

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Creating and Implementing a Mentorship Ministry for New Believers

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

by

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Abstract

A major spiritual crisis exists in the Christian church due to the lack of care and attention given to new believers. Although many churches provide conversion opportunities, they may not prioritize discipleship and support for those who are new to the faith. Consequently, some new believers resign their faith when faced with difficulties, while others may struggle without crucial elements of their faith and doctrine, causing obstacles in their future spiritual journeys. This thesis project argues that having a New Believers Mentorship Ministry is vital and effective in addressing these issues.

The project coordinator has three specific expectations for the project. First, the project coordinator recruited eight candidates, who were evaluated and matched as mentors and mentees based on criteria, forming four groups. Second, the project coordinator trained the mentors and established an eight-week mentoring session via Zoom based on a new believer curriculum. The curriculum consisted of weekly readings in Mark, introductory biblical topics, study questions, and prayer. Lastly, the project coordinator evaluated the participants using assessments, interviews, and focus groups in order to assess the progress of the new believers and adjust aspects of the project. The project coordinator focused research on creating a mentoring culture within the local church, mentor-mentee matching, and a new believer curriculum focused on a mentoring partnership. The evaluation portion of the project revealed a notable increase in the self-assurance and spiritual development of both new believers and their mentors.

Key Words: Discipleship, mentor, mentee, new believer, spiritual maturity

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Abbreviations

CAYM	<i>Christian Association of Youth Mentoring</i>
CFC	<i>Changing the Face of Christianity</i>
DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
ESV	<i>English Standard Version</i>
HNBOC	<i>Harvest New Believer's Online Course</i>
NBFH	<i>New Believer's Friend Handbook</i>
NBMM	<i>New Believer's Mentorship Ministry</i>
NIV	<i>New International Version</i>
TBCC	<i>The Bridge Community Church</i>

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since the formation of the Christian Church, mentorship has been practiced and has proven to be an effective form of discipling individuals in Scripture.¹ While discipleship through the avenue of mentorship continues to be promoted and practiced in local congregations, some churches have moved away from one-on-one discipleship to a singular emphasis of classroom or group discipleship.² While these forms of discipleship can still prove effective, one-on-one care, encouragement, and guidance over a period of time have proven to be an impactful experience in the life of a new believer.³ Relationships fashioned through mentorship produce a fertile environment, allowing spiritual growth and health in the life of the mentee.⁴

One of the great spiritual tragedies within the church is the lack of concern and personal attention to new believers.⁵ While God remains a believer's ultimate form of dependence, spiritual mentors can provide new believers the necessary care they need at a very crucial time in their lives. New believers who come to the faith are similar to infants who depend on their parents for nurturing and care. While God provides the growth, the church is called to plant the seeds and continually water the soil (1 Cor 3:5-6, English Standard Version). The term new

¹ Phil A. Newton, *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2017), 17.

² “New Research on the State of Discipleship.” Barna Group, Last modified December 1, 2015. <https://www.barna.com/research/new-research-on-the-state-of-discipleship/>.

³ Kate Harmon Siberine and Lisa Kimball, “Confirming Mentoring,” *Theology Today* 76, no. 1 (2019): pp. 38-49, doi:10.1177/0040573619826950.

⁴ Bryan Miller, “River of Hope Portrait - Baptized for Life,” The Confirmation Project, Last modified December 1, 2016, <https://baptizedforlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/RiverOfHope.pdf>.

⁵ Charles T. Crabtree and Rebecca Guillion, *The New Believer's Friend Handbook* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2007), iii.

believer in this project encompasses individuals who recently converted to Christianity and individuals who have been in the faith but never received an intentional time of discipleship.

Mentorship ministry was prevalent in the New Testament and one of the primary means of discipleship consisting of caring for and training those in the faith.⁶ Mentorship does not replace discipleship; rather, it provides an avenue for discipleship to take place effectively in the life of a new believer. Mentorship provides new believers with intentional spiritual care and should remain essential if the church desires to raise up healthy followers of Jesus, desiring to fulfill the Great Commission, Jesus' mission to the church.⁷

The introductory chapter of this action research project presents the ministry context, problem, purpose, and thesis statement. The ministry context provides the reader with the setting and background for the research project. Similarly, the problem statement presents the issue within the ministry context, while the purpose statement provides the proposed solution for the issue. Moreover, the introductory chapter presents the basic assumptions, definitions, limitations, and delimitations to be considered for the project. Lastly, the thesis provides the results of the proposed solution once it has been established in the ministry context.

Ministry Context

On March 20th, 2016, fifteen members, along with the new lead pastor and his wife, transplanted from their current church and launched The Bridge Community Church (TBCC) in Anaheim, CA. Demonstrating Jesus in a community was the desire of the church, and TBCC

⁶ Fraser Keay, *Mentoring Ministry: How God Can Use You to Shape the Following Generations* (GB, UK: Illumine Press, 2019), 33.

⁷ Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 17.

believed it was doing that when the congregation moved into the West Anaheim Community.⁸ Planting TBCC, with its frequent gatherings and ministry opportunities, created an excellent environment for the launch team to make connections and naturally reach out to the local community. The lead pastor trained and empowered the leadership team to help carry the weight of the ministry.⁹ The launch team quickly transformed into much of the leadership team as team members began to discover the specific area of ministry they would serve. The church launch team comprised a few single young adults and one person over sixty years old; however, most of the team comprised married couples with small children. Having children in the church plant from the beginning was a benefit as the launch team understood the importance of the children's ministry and the goal of creating healthy families within the church. The launch team comprised mostly Caucasian and Hispanic believers from varying walks of life. The eclectic group added diversity to the church, creating a wider reach to the friends and family they would invite and the potential impact they would have on the community. As the church grew, team members began to invite their unchurched friends and family. From the launch of the church, the leadership team desired to create a church culture of inviting friends and family to events and services at TBCC.¹⁰ Visitors comprised mostly single young adults, young families, and community members.

TBCC was predominantly a community center church meeting primarily in local community centers in Anaheim, CA. TBCC started in a community center in downtown Anaheim and a year later moved to an advantageous location at Brookhurst Community Center

⁸ Elmer L. Towns, *Planting Reproducing Churches* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publisher, Inc., 2018), 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁰ Gary L. McIntosh, *Growing God's Church: How People Are Actually Coming to Faith Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016), 126.

in the west of Anaheim. The Brookhurst Community Center was near housing communities, suitable for outreach and ministry to its neighbors. The Brookhurst Community Center was also situated close to a community park where the church could plan events for the community families and their children. The team was excited about the opportunities to connect with unbelievers and be "The Bridge" that could lead them to Christ. TBCC's desire was to become a missional church, continuing the work that the Father began, and if given the opportunity, invite others to weekend services.¹¹ Sensing God bringing His kingdom to this community and responding to the opportunities God provided was the desire of the church.¹² Meeting at a community center provided TBCC with both opportunities and challenges. One opportunity was the numerous community members coming in close proximity to TBCC church attendees as they would participate in events at the community center. In contrast, because of the limited amount of equipment provided by the community center, like other church plants, TBCC was required to arrange, set up, and tear down equipment whenever they gathered. However, this did not discourage the leadership team, as they were ready to accept any challenge, knowing that their effort could provide the opportunity to meet other guests and introduce them to Christ. The new leadership at TBCC created a seamless and holistic approach to setting up and tearing down by training all the leadership in the Setup and Teardown Ministry and implementing the plan quickly. Since TBCC was still a small church, the Setup and Teardown Ministry required most of the leadership team to arrive early and depart late; however, this did not prove difficult as the team did not mind spending time with each other as relationships were being formed.

¹¹ J. R. Woodward, *The Church as Movement: Starting and Sustaining Missional-Incarnational Communities* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 120.

¹² Dick Wiedenheft and Mike Breen, *The Meaning of Missional: A Beginner's Guide to Missional Living and the Missional Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018), 53.

Ministry and Outreach

Situated in the heart of a Hispanic community, TBCC elected to transition to bilingual church services, translating from English to Spanish during Sunday gatherings and eventually to all events. Communicating in both languages met the needs of the community and created a better opportunity for residents to connect with the church.¹³ Similarly, the leadership at TBCC created outreach events that allowed the church to connect and communicate with the individuals and families in the community. TBCC would regularly create free events that would serve and care for the needs of individuals and families within the community.¹⁴ Some of the outreach events included a community Easter egg hunt with food, drinks, and prizes for the children. Likewise, TBCC would create quarterly free lunch barbecues following the service for those in the community. TBCC was also involved in homeless ministry for a period, as some on the leadership team were connected to homeless shelters in the city. However, most of TBCC's outreach took place in the summer. Every year in the summer, TBCC would organize three large outreaches consisting of a community center movie night for families and a backpack giveaway for students beginning school. However, the biggest outreach event at TBCC was Mega Sports Camp. Mega Sports Camp was a week-long outreach event allowing elementary-aged students to develop fundamentals in their preferred sport while also teaching the children about Jesus. Mega Sports Camp would allow the Kids Ministry at TBCC to connect with dozens of kids in the community while other leadership team members connected with their parents. TBCC desired to create a mission of continual outreach as a process and not as a church event.¹⁵ Speaking Spanish

¹³ J. D. Payne, *Apostolic Church Planting: Birthing New Churches from New Believers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 64.

¹⁴ Stephen Viars, *Loving Your Community Proven Practices for Community-Based Outreach Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020), 15.

¹⁵ Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im, *Planting Missional Churches: Your Guide to Starting Churches That Multiply* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016), 242.

and English was a benefit for some on the leadership team as they could effectively communicate with and minister to the parents in the community. While some did not connect with families in the community because of the language barriers, others adapted to the challenges and embraced the changes.

Challenges

While community connection continued to develop, challenges also ensued. One of the prevailing challenges was the language barrier that existed between the leadership team and community families that would attend church. Spanish-speaking community families began to attend outreach events and Sunday services. While this was exciting for the church, it created difficulties for some of the leadership team attempting to connect with guests who would attend. While most of the leadership faithfully attempted to reach out despite the language barrier, some non-Spanish-speaking team members were determined to leave connection with Spanish-speaking guests solely to Spanish speakers. While there were some Spanish-speaking team members who joyfully continued to reach out, some of the leadership team developed an unhealthy posture of leaving guest connections to others regardless of their spoken language. Similarly, while most of the leaders were mature Christians, many of whom were raised in the church, some were not accustomed to interacting with individuals and families from varying social and economic lifestyles. TBCC was, undoubtedly, a diverse church with varying nationalities and languages; however, despite its challenges, the leadership continued to work at creating an atmosphere of unity and love. While TBCC was not a church for everyone, many continued to get rooted in the church community and in their relationship with Jesus. Bilingual ministry characterized TBCC for close to two and a half years; however, in the year 2020, TBCC

decided to transition back to English only because of the challenges during the pandemic requiring TBCC to move from the Community Center.

Beginnings of Mentor Ministry

Although some of the lay leadership at TBCC had challenges connecting with guests, several always did. These leaders, along with the pastor, had a knack for finding the loner in the room, connecting with them, and helping them feel comfortable in their unfamiliar surroundings. Moreover, these guest-aware individuals were more outgoing and outspoken. However, what was also clear was that they understood ministry and found a way to naturally connect with guests. Guest-aware leaders desired to create the most affectionate, engaging, and welcoming environment for guests.¹⁶ The pastor at TBCC would use these individuals to assist with following up with the guests by texting, calling, and inviting the guests to upcoming events at the church. Additionally, the leaders understood that ministry is more about the person than the ministry task and were able to cultivate relationships with the guests even outside of the congregation. Some of the leadership team began to meet with the guests and disciple recent converts.

Healthy Church Culture

While guest connections and community engagement improved at TBCC, traces of some minor unhealthy habits and culture continually required attention. Some of the corrections involved training leadership on naturally connecting with guests, even if it meant connecting the guest with someone who shared common interests with them. Moreover, the pastor would assign the individuals who were already practicing guest connection and relationship building to set the

¹⁶ Steve Chestnut, *Power of Connection in the Church: A Church Leader's Guide for Connecting Guests and Closing the... Back Door* (Keller, TX: Milestone Resources, 2022), 5.

example for those who were finding it challenging. Providing health to TBCC became a church-wide effort from the pastor to each church congregant. The changes involved creating space at TBCC where relationships could be cultivated, teaching the importance of relationships and community from the pulpit, and celebrating behaviors that affirmed mentorship and relationships with the congregants.¹⁷ TBCC discovered that a church culture emphasizing relationships is foundational for natural mentoring partnerships to experience longevity and success in mentor ministry, particularly with new believers.

TBCC began to understand that many of the guests who frequented the church were either unbelievers or new believers. Some of the new believers would experience discouragement and isolation because of the questions and challenges they would face.¹⁸ While there will always be individuals who are not open to spiritual life change, TBCC understands there should not be new believers who resign their faith because someone was unavailable to help them on their journey.

Problem Presented

Individuals who arrive at TBCC may respond to a gospel presentation. However, some individuals who do respond relinquish their faith after they are reminded of the realities in their lives awaiting them once they leave the comfort of the church community. Awaiting struggles for new believers are only part of the challenge; new believers also find themselves overwhelmed with questions, unsure of spiritual practices, and unfamiliar with the church community. Moreover, new believers may be unschooled in Scripture and approach God's Word

¹⁷ Chris Sonksen, *When Your Church Feels Stuck: 7 Unavoidable Questions Every Leader Must Answer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017), 148.

¹⁸ Charles T. Crabtree and Rebecca Guillion, *The New Believer's Friend Handbook* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2007), iii.

with pre-conceived ideas, leading to confusion, discouragement, and unanswered questions.¹⁹

New believers who are not provided a time of mentorship or discipleship may continue to remain in the church. However, they may lack a biblical foundation, and an understanding of what it takes to follow Jesus may prove detrimental.

Mark paints a clear picture that faces the new believer in the parable of the Sower. Individuals in this parable receive the Word with joy; however, because of life's difficulties and their lack of spiritual roots, they quickly fall away from the faith (Mark 4:16-17, New International Version). While a valid concern is the believer's former lifestyle that may contradict their newfound life in Christ, more harmful is the lack of spiritual roots they possess after their conversion. If the plant is not nurtured, does not receive the necessary nutrients for health, and does not deepen its roots, it will eventually wilt and die. While God brings the growth to spiritual roots, it is clear that God uses the individuals in the body of Christ to partner with God in planting and watering the spiritual seedling (1 Cor 3:6-7, ESV).²⁰ The Apostle Paul emphasizes that the goal is growth provided by God. However, he also highlights the partnership that he and Apollos had in planting and watering. It is individuals in the body of Christ that provide the new believer with seeds of spiritual truth and care, which create fertile soil for God's growth to begin. While the seed and the growth are necessary, the watering provided by the members of the body of Christ is essential for growth to occur.

In comparison, when an individual commences an unfamiliar responsibility or occupation, assistance and training are implicit in the process of growth for the individual. At

¹⁹ Ken Ham and Bodie Hodge, *Begin: A Journey through Scriptures for Seekers and New Believers* Green (Forest, AR: Master Books, 2011), 6.

²⁰ Mission Venture Ministries, "Planting and Watering for Christ – 1 Corinthians 3:6-9," Mission Venture Ministries, Last modified March 7, 2021, <https://missionventureministries.wordpress.com/2021/03/03/planting-and-watering-for-christ-1-corinthians-36-9/>, 1.

times, the support may come in the form of patiently answering questions posed by the new worker or by explanations or demonstrations of the new task. Providing an unhurried approach to training the new worker is indispensable in providing the individual with a clear understanding of their new role. The same is true of new believers that come into the faith. Unlike Christians who have fallen away from the faith and returned, most new believers have no prior knowledge of their new faith; therefore, they require patience, care, and an open-ended approach to discipleship.²¹ An open-ended approach is necessary for responding to the many questions that may arise even after the set time of mentorship has concluded. Patience is also essential as the new believer attempts to put into practice the lifestyles and doctrine found in Scripture. Similarly, connecting with others journeying on a similar path is necessary for continued encouragement and health. Newfound faith is delicate and should be nurtured and cared for to grow healthy and mature.

