests that children growing up without a father may be harmful to them. Furthermore, a father helps his boys

to connect with their masculinity in many different ways, but a father's warmth and a close relationship is considered to be more valuable than his ability to be masculine.

The absence of a father can bring devastating impacts on the family. In the event of a divorce, when children are left with the now single mother, there is a significant economic impact on the family (Lamb, p. 182). Further research acknowledges the emotional pain and trauma children go through after divorce and the lack of availability of both parents as they attempt to make sense of what is happening (p. 184).

According to Lamb and his research team, children with highly involved fathers can be characterized by having greater cognitive reasoning skills, increased empathy, fewer stereotyped beliefs, and better self-control (p. 11).

Although not openly Christian, Lamb's editorial efforts help to contribute to the understanding of the family context effecting churches and society across America. It could be deduced by the research that divorce and fatherlessness contribute to the inability of children learning and maintaining strong religious habits. So had the Israelite fathers not divorced and taken foreign wives (Mal 2:11), stayed faithful to their covenants (Mal 2:8), their children would have seen their example and been better able to hear and observe the instructions of the Lord (Mal 2:6 - 8).

Randal D. Day and Michael E. Lamb [*Conceptualizing and Measuring Father Involvement* (2004)]

This book and selections within it were specifically targeted because of the research done that supports the importance of fathers actively engaging in the lives of their children at every stage of growing up. Fathers are a significant piece of the growth and development of a healthy child.

The textbook, *Conceptualizing and Measuring Father Involvement*, published in 2004 is one of the most expansive works involving fathers. Many researchers from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines were brought together to better understand the social implications relating to the family and child well being and how this forms public policy and further research (Day & Lamb, pp. ix). Scholars and policymakers commissioned this volume for the purpose of clarifying and developing a refined measure of men's roles in family life. "In spite of these encouraging new developments, a fundamental problem remains. We have based our understanding of parental effects on children on a mother-child interaction paradigm. We now include fathers in the paradigm..." (p. xi).

The chapter that gives the most insight to the project is the 15-year longitudinal study done in Sweden, where 144 Swedish parents and their first-born children participated in the study (Day & Lamb, p. 10). This particular study did not just take one or two facets of father involvement, it examined the stability and change in levels of parental involvement; with specific interest in fathers (p. 131).

Over the 15-year study, as a general rule, the amount of playtime and direct care given by fathers, diminished. Meaning, that as the children grew up and developed more independence, less time for supervision and direct care was necessary, and often the children spent less time in direct contact with their fathers. However, fathers in this study as a general rule still made themselves accessible to their children (Day & Lamb, p. 129).

What this means to fathers, is that as the children get older and more independent, the relationship changes so each father has to adjust with each growing stage of his child's life. If a father desires to maintain a strong and warm relationship with his

children he will embrace the changes by trading play time and direct caregiver time to coaching and mentoring (Day & Lamb, p. 131).

### **Pastors, Apologists, and Professional Authors**

Dr. Voddie Baucham, Jr. [*Family Driven Faith* (2007); *Family Shepherds* (2011)]

Voddie Baucham, Jr. voices contempt for the view that popular culture presents. He has written and spoken widely on the subject of fathers not only being present, but being emotionally engaged and most importantly the spiritual leader of the home. The two books of his I have chosen to utilize for this review are *Family Driven Faith* (2007), and *Family Shepherds* (2011). Both books published are deep and challenging to the reader. Baucham (2007) points to the loss of our Christian youth as being at the center of a major crisis. In this book, using research done by various professionals, such as Barna Group Inc., Gallup Polls, and Nehemiah Institute, he points to the breakdown of the family as being cause for alarm.

He says that our children are not giving up on God and the church because the church is doing a bad job; our children are exiting in waves because we are expecting the church to do what God has designed the family to accomplish (Baucham, 2011, pp. 176 – 177). Baucham (2007, p. 7) explains that true discipleship and multi-generational faithfulness is based or begins in the home. Church plays a supporting role, but the primary work begins and ends at home.

Although in *Family Driven Faith*, Dr. Baucham speaks to the need for fathers to lead and guide their family in a biblical manner; *Family Shepherds* takes it to the next level by specifically equipping men to lead their homes. The target is those fathers who

know their duty and feel a sense of responsibility, yet, lack the confidence and vision to accomplish this goal. In a practical fashion Baucham uses a multi-pronged approach targeted at family discipleship and evangelism, marriage enrichment, training and discipline of the children and finally challenging men to evaluate the family lifestyle.

According to Baucham, the need for fathers to step up into their biblical roles is paramount for the future generations to receive and live out faithfulness.

The Bible teaches male headship in the home in a number of places, including Ephesians 5: 21-33; Colossians 3: 18-19; 1 Peter 3: 1-7; and Titus 2:5. But it's the first three chapters of Genesis that serve as the theological foundation for the matter. In fact, when Paul argues for male headship in the church in 1 Timothy 2: 12-13, he bases his argument on the Genesis account. Paul sees Adam's headship in the garden of Eden as the basis for male headship today in the church and the home. (Baucham, 2011, p. 101)

If men had not abandoned their roles at home, our culture would not be faced with the issues we are now. It is a long road back to leading and guiding their homes, but every father needs to become a student of the Bible.

Baucham says, "Apologetics is a discipline rooted in Peter's admonition to be 'always... prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you' (1 Pet. 3:15). Thus, apologetics involves (1) fully grasping what you believe (being 'always prepared'), (2) knowing why you believe it ('a reason for the hope that is in you'), and (3) being able to communicate this to others effectively ('make a defense'). (Baucham, 2011, p. 101)

This starts in the home to the children and the wife.

Even though the book of Deuteronomy speaks to the need to repeat God's laws over and over in life's contexts and mark your homes as God's territory. Baucham points out the major divisions in discipleship. He says,

*The church has limited jurisdiction.* God designed the world with three distinct institutions – the family, the church, and the civil government – each with specific jurisdictions. The church can no more tell a family how to run its affairs than it can to tell the state how to run theirs. Certainly, the church has a responsibility to teach,

admonish, warn, and guide. However, it may not govern the other jurisdictions... the day-to-day discipleship of children is outside those limits. (Baucham, 2011, p. 176)

Kurt Bruner and Steve Stroope [*It Starts at Home*  
(2010)]

*It Starts at Home* is a compelling book with practical insights for fathers trying to nurture life-long faith in his family. Although Israel had abandoned faith and God ordained practices, the significance of the problem is rooted at home.

Perhaps for the first time in church history many of those most inclined toward belief – our own children – are actively rejecting or passively abandoning the faith. And the problem... is not what's happening at church but what desperately needs to happen at home. (Bruner & Stroope, 2010, p. 20)

No matter how creatively we proclaim God's Word to children at home, they are more likely to believe their experience of the faith at home. That's because incarnation trumps proclamation (Bruner & Stroope, p. 31). If a father chooses or cannot participate, his absence creates a huge dent in the faith of his children.

The effect that fathers need to have on their children comes at a cost says, Bruner and Stroope. It must be intentional if the legacy we desire to leave is a godly one. Because the years we have with our children are short and go so very fast, the last thing we want to do is say oops. He uses the illustration of a mechanic or barber, the last words you want to hear when you are getting your hair cut is oops, well at least it will grow again. As time passes so quickly, we need to be intentionally casting the vision and working towards godly character in our children so that there is no room for saying oops.

Fathers have the most significant role in spiritually empowering their children. "Your relationship with your parents, and especially your father, has a significant influence on how you perceive God" (Bruner & Stroope, p. 18). Children need to see

their fathers wrestle with real spiritual issues, experience them leading by example and learn to develop a long-term faith commitment. The embodiment of faith at home is a natural and permanent way of learning the values of faith (Bruner & Stroope, p. 33).

Dennis Rainey [*Stepping Up; A Call to  
Courageous Manhood* (2011)]

In this book, he outlines what it takes to be a man; meaning that it is not enough to participate in the procreation of a child, but one must have the courage to fill the role one was called to be in.

He further goes on to show how the different stages of a boy's life lead eventually to manhood. His use of stories combined with the ability to capture the essence and difficulty of boys, as they become godly men, is refreshing.

As fathers, we are called to be initiators of life and leadership in the home, not mere reactors to things gone off base. We are called to protect our family both emotionally and physically, and this is not based on how many guns we have in our armory. It is founded on a father's ability to live and anticipate life's challenges to his family.

Rainey also points out that a father must lead by example in the area of temptations (p. 121). It is easy to tell children what to do or not do, but living a consistent life that is a godly example to them which includes resisting the arrows of the devil.

The greatest impact on our families occurs when men/fathers intentionally and consistently embody evidence of knowing God personally (Rainey, pp. 203-204). A father's influence extends far deeper because of knowing God, and walking with him personally.



One of the tragedies of our day is that too many boys are growing up without the guidance of a father, or another man, to show them what it looks like to do away with that boyhood stuff. As a result, they often move into adolescence and then adulthood looking like men but still speaking, reasoning and behaving like boys. (Rainey, p. 44)

By default and lack of preparation, these boys are adapting their views, character and work ethics, but not for the good. They are affecting the thoughts and lives of future generations that might not be corrected. “One of the most reliable predictors of whether a boy will succeed or fail in high school rests on a single question: Does he have a man in his life to look up (Rainey, p. 45)? Rainey explains that too often the answer is no, because of increasing promiscuity, and the high rate of divorce.

These fatherless boys, through no fault of their own are being raised by single moms, grandparents, or have become a product of the foster system. In every kind of neighborhood, regardless of economic or racial status, an increasing number of boys, now reaching a startling 40%, are being raised without their biological fathers.

Character, relationships, identity, and mission are essential building blocks in the development of children. Boys are destined to repeat the sins of their fathers unless character is instilled in them. Character helps define what is wise and what is foolish. Rainey defines character as “response-ability – it is the ability to respond rightly to authority and to the challenges we face in life (Rainey, p. 44).

Boys innately lack wisdom, and Rainey quotes Proverbs 22:15, “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child” (Rainey, p. 44). Boys, more than girls need that older male influence to help them make right and wise choices (pp. 45-46).

Additionally, Rainey says that boys need to learn the right and proper way to have relationships. In order to build “authentic relationships--how to communicate and speak respectfully, how to forgive and ask for forgiveness, and how to control his natural

selfishness. He needs to be trained in how to love other imperfect human beings honorably (Rainey, p. 44).

Rainey's third and possibly greatest difficulty for fathers to relate to and help develop in their sons, is identity. "Every person is born with a unique identity that has its origins in God... A boy can never fully determine who he is unless he understands that he is made in the image of God..." (Rainey, p. 48).

When we talk about combating the pop culture and selfish human focuses, it is important for fathers to show their boys by example what God the heavenly father is like. He must tell his son, "As imperfect as I may be, it is my desire to take the next couple decades and introduce you to God" (Rainey, p. 48).

Finally Rainey says that boys need to know their place in their world. "Every boy, every person, needs a reason to live – a purpose that provides meaning and impact" (p. 49). We were created by God to do his good works and glorify God in Heaven (Eph 2:10). Boys are to look at the world through God colored glasses and fight the battles of the day by God's standards.

Randy Stinson and Dan Dumas [*A Guide to Biblical Manhood* (2011)]

Although this may be one of the smallest volumes on fathering, it is packed with information and helpful support for fathers. Stinson and his family consider baseball to be the greatest sport on earth. And throughout the book there is sport flavor mixed with a call for character development of men.

Stinson and Dumas, in this power-packed book, address the feeling that many fathers find themselves in a perilous situation. Their fathers were not there for them (pp.

10, 12, 79) and many men who had fathers present in the home saw the imperfection and even hypocrisy of their fathers. Knowing what to do and where to turn to break the chains of generations of fatherlessness or bad fathering can be overwhelming and downright scary.

How is a man, particularly in his home, supposed to express his masculinity as the leader? As a suggestion, here are nine areas where a man should initiate in the home.

Vision: This is where we are going.

Direction: This is how we get there.

Instruction: Let me show you how.

Imitation: Watch me.

Inspiration: Is not this great?

Affirmation: You're doing great.

Evaluation: How are we doing?

Correction: Let's make a change.

Protection and Provision: I'll take care of you (Stinson & Dumas, pp. 80-83).

After looking at this pretty comprehensive list, it is easy feel like this might be overreaching, overwhelming or all too encompassing. However if we stop to consider the positive effects of a healthy father, no area of life should be left to chance.

The Bible says "and showing love to a thousand generations of them that love me and keep my commandments" (Deut 5:10; Exod 20:6). God wants to help his people stay close to Him and follow His commands. And since fathers have a key role in molding the faith of his children, it is important that he know how to instruct them in the Lord, not just keep them out of jail.

Gary Smalley [*Guarding Your Child's Heart* (2011)]

Probably the most simple and practical faith-based curriculum for helping to establish faith among our children is this work by Smalley.

Jesus promised an abundant life to those who follow him, and as believers we want that for ourselves and our children, instead of giving ground to the devil and the world's culture, Smalley says, "it's time for the followers of Christ to take back our turf from him" (2011, pp. 8). The devil attacks our hearts and homes and God gives us four ways to combat these attacks. Fathers, as well as the atmosphere in our homes, must first exemplify humility before the Lord (Jas 4:6). After we have figured out our place in reference to God, we must put our whole heart into loving God (see Deut 6:5; Matt 22:37), and then it makes it easier, still difficult at times, to love others (Gal 5:14). But finally Smalley challenges parents to lead their children in learning how to rejoice in their trials (see Rom 5: 3-5; Jas 1: 2-4). And if we learn to live every day by these four biblical truths, our homes and lives will be filled with joy, laughter and God's Word.