The problem has been expanded as some of the lay leaders at TBCC have grown accustomed to giving more attention to the task of ministry and relationships with other church members than the guests. Even though regular attendees are friendly to each other, it does not make them a friendly church.²² The behavior is evident as lay leaders prioritize their task-oriented ministerial responsibilities, such as tearing down equipment and putting items away, rather than cultivating relationships with the guest or new believer. Lay leaders should be trained and continually reminded that connecting with the guests and new believers is a crucial part of their ministry as it creates an environment that newcomers can return to. Newcomers to church

²¹ Michael Green, *The Way Forward: Nurturing New Believers* (Newport Beach, CA: Anglican House Publishers, Inc., 2013), 14.

²² Thom S. Rainer, *Becoming a Welcoming Church* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2018), 11.

are not primarily looking for thought-provoking preaching or stimulating worship but for genuine churches that will embrace them.²³

While some individuals at TBCC have casually mentored new believers, there are minimal systems in place to unite the new believer with a mentor and provide longevity and continued health to the ministry. The problem at The Bridge Community Church is that new believers fail to become spiritually mature because of not receiving the necessary spiritual guidance.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to create a mentoring ministry to assist new believers in maturing and establishing their faith. The reality is that new believers need a mentor to pray with, explore their newfound faith, ask questions, and build relationships with those in their new community of faith.²⁴ While creating a mentoring ministry in the church may not be difficult, creating a mentoring culture in the church proves to be more challenging. Mentoring ministries often fail as quickly as they are established if mentoring is not a vital part of the DNA of the church. Mentoring ministries require a clear mission, goals, and a process for natural mentor-to-mentee matching. However, also critical to mentorship ministry are church-provided spaces where relationships can naturally be formed and funneled into the mentoring ministry, establishing a foundation for a mentorship culture in the church.

²³ Steve Chestnut, *Power of Connection in the Church: A Church Leader's Guide for Connecting Guests and Closing the... Back Door* (Keller, TX: Milestone Resources, 2022), 5.

²⁴ Crabtree and Guillion, *The New Believer's Friend Handbook*, iii.

Vital to every mentor ministry is a church that practices a mentoring culture demonstrated by the lead pastor to the lay worker.²⁵ TBCC is currently investing time and resources in creating a healthy relational culture that prioritizes spaces where individuals can naturally cultivate relationships, teaches the importance of community from the pulpit, and celebrates small groups and individuals that incorporate practices that cultivate relationships.

A mentoring relationship should be formed organically from an existing relationship that has already been formed.²⁶ These organic relationships will be cultivated as local churches continue to provide space for relationships to develop and cultivate. While there has been improvement, there is still work to be done; however, a solid foundation is being created for mentor ministry to thrive. When a church seeks to establish practices that cultivate a relationship culture, mentor partnerships will naturally and easily form, providing longevity to the mentorship ministry.

Basic Assumptions

The first basic assumption asserts that new believers exist with varying levels of Christian maturity and knowledge. Even though church congregants may consistently attend church gatherings and be connected to the Christian community, they may still fall into the category of a new believer as they lack the necessary biblical understanding and Christian maturity to live the Christian faith on their own. The word "new" in new believer entails a level of maturity and spiritual independence in the faith rather than a period since salvation. The second assumption concludes that new believers need mentorship. In other words, it is assumed

²⁵ Geoffrey Brailey and Douglas Parker, "Learning from Experience: An Evaluation of Christian Young Adult Mentoring," *Journal of Contemporary Ministry*, no. 5 (May 2021):87.

²⁶ Sue Edwards, *Organic Mentoring: A Mentor's Guide to Relationships with Next Generation Women* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2014), 60.

that new believers need personal guidance, teaching, and encouragement as they may not have sufficient understanding of the Christian faith and be unaware of how to develop their spiritual health. The last assumption concludes that church culture plays a significant role in the success or failure of mentor ministry. A critical foundation for mentor ministry is created when the church, including leadership and laypersons, establishes a culture of cultivating relationships, prioritizing guests, and celebrating the behavior and groups of those who do.²⁷

Definitions

This action research project will focus on creating and establishing a mentoring ministry for new believers at The Bridge Community Church. Throughout this project, some terms will be frequently used to bring understanding to mentoring ministry. Essential terms include mentorship, church culture, launch team, mentee, mentor, mentorship, new believer, and protégé. While these terms have unique definitions, they will be used in various forms throughout this project.

Church Culture. The unique expression of a church's common beliefs and values, explaining its general behavior and displaying its unique identity.²⁸ Church culture is the common attitudes, standards, and behaviors in a group. Culture is shaped by the leadership and passed down to the church congregants. Church culture is the way things are done in the church.

Launch Team. The launch team is a team of dedicated individuals who support in preparing for and executing a successful launch.²⁹ This is a team of people currently living locally where the new church will reside—a team that is built from the ground up. The launch

²⁷ Sonksen, *When Your Church Feels Stuck*, 148.

²⁸ Nathan H. Chiroma and Anita Cloete, "Mentoring as a Supportive Pedagogy in Theological Training," *HTS Theologese Studies / Theological Studies* 71, no. 3 (November 2015), doi:10.4102/hts.v71i3.2695.

²⁹ Nelson Searcy et al., *Launch: Starting a New Church from Scratch* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017), 83.

team has one purpose: to help a group of people launch a church. When the launch service is completed, the team may dissipate. However, those who assisted in the launch will, many times, transition to becoming weekly volunteers.

Mentee. An individual who reflects and draws upon their own wisdom after processing the insight and input offered by the mentor in order to accomplish their desired goal.³⁰ A mentee, in the spiritual sense, is almost always partnered with a mentor who stimulates, encourages, and builds them up in their abilities and their unique position in God’s kingdom. A mentee assumes a posture of learning and continual observation to emulate specific areas of their life.

Mentor. An individual who assists a mentee in moving toward their desired goal through their insight and input.³¹ In the Christian world, a mentor not only imparts wisdom to the mentee but partners with them in discovering the right response to questions and challenges in life. A mentor undoubtedly stimulates a mentee's spiritual growth and depth in God while also helping them discover their unique purpose in the kingdom of God.

Mentorship General Definition. It is a process that can occur officially or naturally, allowing an individual to share their experience, knowledge, and skills with another individual for their benefit.³²

Mentorship Ministerial Definition. A triadic partnership between mentor, mentee, and the Holy Spirit where the mentee begins to understand their purposes in God and their identity and unique voice for kingdom responsibilities.³³ The dynamic of mentorship is a partnership where

³⁰ Ann Rolfe, *Mentoring: Mindset, Skills and Tools* (New South Wales: Mentoring Works, 2021), 12.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Chiroma and Cloete, “Mentoring as a Supportive Pedagogy in Theological Training.”

³³ Nathan Hussaini Chiroma, “The Role of Mentoring in Adolescents’ Spiritual Formation,” *Journal of Youth and Theology* 14, no. 1 (November 2015): pp. 72-90, doi:10.1163/24055093-01401005.

one individual, usually the mentor, imparts wisdom and pulls unrealized potential in the life of the mentee.

New Believer. The term new believer in this project will encompass individuals who recently converted to Christianity and individuals who have been in the faith but never received an intentional time of discipleship.

Protégé. A person who is a novice in their field who is taught, trained, guided, and supported by an individual with expertise and experience.³⁴ A protégé is trained in specific abilities and methods to emulate their mentor. A protégé desires to become like their mentor in one or more specific ways.

Limitations

Limitations include the participants for the research project. While the researcher seeks to capture an accurate view of the problem and solution, the age, race, gender, and spiritual development of the participants may not fully represent all prospective views. Limitations also include a limited number of participants due to the size constraints of the congregation. Based on availability and willingness to participate, most of the participants will be young adults aged twenty-five to thirty-five years old and a few above that age bracket. Although the participants are familiar with the project's researcher, limitations also include whether candid responses can be expected from the participants based on the dynamic of the relationships.

Delimitations

Delimitations include the topic of mentoring new believers. While there are many secular and religious mentorship topics and objectives, this action research project will focus on creating

³⁴ Beverly J. Irby, *The Wiley International Handbook of Mentoring: Paradigms, Practices, Programs, and Possibilities* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2020), 47.

and implementing a healthy mentoring ministry for new believers. Similarly, the action research project will primarily transpire in the settings of a local church context with church congregants. Sessions of the action research will primarily take place through online gatherings via Zoom. Likewise, delimitations include the number of participants chosen to participate in the project. Four to seven individuals, both male and female, with different occupational backgrounds and various church experiences, will be chosen to attempt to represent the group.

Thesis Statement

Mentor ministry within the church meets the new believers where they are in life, allowing congregants and new believers to find partnership and direction with issues in life and questions of faith.³⁵ It is easy to assume that someone who is attending service, giving consistently, and appearing to have healthy social traits is connected to meaningful spiritual relationships. Unfortunately, this pretext exists in many church communities. The reality is that there are many new to the faith and even those more mature who lack meaningful spiritual relationships in their life.³⁶ Mentorship ministry can fill the need every believer has for a relationship. Mentorship ministry aids one of humanity's most profound desires, and this is relationship.³⁷ In the beginning, God created man to look after the garden, assigning him tasks like naming the animals, which certainly kept him occupied. However, after creating the universe, the birds of the sky, animals of the land and sea, along with all plants and vegetation, and affirming that it was good for the first time (Gen 1:1-25), God stated that "it is not good for man to be alone" (Gen 2:18, ESV). The Creator's response to this profound human condition was

³⁵ Jeff Grasher and Josh O'Hora, *Biblical Mentorship* (Kansas City, MO: Living Faith Books, 2021), 2.

³⁶ "New Research on the State of Discipleship." Barna Group, Last modified December 1, 2015. <https://www.barna.com/research/new-research-on-the-state-of-discipleship/>.

³⁷ Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2008), 9.

to create a relationship for man (Gen 2:20-22). This profound human need has not changed because it lies deep within every man and woman whom God created in His image. Mentorship ministry takes the deep human desire for relationship and community and places it within the confines of the church and one's newfound faith.

If TBCC desires to create healthy, well-balanced followers of Christ, then an intentional, unhurried period must be given to new believers. Similar to a newborn infant's dependence on their mother, new believers desperately need a Christian community, relationship, and mentorship.³⁸ Without the guidance and focused care of a mentor, new believers may return to their former lives because of the challenges in their newfound faith and the lack of depth in their spiritual roots. Mentors partner with new believers to strengthen themselves, allowing them to grow to maturity and eventual health. Unlike a new believer's group setting, mentorship ministry partners two individuals, a new believer and a mature believer, who will closely pray for, guide, and encourage the new believer toward health and maturity. If new believers at TBCC commit to the mentoring ministry, then they will mature and establish their faith, providing continued health to the church.

³⁸ Crabtree and Guillion, *The New Believer's Friend Handbook*, ii.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

One of the major spiritual challenges in the church today is the absence of urgency in caring for and discipling new believers.¹ A new believer enters a local assembly, and after becoming vulnerable and placing their faith in Jesus Christ, they encounter the greatest friend and companion the world has ever known. Angels in heaven, along with the church, celebrate the newfound life-changing spiritual relationship.² Nevertheless, after the celebration comes the challenge of a new lifestyle, new priorities, a new direction, and correspondingly, the natural questions of how to accomplish these immense undertakings. While the new believers may be enthusiastic about their new life change, they may find themselves disheartened by the lack of guidance in their newfound faith in Christ.

Jesus left a mission for the church before He ascended to His heavenly home, commanding the church not to make converts but disciples of all people in all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey what He commanded (Matt 28:19-20). The church's focus should not be one of self-preservation, but discipleship should be fused into the DNA of the church, affecting all it does.³ The mission to make disciples is the primary reason for the church's existence and its fundamental identity, and

¹ Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2016), 18.

² Crabtree Guillion, *The New Believer's Friend Handbook*, 8.

³ Stephen Bevans, "Transforming Discipleship: Missiological Reflections," *International Review of Mission* 105, no. 1 (2016): pp. 75-85, doi:10.1111/irom.12136, 83.

some would argue that all Christians should be mentors.⁴ While it can be easy to focus its efforts elsewhere, the church must recover its identity of making disciples, starting with the new believer.⁵ Mentorship ministry, therefore, becomes a fitting and effective tool to accomplish this precious and essential work.

Churches that desire to fulfill the Great Commission require a deliberate approach to equipping and mentoring believers.⁶ Jesus, the Son of God, selected twelve disciples from among many who began a movement that changed the world indefinitely (Mark 3:13-14, Luke 6:12-13).⁷ The movement was Christianity, and the method Jesus chose to teach and disciple the Twelve was mentorship.⁸ Likewise, Scripture affirms mentorship in the New Testament as one of the primary and effective methods of fulfilling the Great Commission through strengthening the believer's faith.⁹ It is evident in the early stages of the church that spiritual growth was accomplished in partnership with other believers (Acts 2:42-47) and should remain essential in church ministry today. The literature review discusses the importance of mentorship and the necessity of establishing a mentorship culture and mentorship ministry for new believers within the church.

⁴ Craig T. Kocher, Jason Byassee, and James C. Howell, *Mentoring for Ministry: The Grace of Growing Pastors* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), i.

⁵ Bobby Harrington and Josh Patrick, *The Disciple-Maker's Handbook: 7 Elements of a Discipleship Lifestyle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 72.

⁶ Phil A. Newton, *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2017), 16.

⁷ Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship: Moving from Shallow Christianity to Deep Transformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2021), 101.

⁸ Regi Campbell et al., *Mentor like Jesus: His Radical Approach to Building the Church* (Atlanta, GA: RM Press, 2016), 58.

⁹ Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 49.

Literature Review

Mentorship is defined and approached in many ways. Religious churches and secular organizations value the importance of mentorship; however, some entities may struggle to establish and, more importantly, advance a healthy mentorship program within their organization. The literature review covers the topic of mentorship and presents Christian and secular perspectives on how to maintain and establish mentorship programs, emphasizing creating a mentorship ministry for new believers.

Mentorship Defined

Mentoring has been described in many ways; however, while its origins may still be unknown, the term mentorship originated from a Greek poem, *The Odyssey*, written more than ten thousand years ago.¹⁰ In *The Odyssey*, written by Homer, the character Odysseus finds himself away from his home and, in his absence, leaves his trusted friend, Mentor, in charge of the care and education of his son, Telemachus.¹¹ However, in the story, the goddess of war and wisdom, Athene, takes on Mentor's form covertly and advises Telemachus.¹² While the term may have originated thousands of years ago, the idea is prevalent today. Many have offered their interpretation of the word; however, for the sake of the literature review, two definitions will be provided summarizing the term mentorship; one will be a general definition and the other ministerial.

¹⁰ Laura Gail Lunsford, *A Handbook for Managing Mentoring Programs Starting, Supporting and Sustaining Effective Mentoring* (Burlington, VT: Gower, 2016), 12.

¹¹ Homer, *The Odyssey* (Warszawa: Ktoczyta.pl, 2019), 26.

¹² Lunsford, *A Handbook for Managing Mentoring Programs*, 12.

In general, a mentor can be viewed as an experienced and trusted guide. For the sake of this thesis project, a more in-depth definition is offered.¹³ Mentorship is a developmental process occurring both naturally and formally, which allows one individual to share their experience, knowledge, and skills with another individual to cultivate their personal and professional growth.¹⁴

Ministerially, mentorship is a three-fold relationship between mentor, mentee, and the Holy Spirit, assisting the mentee to discover three essential principles consisting of their identity as a child of God, the necessity of intimacy with God, and the actionable work of God already present in their life. The discovery of the three essential principles will assist the mentees in discovering their unique voice for building God’s kingdom.¹⁵ In summary, through mentorship, an older or, at times, more experienced believer takes a younger or more inexperienced believer and guides them on how they can live their faith out in their specific context.¹⁶

Mentorship Culture

Cultivating a church's mentorship culture is essential to creating a successful mentor ministry.¹⁷ Church culture is defined as the unique expression of a church’s shared beliefs and values, explaining its general behavior and displaying its unique identity.¹⁸ Investing in the relational culture of a church before beginning a mentorship program is crucial as the current of

¹³ Jane Westergaard, *An Introduction to Helping Skills: Counselling, Coaching and Mentoring* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2017), 28.

¹⁴ Chiroma and Cloete, “Mentoring as a Supportive Pedagogy in Theological Training.”

¹⁵ Chiroma, “The Role of Mentoring in Adolescents’ Spiritual Formation,” 72-90.

¹⁶ Melissa B. Kruger, *Growing Together: Taking Mentoring beyond Small Talk and Prayer Requests* Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2020, 19.

¹⁷ Geoffrey Brailey and Douglas Parker, “Learning from Experience: An Evaluation of Christian Young Adult Mentoring,” *Journal of Contemporary Ministry*, no. 5 (May 2021): pp. 69-90.

¹⁸ Chiroma and Cloete, “Mentoring as a Supportive Pedagogy in Theological Training.”

the church will naturally gravitate towards what behaviors and priorities they deem as important.¹⁹ A mentoring culture is naturally cultivated because people belong to the same community, relationally engage with one another, share similar beliefs, and ultimately desire to help each other. Individuals engage in mentoring because there can be reciprocal advantages in doing so.²⁰ Any culture, including a mentorship culture, is cultivated when church leadership creates spaces for congregants to build relationships while simultaneously and continually celebrating behaviors they value as important and desire to see repeated within the congregation.²¹

A mentoring culture also affects mentorship matching (matching mentor and mentee). While mentorship matching may not always occur naturally, involving the help of leadership to create spaces for genuine relationships to develop can prove more advantageous. Niël Steinmann, a psychologist specializing in the area of leadership development and author of *Crucial Mentoring Conversations*, asserts that many experienced mentors consider the structured approach to mentorship to be “artificial” and based on a formal agreement, dissimilar to a genuine relationship that has already been formed which can be developed into a healthy mentor-mentee partnership.²² Moreover, Steinmann affirms that some matches are, in his words, “forced marriages” and may prove more harmful than good, making mentorship matching vital in creating a mentorship culture and a mentorship ministry.²³ A mentoring culture creates an

¹⁹ Brailey and Parker, “Learning from Experience,” 69-90.

²⁰ Jonathan Passmore, *Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of the Psychology of Coaching and Mentoring* (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 198.

²¹ Sonksen, *When Your Church Feels Stuck*, 148.

²² Niël Steinmann, *Crucial Mentoring Conversations* (Randburg, South Africa: Kr Publishing, 2017), 15.

²³ *Ibid.*

environment that makes it possible to have a healthy “official” mentoring program within a corporation while still having mentoring relationships as informal.²⁴

When pursuing a mentor relationship, the mentee can begin by assessing whom they connect with naturally and gravitate towards, while the mentor should be aware of the individual who continually seeks their attention and affection.²⁵ Sue Edwards, professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, a specialist in mentoring in women's ministry, and author of *Organic Mentoring: A Mentor's Guide to Relationships with Next Generation Women*, describes the mentor-mentee connection as a “click.” Edwards asserts that a click is a subtle connection that occurs when a mentee and mentor are drawn to each other, followed by an effortless and comfortable relationship.²⁶ Furthermore, Edwards asserts that for many women, mentoring starts with trust; therefore, a potential mentor must be a person familiar with the mentee. The mentee may not know the mentor personally, but if the potential mentor has in some way demonstrated trustworthiness, the young woman will admire her.²⁷ If a connection occurs, a mentor can pursue another time and place where a conversation can be continued or discuss what is happening in the prospective mentee's life.²⁸ Establishing a mentor relationship should also require divine assistance, involving prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is essential to understand that when Jesus, the greatest mentor, selected His mentees, He sought the advice of His Heavenly Father, praying all night long before making His choices (Luke 6:12-14).²⁹ While having a prior

²⁴ Passmore, *Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of the Psychology*, 198.

²⁵ Keay, *Mentoring Ministry*, 77.

²⁶ Sue Edwards, *Organic Mentoring: A Mentor's Guide to Relationships with Next Generation Women* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2014), 58.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

²⁸ Brailey and Parker, “Learning from Experience,” 69-90.

²⁹ Regi Campbell et al., *Mentor like Jesus: His Radical Approach to Building the Church* Atlanta, (GA: RM Press, 2016), 63.

relationship may not be the reality for all mentor relationships, cultivating a mentorship culture in the church is essential to having an enduring mentor ministry.

Mentorship and Substance Abuse

Mentorship has played a key role in the Pentecostal-based recovery program called the Lazarus Project. The Lazarus Project (LP) believes that substance abuse is an unsuccessful attempt to fill a spiritual void that can only be fulfilled by having a relationship with Christ.³⁰ At the LP, each resident's specific needs are known by the director, who then matches them with a suitable mentor who meets regularly throughout the residency until graduation. It is reported that some graduates even transition their mentoring relationship into a lifelong friendship that sometimes even inspires mentees to become spiritual mentors themselves.³¹

During interviews, residents often mention that out of the many activities taking place during their time in the program, their mentors were the most significant spiritual experience at the Lazarus Project. When the mentors were asked to share their goal in mentoring, many stated that it was to encourage them in their relationship with God, which is what will sustain them after they leave the program. Likewise, all the mentors encouraged their mentees to know that there was nothing for them in their previous life but a brand-new start in their new life.³² The mentors at LP used a five-fold approach to the spiritual transformation, which consisted of connection, compassion, encouragement, spiritual change, and parental pride. Through a one-on-

³⁰ W. Paul Williamson and Ralph W. Hood, "The Role of Mentoring in Spiritual Transformation: A Faith-Based Approach to Recovery from Substance Abuse," *Pastoral Psychology* 64, no. 1 (2013): 135–52, doi:10.1007/s11089-013-0558-0, 138.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 140.

one approach, the mentors were used to provide spiritual transformation in the lives of the mentees.³³

Mentorship in Scripture

The most natural means for discipleship through mentorship ministry occurs through the church. The Christian church is tasked to make disciples, continually teaching and baptizing new believers, which are distinct responsibilities for the church.³⁴ Addressing a mentorship ministry and culture within the church can hardly be accomplished without referring to its purpose, which is principally found in Scripture. Mentorship culture is evident throughout Scripture in the Old Testament as a natural response to passing down the commands of God to the next generation. In the New Testament, a mentorship mindset existed primarily in the church to continually raise up followers of Jesus to share the gospel and establish churches.³⁵ Mentor relationships such as Moses and Joshua (Num 27:18-20), Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1:16-19; 2:2-3), Samuel and Eli (1 Sam 3:8-10), Elijah and Elisha (2 Kgs 2:1-18), and Jehoiada and Joash (2 Chr 22-24) were evident in the Old Testament in order to lead God's people and continue His story.³⁶ Early in the New Testament, Jesus established a well-defined pattern of mentorship to follow, selecting a small group of new believers out of hundreds of followers, making Him the model mentor to the church.³⁷ Similarly, Paul committed his ministry to mentoring young leaders and pastors, which may have been inspired by his relationship with Barnabas towards the beginning of his

³³ Williamson and Hood, "The Role of Mentoring in Spiritual Transformation," 138.

³⁴ Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 99.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁶ Keay, *Mentoring Ministry*, 33.

³⁷ Campbell et al., *Mentor like Jesus*, 58.

ministry.³⁸ Less experienced workers such as Timothy and Titus benefited from on-the-job training provided by more experienced church leaders.³⁹ Paul acquired many coworkers while preaching the gospel; however, none were seemingly closer than Timothy, his “true child in the faith” (1 Tim 1:2, ESV), a new believer in Christ, whom Paul mentored for ministry and eventually coached with skills for pastoral ministry.⁴⁰

Although mentoring in the New Testament was partially motivated by a desire to mature the individual, church leader, or elder, its ultimate purpose was the Great Commission, Jesus' command to preach the gospel to all nations. Comparable to today, the early church in the book of Acts assumed the responsibility for training and sending workers to share the gospel (Acts 6:4, 13: 1-3). Similarly, church planting, missions, and church revitalization required leadership cultivated in the local church by authentic mentors.⁴¹ If the church were to fulfill its mission, a continuous line of new believers had to be mentored and developed to meet the need for leadership in up-and-coming churches. Unfortunately, many church leaders have become so preoccupied with programs and committees that they have little time to instruct spiritual children to become spiritual parents themselves.⁴² The Great Commission should unceasingly be the focus and mission of the church, and mentoring is an essential mission.

Mentorship in Past Centuries

Mentoring ministry existed in the early days of the church and has persisted through godly men who have continued to embrace Jesus' mission for the church. Godly men like John

³⁸ Kenley D Hall, “The Critical Role of Mentoring for Pastoral Formation,” *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 11, no. 1 (2017): pp. 42-53, <https://tinyurl.com/4mv6psnk>, 45.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁴⁰ Hall, “The Critical Role of Mentoring for Pastoral Formation,” 48.

⁴¹ Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 49.

⁴² Keay, *Mentoring Ministry*, 27.

Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli were not just church leaders who fought the Catholic Church but reformers who changed Europe's religious and political landscape. Nevertheless, Calvin and Zwingli were primarily local pastors who desired to shepherd their flock and raise leaders to continue sharing the gospel message.⁴³ Huldrych Zwingli, the first of the Reformers, was one of the magisterial Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth-century Reformation.⁴⁴ However, 1515-1516 demonstrated a transformation in Zwingli's thinking toward biblical reformation under the guidance of Desiderius Erasmus.⁴⁵ Some believe that the transformation in Zwingli grew out of his dynamic relationship with his local church and community. Zwingli's renewal to *sola scriptura* was the foundation for his life, affecting those he would mentor and disciple.⁴⁶ Zwingli taught his students the importance of modesty and speech in order to produce lives that demonstrated Christlikeness.⁴⁷ He also instructed his students that Christian education aims to live a restrained, beneficial, and God-fearing life.⁴⁸ Zwingli remains a prominent example of fulfilling the Great Commission using the avenue of mentorship in the local church.

The second generation of the Protestant Reformation was led by John Calvin, a leading French Protestant Reformer who recognized the value of educating and forming local congregations after evaluating their health.⁴⁹ With Calvin's strong position in the local church, he trained the local congregation, believing each congregant should learn to read, understand, and

⁴³ Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 71.

⁴⁴ Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 86.

⁴⁵ Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 72.

⁴⁶ Gäbler Ulrich, *Huldrych Zwingli: His Life and Work* (Edinburgh, UK: T & T Clark, 1987), 83.

⁴⁷ Ulrich Zwingli, *The Christian Education of Youth* (Collegeville, PA: Thompson Brohers, 1899), 81-84.

⁴⁸ Ulrich Zwingli and Samuel Macauley Jackson, *Selected Works of Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531): The Reformer of German Switzerland* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 1901), 401.

⁴⁹ Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 74.

utilize Scripture daily.⁵⁰ Calvin's understanding of the importance of mentorship was so extensive that he invited a group of students to live with him for instruction and prayer.⁵¹ Mentoring pastors would occupy a significant amount of Calvin's ministry and would shape the religious landscape of his time.⁵²

Few pastors are comparable to Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1822), a Baptist pastor at London's Metropolitan Tabernacle. Notwithstanding the years of physical and emotional grief, Spurgeon sought to mentor young men to carry the gospel's message.⁵³ Spurgeon began to train T. W. Medhurst, one of the young men converted under Spurgeon's ministry. The training was so successful that Spurgeon began to train others until he decided to open the Pastor's College with the help of Reverend George Rogers.⁵⁴ Before Spurgeon died, he mentored and trained nine men to plant, renew, and lead churches.⁵⁵ These mighty men in church history did not reinvent the wheel but continued the mentorship practices and methods demonstrated in the New Testament to teach and baptize disciples.

Mentorship Ministry

Creating a mentoring ministry for new believers motivated within the confines of the church can be comparable to creating a mentoring program anywhere. Mentoring programs are intentional efforts to partner protégés with mentors to accomplish a desired result. Therefore, the

⁵⁰ Randall C. Zachman, *Reconsidering John Calvin* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 148.

⁵¹ Derek Thomas, *John Calvin: For a New Reformation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 99.

⁵² Scott M. Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536-1609* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2.

⁵³ Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 89.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁵⁵ Ernest W. Bacon, *Spurgeon: Heir of the Puritans* (Arlington Heights, IL: Christian Liberty Press, 1996), 93.

first step in launching a mentorship program is clearly defining the expected goals and outcomes.⁵⁶ While the focus may differ from each mentoring program, the structure is analogous. Likewise, varying aspects such as texts and curricula will be introduced to aid the mentoring process; however, the structure and goals should continually remain foundational for designing the process of mentorship.⁵⁷ Moreover, well-crafted goals set as the objective will ensure the mentor relationship stays on track.⁵⁸ Some foundational goals necessary for any mentorship program include confidentiality, selecting a set time and place to meet, choosing a safe and distraction-free environment either in person or online, and committing to the decided structure or outline of the program.⁵⁹ Each program may have slight differences in its approach and program labels; however, it will still include a similar structure. The result of a well-structured mentorship program will not only benefit the mentee but the organization as well.⁶⁰

Mentoring programs will normally have similar interactions between mentor and mentee – based on the mentee's age and stage of life – such as rapport, review, agenda, and question and conversation. Rapport involves the initial informal conversation between mentor and mentee. The review usually assesses the previous week's agenda, reading, study, or assignments. The agenda will comprise the current curriculum, study, or reading assigned. Lastly, questions and conversations will allow the mentor and mentee to discuss any thoughts or questions regarding the agenda and any related topics the mentee would like to raise.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Lunsford, *A Handbook for Managing Mentoring Programs*, 23.

⁵⁷ Lunsford, *A Handbook for Managing Mentoring Programs*, 74.

⁵⁸ Wendy Axelrod, *10 Steps to Successful Mentoring* (Alexandria, VA: ATD Press, 2019), 30.

⁵⁹ Ann Rolfe, *Mentoring: Mindset, Skills and Tools* New (South Wales: Mentoring Works, 2021), 183.

⁶⁰ Robert Todd Craig, “Mentoring Worship Leaders to Become Mentoring Worship Leaders” (dissertation, Proquest, 2020), 28.

⁶¹ Rolfe, *Mentoring: Mindset, Skills and Tools*, 175.

Conversations between mentor and mentee should not be arbitrary but intentional. Conversations can be opportunities where the relationship can move towards trust.⁶² Author, organizational anthropologist, and founder of Benchmark Communications, Judith E. Glaser, asserts that when a relationship is comfortable, the heartbeat becomes more consistent, sending indicators to the brain to relax and freely communicate with that person.⁶³ Trust is essential in allowing mentoring relationships to develop into a partnership and not a one-sided conversation when seeking solutions to matters. Moreover, when trust and comfort are created, it allows the relationship to be respectful, open, and transparent even before focusing on the task. Similarly, trust creates a high level of care, similar to a parent-child relationship without emotional packaging.⁶⁴ In a healthy mentor relationship, both parties are willing to be transparent and open to the Holy Spirit, speak the truth with love, and express vulnerability to transform fears into growth.⁶⁵ Approaching the mentor relationship with an attitude of partnership and trust is essential to a successful mentorship ministry. Stephen Edward Burt, author of *The Art of Listening in Coaching and Mentoring*, affirms that listening is also a basic form where mentors create conditions for mentees to speak freely.⁶⁶ Burt affirms that listening involves how a listener becomes mindful of what the speaker is undergoing and expressing in a given moment, allowing the listener to become familiar with the mentee.⁶⁷ On the contrary, poor listening is characterized

⁶² Judith E. Glaser, *Conversational Intelligence: How Great Leaders Build Trust and Get Extraordinary Results* (Brookline, MA: Bibliomotion Inc, 2016), 10.

⁶³ Glaser, *Conversational Intelligence*, 11.

⁶⁴ Sunil Unny Guptan, *Mentoring 2.0: a Practitioner's Guide to Changing Lives* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2018), 3.