Consistent daily focus on God's word while instructing the family is the key to breaking the chains of generational slavery to sin and godlessness in our homes (Smalley, pp. 38-39). This must be the focus of every Adventist home as time comes to an end.

### **Related Speeches and Articles**

To get "air-time" in a president's speech, typically means it is either an agenda item he chooses to take up or there is a crisis that needs to be addressed. So I found it intriguing to hear re-elected President Obama in his 2013 State of the Union address the issue of fathers. He said, "We need to do more to encourage fatherhood, because what

makes you a man is not your ability to conceive a child, but having the courage to raise one” (Obama, 2013). Whether I understand or agree with his reasoning behind including this statement in his speech, it has become an important enough issue in society that he spoke to the issue.

The government’s outlook on children and fatherhood appears not to be biblically motivated. However, the point that our society is depleted in the healthy-father category is an area I agree. The modern vacuum of fatherhood rivals the challenges faced by Israel as addressed in Malachi.

Even if the government in the years to come creates programs and policies to help prevent the absence of fathers, it will be difficult to enforce. Furthermore, the foundation to the spiritual and religious purposes of a multigenerational vision comes from the family and not governments, institutions or society.

In the church, evangelism often focuses on unchurched, secular, and proselytizing. Yet, the overwhelming dialog amongst colleagues and church officials ignores the fact that our children are the greatest evangelistic responsibility in our lifetime.

Brown (2008), says,

I believe that we are involved in the greatest evangelistic opportunity before the church today. I am talking about the salvation of millions of children under the evangelistic and discipleship ministry of fathers and mothers in the home. This is not the only mission field, but it is perhaps the most neglected mission field before the church in our day.

Furthermore, Brown states that fathers as designated heads of household are fighting an uphill battle. This battle is not just with himself: how to lead and what to do, but many men, women and children object to this view of family in general (2008). It is

not only necessary, but also, urgent that fathers step up and become involved in the evangelism of his children. The restoration of fathers evangelizing their families is an almost impossible task, but one necessary.

### **About the why Question**

When considering the written work available today in libraries, online, and through bookstores, there should be no surprise as to the variety of viewpoints. However, among all the voices, both secular and Christian, it is clear that fathers are important to development and maintenance of a healthy balance in the family and society. But one must ask the question why?

We know that men/fathers struggle to live up to many expectations, but how did we get to where it has become more of the rule than the exception? Crabb suggests that it is not a new phenomenon, but a condition since the beginning of human history when Adam sinned against God in Eden; “The silence of Adam is the beginning of every man’s failure” (Crabb, 1995, p. 12).

Every man/father alive when given the chance to be honest with himself knows his own failures. “Spiritual manhood has more to do with continuing to function in spite of difficulties than with successfully overcoming them” (Crabb, p. 13). For other researchers and anthropologists, the decline is more closely tied with the industrial revolution of England in the 1760s, then spreading to America by the 1790s (Blankenhorn, p. 5). Yet, as a Christian, there is no question that men/fathers have a much longer history of abandoning their roles than just a few hundred years.

For Crabb, the main purpose of men is to “Remember” (p. 78). “Men are created in God’s image... if our lives do not reflect this image, something is wrong... Genesis 1:

27... the word man is translated... the remembering one” (p. 79). This is the key and most significant piece of man’s proclivity to forget our place (created in the image of God) and purpose (retelling the acts of God among His people) (p. 81).

Men are called to pass to future generations something that is important: “not just a passing on of history but a passing on of the memory of God in our lives” (Crabb, p. 83). Often we hear about men who tell tales of how their fathers failed to support or show empathy to them in their time of need. Time when life had its biggest struggles and their father could not be found or refused to give answers to the dilemma. “My father didn’t give me answers to my struggle. But his remembering gave me courage to go on in the midst of it. His stories gave me hope” (p. 83).

The problem men/fathers face in continuing to tell such stories is a matter of trust. Whether I understand what life is dealing me at this moment, “the root problem is the failure to believe that God is enough” (Crabb, p. 84). Is trusting God producing the results I want, or am I attempting to look to another source for my standard of satisfaction.

According to Crabb, “unless men honestly face their stubborn delight in forgetting and their commitment to passions stronger than their desire for God, lasting change will never occur” (p. 85).

Love, gratitude, loyalty to the Creator—all were overborne by love to Eve. She was a part of himself, and he could not endure the thought of separation. He did not realize that the same Infinite Power who had from the dust of the earth created him, a living, beautiful form, and had in love given him a companion, could supply her place. He resolved to share her fate; if she must die, he would die with her. After all, he reasoned, might not the words of the wise serpent be true? Eve was before him, as beautiful and apparently as innocent as before this act of disobedience. She expressed greater love for him than before. No sign of death appeared in her, and he decided to brave the consequences (White, 1890, p. 56).

In the midst of experiencing this difficult challenge, men/fathers are called by God to have a change of heart. To put Him first and not let the world crowd in so we choose to forget about Him and His blessings upon us.

### **Father-God as an Example**

Tasker suggests God's election-covenant with Abraham was renewed many times through Israel's history.

For example, when God chooses Solomon to be His son, a new relationship is formed, and Solomon assumes a new identity and a new role<sup>1</sup>— he becomes a son of God (without losing his relationship to his biological father)... God's choice of Solomon as king and temple builder presupposes God's election of David as the king who prepared for the building of the temple and the institution.... (p. 271)

It is God who establishes the relationships and He is the one who is faithful to men/fathers no matter how far they stray. It is through God's example to earthly fathers that we can set higher standards and goals for our own fatherhood.

The concept of father as God is not a new idea. Tasker states that it is found often in extra-biblical records such as Ancient Near-Eastern Texts and “emphasizes more than just a physical relationship. “In the Scriptures this is noted, for example, in Ps 103 where the father-son relationship is maintained by obedience - on the understanding that in a relationship between humans and Father-God, human activity is recognized as God-initiated” (Tasker, p. 274).

As men/fathers it is important for us to see our primary focus not just on spiritual leadership, but equally prominent is our ability to transmit faith to future generations. With God as our ideal father-example (through election, adoption, covenant), we experience His attempts to attract and maintain a personal relationship with us. The



oracle of Malachi not only demonstrates God's love as a leader and father, but faithfulness to the covenants back to creation account in Genesis.

### **Conclusion**

In comparison to the issues found in the oracle of Malachi, one might think popular voices would not necessarily agree. Furthermore, with time and distance, the issues of culture and technology certainly must alter the needs and challenges. But modern writers and biblical writers alike are calling for a resurgence in male leadership in the home and in doing so, help to correct our most urgent social problems.

The four basic principles of a godly father established in Malachi, have been proven necessary in modern scholarly, scientific and religious literature. Intimacy with God is a key in his life-example. A father's love for God is the fountain for everything that pours out of his life. His own personal spiritual walk gives him the ability to establish and maintain deep and purposeful relationship, both in the family and society.

Secondly, a father must be a promise keeper; a man of integrity so as to live the example he desires for his children. This enables him to be a covenant-keeping father. It is impossible for fathers to tell children by their actions, "do as I say, and not as I do." That type of hypocrisy adds to the dysfunction in any home environment. His example of maintaining loving relationships and keeping his promises nurtures love and stability as opposed to an absent or uninvolved father.

If his example does not include: personal Bible study, hard work ethics, fair and balanced discipline, family worships, and love for "their" mother, he is setting up his

children for failure. A father's commitments, promises or covenants in the biblical case, establish his ability to lead by example.

A godly man/father, desiring the best for his family will always return to the Bible or biblical council for the teaching and instruction. As a warrior for Christ, He will espouse godly wisdom, not his own. This third principle of a godly man is exhibited in almost every modern religious book. The clear need for men to teach and instruct the Word of God in lifestyle and action, not to mention formal or informal instruction of his family.

The supporting articles and literature could be a vital piece in the encouragement and support of his endeavors. As each father grows and develops better tools for instructing his children in the Lord, everything must be checked by God's word. If the teaching and instruction is not grounded in scripture, it can unintentionally lead his family to destruction.

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another (Prov 27:17). The final work of a father, involves: mentoring and coaching so as to intentionally transmit a legacy of faith to his children's children (Prov 13:22). Part of his work includes, "Listen to me and watch what I do," Learn information and practice the skill. This stage of learning requires watching, but also trying it out and practicing till it is mastered. It could be misplaced by some as instruction, but, to truly pass the mantle of faith, they must be in a safe place to practice and learn their own leadership.

Both the biblical and popular literature exhibits the need for passing on the values of the family; from the fathers (that is, the parents) to the children. This stage is a

potentially life-long process of healthy give and take. One might consider one's adult children as friends, but no matter how old they are, they will always be children.

Each father needs to consider this concept, "The world does not so much need men of great intellect as of noble character. It needs men in whom ability is controlled by steadfast principle" (White, 1903, p. 225). He must be a man of principle; Honest, loving, a man of peace and humility. This is the beginning of becoming a godly man in today's world as we now experience it.

## CHAPTER 4

### MEN/FATHERS AS SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE HOME: DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

#### **Introduction**

The role of male or paternal spiritual leader/priest in the home is a lost practice in most religions today. The devastating effects this has on both home and society touches all classes, races, and sectors. By 1993 this social crisis in America reached epidemic proportions; 40% of homes in America were listed as fatherless (Canfield, p. 203). A decade into the 21<sup>st</sup> century now shows that the phenomenon of fatherless homes has only worsened as cultural shifts and values together with single parent homes continue to reveal men less and less engaged in the lives of their children.

How does one engage men/fathers at home, in the parenting and marriage context? And if the ultimate goal is having men as spiritual leaders at home, how can we develop men/fathers not only to stay and engage, but also to step it up in a priestly role that was most likely never modeled? If society is to be changed even slightly toward a more positive model, it will require men/fathers leading their families by the values found in God's Word.

The methodology in this chapter will discuss the relationship of men/fathers to their families as it relates to the personal evangelism and discipleship of each family-

member. It will address the issues that men/fathers face in their personal lives and in the home context and how they can better engage in this project to improve their attitudes, behavior, and outcomes as spiritual leaders in the home.

This project will focus on the desire to improve the quality of relationship and spiritual growth of the men/fathers more than the change of the home or church environment. Yet, in the process of personal growth, each participant will hopefully improve the attitudes and create an environment of peace.

It is a goal of this project to equip fathers with the ability to be part of reversing the neglect or indifference among Adventist families in the Washington Conference. The task of this project is to develop a strategy that will bring awareness, train, and empower fathers in the Washington Conference to be spiritual leaders in their home and church. This project will be evaluated to determine its effectiveness in its ability to equip and empower fathers as spiritual leaders--both in the home and in the church.

### **Ministry Context/History as it Relates to the Topic**

For much of my ministry I have been focused on youth ministries as a youth pastor, youth director of a conference and camp ministries. Each year I would see children who would graduate from the younger Sabbath School Divisions loose interest and grow distant from the church. By the age of 14, many of our youth are no longer attending church regularly or at all.

One pastoral observation that has disturbed me for many years, deals with how we focus on programming generally as it relates to our youth. Having spent most of my formal training focusing on youth and youth ministries, I was very well aware of the fact that we

were losing our children at alarming rates. The churches in North America typically have great children's programs, VBS programs, and Sabbath schools for up to Juniors (age 10-12). However, most churches do not have anything for the older youth and young adults, partly because there are very few youth and young adults in their churches.

Children leaving the church is not a new challenge to attendance and morale. However, after decades of youth centered ministries, little has transpired to change it. Youth ministries in its present condition continue to produce modest results. So when I read about fatherlessness and the destruction of the family, Malachi 4: 5 and 6 presents a great challenge to the church. Is the remnant church going to have healthy families and churches because fathers and children will respect each other? Do broken families and strained relationships affect the ability of the church to keep its children through the youth and young adult years?

It begs the question: Is the church really going about its faithfulness to God and his calling? And are the families (specifically fathers) of the church living for Jesus or for themselves?

Additionally, it is necessary to ask how do we keep children involved in church but more importantly, how do we keep them connected to Jesus and the eternal relationship of His saving grace? This question among many others haunted me, because helping parents raise children to believe in God and maintain a constant and healthy relationship with the church throughout their lives should be a prime goal of all pastors.

So, my ministry context led me to seek an organized approach to learn about and find answers to why we are losing so many of our young people and more importantly, how to reverse the outward flow or stop it altogether. I quickly learned that it is neither

the church or church school's fault, nor responsibility to fix our young people. It is in the personal and relational context of the family that life-long spirituality is born and grows over a lifetime. If the family context is lacking in male spiritual leadership as most are, the children suffer. They are unable to visualize or intuit spiritual realities and how biblical values can actually become part of life. They have no spiritual model to help them envision a personal relationship with Christ.

Pastoral observation reveals that too many Adventist homes suffer from either physical or spiritual absentee or uninvolved fathers. As a result of absentee fathers, too many children are disinterested in church and spiritual things. The methodology to be implored is designed to target men/fathers specifically to address both the personal evangelism and discipleship of future generations.