⁶⁵ Marion Sanders, "Mentoring Matters," *Christian Teachers Journal* 21, no. 4 (2013): 12–15, 14.

⁶⁶ Stephen Edward Burt, *The Art of Listening in Coaching and Mentoring* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 18.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

by the listener concentrating on themselves, intending to meet their own needs in some way, and reacting without awareness.⁶⁸

Theological Foundations

The concept of mentorship is prominently featured throughout Scripture, with examples spanning from the time of Moses to that of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Similarly, the Apostle Paul's ministry is also marked by occurrences of mentorship. However, if one is to recognize mentorship in Scripture, a basic comprehension of the term and its practice should be understood. In this theological framework, the general definition of mentorship will be specified. Mentorship is a developmental process occurring both naturally and formally, which allows one individual to share their experience, knowledge, and skills with another individual to cultivate their personal or professional growth.⁶⁹ Specifically, in Scripture, mentorship is evident when one or more mature individuals impart wisdom, teach, disciple, or spiritually instruct another individual who is younger, inexperienced, or both. If one embraces this definition of Christian mentorship, then it is apparent that God expresses that mentorship should be done between individuals in Scripture.⁷⁰ Mentoring in the Christian context can mean simply fostering the faith of an individual in need.⁷¹ While the concept of mentorship, as in the example of Jethro instructing his son-in-law Moses (Exod 18:13-27), is evident, this theological framework will only focus on the occasions of mentorship that are either viewed or implied repeatedly throughout Scripture.

⁶⁸ Burt, *The Art of Listening in Coaching and Mentoring*, 30.

⁶⁹ Chiroma and Cloete, "Mentoring as a Supportive Pedagogy in Theological Training."

⁷⁰ Janet Thompson, *Mentoring for All Seasons: Sharing Life Experiences and God's Faithfulness* (Abilene, TX: Leafwood Publishers, 2017), 30.

⁷¹ Todd C. Ream, Jerry A. Pattengale, and Christopher J. Devers, *Cultivating Mentors: Sharing Wisdom in Christian Higher Education* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022), 2.

In the Old Testament, mentorship is primarily observed in leadership ministry in light of the story of Israel, similar to Moses guiding his protégé, Joshua, into the next leader.⁷² However, in the New Testament, mentorship is primarily applied as a vehicle to accomplish discipleship or disciple-making, corresponding with the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). This theological framework examines the mentorship relationships of Moses and Joshua, Jesus and the Twelve Apostles, and Paul and Timothy.

Moses and Joshua

While other Old Testament mentorship examples are evident, such as Naomi and Ruth, Eli and Saul, and Elijah and Elisha, this theological framework focuses on the Old Testament relationship between Moses and Joshua. Early in Israel's narrative in the book of Exodus, Joshua is introduced as a key character closely connected to Moses soon after their departure from Egypt. In Joshua's introduction narrative in Exodus 17, Israel is suddenly at war with the Amalekites, and Moses promptly instructs Joshua to "choose some of our men, then go out and fight the Amalekites" (Exod 17:8, ESV). Joshua's abrupt introduction as someone already familiar to the reader suggests to scholars that the incident in Exodus 17 may have come from the collection of Yahweh war narratives known as the Book of the Wars of Yahweh.⁷³ If this is the case, it may already be assumed that Joshua was not only an essential character in the story of Israel but also Moses' military leader and assistant, confirmed later in Scripture.⁷⁴

Four times Scripture mentions Joshua as Moses' assistant in the Pentateuch (Exod 24:13, 33:11, Num 11:28, Josh 1:1). However, understanding the implications of the word assistant in

⁷² Fazel Freeks, "The Notions of Mentoring and Motherhood from a Practical Theological Approach: Biblical Examples and Viewpoints," *Pharos Journal of Theology*, no. 104(2) (2023), doi:10.46222/pharosjot.104.404, 1.

⁷³ John I. Durham et al., *Exodus, Volume 3* (Grand Rapids, MI: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2015).

⁷⁴ Durham et al., *Exodus, Volume 3*, 346.

the context of Scripture is essential in discovering the mentoring relationship. The word assistant described in the passages is *šāraṭ* in Hebrew, meaning assistant or minister.⁷⁵ While the word *šāraṭ* describes Joshua's primary responsibility to Moses as assistant or minister, Scripture reveals that the word implied more. Scripture would reveal that Joshua would succeed Moses as the leader of Israel (Num 27:16-17). Therefore, Joshua, as the assistant or *šāraṭ* of Moses, was deliberate, providing him intimate time with Moses in preparation for his position. Joshua's time with Moses was evident in the practical lessons he learned while observing Moses and the supernatural experiences he encountered (Exod 17:14; 24:19; 32:17-18; 33:11). One early example of mentorship in preparation for Joshua's future assignment is found in Exodus 17. Following Joshua's defeat of the Amalekites, the LORD commanded Moses to write the occurrence on a scroll. Furthermore, the LORD ordered Moses to "make sure Joshua knows you have done it" (Exod 17:14, ESV). The LORD's command to Moses affirms that Joshua's knowledge and recollection of this victory were necessary because of Joshua's role as Moses' protégé,⁷⁶ and as Israel's future leader, he could recount the LORD's miracles. Joshua not only followed Moses as a leader, but he also intentionally repeated events in Moses' life.⁷⁷ Similarly, in Exodus 24, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up the mountain to witness the God of Israel. While the leaders encountered the LORD from a distance, only Joshua was able to continue up the mountain with Moses, while the LORD gave Moses additional laws (Exod 24:9-18). Like Jesus taking Peter, James, and John, the closest of His mentored disciples, to experience Jesus in His glorified form (Matt 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36), Moses took Joshua to accompany him as he met with the LORD. Moses left behind all

⁷⁵ James Strong, John R. Kohlenberger, and Swanson James A., *The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 1579.

⁷⁶ Durham et al., *Exodus, Volume 3*, 237.

⁷⁷ David J Zucker, "Elijah and Elisha," *The Jewish Bible Quarterly*. 40, no. 4 (2012): 225-230.

other leaders except Joshua to accompany him further up the mountain. While Joshua only lingered about halfway up the summit,⁷⁸ he remained closer to Moses in his meeting with the LORD than any other. While Joshua may not have experienced meeting with the LORD the way Moses did, the example shows that there was no other leader in the camp of Israel closer to Moses than Joshua. Moses and Joshua also share a brief conversation as they move back down the mountain, where they briefly discuss the situation surrounding Israel, specifically the noise they hear coming from the camp (Exod 32:17-18). The author of Exodus takes time to highlight the conversation between the two men. While Joshua misinterprets the sound at camp, Moses discloses to Joshua the LORD's revelation to him,⁷⁹ demonstrating the intimacy of their relationship. Scripture also reveals that Joshua would remain near the LORD's tent as Moses would encounter the LORD face-to-face. Additionally, Scripture discloses that Joshua would linger at the tent of meeting even after Moses departed (Exod 33:11). One may never know whether Joshua remained at the tent of meeting to protect the sacred place or to simply linger to maintain a connection to the intimate presence of the LORD; however, Joshua remained near to the supernatural encounters between Moses and the LORD.

When Moses realized he would not enter the Promised Land, he pleaded with God to “appoint a leader over Israel that watches over them so they would not be helpless, unprotected, and able to enter the Promised Land” (Num 27:16-17, NIV). The LORD then told Moses to lay his hands on Joshua, pass on his authority to him, and appoint him as Israel's leader in front of the priests and the entire community. This final step of Moses passing his authority to Joshua is confirmation that Moses' time, relationship, and mentorship of Joshua was deliberate and

⁷⁸ Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 507.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

premeditated by the LORD and Moses.⁸⁰ The time Joshua spent with Moses was clearly intentional and indispensable to Joshua's growth. Joshua was taught practical leadership aptitudes by Moses, along with observing how he responded to Israel and the LORD. Joshua's season of mentorship with Moses was necessary for shaping his character and preparing him for his calling of conquest and leadership.

Jesus and the Apostles

Jesus set the standard for New Testament discipleship through the avenue of mentorship in the New Testament.⁸¹ While discipleship is a familiar practice in Judaism, Jesus broke the mold by mentoring His students in a newfound way of life, spirituality, and discipleship. As Jesus began ministering and applying His three-fold approach of teaching in their synagogue, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction (Matt 4:23), He amounted to a large following. From that following, He appointed a particular group of twelve individuals to be His disciples. Contrary to the standard of first-century discipleship, in which students would select a teacher, Jesus takes the initiative, and the Twelve respond by following Jesus (Mark 1:18, 2:14).⁸² From that point in Jesus' ministry, Mark uses the term "disciple" for the Twelve.⁸³ The Twelve were new believers with little understanding of the ways of the kingdom of God. In his account of the same narrative, Luke emphasizes Jesus spending the night praying before His selection of the Twelve (Luke 6:12-13). Luke's attention to Jesus's prayer affirms that Jesus's selection was not a random act but a spiritual one involving the guidance of His Heavenly Father. Why did Jesus select the Twelve? Mark provides a twofold

⁸⁰ Freeks, "The Notions of Mentoring and Motherhood," 1.

⁸¹ Keay, *Mentoring Ministry*, 33.

⁸² Mark L. Strauss, Tremper Longman III, and David E. Garland, *Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2017), 117.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

response stating that the Twelve were selected, “that they might be with him” and “that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons” (Mark 3:14-15, NIV). Jesus did not call them exclusively to study but to an itinerant ministry.⁸⁴ While the latter purpose of their calling is clear, the Twelve were also called to “be with Him,” like an apprentice sent out to apply the training given by their mentor. Mark simply states, “that they might be with Him” (Mark 3:14, NIV), revealing that the latter reason for the Twelve would not be possible without the former. While Mark’s motive for the disciples is described in a brief sentence, it implies a great deal, indicating that the Twelve would live with Jesus, travel with Him, converse with him, and follow His way. Mark's account denotes that much of Jesus' time was occupied with their training, leading to their launching like an apprentice to their mentor.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the training was not an end in itself but the beginning of their new assignment.⁸⁶ While the Twelve were trained to be disciples of Jesus preaching the kingdom of God, their training was accomplished through the avenue of mentorship.

The impact of the mentor relationship between Jesus and the Twelve is still felt today. While the disciples were taught by Jesus, their observation of Him may have been even more impactful. Similarly, the dynamic of observation is mirrored in the relationship between a mentor and a new believer. While new believers may learn by being taught by their mentor, they may be even more impacted by observing the responses and lifestyle of their mentor.

⁸⁴ Clinton E. Arnold, *Matthew, Mark, Luke, Vol 1*, Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2011), 11.

⁸⁵ Strauss, Longman III, Garland, *Mark*, 118.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Paul and Timothy

Paul's desire to mentor the body of Christ was evident even in his letters to the churches.⁸⁷ While Paul had several companions and protégés in ministry, none compared to his relationship with Timothy.⁸⁸ On several occasions, Paul addresses Timothy as “his son” in the faith (1 Tim 1:2, 18, NIV). While it is unclear if Timothy converted under Paul's ministry, Paul adopted Timothy as his spiritual son and trained, encouraged, and cared for him.⁸⁹ In short, Paul mentored Timothy. Early in their relationship, Paul urged Timothy to accompany him on his missionary journey, even circumcising him to appease the Jews they would meet because of his Greek father (Acts 16:3). However, it is evident that Paul's request and Timothy's obedience in maintaining the gospel as a priority solidified their relationship moving forward.⁹⁰ While mentoring and traveling with Timothy, Paul undoubtedly trained and prepared Timothy for pastoral ministry (2 Tim 2:1-2); however, Paul also spent a great deal of time caring for and encouraging Timothy. In his letter to Timothy, Paul knew the great and potentially intimidating responsibility Timothy had of passing along Paul's instructions to the church. Therefore, Paul encouraged Timothy with spiritual support and confidence even though he was young (1 Tim 4:11-12).⁹¹ Paul encouraged Timothy to continue advancing in his understanding of the faith and to keep as sound teaching what he learned from him, Timothy's mentor (2 Tim 1:13-14).⁹² Furthermore, Paul encouraged Timothy to set an example to the believers in what he believed,

⁸⁷ Jennifer Courduff, “Community of Practice Foundations in Scripture: A Model of Vocational Preparation,” *Practical Theology* 11, no. 4 (2018): 334–46, doi:10.1080/1756073x.2018.1502542, 344.

⁸⁸ Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 118.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁹⁰ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 524.

⁹¹ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 251.

⁹² Courduff, “Community of Practice Foundations in Scripture,” 331.

how he loved, and his purity (1 Tim 4:12).⁹³ Similarly, Paul also emboldened Timothy to continue to operate in the gifts God gave him and never to give up (1 Tim 4:14-16). Paul demonstrated the heart of a mentor as he guided and encouraged the younger Timothy in his ministry and calling. Paul's mentorship in Timothy's life proved effective as Paul not only referred to Timothy as his spiritual son but as his coworker and fellow servant of God (1 Thess 3:2; Phil 1:1).⁹⁴ The patience and care that Paul demonstrated to Timothy is reflected in the patience and care demonstrated by a mentor to a new believer. Like a newborn infant, a new believer should be cared for and nurtured, allowing them to become mature until they can take care of themselves.

Theoretical Foundations

The focus of this project centers on mentorship. However, the Theoretical Foundations exclusively concentrate on established Christian mentorship initiatives and research that prioritizes mentorship for new believers. Various mentorship programs exist in both the secular and Christian arenas. While the project focuses on mentorship and comprises secular mentorship approaches, this theoretical framework will only focus on existing Christian mentorship programs and studies emphasizing mentorship for new believers.

There are certain online mentorship programs available to those within the Christian community. These programs provide support and guidance to individuals desiring spiritual partnership and biblical guidance or to simply navigate the challenges of everyday life. The online Christian mentorship programs available are similar to those involving a life coach, who

⁹³ Walter L. Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 1999).

⁹⁴ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 118.

aids decision-making and provides direction in life, nevertheless, with a spiritual emphasis.⁹⁵ While some of the programs have a specific demographic focusing on men, women, college, or youth students,⁹⁶ other programs are available for Christians in general desiring mentorship, including new believers. While there is a market for Christian mentorship, few mentorship programs are readily available for new believers, while formal secular mentoring programs, particularly within Fortune 500 companies, continue to increase in popularity.⁹⁷ Most of the existing support for new believers is study-based, to be inserted into a small group semester, and completed in the context of a small group or study, and not program-based, providing a holistic approach to new believers and continued growth outside of the small group setting. The following sections of the theoretical framework present the Christian mentorship programs and curriculums discovered.

The first Christian mentorship program is the Christian Association of Youth Mentoring (CAYM).⁹⁸ This program is for middle and high-school-aged youth who are new or mature Christians seeking an older spiritual mentor. CAYM is a program that pairs a younger mentee with an older mentor to provide biblical guidance and assistance in life decisions, easily supplementing any church or youth ministry. The program includes direction on recruiting mentors and mentees, a screening process for mentors, and mentor and mentee matching for a healthy mentor relationship.⁹⁹ CAYM also provides training, which includes a starter course to

⁹⁵ Diane S Menendez and Patrick Williams, *Becoming a Professional Life Coach* (Findaway World, 2019), i.

⁹⁶ “Youth Mentoring Programs,” CAYM, accessed September 11, 2022, <https://www.caym.org/>.

⁹⁷ Connie Deng, Duygu Biricik Gulseren, and Nick Turner, “How to Match Mentors and Protégés for Successful Mentorship Programs: A Review of the Evidence and Recommendations for Practitioners,” *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 43, no. 3 (2022): 386–403, doi:10.1108/loj-01-2021-0032, 387.

⁹⁸ “Youth Mentoring Programs,” CAYM, accessed September 11, 2022, <https://www.caym.org/>.

⁹⁹ “Youth Mentoring Programs,” CAYM, accessed September 11, 2022, <https://www.caym.org/youth-mentoring-program-training>.

begin the program and a mentoring essentials module that provides training for mentors.¹⁰⁰ The program also provides different certification level packages with varying prices, performing a program audit to discern the program's health while providing peace of mind to the families involved. CAYM's emphasis is to create a successful Christian partnership between a mentor and a young mentee; therefore, it does not provide a robust biblical curriculum for the program.