And when a father is either absent or uninvolved in the spiritual growth and development of his children, they cannot have a complete picture of who God is. They will always lack depth of comprehension in the Father figure of the Godhead and His eternal role in salvation. Because their own father picture lacks healthy example and true love a father should possess.

Pastoral experience reveals a gap in available men and the willingness of those involved that are capable of leading out both at home and in the church. And at times in ministry, I have witnessed men/fathers that are culpable for the destruction of their family's spiritual growth and not just absent from a nurturing environment.

### **Development of Intervention**

During this project God gripped my heart and began uniting two worlds together-- the loss of our youth and how the resurgence of fathers could be the game changer. If we

are to stem or slow the migration of our youth from churches, we need to engage fathers in more meaningful conversations about spiritually leading their families.

As I look forward to this research project, the problem appears insurmountable. Therefore, the proposed intervention will have to be manageable in the course of six to 12 months. It must also be understood that the intervention's intended impact on participants, while truly revolutionary in its transformational possibilities, will realistically be only a beginning for all and marginal for most. Even though the big picture requires a lifetime commitment to the reconciliation of the family relationships, this project intervention contributes to the overall discussion of how the role and function of fathers is related to the loss of a large portion of our children by the teen years. The scope and timeline of this project does not allow either an in-depth discussion of these particular issues nor a complete resolution.

After looking at the family dynamics and with a view towards developing an intervention that is feasible within the timeline of the project dissertation, I will focus specifically on men/fathers. They, I believe, are the key element for developing and promoting healthy views in life related to religion, spirituality, and the church. Men/fathers must lead a balanced spiritual life to deepen the spiritual growth of his children. All the while keeping in mind that he can negatively affect future generation's spirituality by his lack of attention and neglect.

I will invite fathers to take a survey and join a class that will inspire them spiritually, provide tools towards personal spiritual growth, and help them to better understand their roles as a men/fathers both in the church and society. The survey will ask specific questions to find out how they are actively engaged in the lives of their



families and how, if at all, they lead spiritually. Each man/father will be invited to join a group for study and support.

As part of the intervention process, I will have a website with weekly blogs, books and other resources for men/fathers to interact with. I will establish a Facebook page and twitter so that those men/fathers who are tapped into the social media side will have easier access to the information or me if they so desire. The point of access and information is to help the men visualize the need for improving the spiritual-intentional leadership at home. Men/fathers will only become more involved and intentional as they personally grow spiritually. This spiritual growth includes a personal relationship with Christ. After the experience of conversion, experiencing God daily in one's life—is a result of the Bible being used as one's personal guidepost. These men/fathers will also be given the opportunity to be supported by other men/fathers who desire to encourage each other and hold fast to their calling as godly men/fathers.

### **Description of the Intervention**

I intentionally began learning more on male spiritual life and the implications of spiritually growing men by an organized study while at the same time engaging more men/fathers in the conversation. Since pastoral ministry automatically puts me in the lives of families and individuals, I will take the opportunity to ask probing questions about their involvement at home with their wives and children. The approach will not be scripted and will not be too formal or stiff. My approach evolved out of the needs displayed through the interaction with each man/father. As I talked with each man/father (grandfather in some cases), one major issue came to the forefront; many of these men were in a relational crisis of some sort. The crises ranged from a dispute with their

spouse, to a child in trouble, loss of job/income, to moving away from the family.

Each of these fathers in crisis were confronted with a marriage on the rocks, kids in total rebellion or fear of how to be an adequate father; and in some cases, all of them combined. The demand on my time was immense, yet the variety of responses depended on the moment of crisis and the context of the immediate situation. I would meet with them one on one, and depending on the father, we would connect by an activity: playing racquetball, cutting firewood, having to coffee, going jeeping, horse packing, and camping, among other activities. I was able to develop positive friendships with most of the individuals. These friendships enabled me to challenge their spirituality and help them to see that their role as father--loving-servant, spiritual leader--was the most important role in life second only to maintaining a growing relationship with Christ Jesus.

Given the personal situations and crises of most of the men/fathers I engaged, I was challenged with the reality that most of them were almost too far-gone for my project to be effective (especially in any short term way). No matter what self-help, spiritually uplifting book we read or biblical principle we explored it was not the right place to begin. Several of the men by definition would not be considered biblically practicing Christians. At times, challenging each father to a biblical worldview and practice seemed almost impractical.

It was my original intention to use the idea of “iron sharpens iron” (Prov 27:17) through direct mentor/coaching type relationships to help develop a heart for God and intentional discipleship of their family. What I did not take into account was the depth of crisis many of the men/fathers were already entrenched in. However, it was a great privilege to present a holistic way of approaching their situations in hopes that they

would allow God to do His work in their lives and families.

The relationships were developed and the seeds sown, but one does not easily eliminate decades of bad habits or damaged emotional thinking in just a short time. For many of these fathers, it will be a lifetime of struggles with many ups and downs. And though I will be available beyond the end of this project, only Jesus can truly convict and convert the hearts of these men/fathers.

In this intervention process, the methodology will include the following steps to engage men/fathers for the purpose of personal development towards spiritual leadership in the home. The challenges that each man/father faces are common, and typify the overwhelming need for this project.

Step 1 – is to find men/fathers willing to learn, grow and commit to a process of potential personal improvement. I will invite them to a ministry event, seminar or class on a related topic of being a godly men/father.

Step 2 – is designed to orient and empower men/fathers by providing information, support and a process that will cause them to be better men/fathers in the home.

Step 3 – is focused on a mentoring/coaching process, which takes place during a six-month time frame. The intent is to improve their involvement both physically and spiritually in the home.

#### Step 1 – Manhunt

This step is the proactive search for men/fathers who are willing to participate in this process by hosting an event at local area ministries and churches. I will reach out to pastors in the local area and engage them in helping me host events that will inspire men/fathers to move to step 2 in a growing process.

Where will I find men/fathers?

1. Local churches
2. Men's groups
3. Father/son retreats
4. Normal life; i.e. Shopping, post office, or restaurants, etc.
5. Family Life Conferences
6. Public Transportation; Bus station, Ferry or tram

### Step 2 – Encourage, Equip, and Empower Fathers

Step two will be a class, retreat, seminar or workshop that will inform men/fathers of the issues related to the overall fathering process and how fathers impact the entire family dynamic. Each class, retreat, seminar or workshop will allow for a Q & A time so that each man/father can begin to address his specific issues.

What will the Seminar/Workshop material cover?

1. Session #1 – Historical and biblical background: Biblical principles and values drawn from the book of Malachi will provide the overarching umbrella.
2. Session #2 – Personal Commitment: This seminar will teach fathers that it is necessary to be personally engaged both physically and emotionally. It will be shown that having a job and providing financially for the family does not make one a good father and that there is more to guiding children in the maturing process of becoming godly young men and women.
3. Session #3 – Evangelism and Discipleship: This seminar will deal with the home as being the center of the evangelism and discipleship of the children and how the home either helps or hinders spiritual growth.

4. Session #4 – Mentoring and Coaching: Engaging in a church family community is necessary for children to see “daddy” interact spiritually with other men; this session will deal with ways men can help other men deepen their spirituality and model it for others including his own children.

### Step 3 – IronDads of Purpose

This step will require a deep level of commitment from each man/father. He will be expected to join a small group of other men/fathers for support and encouragement. In this small group, they will go through the IronDads Journal. Each man/father will be challenged to grow spiritually first and in doing so, learn to better lead his family spiritually.

What do I have to do and how long is the commitment?

1. The commitment phase is going to be from 12 weeks up to six months.
2. It will require each man/father to attend weekly small group meetings for both Bible study and personal accountability.
3. Each man/father will be supplied an IronDads Journal for the weekly meetings.
4. Each man will be expected to complete an entry survey in order to help better support his issues and help him improve as a man, father and or husband.

### **Conclusion**

There is no easy way to approach the research of the spiritual and moral influence of men/fathers in the family context. For example one could begin with their likes and dislikes, hobbies and interests not to mention their profession or line of work. Yet, I believe the leadership position a pastor has, provides the perfect opportunity to meet

men/fathers from all walks of life and impact them in matters that count for eternity. It can affect not just a man/father's personal journey, but it will also affect his entire family as he grows spiritually. Studying habits and hobbies might be fun, but I believe the approach and focus of this project intervention will indeed provide better answers for lasting solutions.

The linear process included in this chapter is the first step in the process of developing men/fathers as spiritual leaders in the home. Each man father comes from different backgrounds and levels of understanding. However, as they progress through each step, they could become the man/father they desire to be and change the lives of their family members in the process.

## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLEMENTATION NARRATIVE

#### **Introduction**

At the beginning of the research phase, I showed a movie and provided a six-month follow up Bible study on father issues. I was the featured speaker for a few men's retreats and a father/son outing. During each of the events, men/fathers were invited to sign up and do a survey. I had invested my personal passion and energy into these events and hoped the fathers would find it to be inspirational and informative. Although each outing was a fun experience, it did not have the impact it could have. I had hoped more men/fathers would have signed up and taken the survey, but most did not.

A pastor friend invited me to present a series to his local congregation on the topic of Transforming Families. I chose to present messages from the material that I had been studying for this project. After presenting the information to a multigenerational audience, it helped me to develop a new way of thinking as I continued to work with the men/fathers that I encountered.

I revised the survey to measure the involvement of men/fathers in the home lives. The results of the surveys are in the data section of the chapter on methodology along with the intervention implored. As a first step in working with men/fathers, I spoke to them about their personal spiritual growth as it relates to their faithfulness to God and the family. Many of the challenges faced regarding the rearing of their children, leave fathers

feeling overwhelmed and unequipped. Men/Fathers have their own demons of temptations to overcome by the grace of God and have cultural influences that were not experienced by each previous generation.

### **Implementation Narrative**

When I began the research phase of the project, I hosted a men's/father's event at the church I was pastoring at the time. We watched the movie *Courageous* (See appendix D), and I presented information regarding father's effects on their children. Information also included the challenge of keeping children engaged in church beyond the teen years. I shared my convictions that fathers are the key to slowing down and possibly reversing the loss of children engaging in church family life after the age of 14.

Following the movie and workshop, I presented additional methods for continued learning and involvement. The first was a survey provided both online, ([www.irondads.org](http://www.irondads.org)) and via paper. As part of the online connections, a contact card for the blog and Facebook was handed out. The second method of keeping connected was by attending a follow-up Bible study class and journaling.

Two different follow-up Bible study options were offered. The first option was a 12-week Bible study class and would utilize the *Courageous* study guides and the discussion would flow from the topics presented in the lessons and the Bible.

The second option offered to attendees was a six-month group, which met at 5 a.m. on Mondays. During this time we used the IronDads Journal provided in appendix B. Each group met weekly and targeted different men.

During this process I realized that many of the men/fathers were not truly committed to the process and did not really take their role as seriously as I had hoped.



Some of them made attempts and welcomed the recreational engagement, but the spiritual leadership, as a general rule, was lacking.

My goal for the men/ father interaction was twofold:

1. To nurture a personal saving relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. To equip and encourage fathers to develop strong relationships with their children. With the possibility of sharing their experiences with other men in the future.

In order to accomplish these stated purposes, a friendship with each man/father was important. The purpose of a close-knit relationship was not only to raise their capacity as a balanced father, but to point them to Christ as the ultimate father-coach.

It is hard to develop an intervention for fathers, based on the biblical standard, especially if they do not want it or sense the need. Many of the fathers recorded in the Bible were complete and utter failures. Some fathers stood as priests and prophets as in the case of Samuel and Eli, but their sons were an embarrassment to God and the nation. Some fathers were simple and seemingly uneducated yet participated in raising some of the greatest spiritual leaders history has ever known. This appears to be the case for Jesse the father of King David, Joseph the stepfather of Jesus Christ, and the entire lineage of the Rechabites.

### **Looking Back**

When I began my studies with the Doctor of Ministry program, there were two hurdles that made the development of intervention and the writing of the intervention more difficult. The first challenge was related to the research class being my first class in the Doctor of Ministry Program. We were empowered to do research without any literary

or biblical foundations. We were armed with a theory and information on research methods and then set to work. But it was not clear to me what I should research or what should the biblical foundations undergirding that research be. I found myself plunging into research without a clear picture of what I was supposed to analyze with respect to the problems I intuited—or the issues that I needed to address in order to clarify the project and which needed clarification through process of the project.

The second challenge was related to transferring writing requirements from the old bulletin and rubric to a newer one. This created a new expectation and several major editorial and writing challenges. None of these challenges were insurmountable or impossible, the changes made the proper development and successive writing of desired intervention more difficult.

These changes were extremely frustrating to this project process. Albeit, the overall outcome is a clearer and possibly even a better project. There is no doubt that the process was part of character development in my own life.

My entire project experience is a testament to this challenge, yet to its credit, the Doctor of Ministry program no longer leads its cohorts with research as the first class, and the newer project rubric is clearer in its expectations. Given those two developments, it would be assumed that students would produce a better document in the end.

A third and almost equally difficult obstacle was to have a thesis and a project proposal but not have completed the theological foundations to lay down the rails for the methods used to direct the research or fix the problem. Even though the ideas were there and the basic theology was understood, the clearer vision of intentionality suffered

because of attempting to do the research phase prior to developing the biblical foundations of the project dissertation.

Having not been through this writing and research process before, it would have been helpful to have an earlier picture of how a theological foundation formulates everything in the project. The intentional development of each phase would have clearly matched up with the biblical and theological foundations. Additional aspects of the project would have been complementary. With the research classes being first, it unwittingly marginalized the biblical foundations in this process. Whether it was a lack of proper mentoring and instruction or an oversight on my part, it was almost too late in the process before I realized the need and the changes were begun.

### **Description of the Research Methodology Used to Help Determine Outcomes and Evaluate the Intervention**

This research project began with a programmatic approach. I sought to gain a large enough data sample to make deductions about men/ fathering in the Adventist context. However after a couple attempts at making a faulty premise work, I amended my approach to a, “one-on-one approach.” I believe that personal and interpersonal relationships are necessary for men/fathers to experience true transformation. This firsthand connection becomes a priority for developing an effective method for determining future interventions.

Using the biblical principle, “As Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another (Prov 27: 17), mentor/coaching became the focused intervention. I engaged selected fathers in conversation hoping to begin a transformational journey toward a balance, godly family and holistic church.

After entering into this level of personal one-on-one conversation with each father, my goal was to: a) Help him understand his level of commitment to living and raising his children with a biblical worldview. And in the cases where a man was not a father because of choice or circumstances, I still worked with him, however it was related to the husband part and potential of reaching out to the fatherless. b) Identify obstacles to this commitment. c) Assess strengths of the father that would help him be improve at home. d) Assess weaknesses that might hinder his progress. e) Help each father develop a family vision and a plan for family discipleship that fits his family's lifestyle.

### **Engaging Fathers**

It is rather challenging to help change a person's world view and cause them to immediately act when his life is out of balance and in some cases, in total crisis. As I look at each father that engaged in the conversation either because of an obvious need or out of desperation to "fix" the situation, many fathers were not able to work through the process as honestly as necessary to address their weaknesses and take the appropriate steps to correct their own behaviors.

Much of the initial time spent was burned up in a casual dining atmosphere. But part way through, because of time constraints and perceived minimal progress, I changed the approach to a group setting in order to gather more data in a shorter period of time. I sent out the advertisements and invited men/fathers to come to our opening "IronDads Workshop." At the opening I presented the foundation for this research project and invited each man/father to take the survey online or on paper. They were to enroll in the follow-up sessions for the next six-months and/or ultimately one year. Of the initial group of men/fathers, 35 came to the first meeting. Out of that group, 15 men/fathers completed

the Bible study, and only five men/fathers stayed through to completion. Moreover, none of the men completed a year of Bible study and daily devotions in the IronDads Journal.

### **The Life Application Battle**

Every young man and father who participated were personally encouraged and challenged in ways they had not expected – for some in a way they had never been challenged before. All without exception were given the opportunity to ask questions and wrestle with their individual situation as was necessary. Each father was encouraged to find a mentor/coach, and attend the group meetings. Of all the men who attended, there is a varied response to the opportunities given. Some fathers immediately began to put into practice the things read, taught, and experienced. Others did very little and still others did almost nothing but show up to the group meetings.

In a few of the cases, men pulled away when faced with the challenge of changing things in their lives and homes. Many of the closely guarded habits and patterns of regular fathers are hard to break, near impossible. One father approached me to help him avert a divorce and keep his two boys. But he was not willing to give up his entrenched behavioral habits to do the right thing for his family. Consequently he landed in jail, lost contact with his boys and was served divorce papers.

The goal in the first step of the process was to create awareness in each father of his needs and deficiencies. If a man/father is ignorant or feels incapable, yet willing to learn, he will grow and develop into a better man/father. But, if he is unwilling to be taught, it becomes a greater challenge to help him to better his family situation. For many fathers, it is much easier to blame others and deny there is a major problem than to face up to reality; every man/father no matter how good he is, can always improve.

## **Family Situation as Vital Indicator**

A man/father's spiritual-leadership, responsibility and jurisdiction roles are vital to the family context. The family situation reveals obstacles young men face as they grow up. Many boys today are not being developed as godly young men, and most of the men/fathers in this project felt insufficient for the position of father. Boys need a godly father, grandfather or another male figure to give them the hands-on training and mentoring necessary to have confidence in this journey of life.

Reading a book or going to one seminar is not sufficient for the practical hands-on training and mentoring needed to excel as a father. The goal of this process was to give men confidence in the journey, help them be better equipped to lead their home, and how to apply the biblically-relevant tools he has been developing since the first day.

This is a process and a personal journey; not an event or rally to go away with good feelings. The successful results of the project lie in the ability of each father to see, create and implement a vision in his home. This is a multigenerational vision that often does not see its completion until a future generation. It is hard work and takes dedication and time to see it through. However, awareness of each father's need and contribution, not just to earn a paycheck and get his children to survive to adulthood, but to have a desire for godly-character development and healthy habits to be formed in the next generation is part of the first step.

The data tells me that this project was able to sow a lot of seeds in the minds of each participant, however the total impact of time spent may be years and even decades away. A few of the fathers have the constitution and fortitude to keep on track and follow through in a strong biblical role, however, for the most of fathers they want it for their

family, but unable to move their desire into action; demonstrating the biblical principles. Many of the fathers see the need to step up, intervene or return home, but lack the will power to make it happen.

### **Spiritual Factor**

Most men/fathers feel inadequate or ill-equipped for the spiritual leadership in their own lives much less leading a home or church. Spiritually speaking, it was not too hard to get the men/fathers to recognize their need to be in devotion to Jesus and have personal quiet time and prayer, which included reading the Bible. However, creating time for family devotions and prayer was considered almost impossible because of time constraints. Many of the men/fathers preferred the wife to do the family Bible time or family worship, and did not lead or participate. A few of the men/fathers attempted to have family devotionals for a while. But, other men/fathers felt that just being there was enough to show support for the spiritual growth of their homes.

Playing games, going on outings or watching a movie together was more comfortable for most men/fathers to do. This type of engagement with the children is vital and necessary, however it is not enough for Christian fathers as they look to pass on faith-values to their children. I encouraged the men/fathers to use recreational type activities and general interaction as a transition to developing spiritual goals in themselves and in their children.

One of the conclusions drawn from the data is that if the men/fathers grow in their relationship with Jesus (whether it is conversion or a deepening of spiritual life and faith), then they will more easily attempt to step up into their role as spiritual leaders in the

home. The process of their trying and failing may not change, but the initial step of moving in a more biblical direction has been accomplished.

### **Easy Road vs. Commitment**

The Bible describes spiritual leaders who do not give the proper leadership and instruction as despised and abased (also called a derision) before all the people (Mal 2:9; 2 Chr 30: 7). Because men/fathers should seek to lead with God's instruction upon their lips and Gods knowledge in their minds (Mal 2:7).

Sadly many of the men/fathers in this project have become an object of derision and despised in their own homes. For every man/father that does not improve, it will only be a matter of time before their family implodes. And a few of the family situations have already experienced this abased condition. For the rest, there is hope that a few simple steps can improve and someday quicken their spiritual leadership in the home. Knowing that all men/fathers are on a journey, it is important to provide one caveat: no father is ever perfect even if he is living up to the best he knows how.

### **Deciding the Approach**

Using qualitative research limits large amounts of data collection. Yet, after several attempts at programs and sizeable data samples, I realized its ineffectiveness. The desired influence of this project required a more personal approach in order to draw important conclusions. There was no question in my mind that I had to shift from a mentality of the bigger the better, to a simple and relational approach.

The amount of information and observational experience gleaned from this project will continue to be helpful for pastoral ministry. However, the ongoing goal of the



project is to develop better systems, while quantifying the interaction with men/fathers. Moving forward it is necessary to determine a next step for improving the process for developing fathers as spiritual leaders in the home.

One additional system that has developed since the initial research phase involves training other Adventist pastors. The system enables these pastors to have access to the information, tools, and resources to develop or grow a process in each congregation. I began by giving them resources to be able to duplicate the research in their own pastoral context. Allowing them to use the survey and online resources to collect data on the men/fathers they work with to better assist in the goals of developing fathers to disciple their homes.

In a way, this project has deepened my own spiritual journey, much greater than any one man/father who has been through the program or had personal contact with me over the past few years. I have grown in my understanding of how to be a husband, father and even pastor. I have learned how to better build men to strive to follow Jesus in a daily practical way. I have learned how to better resource fellow pastors and friends in other parts of the country when it comes to dealing with church or family issues in the church.

The biggest and most important outcomes of the project are probably not measurable by statistical data. It is best qualified in the change of character, both for me and for some of the participants, by the internal commitment to a family vision, a reunited family or renewed love for Jesus Christ. The seeds that were planted, the ideas that were formed and the interest that has been cultivated, while observable nevertheless remain immeasurable.

## **Facing Fears**

The discussions and questions that I have fielded over the past several years related to this project has stirred up a lot of interest in the final document and results. However, I have been surprised that there is not more interest in the Adventist church. Because it seems there is a lack of interest across the Adventist church, in some respects it feels like the church refuses to take an honest look at our claims to being the “Elijah Message” or “People.” Furthermore, at times it seems that the church is ignorant of the effects of spiritual-fatherlessness on our homes and churches.

Several families have been positively affected by this project, but the journey for them has only just begun. For some of those faithful men/fathers, it will take continual coaching and support from a strong mentor to see them through to become a balanced leader in their home. Developing strong mentors is part of the ongoing personal mission I have: To help godly pastors and fathers broaden their influence; to help shape male/father resurgence in families, church and society. However, if church leaders cannot recognize that healthy homes help to make the church stronger, we will continue to struggle with keeping our children in the pews.

## **Conclusion: Hesitations and Resistance**

Almost every father secretly desires to be a better father. Each father knows most of his own faults and the rest are often brought to his attention. Fathers are often aware of their own personal short falls, fears of failure, resistance to ultimate success, what drives them crazy, and what gives them great joy. Some resist improving self and family out of pride. Some fathers hesitate out of fear and yet others are unaware of the importance in their role as a father.

Most fathers do not realize that their lack of spiritual or moral visions are the reason that the current and future generations will not have hope, contentment or security in the home. Most fathers have forgotten that just by being there consistently, paying the bills, and making themselves available, prevents the statistical normality of criminal behavior, or worse patterns of long-term defects in character.

### **Effects: Both Positive and Negative**

Even though a fully engaged father can produce presidents, CEOs and strong leaders, the spiritual health of his family and community can never be measured by the positive impact of that one single father. Every father has the single most potential to pass healthy values on to his children for generations to come. That is an impact that is hard to measure by quantifiable statistics.

We remember the famous President George Washington, or John the Revelator; we have branded in our minds the legacy of President Abraham Lincoln and King David, but who were their fathers? What values, ethics and morals did they receive and pass on for history to analyze?

President Abraham Lincoln is attributed as saying, “The strength of a nation lies in the homes of its people.”<sup>1</sup> The effects of fathers missing their boys growing up are far and wide. Disengaged fathers have similar devastating effects on the outlook of their children. Children can learn how not to act from situations where failure is obvious, such as: A father that repeats negative behaviors (i.e., alcohol, illegal drugs, pornography,

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<sup>1</sup> Spoken by Dennis Rainey during a pre-recorded radio program on Family Life Today (April, 2014).

gambling, work-aholic) toward his family, foster devastating effects on his children and forcing them to depend on outside factors.

One of the tragedies of our day is that too many boys are growing up without the guidance of a father, or another man, to show them what it looks like to do away with that boyhood stuff. As a result, they often move into adolescence and then adulthood looking like men but still speaking, reasoning and behaving like boys (Rainey, 2011, p. 44).

As America's boys grow up, they need to see the importance of their place in the resurgence of strong homes, churches, and communities. Men/fathers are being called out at a crucial time in earth's history. As the challenges loom great over us, men/fathers have the ability to become the most important influencers in the lives of their children.

When a father attempts to live up to the calling of biblical leadership, his covenant with God gives him life and peace, and that connection is an object of reverence (Mal 2: 5). He will be a father that will call his family together at times to pull out the "journal" of his life (Mal 3: 16 – 18) and show how God has led them despite the challenges they have faced.

MacArthur said,

by profession I am a soldier and take pride in that fact. But I am prouder – infinitely prouder – to be a father. A soldier destroys in order to build; the father only builds, never destroys. The one has the potentiality of death; the other embodies creation and life. And while the hordes of death are mighty, the battalions of life are mightier still. It is my hope that my son, when I am gone, will remember me not from the battlefield, but in the home, repeating with him our simple daily prayer, Our Father who art in Heaven. (cited in Russert, 2006, p. 56)

To ... restore the hearts of the fathers to their children (Mal 4:6)... It is in the daily simple, consistent life that will shape the future of the home and church. So that...the hearts of the children will be reconciled (Mal 4:6)... And as a pastor and a

father, I have not only witnessed this in lives of a few men, I have personally experienced it in my home.

## CHAPTER 6

### EVALUATION AND LEARNINGS

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is a snapshot of my life in process. When I started this project, I had all kinds of dreams and hopes as to how this all would turn out. However, after several years of reading, research, and personal experience, a much clearer picture developed: reality. This project is the culmination of life's events, which directly led me to attempt the project. Personal experience with my father and becoming a father caused me to consider the need for better solutions for men/fathers.

This chapter targets the personal, professional and familial growth I have experienced through this project process.

#### **Evaluation of the Intervention/ Method**

##### Growth Assessment

When I first started this project, I had lofty ideals. There was no mountain too high, no valley too deep that we would not conquer it with this project alone. Nothing else in the world was as valuable or far-reaching as this project; or so I wanted to believe.