The second program is Changing the Face of Christianity (CFC).¹⁰¹ CFC is an online program that matches a Christian mentor and mentee who together engage in a Christian discipleship curriculum. The mentor and mentee initially take a "Christianity Quiz," which informs the individual if they would be more suited to be a mentor or a mentee. The individual then joins a Facebook page where they are matched with their partner. The mentor and mentee are then provided with a curriculum that is biblically based and easily downloadable. The curriculum contains mentor and mentee orientation, teaching on being a disciple of Jesus, Bible plans, and assistance in biblical meditation, journaling, prayer, fellowship, and serving.¹⁰² CFC was created for easy accessibility and streamlining mentor and mentee pairing and connection. However, the speedy mentor and mentee pairing with an unfamiliar partner can create future challenges in the mentorship partnership.

The third new believer's program is the Harvest New Believer's Online Course (HNBOC).¹⁰³ HNBOC is a four-week course coinciding with a Bible produced by Harvest

¹⁰⁰ "Youth Mentoring Programs," CAYM, accessed September 11, 2022, <https://www.caym.org/youth-mentoring-first-steps>.

¹⁰¹ "Changing the Face of Christianity." Changing the Face of Christianity. Accessed September 11, 2022. <https://changingthefaceofchristianity.com/>.

¹⁰² "Changing the Face of Christianity." Changing the Face of Christianity. Accessed September 11, 2022, <https://changingthefaceofchristianity.com/discipleship/christian-discipleship-curriculum/>

¹⁰³ "New Believers Online Course," Harvest Online Courses, Last modified July 8, 2022, <https://courses.harvest.org/courses/new-believers-online-course/>.

Ministries that can be obtained free of charge.¹⁰⁴ The New Believer's Bible provides features such as “how to study the Bible,” the “One Year New Testament Reading Plan,” “52 Great Bible stories,” “Memory Verses,” a “Glossary of Christian Terms,” and a “Topical Index.”¹⁰⁵

Similarly, the Bible contains an extensive section with questions such as “What is right and wrong,” “Can we trust the Bible,” “Why is Jesus the only way to God,” and more.¹⁰⁶ Lastly, the Bible provides new believers with reading tracks on different subjects, such as accountability, discernment, the end times, and more.

When new believers commence the online course, they are provided with four videos, which include: Read Your Bible, Pray, Attend Church, and Share Your Faith. Once the new believer finishes the courses, they take a quiz demonstrating their understanding of the material. HNBOC fills the immediate need for new believers by providing them with pertinent information on their decision for Christ and offering a Bible. However, because HNBOC emphasizes the immediate need for the new believer without the assistance of other Christians, there seems to be no long-term assistance for the new believer.

The last new believer’s program is the New Believer’s Friend Handbook (NBFH).¹⁰⁷ This program comes in the form of a two-book study titled *The New Believer’s Handbook* for the new believer and *The New Believer’s Friend Handbook* for the mentor. NBFH does not need to fit into a small group semester; however, it can be offered year-round and used as needed. NBFH pairs a new believer with a mature Christian who together walk through an eight-week study.

¹⁰⁴ “New Believers Online Course,” Harvest Online Courses, Last modified July 8, 2022, <https://harvest.org/request-material/>

¹⁰⁵ Greg Laurie, *New Believer's Bible: First Steps for New Christians* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers), 2020, A9.

¹⁰⁶ Laurie, *New Believer's Bible*, A17.

¹⁰⁷ “The New Believer's Handbook,” My Healthy Church, accessed September 11, 2022, <https://myhealthychurch.com/store/startitem.cfm?item=020272>.

The Handbook covers Christian essentials such as understanding the Bible, praying, becoming a strong Christian, and other similar topics. Likewise, both individuals commit to answering daily study questions, reading the entire book of Mark, meeting weekly to share questions and answers, and praying for each other.¹⁰⁸ The mentor also commits to helping the new believer get involved in church, take initial steps such as water baptism, establish spiritual disciplines such as daily prayer and personal devotions, which are essential to spiritual growth in one's relationship with God,¹⁰⁹ and also involve the local church pastor.

Of all the programs examined, NBFH proves to be the most holistic for new believers. NBFH provides the new believer with vital biblical truths for their new faith but, even as important, provides a partner and guide for the new believer's journey. Furthermore, the NBFH program emphasizes essential next steps for the new believer, such as ministry service and small group involvement. These next steps are vital for the growth and maturity of the new believer. NBFH not only provides the new believer with a mentor but an ongoing friend with whom they can connect throughout their faith journey.

Conclusion

Making disciples should remain the primary mission of the church, and mentorship ministry is an effective path where this important task can be accomplished. However, accomplishing this vital assignment can be one that offers various approaches and challenges. This action research project proposes that disciple-making must start from the moment an individual commits their life to Christ. Many churches continually invite guests to put their faith in Christ, and many individuals accept the invitation; however, in many cases, there is little done

¹⁰⁸ "The New Believer's Handbook," iii-iv.

¹⁰⁹ Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 26.

to assist the new believers in their faith journey. Correspondingly, the problem at TBCC was new believers failed to mature spiritually because they did not receive guidance in their journey. Churches and ministries marvel at how marvelous a faith decision can be but forget the natural challenges it presents.¹¹⁰ Challenges include faith questions, unfamiliarity with the church community, a lack of understanding of spiritual habits, and life complications. If no assistance or partnership is provided for the new believer, they may find themselves returning to their former lives. Mark paints a clear picture that faces new believers in the parable of the sower. Mark asserts that even though they receive the Word with joy, they quickly fall away because of their lack of roots (Mark 4:16-17).¹¹¹ As this is the reality for new believers at TBCC and many other churches, this action research project desires to create a mentoring ministry that will assist new believers in maturing and establishing their faith. Research discloses that healthy new believer mentorship programs have three key components: a healthy mentor and mentee relationship, a strong biblical curriculum, and a plan for new believers' next steps for continued growth and maturity.

Mentorship ministry is a biblical response evidenced early on in Scripture in the relationship between Moses and Joshua, in the New Testament between Jesus and His twelve Apostles, and in Paul and Timothy's relationship. The mentor would train and guide the mentee in each of these instances. However, the relationship would also allow the mentee to glean from the responses and experiences with the mentor. Scripture affirms that mentorship is a biblically-based, God-ordained method for creating godly leaders and healthy disciples for Christ.¹¹² A

¹¹⁰ Greg Laurie, *New Believer's Guide to Effective Christian Living*. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2013), 115.

¹¹¹ Walter W. Wessel et al., *Mark, Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Rev. Ed.) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 133.

¹¹² Dean K. Thompson and D. Cameron Murchison, *Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 83.

mentorship ministry provides a space where one individual can remind another of the importance of God's love for them, which is essential in any NBMM.¹¹³ Likewise, research reveals that a successful mentorship ministry requires a healthy relational culture in the local church. A healthy relational culture is not just a friendly church but a church committed to creating space for relationships to be cultivated within the church context naturally. This culture starts from leadership and trickles down to the congregants and guests. If churches can cultivate a mentorship culture and establish a healthy mentorship ministry, partnering mentors and mentees, new believers will mature, transforming into healthy disciples of Christ.

¹¹³ Alan Noble, "Professor's Perspective: Why Christian Colleges Emphasize Mentorship," *Christianity Today*, November 2017, 82.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The intervention plan designed for this action research project matches a new believer with a mentor for an eight-week period, providing the new believer with companionship, foundational Bible instruction, and guidance. While new believers can receive these benefits in the context of a group or class, a mentor is exclusively dedicated to the new believer rather than a group.¹ Likewise, as the mentor provides continual care, they assist the new believer in discovering clarity in the Christian faith. Although the timeframe and setting may not mirror the mentorship Jesus provided His disciples, the conceptual structure is still evident. Jesus mentored twelve disciples, and out of the Twelve, He mentored three more intimately for a period.² A mentor will attempt to do the same for a new believer. Although the structure of the mentorship program is for a designated time, the relationships gained during that time will prove essential as relationships are invaluable to the health of a believer. While ministries may find themselves moving away from one-on-one discipleship approaches to ministry, the need for human affection interaction is still very evident.

The intervention design will go back to the beginning and discuss foundational areas of Christian theology and doctrine that may have been overlooked by the new believer. Similarly, the one-on-one discussion times allow the new believer to grasp essential concepts and allow the new believer to discuss areas of hesitancy. Similarly, the intervention plan contains spiritual next

¹ Ann Brewer, *Mentoring from a Positive Psychology Perspective: Learning for Mentors and Mentees* (Cham Switzerland: Springer, 2016), 86.

² Jim Stump, *The Power of One-on-One: Discovering the Joy and Satisfaction of Mentoring Others* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014), 62.

steps, cultivating spiritual development in the participants and allowing the project coordinator to track the spiritual growth of the new believer.³ The methodology for the action research project is divided into three parts: recruit, mentor, and evaluate. Recruitment consists of communicating the project's expectations, framework, mentor and mentee matching, consent form, and assessment. The mentoring portion includes eight weeks of mentor and mentee gathering, comprising of reading the book of Mark, weekly study preparation and completion, discussion, and prayer.⁴ The evaluation comprises a survey exit interview, focus groups, and fine-tuning. All action steps associated with the study are categorized into one of these three steps.

Intervention Design

The methodology for this intervention plan has many steps. However, three core steps categorize the scope of the intervention. The three steps include recruit, mentor, and evaluate. All action steps associated with the intervention are categorized into one of these three core steps (see Figure 1 below).

³ Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, *Spiritual Formation Is...: How to Grow in Jesus with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2018), 17.

⁴ Crabtree and Guillion, *The New Believer's Friend Handbook*, viii.



Figure 1. Intervention plan core steps

Recruit

The first step, “Recruit,” is essential to the study as it will determine the eligibility of those who can participate. Two months before the study, the researcher will create awareness of the intervention plan by communicating the study summary to potential candidates through word of mouth. Communication with the potential candidates includes explaining the general timeframe of the total project, the weekly time commitments expected, and the evaluation that will take place. Similarly, the project coordinator will convey the mentor and mentee partnership that is expected, along with the new believer study that will be assigned.

One month before the study, the researcher will begin recruiting potential participants through an email campaign (see Appendix A) describing the purpose of the study, a basic description of what the project entails, and who is eligible to participate.⁵ Eligibility will consist of those with limited biblical knowledge and evident room for spiritual growth (new believer) or ample biblical knowledge and spiritual experience and maturity (spiritual mentor).⁶ Likewise, eligibility will only be granted to those who are over eighteen years old. Mentees, in general, will have never been disciplined for an established period. Similarly, the email will contain a direct link to the NBMM webpage providing general information (see Appendix B). The webpage will describe the general information of the project and contact information in case the participants would like to reach out to the project coordinator or use the page as a reference for the duration of the project. Similarly, the webpage will have a direct link to the consent form, which all participants will have to read and sign formally, beginning the process of participation in the mentorship project (see Appendix C).

Consent Form

The consent form provides the potential participants with the full details of what the project will entail, including an invitation to participate in the study, the expected age, the qualifications needed for the study, what the study is about, and why it is being done. The consent also details the framework of the study, including time commitments and expectations and the benefits of the study. Likewise, the consent form conveys the risks for the study, which are minimal, and that any information or responses will be kept confidential using pseudonyms

⁵ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 237.

⁶ Edward L. Smither, *Augustine as Mentor: A Model for Preparing Spiritual Leaders* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2008), 14.

while also passcode protecting all data. The consent form states that while confidentiality will be encouraged in focus groups, it cannot be guaranteed because of other focus group members.⁷

Assessment

Once the consent form is completed, the researcher will send the participant a link to take an assessment (see Appendix D) to determine eligibility for the study. The assessment will be delivered to four to eight potential new believers and mentors, and the potential participants will have five days to complete the survey. Participants are selected by the project coordinator with prior knowledge of their biblical and spiritual depth; nevertheless, all participants will be assessed. The survey consists of thirty-six questions that will assist in determining the spiritual depth of the participants.⁸ While one assessment cannot fully determine the spiritual depth of an individual, it will aid the project coordinator in establishing a basis for the general spiritual health of the participant. Participants who score higher on the assessment will be eligible to participate as mentors, and those who score lower will be eligible as mentees. All assessment determination will be subject to the project coordinator.

In week two, the project coordinator will assess and determine eligible candidates for the study based on the survey results. The categories on the survey include Bible engagement, passionate prayer, wholehearted worship, humble service, joyful generosity, consistent community, and organic outreach (see Appendix E). The assessment comprises the essentials for spiritual growth, including spiritual disciplines and service in ministry and missions. Participants who will be considered mentors must score an average of 80 percent or higher; similarly,

⁷ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 238.

⁸ Shoreline Church, "Spiritual Growth Self-Assessment," Shoreline Church, Monterey CA, Last modified January 6, 2022, <https://shoreline.church/spiritual-growth-self-assessment/#>, 1.

participants who score an average of 65 percent or lower may be considered new believer candidates.⁹

Recruitment Interview

After assessing and determining potential eligible new believers and mentors for the study, the researcher will select three to four mentor and mentee participants and interview them before and after Sunday morning service to finalize participants. The interview will take place in an outdoor seating area where others will not be able to disturb and overhear and to create a strong first impression for the potential candidates.¹⁰ The project coordinator will determine eligibility in the interview by asking the candidates the interview questions (see Appendix F). The interview questions for potential new believer candidates include but are not limited to five questions:

- Have you ever been discipled as a new believer? Why or why not?
- What would you say are the reasons for your lowest and highest scores on the survey?
- What are your biggest challenges in following Christ?
- What are your thoughts on mentorship?
- Have you ever been discipled by a mentor in your time following Jesus?

Correspondingly, the interview questions for potential mentor participants include but are not limited to five questions:

- What does your devotional life (time with Jesus) look like?
- What are the reasons for your lowest and highest scores on the survey?

⁹ Shoreline Church, “Spiritual Growth Self-Assessment,” 1.

¹⁰ Sharlyn Lauby, *The Recruiter’s Handbook: A Complete Guide for Sourcing, Selecting, and Engaging the Best Talent* Alexandria, Virginia: Society for Human Resource Management, 2018, 17.

- What are your spiritual gifts and abilities?
- Have you ever mentored or been mentored by someone?
- How would you feel about mentoring someone for a period of time?

After assessing the candidates following the interview, the researcher will select four mentors and four new believers for participation in the study. If possible, it is essential to select mentors who are comfortable enough to creatively approach the mentoring relationship and offer feedback ultimately to enhance the NBMM.¹¹ The researcher will also deliver New Believer's Handbooks (see Appendix G) and Bibles to the new believers and advise them to begin the week's study questions and readings in Mark in preparation for the upcoming session.

Mentor Training

Once the mentors are selected, in week three, the project coordinator will organize mentor training for the study (see Appendix H). The project coordinator will convey necessary information to the mentors, including pre-meeting setup, the "do's and don'ts" of mentoring, and meeting essentials. Likewise, the project coordinator will explain that the term new believer, in this project, may indicate a person who was never disciplined and is not necessarily newly converted. The training will consist of the two essential parts of the NBMM: the framework of the weekly sessions and the mentorship relationship.¹²

Pre-meeting setup will include the importance of finding a quiet, private, disruption-free location to meet with the mentor. Finding a location that is quiet and disruption-free will provide the new believer and mentor uninterrupted time together. Correspondingly, securing a private location will ensure the meeting remains confidential per the consent form. The mentors will also

¹¹ Alison Waterhouse, "The Learning Mentor Toolkit," *Routledge*, 2021, doi:10.4324/9781003094319, 79.

¹² *Ibid.*, 83.

record their weekly sessions to provide the project coordinator access to the sessions. All sessions will meet via Zoom.

The “Do’s and Don’ts” from Crabtree and Guillion’s *The New Believer’s Friend Handbook* provide the mentor with a clear understanding of what the eight weeks entail and give insight into the mentorship portion of the project.¹³ The “Don’ts” communicate the actions and practices the mentors should avoid as they meet with their new believers. The Do’s contain the heart of the mentorship gatherings.