After studying widely on evangelism, church and spiritual growth, and leadership, a more practical and doable project emerged. I made several mistakes in the research process, but learned better ways for me to approach both people and research. This

process allowed me to grow in ways that no one but God and my family truly see every day! Others may have seen glimpses of the changes in my thinking and actions, but where it really counts, and to those who matter most; it may not be as obvious.

I originally believed that this project was going to transform my conference territory and maybe the whole Adventist church: I still believe that to be a lofty goal, but only God has time, scope and ability to change things out of my jurisdiction. And that is part of my growth process. I learned to focus on being faithful to the territory that God placed in front of me, do my best and let Him do the heavy lifting.

After my initial phase of research, I sought to teach, empower, equip and train as many men/fathers as would listen. I taught classes at camp meeting, men's groups, father/son retreats, and held a seminar at four churches outside of the Washington conference territory. Though a few of the churches were outside Western Washington Conference, it helped me to gain a better understanding of my task at hand and the larger picture of developing men as godly leaders in the home.

It was during the ever-expanding process of sharing what I was learning that I confirmed in my mind the need to focus all energy on people, not programs. Though the research and personal experience had already been screaming to such a demand (I am sometimes slow to catch on), I only later began to solidify in my mind and ministry that I would focus all energy on personal and interpersonal relationships as my *modus operandi*.

#### Biblical Foundations Evaluation

I started digging into the issues of fatherlessness and how the Bible relates to it. When I began, I first focused on contemporary culture and Christian literature and what

their ideas and solutions were. Then I tried to make my biblical/theological chapter either resolve the problems I gleaned from the culture and or Christian literature or produce biblical texts to support some of their valid observations and conclusions. Although this was a good learning experience, it was not until I focused on one area of the Scriptures and not all over the Bible, that the themes and solutions to the issues I was engaging became clearer and more concise. The oracle of Malachi provided both the introduction to the human problem of men/fathers in relation to faith transmission and spiritual nurture within the family and practical solutions to the restoration of the family through godly fatherhood.

Delving into the historical context of the chaos in Israel, this chapter explores four basic principles of the theology of fathers.

Principle #1 – Intimacy with God: Fathers develop and live a personal spiritual connection with God. And exercise a healthy balance of relationship in community and the church. His passionate and appropriate example will be embedded in the minds of his children throughout their life (Mal 2:6, 7; see also Chapter 2, p. 30).

Principle #2 – Promise Keepers: Fathers must be covenant keepers with God: God's greatest desire is to be our God and for us to be His most treasured possession. No matter how many times Israel messed up, God was faithful to His promise, and earthly fathers are called to do the same; to be keepers of our promises to our family and God. However this only happens by maintaining a consistent daily walk with the Lord (Mal 2:5, 8; see also Chapter 2, pp. 33, 34).

Principle #3 – Practical Wisdom: Instructing in the ways of Yahweh means that he will teach with zeal. Moreover, his passion for God will keep him focused on teaching



all the law, covenants and prophecy. As the spiritual leader, he is to make clear to his children that God's ways are the right ways (Mal 2:6; see also Chapter 2, pp. 39-40).

Principle #4 – Interpersonal Engagement; the final principle of the theology of fathers is rooted in the idea of multigenerational faithfulness. He must consider this idea; if Jesus does not come for another millennia, are any of his descendants going to have his faith and passion for Christ. And the only way to successfully impart his faith to the next generation is through an intentional, deeply spiritual mentoring process over the course of his children's life (Mal 3:16, 17; see also Chapter 2, p. 41).

After exploring the four themes of father-faithfulness in Malachi, it helped me to see better the issues we face today. The context of ancient Israel's lack of faithfulness could be closely associated with the issues in the Adventist church. There are those men/fathers who honor God to the best of their abilities and there are some who have chosen the ways of the world over God's principles.

As I grew and developed a deeper understanding of God's desire for me, I was able to share these timeless truths with the men/fathers in my sphere of influence. It was exciting to see fathers began to believe the word from Malachi 4: 6, "...He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children."

#### Literature Discovery

When I first started the literature review, I was looking for complete works on the subject of spiritual-fatherlessness and its effects on society. After discovering the lack of literature on this specific topic, I began searching through more general works related to fatherhood, masculine spirituality and spiritual development in men/fathers.

I feel that the works cited and the works in the reference list are just the beginning of the development in my understanding of how to help men/fathers become the godly fathers of their calling.

Whether stated explicitly or not, Christian authors agree that men/fathers must develop and maintain a growing relationship with Christ. The selected authors in chapter three further develop the need for intimacy with Christ as a priority in a man/father's life (principle #1). Because men/fathers are a key in future faith development and transmission of his children, the literature reveals a need for fathers to keep promises to their family (principle #2). There is very little discussion regarding a man's unique nature or personality, nor why men abdicate their leadership roles in the family.

#### Overall Evaluation Summary

This father-focused project was personally challenging and educational. It was in an area of special interest and gave me a chance to broaden my understanding and deepen my experience in this topic. However after the completion of the document, I am able to look back and make some evaluations and recommendations for any future study to be done by me or anyone else.

As a result of doing this project, I have an increased burden and desire to mentor men/fathers. I can envision this as part of my life's work. Whether I am a local pastor or designated to some other ministry, I have seen the positive impact this project has made on a few men who wanted to be better and the broader impact on each of the children and his wife. This project needs more research done to broaden our understanding on the Adventist future, yet it was worth the work, if for nothing else but to help in future

research and development towards training men/fathers to disciple their family. I am grateful for the growth and learning that has occurred.

In my most recent reflection of this project, had I done the biblical/theological foundation first, I would have had a better understanding of the complexity of the issue Christian men/fathers face. I would have seen that there are basic steps and principle to creating and maintaining healthy and balanced relationships.

Most likely I would still have made the contact personal in nature because of the principle from Malachi 2: 7, “for the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction – because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty.” I would have been more confident with my groups about the process I was trying to take them through as they sought God’s wisdom and instruction.

### **Recommendations for Further Action and Research in the Area of the Project**

It is my firm belief that the research and development of men/fathers as spiritual leaders in the home and church must continue. The exact number of men/fathers who participate in future surveys and interventions is immaterial. If more men/fathers hear of their value and impact on their families, the greater potential it can have on the transformation of the families within our churches and community.

The first thing I would do is change my approach. Instead of calling the men to a seminar, I would take them on an action adventure experience. As part of the interaction during the fun weekend or outing, I would challenge men/fathers to consider their roles in life and lead them to be intentional about making changes. Show them how to be part of their children’s lives, not just tell them.

Instead of sitting down for a hundred hours with each participant, I would work

more diligently at setting up a network of coach/mentors who would meet in a small group and together they could equip each other to do greater things for God in their homes and churches.

These “Irondad Groups” would be activity oriented: Based on a mission project or social activity; these men/fathers would improve their leadership while having fun.

If the Adventist church and conference had the money, funding a full-time men’s trainer for the expressed purpose of leading pastor’s, elders and local men/fathers to build families would also improve the loss of our youth.

## **Outcomes**

### Case Study Outcomes

The fathers that began the project research are in the following narrative. Many of the fathers helped to teach life lessons to me as a researcher and pastor far beyond the project’s intended purpose.

The father snapshots are as follows:

Father 001 acknowledged his need for growth and began the process, however after just a few weeks of working with him, he skipped town. This left his newborn child and wife alone to fend for themselves.

Father 002 progressed quickly through the material and seemed to be making great strides when he had an affair with the neighbor. It was a devastating blow that broke up the family.

Father 003, was well liked both at his job and in the community, he was promoted several times and considered to be a strong leader. He considered the project to be helpful in his ability to see and do as he needed, but after moving to an administrative level in his

company, he divorced his wife, and move to another state.

Father 004 stepped up in his home quickly and was recognized as having changed; this lasted about six months. What shocked everyone was that the family was finally coming together as everyone wanted, but sadly the wife ran off with her high-school sweet heart. He still tries to apply the principles and live it in his home with the children.

Father 005 lives in a completely loveless relationship, no intimacy, no healthy communication yet seeks help constantly. He made some mistakes in how he handled his wife and external relationships. Learning to trust and forgive has been an ongoing struggle for this father.

Father 006 has taken the largest strides of all the fathers, attempting to implement the entire process in his home and life. His wife works out of the home, but they have committed to making their home the center of evangelism and discipleship for their children and he as the father is learning to be the main discipler and trainer of their children.

Father 007 is a father who almost lost his marriage when trying to implement the biblical principles, but after a major breakthrough with his teenage son and his wife, they are doing very well and have developed a growing ability to keep his children's heart.

Father 008 is a father who has been slow to jump in head first, but I see his slow methodical and thinking as being a dad of great potential.

Father 009 is a father that was doing very well the first six months, but when his youngest daughter went to boarding school, he abandoned all teaching and training of his children. Partly because of not being able to handle the emotions related to her departure,

but partly because he no longer had someone at home, so he did not feel needed or as purposeful.

Father 010, has young daughters, he is like every dad, trying to do better, some successes, and some failures. He has great potential with his family as a whole, he and his wife have a close-knit relationship, and are on the same page when it comes to the evangelism and training of their children.

Father 011, after working through the process, the seeds that were sown are now taking effect. This father is taking the first step to repairing a major rip in his marriage and family situation. He has been living separate from his wife and daughter for several years. He and his wife have a lot of work to do, but he has decided to take this journey and become the spiritual leader of his home and family. He wants to be the loving servant leader that dads are called to be. He wants to be the one to teach his family about Jesus and not just let the culture, TV and/or school system be the main influence on his family. He has finally taken the first step in restoring his family.

Father 012 is a father on a journey like most of us. He has taken his job seriously as father and spiritual leader of the home. He has had some successes, and normal challenges and failures. His children have grown up to be respectable teenagers, and great examples to people in school, church, and the community. It is safe to say that he had the idea of being a strong spiritual leader in his home and discipler of his children long before he met me. However, I have seen coaching help him focus his time and efforts, with better results.

Father 013 is the type of father this project seeks to help. He is a father of four children with multiple partners. His current relationship is not his wife, and they have one

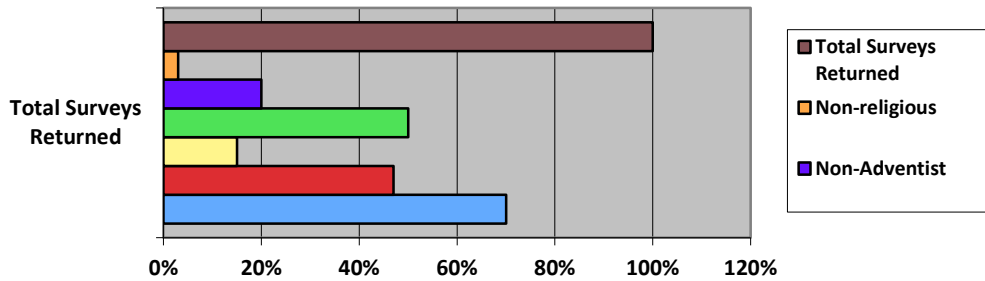
child together. However, there are six children in the home, five from different former relationships of hers. Yet, he is taking a fathering role with them. He has stepped up and allowed the principles of this project to help change him and move towards being the spiritual leader of his home.

Father 014 is a young man who desires to be a father; he was willing and able to apply the principles of the process quickly within his current context with a niece and sister-in-law. Even though he is not their father, he is filling that gap for them by leading them towards a biblical model of life and accountability.

Father 015 is the biological father of one of his two children. He was motivated to take responsibility for his home and the children under his care, and desires to spiritually lead both of the children to a life-long relationship with Jesus.

#### Outcomes Conclusion

Out of the 65 men/fathers that attended a workshop, 34 returned surveys and 15 participated in this father-development and discipleship process. Originally any results of the survey were going to be excluded from this project because a second survey had not been given, so measuring or calculating the effects of the project on the lives of the men was not going to be possible. However, being honest about future needed research in this area, I have chosen to include some of what was gleaned.



Of the 34 surveys returned, the following statistics help explain the chart above. Seventy percent (70%) of the men/fathers involved signified that they attended church at least once a month. Though the highest common denominator was church attendance, less than half (47%) participated in regular family worships. Several of the men/fathers surveyed demonstrated difficulties in maintaining any spiritual disciplines including having daily personal devotions; 15% acknowledged the lack of this spiritual activity.

Seventeen of the men/fathers (50%) said they have young children (ages 0-13) at home. They considered the information in this project to be important and relevant to improving their family life. About 20% of the attendees were not members of any Adventist church, and one father did not consider himself religious at all.

Having worked with each man/father over a period of at least six months, many lessons can be learned. In each crisis situation (i.e. divorce/remarriage, marriage in trouble, extended family, or children), it was necessary to address the urgent and important aspects dealing with the spiritual and family-relational aspects first. In a few cases, some major hurdles had to be overcome; in other cases the hurdle was an impasse. The degree of brokenness also played a major part in the father being able to consider the possibility of change or improvement in his home situation. In a case where the father was absent upon return it offset the power-balance, and since power-balance is



potentially a delicate subject, this is an issue to consider when a father engages at any level different than before. He must consider his wife (if applicable) and child(ren).

This doctoral project has lead me to conclude that further and deeper research would be apropos to better understand the challenges faced in developing a network of godly men/fathers. Additional research that targets a larger number of fathers with a set of specific probing questions that will help explain how they came to be the father they are now as a follow-up survey after the “IronDads Program” is complete. Furthermore, helping fathers to practice new ways of living and acting outside of a crisis mode. This research involvement showed that if a biological father has not made the commitment to being more than a sperm donor, little progress will be made no matter how targeted the intervention is.

In future research I will seek within each father, to find indicators of the minimum factor for commitment in leading and guiding his family. It is important to work with fathers who are committed but need tools or support for the journey. Fathers that are checked out or in such a deep crisis can seriously derail the process and affect my leadership as husband, father, and pastor.

This research has also helped to fuel my pastoral work, knowing that we need healthy men involved at home and in the church. Gives me an emphasis and tools to help direct men in the congregation and community. It can be synergistic in the sense that if we interest fathers in church and spiritual activities, we can help improve their involvement at home and the inverse is plausible as well. I will, however, in the future be more direct with each father. For example: One of the fathers I worked with at length was in a marital situation spiraling out of control, within a couple months, he was kicked out

of the house. My attempts to coach and direct him prior to being expelled, did not work. Over a year later when he moved back into the house, he began to put in place some of the ideas and principles of a loving father, serving and leading the home. If there was another time, I would now be direct in the potential consequences of delay, bully-type fathering, and neglecting his own personal relationship with Jesus.

Indicators in the future will also include how the family responds. Does the wife and children respond positive even if the father feels that he is doing a poor job at reaching his family? Has his commitment level increased his interest in things that happen in the home?

The greatest need in my future work in the area of mentoring men/fathers is organizational, especially in terms of focus, biblical foundations, materials developed, and process. This better organization and process is realistic as it grows more naturally from the biblical/theological foundations which sets the tone for personal mentor/coaching type relationships and not big church programming. In the event that I was to host a program, I would approach the orientation, workshop, and interactions differently.

The four basic principles I learned from the message of Malachi, has helped me to see a need for redirecting the research and implementation. Fathers need to be encouraged, equipped, and empowered to live faithfully. I do not have all the answers as to what I would do, but personally I felt the research could have been better because of the Malachi input I learned much later in the project.

## **Conclusions**

Overall, several lives were affected by their interaction with the material and people of this dissertation project. Many seeds were planted in the hearts of young men and fathers. Only God's involvement and time will produce the true desired outcomes. Future research, which I might do, on the role of fathers in the home to improve upon the things learned during the project. It will attempt to develop a more intentional scientific approach that will gather data in a way to deepen the process already begun. Ultimately, the information gained will help create a model for family evangelism and a formula to build an Adventist Family Church Model (i.e. Church planting model).

This project has made a concerted effort to promote healthy homes, which engaged fathers as the loving servant leader with Christ as the center. This project also attempted to address the issue of men in church. Seeing it as their responsibility to help create healthy churches where men are engaged in the spiritual development of not just their own children, but the growth of others in the congregation.

## **Professional Transformation**

When I first started pastoring, both my home and my ministry was somewhat random and lacking the needed intentionality. Strict organization and task orientation have been weaknesses in my life. Even though I have always been good at developing relationships and pointing people to Jesus, this project has helped me realize that a lack of structure and constant randomness can be problematic.

I have not only learned the need for intentionality in my own home, but have grown to the place where I can help other men/fathers to develop purpose in their lives and homes. And though my character and personality craves spontaneity, having a

structure and purpose helps me to focus my moments towards the overall goals of our home life and ministry.

On the evangelism and discipleship of the home, I have seen how taking intention and engaging with the family has help both my wife and the children grow their characters towards Jesus and away from the world.

### **Further Research and Reflection**

It is my desire to continue to engage fathers, father figures and fathers-to-be as part of further research. For this project it is important continue to learn what could be the game changer in the homes and churches of Adventism. I started the project based on the premise of “Why are all our kids leaving the church?” and what I discovered was that although fathers may not be the general cause for this loss, they can be the difference in stemming the tide and the ultimate key to prevention of future generations walking out faith’s back door.

One of the reoccurring themes of the men whom I talked to was the feeling or perception that there is no real place for the manly men in church (meaning because they do not like reading, being quiet, sharing feelings, talking about LOVE all the time, emphasizing character traits like: gentleness, kindness, meekness and self-control); there is an appearance of girly culture in religious organizations to many of these men. This lack of godly manhood in the Christian community is in part what is intriguing me for further study and research. Pastoral observation suggests that we need to create multiple opportunities for men to engage Christ through a Christian-man’s perspective.

I have developed a website [www.irondads.org](http://www.irondads.org) that I will keep as an ongoing research and development to evangelizing fathers to a godly calling and leadership. Each

father will be invited to take the survey and start the process learned from this project. Eventually I want to develop it into a “Christian Men’s University” online. A place where men can go and develop godly skills through reading, listening, receiving coaching, leading and mentoring, networking and a myriad of other manly type points of empowerment.

This project has addressed a societal and familial epidemic that seems to only increase as times get worse. It is necessary for God’s Holy Spirit to work in the lives of men/fathers to empower them to be spiritual champions in their homes and churches.

If you are a pastor, teacher, father, mother or researcher, I recommend several directions for future discussion, research, and publication.

1. The role of a father in family based and family led youth ministries in the local church. How can the role of the father in a family based youth ministry transform our ideas of evangelism and discipleship?

2. The role of a father in family based and family led outreach/evangelism ministries. How does the role of the father keeping the whole family involved affect the receiver and the giver of the ministry?

3. The role of fathers in youth (ages 13-25) led ministry in the local church. If youth-led ministry was active in local congregations, how could the role of the father help children stay connected through the high school, college and young adult stages of life?

4. The role of the father in a single-parent homes; How does the role of a father in a single-parent home honor a balanced approach to evangelism and discipleship? And is the role of a single father different from having two parents?

5. The role of an incarcerated or recently released father; how has meeting Christ and attending church helped the role of an incarcerated or recently released father in the evangelism and discipleship in the home? The need to study radically transformed men/fathers who actively seek a growing relationship with Jesus and desire to better understand their roles as fathers within their families this time around, and yet have the cloud of prison hanging over their heads. How does the role of this father affect the children after seeing his radical transformation?

### **Final Thoughts**

Though it was not part of the project, in my own pastoral leadership church context, I sought out men/fathers to encourage, equip, and empower them for ministry. I was surprised to observe that not only did the men in my congregation respond to mentor/coaching in the church governing processes, but also they began to increase in their attendance and evangelistic viability throughout the church. Our attendance increased significantly for our sized church, and our male participation in church became the norm, not an exception.

As part of our journey together, our church increased its recreational evangelism type events as well as targeting any program we hosted to be a family-type event. If we held a program, it was designed to improve the family: health, finances, interaction and relationships. However, everything we did focused on relationships not programs.

For me as the pastor, I can honestly say that I was significantly blessed along the journey by working with these men/fathers.

APPENDIX A  
IRONDADS SURVEY

## IRONDADS SURVEY

This survey is offered to you as a participant in the ongoing IronDads research, to better understand help resource men/fathers who desire a deeper spiritual life and better family experience. During this process, you will be invited to begin or renew your commitment to your family as the spiritual leader, who is called to lovingly serve as Christ does to His church (Ephesians 5:25).

Take as much time as you need to thoughtfully complete the questions on this survey and return it to Pastor Tobin Dodge (pastortobin@gmail.com).

1. Which State and city do you live and work in?
2. What is your age?
3. Which educational program did you last complete? (I.e. High School, College, Post Graduate Degree)
4. What is your total household income?
5. What best describes your Family Situation? (Both parents, single parent, blended family, etc.)
6. What is your Religious Affiliation?
7. What ethnicity do you claim? (Color is not Ethnicity)
8. What best describes your home as a child?
9. What is your Mother's highest level of education?
10. What is your Father's highest level of education?
11. Do you have children living at home? If Yes, How many? Boys? Girls?
12. How many nights a week do you have at home?



13. How many times a month do you have a family night or outing together?
14. How many meals a week do you eat together as a family?
15. How much time do you give your children your undivided attention each day?
16. How many times a week do you currently have family worship?
17. How many times a week do you currently have personal devotions?
18. How many times a week do you currently pray for your spouse?
19. How many times a week do you currently pray for your children?
20. How many times a month do you attend church?
21. How many evenings a week do you have commitments at church?
22. How would you rate your satisfaction in your experience of going to church?
23. If you could change one thing about church, what would it be?
24. If the above was changed in your favor, would you also commit to this idea?
25. Any other comments?
26. Are you in an ongoing accountable relationship with a godly man?
  - a. If you are in an accountable relationship, what is the frequency of your communication?
  - b. If you are in an accountable relationship, what is the METHOD of your communication?
  - c. Do you and your accountability partner follow a set plan?
  - d. Are you intentional about your accountability for each other?
27. Has this research project helped you improve your family relations?
28. Has this partnership helped improve your Spiritual Leadership at home?

29. Has this partnership challenged you to be more balanced with your involvement in church?
30. How many times a week do you now have family worship?
31. How many times a week do you now sit and have family meals?
32. How often do you read the Bible as a family?
33. How much more undivided time do you give your children each day?
34. Has your relationship with your children improved as a result of your participating in this research project?
35. Are you modeling repentance and forgiveness with your children?
36. Has your relationship with your spouse improved during this same period?
37. Are you loving God openly? In what areas can you do this more effectively?
38. Do your children understand that their training is your responsibility and privilege?
39. How has your church experience changed over the past several months?
40. If you continue on this journey for the next 5 years, what would be your new family dreams and goals?
41. Describe the overall impact of this project on your family in terms of positive outcomes you have experienced...

APPENDIX B  
IRONDADS JOURNAL

# IronDads Journal

## NOTEBOOK CONTENTS

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### SECTION 1 – APPRENTICESHIP

My Covenant .....  
Iron Dad Strategy .....  
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Dad’s Life balance .....  
Iron Dad Goals .....

### SECTION 2 – ALTAR

Building an Altar .....  
Ten Top Most Wanted .....  
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Prayer Strategy Sheet .....

### SECTION 3 – ACCOUNTABILITY

Iron Dad Questions.....  
Iron Dad Dream Team .....  
Resources .....  
Influences .....

### SECTION 4 – ACTION

Memorization .....  
Bible Studies .....  
Journal .....  
Project Sheets .....

Greetings to Each Participant,

Throughout history, man has established a “Rite of Passage” for growth and maturity. This is seen today in many cultures around the world, through a “Bar Mitzvah”, or a “Quinceanera.” Each event has its own place in the culture signifying a major shift in the young person’s life. During the middle ages, when it was more common to practice Chivalry, Nobility and Honor, there were those who would dare to accept the challenge of an apprenticeship to prepare for greatness. It was these men who dared to step out and lead their generation into great victories. This challenge would begin in vigorous training.

Our challenge is a one-year commitment to four areas of growth.

1. Personal
2. Family
3. Church
4. Ministry

For each of you who would dare to take this challenge, are encouraged to keep the **“LUMP OF IRON ORE”** for one year in a safe and visible place; to remind everyone of your commitment. At the point of graduation, each one who valiantly accomplishes this discipleship training will return the **“IRON ORE”** and be commissioned with a **“SWORD”**. My hope and desire is to see a group of men in our Faith Community step out in new spiritual leadership Horizons.

This Journal is designed to order your Spiritual Walk over the next year. You will want to bring this and a Bible with you to all monthly “Iron Dad” meetings.

*Pastor Tobin Dodge*

## Section 1

# Apprenticeships

### **My Covenant:**

- Where do I feel God calling me that I need to grow and learn?

# The IRONDAD JOURNEY

I want to challenge all men who have children and those who don't, to consider taking their role as "spiritual fathers" to a new level. Some dads have done real well at raising their children in the instruction of the Lord and according the God's Word the Bible. However most are struggling to see how they fit into their family as the godly, servant leader of the home and church.

"Iron Dads" is a research project that is connected to a doctoral program through the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and in conjunction with local Seventh-day Adventist conferences and churches. It will be an ongoing study to measure the impact of involvement of dads in both the home and church. The direct correlation between an absent father and the loss of his leadership role in society has been profound, and pastoral observation shows that it has deeply impacted the church as well.

To enroll in the program, it is preferred that you would have received an invitation from the research team lead by Tobin Dodge (pastortobin@gmail.com) or go to the website; [www.irondads.org](http://www.irondads.org). Most participants will have been given an opportunity to enroll through a local church Men's Event, a Conference-wide event, or workshop/seminar experience.

## IRON DAD WORKSHOP

The following is a sample of an "Iron Dads" Workshop agenda:

"IRON DADS RALLY I": Impacting the Future by exploring our past!  
Kick off rally, 3-day weekend to lead into 12 months of Principle based leadership. With a mandatory monthly gathering and bi-monthly accountability "meetings" (Explained in Session 2).

- Session 1: Courage; Building the Foundation (History & Biblical Perspective).
- Session 2: Atomic #26; Fe = Metal in the first Transitional Series (Personal).
- Session 3: Planet Earth's Inner & Outer Core (Family).
- Session 4: Blast Furnaces and the Cast of Characters (Church).

#### LIVING LABS:

This is a 12-month commitment to be more involved in the life of your family.