The Don’ts

The Don’ts, or the actions that a mentor should avoid during their time with the new believer, include:¹⁴

- DON’T: Smother or overwhelm the new believer
- DON’T: Demand
- DON’T: Try to be a psychologist
- DON’T: Be critical of anyone or anything in the church
- DON’T: Be responsible for them

“Do not smother or overwhelm the new believer” involves doing as much or as little as necessary by following the lead of the new believer and sensing the guidance of the Holy Spirit as you meet. “Do not demand” reminds the mentor to simply offer and appeal to any of the study requirements or counsel the mentor provides. The last thing a new believer needs is harsh discipline or constant correction. “Do not try to be a psychologist” encourages the mentor to refer the new believer to the pastor or pastoral staff for problems beyond their expertise. Mentors

¹³ Crabtree and Guillion, *The New Believer’s Friend Handbook*, iii.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, viii.

should always remember they are the new believer's friend, not a doctor, banker, or theologian. Mentors should see themselves more as a spiritual guide to the mentees.¹⁵ “Do not be critical of anyone or anything” reminds the mentor that they should not point out shortcomings in other believers. The mentor should never entertain a conversation that is damaging to the church. The mentor is encouraged to teach the new believer the importance of leaving things in God’s hands. “Do not be responsible for them” reminds the mentor that they are responsible to the new believer, not for them. The mentor should be ready and available. The mentor should be ready to accomplish the scheduled weekly plans and available to the new believer if any questions should arise or if they need guidance or counsel. However, the mentor should not be responsible for the new believer accomplishing their weekly assignments or the level of their participation. The mentor should simply do their best. How the new believer responds to truth and counsel is their choice.¹⁶

Mentor

On week four, the first of eight sessions will begin. Before each session, the mentor and new believer will complete the week’s study questions (see Appendix I) and read the assigned portions in the book of Mark (see Appendix J). The mentor and new believer will meet weekly for forty-five minutes to an hour via Zoom in a quiet and private location at their preference and convenience.

¹⁵ Peter S Kettler, *Life on Life: The Practice of Spiritual Mentoring* (Meadville, PA: Christian Faith Publishing, Inc, 2018), 14.

¹⁶ Crabtree and Guillion, *The New Believer's Friend Handbook*, viii.

Five Aspects

Each week, they will share five aspects that entail the core of the weekly lesson (see Appendix K).¹⁷ These are Meet Together, Review Together, Share Together, Pray Together, and Wrapping Up.

In Meet Together, the mentor greets the new believer and prays for their time together. Review Together is a time when the mentor answers any questions the new believer may have about the weekly study reading and highlights specific themes the handbook pointed out in the week's study. Likewise, the mentor will ask if the new believer has any questions from the reading in Mark. The Share Together portion poses specific questions to the new believer based on the study and, likewise, asks the mentor to respond to prompts in the handbook. In Pray Together, the mentor asks the new believer for any prayer requests, and they pray together. The mentor can also ask the new believer to pray for them if both participants are willing. In the Wrapping Up portion, the mentor reminds the new believer of the upcoming assignments. Each week, the prompts and questions change based on the study's theme.¹⁸

The Do's

The Do's encompassing the heart behind the mentoring process are:¹⁹

- DO: Make a commitment
- DO: Pray
- DO: Meet together weekly
- DO: Read *The New Believer's Handbook*

¹⁷ Crabtree and Guillion, *The New Believer's Friend Handbook*, xi.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, viii.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, viii-ix.

- DO: Read the Book of Mark
- DO: Share answers to the study questions
- DO: Help the new believers get involved in your church
- DO: Help the new believers take initial steps
- DO: Help the new believers establish good habits
- DO: Involve your pastor
- DO: Just be a friend

Making a commitment encourages the mentor to be available and accessible to the new believer for a minimum of eight weeks. The mentors are encouraged to inform the new believers of the timeframe of their mentorship and also to convey that they will always be their friends. Pray simply involves the significance of praying for and with the new believer often. Pray reminds the mentor that mentoring is a spiritual affair, not simply passing information to the new believer. Each week, before the meeting, the new believer will read one session from *The New Believer's Handbook*. The mentor will arrange weekly meetings to review the week's study with the new believer. The new believer will be encouraged to write down any questions or challenging sections of the session to discuss with the mentor. The text of *The New Believer's Handbook* with study questions and answers is included in the Mentor Handbook. A suggested outline for each weekly session is provided; however, the mentor is encouraged to modify, if necessary, by sharing their own insights to meet the specific needs of the new believer.

Reading *The New Believer's Handbook* encourages the mentor to prepare.²⁰ Preparation involves reading the weekly session in preparation for each meeting with the new believer. A suggested outline for the weekly session is provided; however, the mentors are encouraged to

²⁰ Ralph W. Harris, *The New Believer's Handbook* (Springfield, MO: My Healthy Church, 2007).

adapt it by sharing their own insights to meet the specific needs of the new believer. The new believer is given a portion from the Book of Mark to read daily (two chapters per week). Study questions are included in *The New Believer's Handbook*, coinciding with the daily reading. Mentors will encourage the new believer to set aside time each day for Bible reading and answering the study questions. The mentors will follow the same reading plan during their daily devotions so they can discuss the Bible reading with the new believer. Mentors are encouraged to replace or supplement their normal devotional material with the new believer's handbook material.

The mentor should understand that new believers may not be familiar with the Bible. Therefore, the mentor should be prepared to share answers to the study questions and provide cultural or historical background, spiritual application, or answer any questions for the new believer. To assist the mentor, *The New Believer's Handbook* includes the answers to the study questions and includes background information for the Bible readings. Mentors are encouraged to adapt to meet the individual needs of the new believer and to share their insights from the Scripture reading.

Help the new believers get involved in your church. It is essential for the new believer to connect to the community of the local church.²¹ If the new believer is new to the church, during the eight weeks, the mentor should introduce the new believer to people in your church. Similarly, if possible, they should go with the new believer to a small group and sit with the new believer in services if possible. Helping the new believer develop other relationships and getting assimilated into the church is essential to the new believer's health. Likewise, the mentor should help the new believer take initial steps. As the new believer develops as a Christian, mentors

²¹ Scot McKnight, *One. Life: Jesus Calls, We Follow* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 85.

should emphasize the importance of obeying Bible instructions, including water baptism, and attending church regularly. Mentors should also help the new believer establish good habits. Developing good habits involves leading the new believer in establishing the spiritual disciplines of daily prayer, Bible study, and personal devotions. Developing spiritual disciplines is invaluable for the growth of the new believer.²² The mentor should encourage the new believer to accomplish this through *The New Believer's Bible* or through resources like The Bible App.

Every mentor should consistently involve the pastor or designated leader in the progress of the new believer and seek the pastor's counsel if needed. Involving the pastor or designated leader is essential as it provides the mentor with another layer of assistance and accountability for their journey. Similarly, the mentor is encouraged to just be a friend to the new believer. After the eight weeks are over, the mentor will not spend as much time with the new believer; however, they are encouraged to simply befriend the new believer and be available the way they would another brother or sister in Christ.²³

Implementation of the Intervention Design

In this portion of the project, the project coordinator will observe and collect data on all facets of the project. The facets include recruitment, mentorship, and evaluation. The recruitment portion entails recruiting mentors and new believer participants for the project and providing them with general details on the project.²⁴ While this portion of the project will not yield significant data collection, portions of this process will nonetheless be observed. Observation will involve the participant's reaction to the project, whether excitement or reluctance and any

²² Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 26.

²³ Crabtree and Guillion, *The New Believer's Friend Handbook*, viii.

²⁴ Sharlyn Lauby, *The Recruiter's Handbook: A Complete Guide for Sourcing, Selecting, and Engaging the Best Talent* (Alexandria, VA: Society for Human Resource Management, 2018), 17.

questions the participants may have. Likewise, the project coordinator will evaluate each participant's spiritual assessment to determine strengths and weaknesses in their spiritual health.

The mentor portion will include an eight-week study involving four groups of mentors and the new believer. Weekly observation and interaction will occur with participants in this portion of the project. The mentor and new believer will meet weekly via Zoom to review the weekly session, including reviewing the study questions, responding to questions the new believers may have, discussing the reading in Mark, reviewing the main ideas in the session, and praying. The project coordinator will view each recording weekly, record data, make observations, occasionally offer assistance, and be available to answer questions from the mentors.

The evaluation portion will include both quantitative and qualitative data.²⁵ The quantitative data will be an end-of-study survey (Appendix L), delivered to mentors and participants with varying questions specific to each group. Likewise, the qualitative data will include two focus groups (Appendix M), one for the mentors and another for the new believers, with varying questions for each group. Similarly, the project coordinator will conduct a brief exit interview with each participant, continuing any discussion from the focus group or evaluations, thanking the participants for their involvement, and providing a small gift to the participant, bringing closure to their part of the study. The evaluate portion in the next section will provide in detail the questions that will be used when approaching observation and collecting data.

²⁵ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*,13.

Evaluate

The entire evaluation process will be categorized into three steps (see Figure 2). The three steps are a questionnaire, an interview, and focus groups. All action steps associated with the evaluation process will be categorized into one of these three steps.



Figure 2. Three-step evaluation plan

On week eleven, at the end of the eight-week mentor session, the researcher will email all the participants an evaluation questionnaire (see Appendix L) that they can complete online. Both new believer and mentor participants will have the same questions and be encouraged to provide as much detail as possible. The project coordinator has selected the questions below

using a simple format that is easy for the participants to follow²⁶ and fulfilling the assessment requirements needed to obtain the necessary information.²⁷ The questions in the evaluation questionnaire will include the following:

Evaluation Questionnaire

1. Full name.
2. What is your role in the study?
3. How would you rate your overall experience? Really bad, Could have been better, OK, Pretty good, Out of this world.
4. How Closely did it match your Expectations (1-10)? 0 – Didn't match up, 5 – Was about right, 10 - Surpassed them.
5. What could have been better about your participation experience?
6. What did you enjoy most about your experience?
7. What did you learn most during your experience?
8. Was your experience with your partner (mentor/new believer) enjoyable? Why or why not?
9. Would you recommend this to someone else? Why or why not?
10. Additional feedback.

On week twelve, the researcher will organize two separate focus groups: one for the mentors and the other for the new believers. The goal of the focus group is to uncover a range of views on a specific topic of mutual interest to both the participants and the project coordinator.²⁸

The focus groups will discuss and determine what was positive, challenging, missing, and what

²⁶ Rabi Narayan Subudhi and Sumita Mishra, *Methodological Issues in Management Research Advances, Challenges, and The Way Ahead* (Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing, 2020), 54.

²⁷ Kate Bolton and Ian Brace, *Questionnaire Design: How to Plan, Structure and Write Survey Material for Effective Market Research* (London, ENG: Kogan Page, 2022), 9.

²⁸ Subudhi and Mishra, *Methodological Issues in Management Research*, 93.

could be improved in the study (see Appendix M), along with specific questions based on each group. The goal of the focus group is to be fun and interactive, allowing the participants to build off each other's comments and feedback. The project coordinator will act as the moderator in the focus group, presenting the questions, facilitating the discussion, and recording the responses.²⁹ All participant responses will be recorded, notated, and kept for the project coordinator's evaluation. The questions for the mentors and new believers in the focus group will include the following:

Mentor Focus Group Questions

1. What were your initial thoughts regarding the project (before it started)?
2. How would you describe preparation for each week? How did preparation evolve for you? What preparation advice would you give to the next mentor?
3. What did your structure or outline look like in each week/s session?
4. How did you handle questions from the New Believer?
5. Did you have to supplement the study with your questions/stories?
6. What did you think of the time frame in regard to the content covered and time with the mentor? Would the project lose/gain efficacy if it was longer/shorter?
7. Would you recommend this to others? Would you do it again?
8. What was: Good, challenging, missing, or needing improvement?

New Believer Focus Group Questions

1. What were your initial thoughts regarding the project (before it started)?
2. How has this project helped you view your spiritual life and habits moving forward?

²⁹ Ivana Acocella and Silvia Cataldi, *Using Focus Groups: Theory, Methodology, Practice* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2021), 7.

3. How would you describe the interaction with your mentor? What was special about your interactions?
4. Do you feel satisfied with your mentor's responses/answers to questions?
5. What do you think of the time frame in regard to the content covered and time with your mentor? Would the project lose/gain efficacy if it was longer/shorter?
6. Would you recommend this to others?
7. What was: Good, challenging, missing, or needing improvement?

Lastly, the project coordinator will conduct an unstructured exit interview³⁰ so the interview can be in the form of a discussion and not an interview.³¹ before and after the Sunday service in an outdoor seating area where others will not be able to disturb and overhear. The interview will discuss any intriguing portions of the participant's survey and focus group, thank the participant for their involvement, and provide them with a gift for their involvement.

The Research Project Overview and Design or "Action Steps" (see Table 1 below) represent each action step in the intervention process. Many of the action steps are associated with an appendix page or pages that can be found in the appendix section of the paper. The action steps can be used as a recipe to construct the intervention plan or as a reference for the methodology.

³⁰ Subudhi and Mishra, *Methodological Issues in Management Research*, 80.

³¹ Less Potton, "Masterclass: How to Conduct the Ideal Exit Interview," *People Management* (2015), 48.

Table 1. Research Project Overview & Design (Action Steps)

Research Project Overview and Design	
	RECRUIT
Step 1	After IRB approval, create awareness and communicate the study to potential participants two months before the study.
Step 2	One month before the study, send email recruitment letters to potential participants (Appendix A).
Step 3	In the email recruitment letter, provide a link with general information on the NBMM study (see Appendix A 1) and a link to review and sign the consent form (see Appendix A 2).
Step 4	Once the consent is complete, send the participant an email with a link to take a spiritual assessment (see Appendix A 3) to determine eligibility for the study.
Step 5	Assess and determine eligible candidates based on the averages of survey results from new believers and mentors (see Appendix A 4).
Step 6	Select three to four potential mentors and new believers based on the assessment averages.
Step 7	Conduct an interview by asking the interview question (see Appendix A 5) and allow the participants to ask the researcher questions regarding the study.
Step 8	Deliver <i>New Believer Handbooks</i> to the participants (see Appendix A 6).
Step 9	Advise participants to begin the week's study questions (see Appendix B) and read the assigned portions in the book of Mark (See Appendix B 1) for the upcoming session.
Step 10	Organize mentor training for the mentor participants (see Appendix A 7)
Step 11	Match mentors with new believers.
	MENTOR
Step 12	Mentors will reach out to new believers to determine meeting day and time via Zoom.
Step 13	Meet weekly on the assigned date and time via Zoom and share the five aspects of the study (see Appendix B 2).
Step 14	Observe and assess mentors and new believers weekly through dialogue to detect areas of effectiveness and weakness.
Step 15	Deliver evaluation questionnaires to mentors to distribute to new believers on week eight (Appendix C).
	EVALUATE
Step 16	Conduct exit interviews with each new believer and mentor participant based on the evaluations one week after the end of the study.
Step 17	Organize two separate focus groups to discuss the study: One for new believers and the other for mentors. (Appendix C 1).
Step 18	Evaluate, categorize, and apply necessary feedback from the evaluation questionnaire, interview, and focus groups.
Step 19	Fine-tune new believer mentorship ministry.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The problem at The Bridge Community Church (TBCC), as earlier stated in the paper, is new believers failing to become spiritually mature because of not receiving the necessary spiritual guidance. The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to create a mentoring ministry to assist new believers in maturing and establishing their faith. After careful thought and examining the needs at TBCC, the project coordinator created an eight-week program involving a Bible study, weekly mentorship involving new believers and mentor connection, a scriptural reading regimen in the book of Mark, and an examination of foundational Christian concepts involving the identity of a new believer and avenues to grow as a Christian.¹ Similarly, after the new believer reviews the material and answers the study questions before the meeting, they are encouraged to discuss any question they have with their mentor. Every session concludes with the new believer and the mentor sharing their prayer requests and praying together. The mentor and new believers not only connect during their mentorship sessions; however, the mentor will also invite the new believer to attend Sunday services where they will seek out the new believer and continue to cultivate a relationship.² The mentor will also encourage the new believer to establish spiritual disciplines, such as daily Bible reading, prayer, and consistent church attendance. If new believers at TBCC commit to the mentoring ministry, then they will mature and establish their faith, providing continued health to the church.