1. It involves daily Bible study, weekly Scripture memorization and a journaling element.
2. Weekly Lessons for dads to practice with family and self: with 3 weekly emails – Monday review of what we have done, Wednesday encouragement, Friday what's Next?
3. Activities with dads include, but are not limited to: bowling, beach, hiking, Horseback riding, camping, and table games (It is preferred; NO TV, VIDEO or ELECTRONICS of any kind, personal interaction is a must.) etc.
4. At least a Bi-monthly talk with your accountability partner (phone, skype or face to face. Email, texting or IM does not count).
5. Reading from the Book list.

#### “IRON DADS RALLY II;”

At the completion of the 12 month commitment, each “Iron Dad” will be invited to a family campout (circumstances and situations might vary depending on location and group ability). During this campout, there will be 3 family sessions where the “Iron Dad” can introduce his family to the next phase of the project entitled “Transforming Families.”

#### “Iron Dads” Graduation/Commencement:

During “Iron Dads Rally II, as part of the closing ceremony, there will be a graduation and charge given to the dads who have successfully attempted the program. An appropriate “Trophy” will be given out symbolizing the commitment to “Transforming” the family by being an “Iron Dad”.



# IRON DAD Strategy

There are (4) Areas of focus on this journey.

1. Personal one on one mentoring and accountability with pastor and other peers committing to this process.
2. Accountability in a daily Altar and the (7) Commitments
3. Pre-determined reading list of books that will be discussed weekly or bi-monthly. Addressing several areas of growth.
4. Project Outreach to be determined by the group.

What will this look like?

- Completed Application (\$TBD Registration Fee, Includes Books; No registration fee means you purchase your own books, fees are determined by the host church or conference).
- Investment of Time
  - Meet with “IRON DADS” Group Monthly for the next 12 months.
  - Meet or Talk with your Accountability Partner weekly or bi-monthly.
  - **(Coming Soon) Complete Four Discipleship Tracts of Personal, Family, Church and Ministry.**
  - Build a consistent daily Altar of Devotions and Spiritual Growth plan.
- Investment of Relationships
  - Becoming Accountable & Real in relationships with other men.
  - Develop a Dream Team (People who will support you).
- Investment in the Reading the Book List over the next year!

# Book List

Book List to be read over the next 12 Months!

Month 1	(Commitment to Follow Christ) Altar Defined	Author
Read	Experiencing God Workbook	Henry Blackaby
Action	Develop a Daily Devotional Routine	
Month 2	Commitment to the Pursuit of God	
Read	The God Chaser	Teaney
Month 3	Commitment to Faith	
Read	Living Beyond of Possible	Meyers
Month 4	Commitment to Purity	
Read	Every Man's Battle	Aterburn/Stoeker
Month 5	Commitment to Discipleship	
Read	Disciplines of a Godly Man	Hughes
Action	Develop Consistent Family Devotions	(Daily/Weekly)
Month 6	Commitment to Family	
Read	It Starts at Home	Burner/ Stroope
Action	Plan Family Activities Calendar	(Weekly/Monthly)
Month 7		
Read	Family Driven Faith	Baucham, Voddie
Month 8	Commitment to your Children	
Read	Shepherding a Child's Heart	Tripp, Tedd

Action		Take a Family trip	(This Month)
Month 9			
Read		Championship Fathering	Casey, Carey
Action			
Month 10		Commitment to Continual Growth	
Read		Character Counts	Dyer, Charles
Month 11			
Read		Hunger/Celebration of Discipline	Dybdal/Foster
Month 12			
Read		Boy's Passage, Man's Journey / Girl's Passage, Father's Duty	Molitor, Brian
		<b>Additional Reading:</b>	<b>Author</b>
		Boyhood and Beyond	Shultz, Bob
		What He Must Be	Baucham, Voddie
		7 Secrets of Effective Fathers	Canfield, Ken
		Biblical manhood: Leading & Loving	Wilkinson
		God's Armour Bearer	Nance
		Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood	Piper, Grudem
		Entre Leadership	Ramsey, Dave

# Life Balance

Each segment of the wheel represents one area of your life. Consider each section – how satisfied are you with all these areas of your life? Are you putting as much time, energy and attention into these areas as you would like? The center of the wheel is – 0 and means that you are totally dissatisfied. The outer edge is – 10 and indicates full satisfaction and achievement. Decide your degree of satisfaction and achievement using the range from 0 to 10. Then mark it on the relevant spoke of the life wheel.

(Draw a Life wheel here)

# Goals & Dreams

Dreaming Big Dreams for God

What are your dreams?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What are your Goals? (1 Year)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are your objectives?

GOAL #1

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

GOAL #2

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

GOAL #3

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## SECTION 2

# The Altar

### WHERE DO I START?

It does not have to be flashy, expensive or time consuming. Consider this story and the symbolism of an Altar and then let God lead you as you talk to your accountability partner concerning these things.

#### **Build an Altar**

We need to build a prayer altar in our lives that will bring the Fire of God down in our relationships, ministry and world. Based on 1 Kings 18: 30 – 39, Elijah shows how to build an altar to the living God. The altar can be as simple as a chair, floor mat, or just the same spot you go each day to talk to God. I suggest you get your Bible, a Notebook, This Journal and put them together in a place that you can come to each day for your quiet time with God.

“Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, “the Lord – He is God! The Lord – He is God!”(1 Kings 18)

Elijah and the people of God had experienced the worst draught ever, the people cursed the gods for not sending rain for years. Now there was going to be a showdown on Mount Carmel. If God is God, then Serve Him, but if Baal somehow wins out, serve him. After a full day of work, the prophets of Baal had failed to get fire to come down from heaven.

Now it was Elijah’s turn. They drowned the Altar with water, so that the sacrifice and the wood would be completely soaked. Then Elijah knelt down and prayed to the Living God of heaven to display His power and might by consuming this sacrifice.

The next picture on Mount Carmel is of God’s all consuming fire coming down from heaven, not just to burn up the sacrifice, but the altar, and even the water on

the ground. Anyone who wants to see the anointing fire of God come down into their life must strive to establish good habits in personal prayer and scripture reading. Many have tried to see God's favor for a short season, but do not continue for lack of power or desired answers.

1 Kings 18: 30 – 39

“Then Elijah said to all the people, “come here to me” they came to him, and he repaired the altar of the LORD, which was in ruins. Elijah took twelve stones, one of each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying “your name shall be Israel. With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord.”

- I. Build/Rebuild and Altar (vs 30, 32a)
- II. Dig a Trench (vs 32b)
- III. Arrange the Wood (vs 33a)
- IV. Give a Sacrifice (vs 33)
- V. Pour the Water (vs 33 – 35)
- VI. Stand in the GAP (vs 36, 37)
- VII. Walk in the Power (vs 38, 39)

## TOP TEN MOST WANTED

These Godly people are people you want in your life to positively influence you into a certain direction and away from something else.

<b>Name 1:</b>	<b>Influence:</b>	<b>Need:</b>
<b>Name 2:</b>	Influence:	Need:
<b>Name 3:</b>	Influence:	Need:
<b>Name 4:</b>	Influence:	Need:
<b>Name 5:</b>	Influence:	Need:
<b>Name 6:</b>	Influence:	Need:
<b>Name 7:</b>	Influence:	Need:
<b>Name 8:</b>	Influence:	Need:
<b>Name 9:</b>	Influence:	Need:
<b>Name 10:</b>	Influence:	Need:



## PETITION OF COMMITMENT

FOLLOWING IS SPACE, DATE AND HOW YOU PLAN TO CARRY OUT GOD'S  
WORKING IN YOUR DAILY LIFE.

<b>My Character</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>How?</b>
<b>My Discipline</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>How?</b>
<b>My Relationships:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>How?</b>
<b>My Finances:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>How?</b>
<b>My Ministry</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>How?</b>
<b>My Plans:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>How?</b>



**Weekly Prayer Strategy**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing the weekly prayer strategy.

### Section 3

## IRON DAD

# Questions

These questions are to be asked and discussed between accountability partner and mentorships only. Please respect other's privacy and do not share anything that could be embarrassing or otherwise.

1. Have you been with anyone... anywhere that would appear as compromising?
2. Have you entertained any inappropriate fantasies in your thought life?
3. Have you viewed, read or listened to any sexually explicit material?
4. Have any of your financial dealings lacked integrity?
5. Have you been faithful in your tithes and offerings?
6. Have you spent adequate time in Bible study and prayer?
7. Have you given priority time to your family?
8. Have you been faithful to your ministry involvement with the church?
9. Have you just lied to me?

# Dream Team

Who are the Paul's in my life?

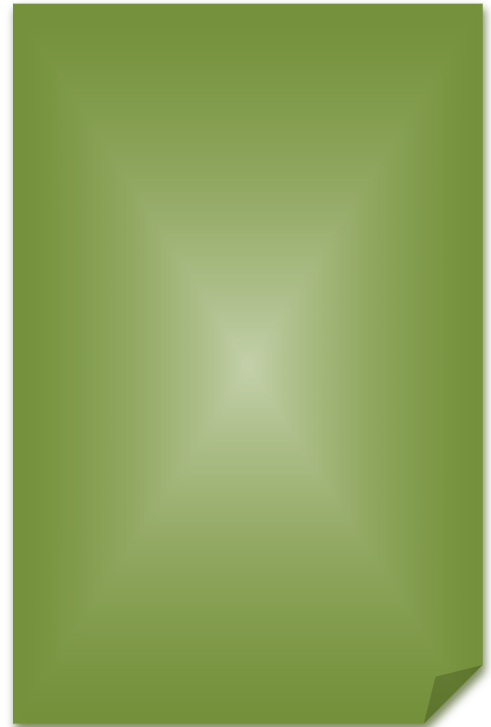
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Who are the Barnabas' in my life?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Who are the Timothy's in  
my life?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



## Resources

Resources:	Definition:

# Influence

Name:	Influence:	How?

Section 4

# Memorization

Deuteronomy 6: 4 – 9

“Hear o Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord you God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

John 3: 17 – 18	Deut 30: 19	Ezekiel 46: 9
John 5: 24	Isaiah 40: 31	Malachi 3: 10
John 15: 7 – 8	Jeremiah 29: 11 – 13	Malachi 4: 5, 6
John 14: 6	Galatians 6:9	Revelation 3: 20
James 1: 13 – 15	Philippians 3: 7, 8	Matthew 24: 4 – 8
John 20: 29	Philippians 3: 10, 11	Numbers 6: 24 – 26
Acts 2: 42 – 47	Matthew 5: 3 – 12	Revelation 22: 17
John 11: 25	Matthew 6: 33	James 5: 7 – 20
Acts 3: 6 – 8	Isaiah 61: 1, 2	Titus 2
Psalm 20: 6, 7	Ezekiel 22: 30	Revelation 21: 1 – 9
Psalm 37: 3 – 7	Habakkuk 3:2	
Romans 1: 16	Isaiah 53: 4 – 6	
Romans 10: 9, 10	1 Thess 5: 16 – 22	
1 Corinthians 9: 19	Philippians 4: 8, 9	
1 Corinthians 10: 13	1 Timothy 4: 7, 8	
Psalm 51: 10 – 12	2 Timothy 4: 6 – 8	
2 Corinthians 5: 17	Hebrews 11: 6	
2 Corinthians 10: 4, 5	1 Peter 2: 9	
Philemon 1:6	1 John 3: 21	
Deut 6: 6 – 9	1 John 1: 8, 9	
Proverbs 3: 5, 6	2 Peter 3: 9	

# Bible Studies

“Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2: 15

Each study is based on a 1-hour session.

- 10 minutes to read (Read 2 – 3 times).
- Meditate on the passage (Let the Holy Spirit Speak through the words).
- Word Study: Look up key words in a Bible Concordance or online (i.e. biblos.com, blueletterbible.org, biblegateway.com, bibleinfo.com).
- Questions: How does this apply to life? How can this impact my family?
- Journal: Write your thoughts, prayers, answers to questions and even your word study (you will be surprised how fast an hour passes).

<b>Text</b>	<b>Topic</b>
John 4: 1 – 42	Jesus & The Good Samaritan
John 6	Jesus left behind
John 15: 1 – 17	The True Vine
John 18: 1 – 11	The I am He
James 1: 26, 27	Pure Religion
Acts 1: 1 – 8	True Witnesses
Acts 9: 1 – 19	Saul’s Conversion
Acts 13: 1 – 12	Set apart and sent
Acts 17: 16 – 34	Paul in Athens
Acts 22: 22 – 29	Chains of perception
Acts 27: 13 – 44	Facing the storms of life
Romans 5: 1 – 11	Peace with God
Romans 6: 1 – 14	Dead, Buried and Alive!
Romans 12: 1 – 8	Call to Ministry
1 Corinthians 1: 18 – 29	The Cross and Me
1 Corinthians 9	Rights of an Apostle
1 Corinthians 12	Spiritual Gifts
2 Corinthians 4: 7 – 12	Treasures in Jars of Clay
2 Corinthians 6: 14 – 18	Being YOKED!
Philemon 1: 6	Sharing our faith
2 Timothy 1: 16	Stir it up
Luke 9, 10	Sending the 12 & the 72
Luke 14: 1 – 24	Compel them to come
Luke 18: 1 – 8	Persistent Prayer
Luke 24: 1 – 35	Road to Emmaus
Galatians 5: 22, 23	Fruits of the Spirit
Galatians 6: 1 – 9	Doing Good
Ephesians 6: 10 – 18	Armor of God



Colossians 3: 1 – 17	Spiritual Clothing
Malachi 4: 5, 6	Father's Duty
Matthew 8: 5 – 13	Centurion & Jesus
Matthew 13: 1 – 23	Parable of the Heart
Matthew 18: 15 – 19	Resolving Conflict
Matthew 25: 31 – 46	Sheep and the Goats
Matthew 28: 18 – 20	Great Commission
1 Thessalonians 4: 13 – 5:11	Coming of the Lord
Titus 3: 1 – 11	Doing what is Good
1 Timothy 3: 1 – 13	Deacons & Elders
2 Timothy 2: 20 – 26	Life of Noble Purpose
Hebrews 11: 1 – 40	Faith
Hebrews 5: 11 – 6: 12	How far is too far?
Hebrews 12: 1 – 12	The Joy of the Lord
2 Peter 3: 1 – 14	Not to slow in His promise
1 John 4: 7 – 21	Loving God
Jude 17 – 23	What are we Call to do?
Mark 1 : 35 – 39	The Habits of Jesus
Mark 5: 21 – 43	Generation healed and raised
Mark 11: 20 – 26	Say to this Mountain
Revelation 1: 17 – 3: 23	The Seven Churches
Revelation 6: 1 – 17	End Times
Revelation 7: 9 – 17	White Robes
Revelation 19 – 22	Who Wins!