¹ Harris, *The New Believer's Handbook*.

² Keay, *Mentoring Ministry*, 98.

The project coordinator will facilitate the collection of feedback from each of the participants by employing various assessment tools.³ The feedback tools will include a series of research activities incorporating interviews, surveys, and focus groups. The interview process will entail particular questions to selected participants in order to acquire insights into their experiences. The evaluations will involve gathering feedback from both mentors and new believers regarding the study's various components and their efficacy. Lastly, focus groups will convene each participant group to collaboratively address a predetermined set of inquiries. The evaluation questions have a broad scope, while the focus group questions delve into great detail. The project coordinator has documented and recorded all data from each participant. All data recorded from the evaluation tools will be presented systematically and through various means to assist the reader in evaluating the data.⁴ Pseudonyms will be used for this portion of the project for all participants to keep their identities confidential.

This portion of the project will begin with the new believers. There were four new believers that participated in this portion of the project. Data will be recorded from ten questions asked to the new believers. All responses will be grouped by the specific question.

New Believer Evaluations

How would you rate your experience overall?

The four individuals who participated as new believers in this portion of the project are Kai, Koa, Ash, and Lee. Each participant rated their "overall experience" in the study, with one being really bad, two could have been better, three OK, four pretty good, and five out of this

³ Leroy White et al., *Behavioral Operational Research: A Capabilities Approach* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 62.

⁴ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 196.

world. Kai gave the study a five, out of this world; Koa rated the study a four, being pretty good; Ash rated their experience a four, pretty good; and Lee rated their experience a four, pretty good.

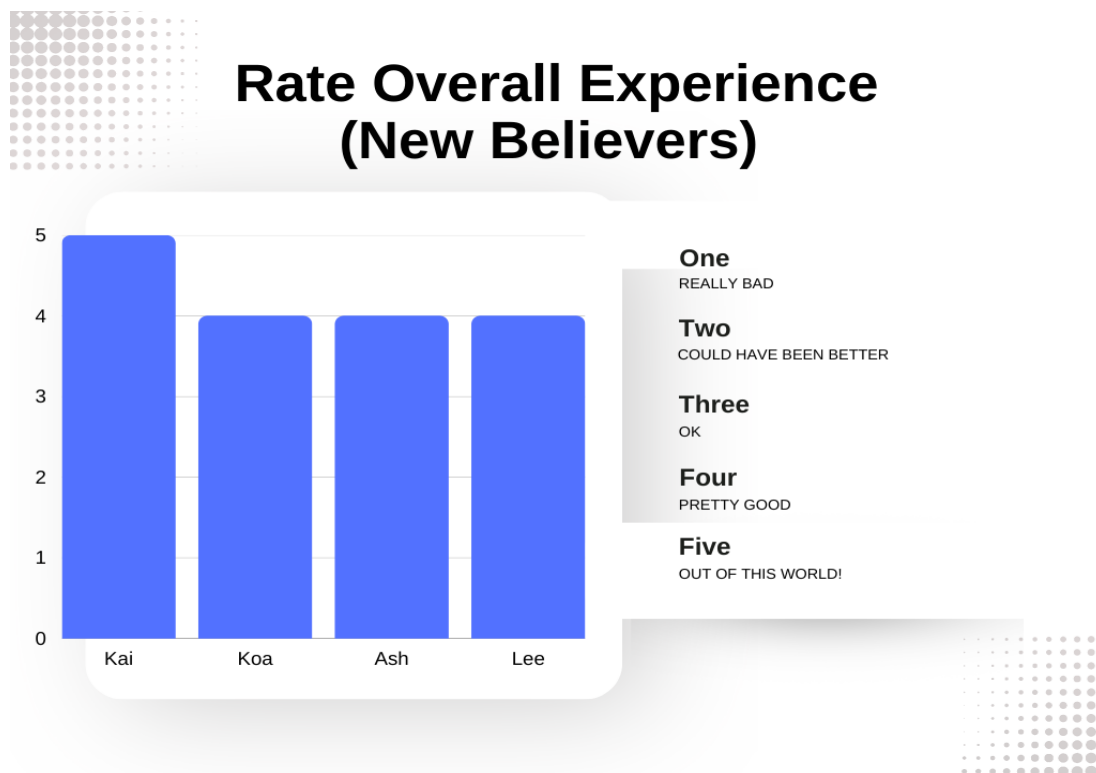


Figure 3. Overall Experience (New Believers)

How closely did it match your expectations?

The four new believers rated “how closely the study matched their expectations.” The choices were zero (it didn’t match up), five (was about right), and ten (surpassed them!). Kai rated the study an eight, while Koa rated the study a nine. Ash rated the study an eight, and Lee also rated the study an eight.

What could have been better about your participation experience?

The next question in the new believer's evaluation was, “What could have been better about your participation in the study?” Kai stated that they would have preferred in-person

meetings rather than meetings on Zoom. Koa stated that they would have preferred more than one meeting a week. Koa believes two thirty-minute sessions a week would be easier for them to manage. Moreover, Koa contends that two sessions a week would improve the accountability for the study. While Ash did not state how the study could be improved, they stated that scheduling conflicts were a challenge throughout the project. Lee stated, "Nothing could have been better." They stated that the experience overall was great, and the study allowed them to reprogram themselves. Similarly, Lee stated that they were able to reprogram themselves spiritually and emotionally, and they were able to know their mentor very well.

What did you enjoy most about your experience?

Next, the new believers were asked what they enjoyed most about their experience. Kai stated that the most enjoyable part of the study was their connection with their mentor. Koa stated that they enjoyed studying and discussing the Bible and being able to share their experiences with their mentor. Similarly, Ash mentioned that they most enjoyed one-on-one mentoring. Ash defined time with their mentor as very informative and enlightening. Lee stated that their most enjoyable experience was studying the Bible.

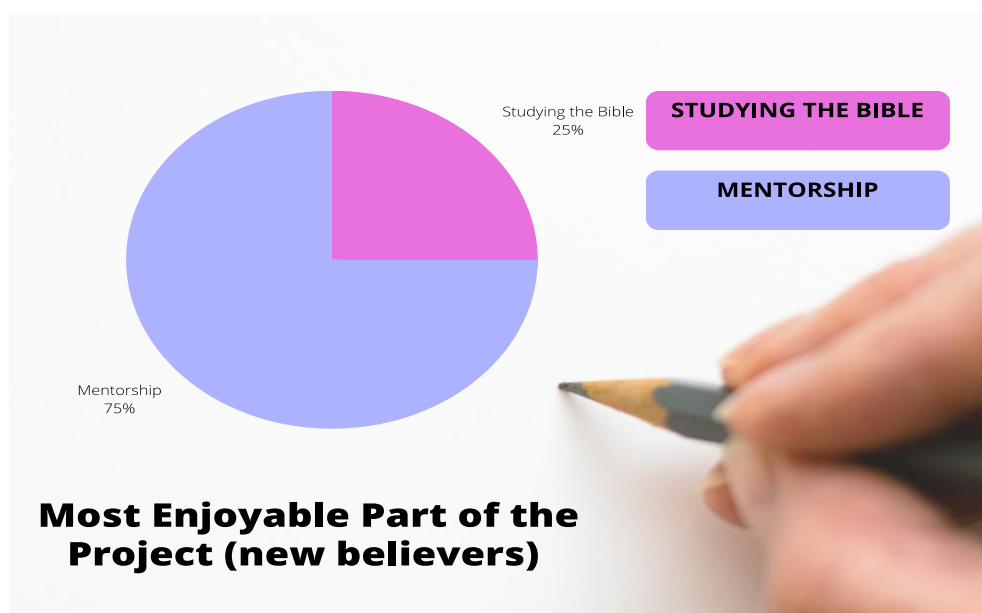


Figure 4. Most Enjoyable Part of the Project (New Believers)

What did you learn most during your experience?

The next question for the new believers was what they learned most during their experience. Kai stated in their mentoring experience that they learned how to be more disciplined in the areas that benefit him spiritually and how to better understand the Bible. Koa discovered that their time spent daily in the Bible and praying helped their overall mood and assisted in their personal life situation. Ash stated that there is still a lot to learn. Lee discovered that faith is an important aspect of being a believer.

Was your experience with your mentor enjoyable? Why or why not?

The following question asked the new believers to discuss their experience with their mentor. Was their experience with their mentor enjoyable? Why or why not? Kai stated that their time with their mentor was very enjoyable and felt very natural. Koa indicated that their time with their mentor was enjoyable. Moreover, Koa stated that their mentor also shared personal trials and stories, which was very encouraging for them. Likewise, Ash stated that their time with

their mentor was very enjoyable, and they felt a strong connection to God during their conversations. Lee indicated that their time with their mentor was also enjoyable. Lee's mentor made the experience a lot of fun while also engaging in deep conversations throughout their time together.

Would you recommend this to someone else? Why or why not?

Lastly, the new believers were asked whether they would recommend this study to anyone else. Kai stated that they would recommend the study to others because they discovered it was a good refresher. Koa shared that they would recommend the study to others because it helped shape and regrow their relationship with God. Ash indicated that finding someone to speak directly into their life was intensely personal but very helpful. Ash stated that they would recommend the study to others. Lee revealed that the study helped them to place God in the rightful place of their life, which allowed them to grow in their relationship with God. Lee would also recommend the study to others. Ash also indicated that they enjoyed the study book because it allowed them to study a few verses daily, digest it, move on, and come back to the Scripture or idea another day.

Mentor Evaluations

How would you rate your experience overall?

The four individuals who participated as mentors in this portion of the project are Aja, Dae, Abi, and Ove. Each mentor participant rated their "overall experience" in the study, with one being really bad, two could have been better, three OK, four pretty good, and five out of this world. Aja gave the study a four, pretty good; Dae also gave the study a four, pretty good; Abi gave the study a four, pretty good; and Ove gave the study a five, out of this world!

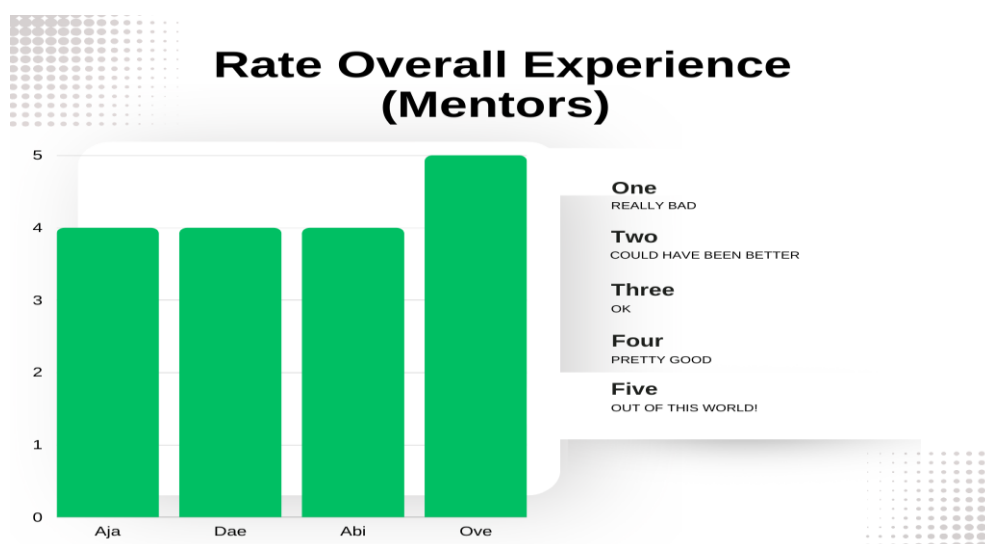


Figure 5. Overall Experience (Mentors)

How closely did it match your expectations?

Similarly, the four new mentors rated “how closely the study matched their expectations.” The choices were zero (it didn’t match up), five (was about right), and ten (surpassed them!). Aja gave the study a seven, Dae gave the study an eight, Abi gave the study an eight, and Ove gave the study a ten.

What could have been better about your participation experience?

The next question for the mentors was, what could have been better about your participation experience? Aja stated the possibility of meeting for a few sessions in person instead of all on Zoom would have made the experience better for them. Similarly, Dae stated that meeting in person instead of Zoom would have made a connection with their new believer stronger. However, they also indicated that meeting via Zoom was convenient. Abi stated that having a mentor check in throughout the study would assist new mentors in their experience. Ove stated that having more time with the new believer would benefit the study more.

What did you enjoy most about your experience?

The mentors were asked what they enjoyed most about the experience. Aja shared that they enjoyed sharing about their faith in Jesus. Sharing their experiences with the new believer and how they have grown in their faith reminded them of why they follow Jesus and trust Him daily in difficult times of their life. Dae began the study concerned they would not be able to answer the questions posed by the new believer. They were surprised to discover that they had Bible knowledge and were able to answer some of the questions. Likewise, Dae shared that they most enjoyed answering the questions from the new believer. Ove shared that they most enjoyed sharing about their personal walk with Jesus. Likewise, they enjoyed sharing tips they discovered when studying God's Word.

What did you learn most during your experience?

The mentors were asked what they learned most during their experience. Aja shared that they learned a lot about their mentee that they previously did not know. Aja also shared that they learned how to become a spiritual mentor during their time together. Dae revealed that they discovered that they knew more than they realized. Moreover, Dae realized that being a spiritual mentor to a person is not as scary or intimidating as they imagined. Abi learned to direct the study better throughout their time with their new believer. Ove discovered that there are people who really do desire someone to partner with them and assist them on their journey.

Was your experience with your new believer enjoyable? Why or why not?

The mentors were then asked to share if their experience with their new believers was enjoyable. Why or why not? Aja responded that their time with their new believer was enjoyable. Aja shared that they were able to learn from their new believer. Likewise, it helped Aja

reexamine passages of Scripture they had not read in a while. Dae shared that their new believer was enjoyable. Dae stated that their new believer was always prepared for the study, which allowed their time together to be productive. Abi stated that their time with their new believer was particularly enjoyable. Abi indicated that what made their time enjoyable was the new believer's desire to continually learn. Ove similarly mentioned that their new believer was enjoyable. Ove specified that they truly enjoyed hearing and learning more about the new believer's story and learning more about them. Likewise, Ove enjoyed watching their new believer grow during their time together, putting into practice the content discussed and the suggestions shared.

Would you recommend this to someone else? Why or why not?

The mentors were then asked if they would recommend the mentorship ministry to someone else, why, or why not. Aja affirmed that they would recommend the mentorship ministry to others. Moreover, Aja discovered that mentorship ministry is invaluable to a new believer or a believer who has never been mentored in their newfound faith. Moreover, Aja asserted that having a spiritual mentor can assist in providing clarity and direct the new believer in the right direction regarding God's Word. Dae stated that they would recommend the study. Dae did not believe they would personally receive anything from the study; however, because the study covered the basics, it was a learning opportunity for their new believer and a refresher for themselves. Abi stated that they would recommend the study to others. Abi believes that the study is a great way to disciple a new believer using a one-on-one mentorship format. Ove stated, "Yes, yes, yes!" they would recommend the study to others. Ove indicated that the study is not only beneficial to the new believer but to both parties involved. Ove believes that a deep

connection between the mentor and new believer was made that would not have occurred if not for the mentorship ministry.

Do you have any closing remarks?

In their closing comments on the evaluation, Aja shared that they were happy to help with the project. Dae indicated that asking for prayer requests at the end of the study was valuable as it provided more understanding and a deeper connection to the life of the new believer. Ove believes the mentorship ministry could be a valuable opportunity for those who may be uninvolved in ministry. Mentorship ministry could be an opportunity for the individual to participate in something significant for their local church and the kingdom of God.