For

each selected passage of Scripture write it here: \_\_\_\_\_.

Compile a list of “Words or Phrases” below each column. This should help you “paint” a vivid picture in your mind. Take into account the people, places, time of day, setting, the larger picture and the small details. Repeat or add to your columns as you journal through the week.

Answer this, “What do you...

SEE

HEAR

SMELL/TASTE

FEEL/TOUCH

EMOTIONS

(Tactile)

(Feelings)

# Spiritual Journal

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

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# Project Sheet

What ministry projects do I need to list?

As an Iron Dad

# My Covenant

APPENDIX C  
DEFINITION OF TERMS

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Family** - A group consisting of parents and children living together in a household. God created the family to be the building block of society, the fabric of the Church, the haven for tenderly nurturing and training future generations for His glory.

**Family Discipleship** – Family with a purpose. Intentionally purposing balance and order by training, instructing and reproofing family members in developing Godly character for generations to come.

**Rite of Passage** – A ritual performed in some cultures at times when an individual changes status (as from adolescence to adulthood).

**Spiritual Leadership** – Discovering “where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God's methods to get them there in reliance on God's power” (Piper, 1995, January 1)

**Father** - A man in relation to his natural child or children. For the purpose of this project, when using the word “Father” it refers to the biological man in the reproductive process of multiplying humanity; producing children.

**Absent Fathers** – “Refers to both the psychological and physical absence of fathers and implies both spiritual and emotional absence. It also suggests the notion of father who, although physically present, behave in ways that are unacceptable: authoritarian fathers, for example, are oppressive and jealous of their son’s talents and smother their sons’ attempts at creativity or self-affirmation. Alcoholic fathers’ emotional instability keeps their sons in a permanent state of insecurity” (Corneau, 1991, pp. 12, 13).

**Worldview** - A particular philosophy of life or conception of the world.

**Faith Worldview** – A Worldview that is faith-based, but not necessarily tied to any one religious persuasion or dogma. A person religious or spiritual in nature, but not a committed member of one religion.

**Biblical Worldview** – A Worldview where “someone [who] believe[s] that absolute moral truth exists; that the source of moral truth is the Bible; that the Bible is accurate in all of the principles it teaches; that eternal spiritual salvation cannot be earned; that Jesus lived a sinless life on earth; that every person has a responsibility to share their religious beliefs with others; that Satan is a living force, not just a symbol of evil; and that God is the all-knowing, all-powerful maker of the universe who still rules that creation today” (Barna Group, 2009, March 6).

**Adventist Worldview** – there is no creed in the Seventh-day Adventist church, however to be a Seventh-day Adventist, it presupposes a belief in the soon and literal return of Jesus of the Bible. The Adventist church also has a set of fundamental beliefs directly extracted from the Bible and practiced by its adherents to the best of their ability.

**Multi-generational** – A social group composed of individuals of widely varying ages. Is the inverse of age segregation and age graded activities or events. Multi-generational is all age groups working, learning, worshipping, playing and socializing together at the same time.



**Character** – The mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual. The importance of Godly character is described in 1 Timothy 4: 8 says, “Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.”

**Elijah Message** – Elijah was considered to be one of the greatest Biblical prophets ever. He called God’s chosen people to return to God at the showdown on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:19). Elijah exposed Ba’al the false god to the people and gave them an opportunity to make a choice for the Creator God of heaven. Elijah’s message both exposed the false teachings and called God’s true people to repentance and restoration of relationship.

The final message of earth’s history will do the same. Proclaiming that Jesus’ return is soon and judgment/ destruction is going to happen. Now is the time to repent and turn to God the creator, Malachi 4: 5, 6 says that this calling of repentance and restoration will lead fathers to restore the family unit both physically and spiritually.

**Elijah People** – Elijah people refers to those who are living by his example. Using his simple yet profound principles in everyday action. Combined with the idea that Elijah’s message is a prophetic message and those who live by it and his example are thought of as the Remnant.

**Remnant** – A small remaining quantity of something. In the Biblical sense, the “remaining quantity” refers to God’s faithful people. “And the dragon was angry at the woman and declared war against the rest of her children--all who keep God's commandments and maintain their testimony for Jesus (Rev 12:17).”

APPENDIX D

ADDITIONAL SOURCE INFORMATION

## Additional Source Information

Adventist Works. I started by calling our local Adventist Book Center, then phoned the following: Pacific Press Publishing Association, Review & Herald Publishing Association, Advent Source, and The General Conference Headquarters Family life Department, all of which told me that no such work exists in the Adventist church.

The Barna Research Group is the leading Christian based research group. It provides trusted data from a wide variety of topics in life.

Biblos ([www.biblos.com](http://www.biblos.com)) is an online bible study resource that has Hebrew and Greek Lexicon aides and word study searches. <http://biblehub.com/hebrew/898.htm>

Center for Youth Evangelism. Established in 1979, under the leadership of Des Cummings, Jr., Andrews University Seminary established the Youth Resource Center. This was the first Adventist College/ University to establish a Center with a focus on the training of students and congregational youth ministry leaders for various forms of Youth Evangelism. The Center for Youth Evangelism as it was renamed in 1990s is still linked to the Adventist Theological Seminary for a variety of youth & young adult related purposes.

Christian Authors (two examples) who teach the home as being central to the spiritual development of children: 1 - Dr. Kevin Leman an internationally renowned psychologist and New York Times Bestselling Author of more than 30 books, provides easy techniques, helpful tips and clear insight that will change the way you look at and resolve the parenting, marriage and relationship issues in your life. 2 - Dr. Gary Smalley is a family counselor, president and founder of the Smalley Relationship Center and author of books on family relationships from a Christian perspective. Among other issues, he teaches about the four temperaments in a format based on well-known animals, the otter, lion, golden retriever, and beaver.

Christian Heritage is a conservative Christian nondenominational group of people who organized with the vision for the God-given responsibility of home-based discipleship and education that is parent-directed, free from government control, and Christ-centered to the glory of God. [www.christianheritageonline.org](http://www.christianheritageonline.org)

Church for Men is an organization dedicated to helping the local church reach more men and boys. At Church for Men, the focus is not male dominance, but male resurgence. [www.ChurchforMen.com](http://www.ChurchforMen.com).

Dudley, Roger, a scholar who dedicated his life's work to the study of families and young people. Now retired director from the Institute of Church Ministry; Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary on the Campus of Andrews University. His books include: *Why Teenagers Reject Religion; Married and Glad of it; The Sure Way to a Happy marriage; When Teenagers Cry Help; Adventurers in Church Growth; A research Guide for Introductory Statistics; Passing On the Torch: How to Convey Religious Values to Young People; The World: Love It or Leave It*; and several other titles.

Gallup delivers forward-thinking research, analytics, and advice to help leaders solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 75 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of the world's constituents, employees, and customers than any other organization. ([www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com)).

Gane, Barry, PhD. has spent over 30 years in Youth Ministry serving in the British Union Conference and South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist church. He was Professor of Youth Ministry at Andrews University Michigan, where he coordinated both the MA and DMin programs in Youth Ministry. He was director of Leadership and Professional Development for the South Pacific Division of the SDA church from 2005 - 2010. (Excerpted from Avondale College's Bio of Dr. Gane.)

Gane, Roy, PhD. Roy Gane is Professor of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Languages in the Old Testament Department and Director of the Ph.D./Th.D. and M.Th. Programs at the Theological Seminary of Andrews University. He was born in Sydney, Australia, grew up mainly in Lincoln, Nebraska, and later moved to Angwin, California, where he graduated from Pacific Union College in 1977 with a B.A. in Theology and a B.Mus. in Piano Performance. He has authored several books, including "*Altar Call*" and the *NIV Bible Commentary on Leviticus*.

Global Family Ministry Organizations. 1 - Focus on the Family; Focus on the Family is a global Christian ministry dedicated to helping families thrive. We provide help and resources for couples to build healthy marriages that reflect God's design, and for parents to raise their children according to morals and values grounded in biblical principles. 2 - Family Life Today; their mission statement says, "To effectively develop godly marriages and families who change the world one home at a time." Through radio, books and the web, Family Life Today reaches across the globe.

The Institute in Basic Life Principles (IBLP) was established for the purpose of introducing people to the Lord Jesus Christ, and is dedicated to giving individuals, families, churches, schools, communities, governments, and businesses clear instruction and training on how to find success by following God's principles found in Scripture. ([www.iblp.org](http://www.iblp.org)).

The John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry, located on the campus of La Sierra University, is a research and resource center providing support to youth ministry professionals, and parents worldwide. The Hancock Center was established in direct response to recommendations from the Valuegenesis research taskforce.

Malachi Global was founded by Brian D. Molitar. Brian is the CEO of Molitor International and the founder of the Malachi Global Foundation. He is a highly sought after strategist, personal coach, and trainer, whose favorite roles in life are as husband and father.

Margaret Mead was born December 16, 1901 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Mead did her undergraduate work at Barnard College, where she met Franz Boas, who she went on to do her anthropology Ph.D. with at Columbia. She became a curator of ethnology at American Museum of Natural History, where she published the bestseller, *Coming of Age in Samoa*. Mead is credited with changing the way we study different human cultures.

National Center for Family Integrated Church. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we believe that the church and the family are holy institutions, ordained and established by the Sovereign Triune God Who created the heavens and the earth. God's infallible revelation, the Bible, reveals that the family is an integral part of the unfolding of His eternal purpose for the redemption of sinners. This great and gracious salvation—purposed by the Father, accomplished by the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit—is in great measure passed on to succeeding generations as parents faithfully disciple the children God gives them. Therefore, the biblical order and unity of the family are crucial to the stability and health of the Church of Jesus Christ. In light of this, we recognize that the family—and especially fathers—are the focus of a fierce and unrelenting attack by the world, the flesh, and the Devil. [www.ncfic.com](http://www.ncfic.com) .

National Center for Fathering. In response to the dramatic trend towards fatherlessness in America, Dr. Ken Canfield founded the National Center for Fathering as a nonprofit, scientific and education organization. Today, the Center

provides practical, research-based training and resources that equip men in virtually every fathering situation to be the involved fathers their children need. ([www.fathers.com](http://www.fathers.com)).

The Nehemiah Institute's primary work is in providing a unique worldview testing and training service to private schools, churches, homeschoolers, and other Christian ministries. Programs are designed for junior high through adult ages.

Vision Forum. As of fall 2013, Vision Forum closed its doors. The founder and president had been involved in an extra marital relationship for an extended period of time. What happened with this man is a prime example of how damaging our relationships can be if we ignore Biblical instruction and put Christ last. The ripple effect not only impacted the marital relationship, it forever altered his children and the employees of the company. ([www.visionforum.org](http://www.visionforum.org)).

Courageous is a 2011 independent Christian drama film, directed by Alex Kendrick, produced by Sherwood Pictures. A film about the importance of fatherhood, how religion and spirituality can help fathers take responsibility for their important roles.

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VITA

## VITA

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Married: July 6, 1997 to Virlyn Tejada

Children: T. Samuel (1999), Isaac Z. (2001), Alexis G. (2004), Olivya F. (2005), Paul J. (2008), I. Malachi (2009).

### **Education:**

2008–Present	Doctor of Ministry in progress; Evangelism & Church Growth Cohort, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University
1999 –2001	M.Div. from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University
1993 – 1997	Bachelor of Arts in Ministerial Studies/Youth Ministry Emphasis, Andrews University
1992 – 1993	Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, TX
1988 –1992	Campion Academy; Loveland, CO
1985 –1988	Sheridan Adventist Elementary; Sheridan, WY
1979 –1984	Brighton Adventist Junior Academy; Brighton, CO

### **Ordination:**

2002	Ordained to the Seventh-day Adventist Gospel Ministry.
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### **Experience:**

2014 – Present	Alaska Mission Pastor/ Church planter
2006 – 2014	District Pastor - Port Orchard, Belfair & Silverdale, WA
2005 – 2006	Associate Pastor - Bremerton, WA
2004 – 2005	Camp Manager - Glacier View Ranch; Ward, CO
2002 – 2004	Youth Director - Rocky Mountain Conference; Denver, CO
2001 – 2002	Associate Pastor - Denver South, Denver, CO
1997 – 1999	District Pastor - North Western Wyoming (5 Churches)