New Believer Focus Group

The four new believers joined the focus group via Zoom. They were also thanked for their participation by the project coordinator. The new believers were encouraged to share honestly and to provide as much information as possible for each question provided.

What were your initial thoughts about the project (before it started)?

The first question posed to the new believers was to describe their initial thoughts about the project. Lee stated that they were nervous about what to expect. Likewise, Lee stated that they were curious as to what the project would look like. Kai indicated that they were nervous about the project and unsure how it would fit into their life. However, Kai also stated that they were excited because they enjoyed being a part of things. Koa informed the group that they were curious about the topic of mentorship ministry and how the project would unfold because they had written a thesis paper in the past. Koa also indicated that they wanted to learn more about the

thesis research process. Ash shared that they were unsure how the project would fit into their schedule. However, Ash was also excited to be a part of the new believer's perspective.

How has this project helped you view your spiritual life and spiritual habits moving forward?

The next question posed to the new believers was how the project helped them view their spiritual and spiritual habits moving forward. Koa stated that the project was a great refresher for them. Koa thoroughly enjoyed reading the whole book of Mark and connecting their reading to the study. The study inspired Koa to spend more of the day engaging in spiritual practices rather than worldly ones. Moreover, Koa stated that the project encouraged them to engage more in habits of prayer and reading Scripture for at least ten minutes at the beginning or end of the day. Koa indicated that they desire to improve their spiritual disciplines.

Kai shared that the study helped them realize that their spiritual life was deficient. Kai shared that the study assisted them in gaining structure for their spiritual activities, such as a specific time in the day to pray. Kai's mentor emphasized the importance of scheduling spiritual disciplines.

Lee shared that the project helped them develop their faith. Lee finds that they are, at times, a doubter and pessimist in life, and the project helped them to view things through the lens of faith. Ash shared that the project helped them reexamine their spiritual habits. Ash assessed their prayer life and Bible reading time and re-prioritized their spiritual time in their life.

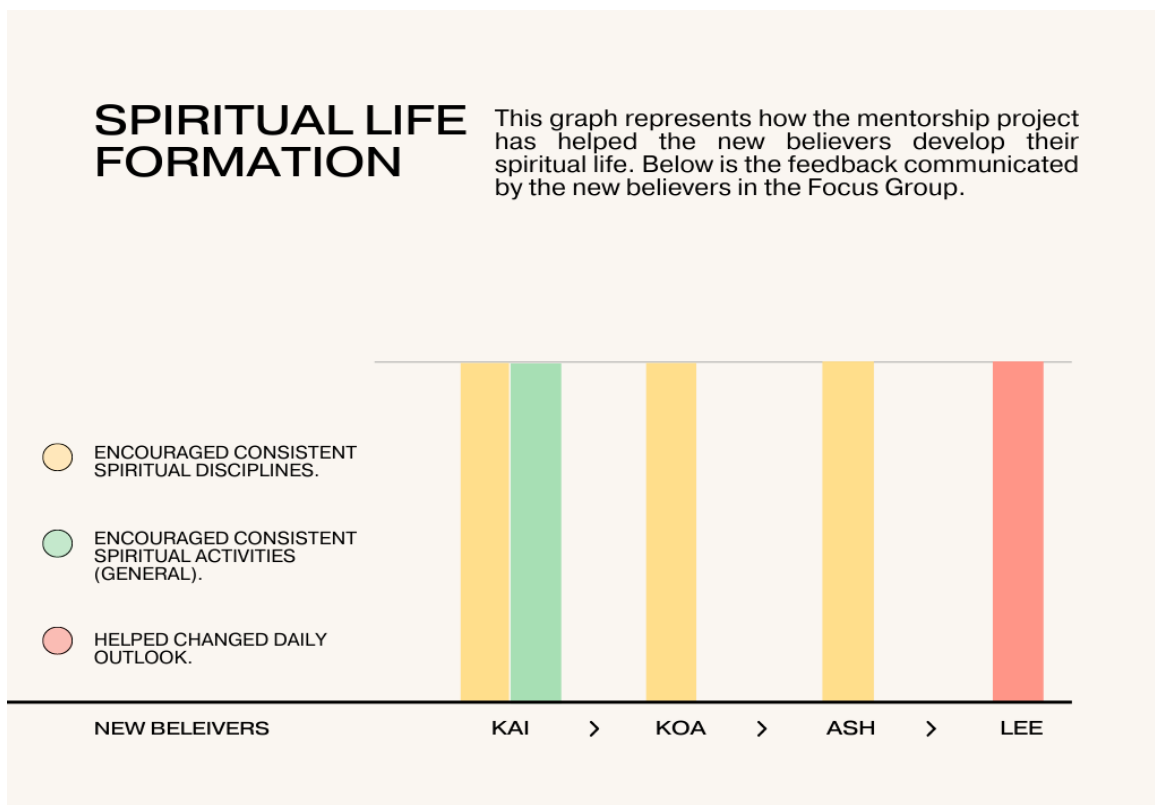


Figure 6. Spiritual Life Formation

How would you describe the interaction with your mentor?

The next question posed to the new believers was to describe their interaction with their mentor. Koa asserted that their interaction with their mentor was very natural, and communication with their mentor was not only in the study but also during the week. Koa shared that they enjoyed prayer time during their sessions because they were able to share personal situations in their life and receive support.

Ash, likewise, shared that the mentoring portion was their favorite part of the project. Ash truly enjoyed the one-on-one interaction with their mentor and enjoyed receiving knowledge regarding Scripture. Moreover, Ash appreciated the personal advice and application for situations in their life.

Kai emphasized that the interaction, even before the sessions started, was very natural. Kai enjoyed connecting with someone regularly, and jointly participating in the study was pleasant. Kai enjoyed their interaction with their mentor.

Lee truly enjoyed the profound conversations they had with their mentor during the sessions. Moreover, Lee stated that they cherished the conversations regarding their personal situations and difficulties. Lee valued the authenticity demonstrated by their mentor. Lee states that there was a deep connection with their mentor that allowed ease in conversation. Lee enjoyed their interaction with their mentor.

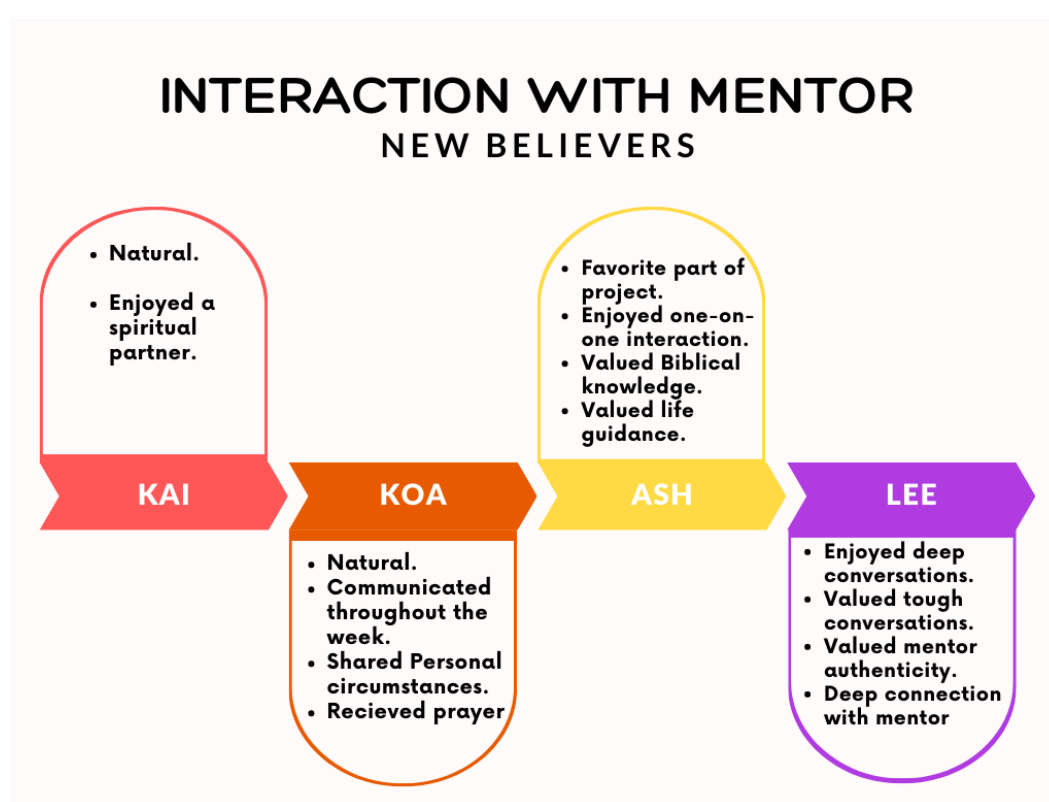


Figure 7. Interaction with Mentor (New Believers)

Share your opinion of the outcome of the project.

The next question asked the new believer to compare what the results would be if their experience were based on a small group or class rather than a one-on-one experience. Kai asserted that the results might be the same. However, they stated that one-on-one mentoring may be better for those who are introverts and intimidated by bigger groups. Likewise, Kai indicated that one-on-one mentoring forces the new believer to engage in the study rather than disconnect.

Koa emphasized that they would not be as open to asking questions if the study were not one-on-one mentoring. Koa indicated that they would have been concerned about what the others in the group might think about the questions posed. Similarly, Koa agreed that they would not want to take the time from the facilitator or teacher in the small group or class. The other new believer fervently agreed with Koa's statement.

Lee agreed with Koa that in a small group or class with others, there is limited time. Lee indicated that in one-on-one mentoring, there is no need to rush, and there may be more willingness to surpass the time because there are only two involved. Lee valued the one-on-one time with their mentor. Ash agreed with all the comments.

Share your thoughts on the time frame.

The new believers were asked to share their thoughts on the format of the project. Would the project benefit if the overall project was longer, i.e., eight weeks to twelve weeks? Would increasing the time of the sessions benefit the project? Koa believes the project would improve if the sessions were split up into two weekly sessions rather than just one. Koa believes the sessions would be shorter if they were divided in half; rather than exceeding an hour in longer sessions, they might be forty minutes. Koa also asserts that they would value the accountability found in meeting twice a week.

Ash indicated that he went over the time limit on all the sessions. Moreover, Ash would continue to converse with their mentor after the session was over and the recording ended. Ash asserts that longer sessions might help improve the depth of the study. Similarly, Ash shared that he would value a more profound system of accountability in the study.

Kai believed the eight-week timeframe was good for the project. Kai believes that the project was balanced and well-rounded and did not need any more time. Likewise, Lee believes that eight weeks and sessions, forty-five minutes to an hour, were good for the project.

Would you recommend this to others?

The new believers were asked, based on their overall experience, if they would recommend the project to others. Kai indicated that they would recommend the study to others. Koa believes the study is great for new converts and those going through a dry spiritual season. The study is a refresher and helps the individual re-engage in the spiritual aspects of their walk with God. Similarly, Koa indicated that the study helped them remember the importance of engaging in the spiritual aspects of their life. The study helped them rediscover the "why." Lee indicated that they struggled on their own, i.e., reading the King James Version, when they did not realize there were other versions. Lee believes they struggled as a new believer because they had no one to assist them on their journey. Lee would recommend the study to others. Likewise, Ash struggled as a new convert because they had no one to guide them in their first steps. Ash indicated that the study provided step-by-step instructions on how to approach their spiritual growth and faith.

What was good, missing, challenging, and needed improvement?

The next question posed to the new believers was multifaceted. The new believers were asked to describe what they felt was good, challenging, missing, and needed improvement in the

project. The “good” responses will not be discussed because the new believers previously indicated what was good about the project. The first question the new believers addressed was what was challenging in the study. Ash and Kai both indicated that scheduling was the most challenging. Finding a time that worked for both the mentor and themselves was difficult as both parties were very busy. Similarly, Koa stated that being “flexible and adaptable” was the most challenging for them. Koa’s statement was primarily focused on scheduling as well. Lastly, Lee stated that vulnerability was a challenge for them at the beginning of the sessions. However, towards the end of the study, Lee’s challenge was not being too emotional as the study was having a positive effect on them.

The new believers subsequently discussed what they felt was missing from the study. Kai asserted that the study would have been more beneficial in person. Kai believes that the sessions would be more intimate and that a deeper connection would be experienced if the sessions were in person. Koa indicated that an in-person meeting would be beneficial if the location provided an opportunity for them to be vulnerable. Koa emphasized that they felt comfortable on Zoom, and they were able to be vulnerable and share sensitive topics. Ash believes that an accountability portion would bring value to the study. Ash described that some sort of “check-in” with predetermined questions would elevate the study. The “what needed to be improved” responses will not be discussed because the new believers felt they already addressed this question.

Mentors Focus Group

The four project mentors joined the focus group via Zoom. They were thanked for their participation by the project coordinator. The mentors were encouraged to share honestly and to provide as much information as possible for each question provided.

What were your initial thoughts about the project (before it started)?

The mentors were asked to share their initial thoughts at the outset of the project. Dae shared that they were worried about the questions they would be asked. Dae was primarily concerned about whether they would be able to answer the questions being asked by the new believer.

Aja indicated that they were nervous. Like Dae, Aja was uneasy about answering questions posed by their new believer. Ove's primary concern was having enough time in their busy schedule. Ove wanted to make sure they had sufficient time to prepare for their sessions and have enough time with their mentor. Abi was excited about the possibility of mentorship.

How would you describe preparation?

The mentors were then asked to describe the preparation for their sessions. Likewise, they were asked how preparation evolved as the project commenced and what advice they would give to the up-and-coming mentors. Aja shared they would read through the study before the meeting with the mentor. As the study progressed, Aja would begin to gauge what questions their mentee asked to better prepare to answer the questions.

Abi did not thoroughly read the manual or watch the complete training video. Abi started the study incorrectly but was able to adjust after the first few sessions, and the study was easier to manage. Abi mentioned that their mentee was spontaneous with asking questions and was able to better anticipate the questions being presented. Dae's mentee did not ask any questions; however, they were always prepared, completing all their work in advance. Dae realized that they needed to be as prepared if they wanted the study to go well. Ove indicated that they would highlight and circle the question they wanted to cover with their new believer. Moreover, Dae

would seek to discover the heart of the lesson while preparing for the session. Discovering the heart of the lesson allowed Dae to emphasize it during the session.

What was your approach or structure to the study?

The next question the mentors were asked was to describe their approach to the study or what structure did they follow when meeting with their new believers. Dae shared that they followed the exact steps of the study according to the book. Dae would ask most but not all the questions in the study, many times share a personal story, and then pray. Abi started doing the Bible reading together with their new believer; however, after realizing that was taking too much time, they did the Bible reading on their own. Ove indicated that they would pray to begin the study and follow the questions in the study. Ove stated that they truly enjoyed the questions presented by their new believer.

Do you think the study textbook was effective? Did you enjoy it?

The mentors were then invited to share their thoughts on the effectiveness of the study and whether they had enjoyed it. Abi expressed contentment with the study, sharing that it had accomplished its goal of presenting the basics of Scripture. Further, Abi mentioned that the questions posed in the study, while simple, helped spark discussions that proved beneficial to the sessions. Aja also valued the study, sharing that it provided a solid foundation for further exploration of Scripture. The questions presented during the study also helped to deepen their understanding of the readings in Mark. Dae expressed appreciation for the book's provision of answers to the questions, which increased Dae's confidence in navigating the study. Overall, the mentors expressed approval with the study and found it to be a valuable experience.

How did you handle questions presented by the new believer?

The mentors were then asked to share how they responded to the questions presented by the new believers. Dae indicated that their mentee would not ask many questions in the study. Ove shared that their new believer would ask questions. However, while their questions would be biblically based, they would be outside of the weekly study material. Ove asserted that they would reference the Bible in their responses to their new believer. Moreover, Ove would provide their new believer with a good deal of practical steps on how to read and interpret Scripture on their own. Aja shared that they were asked a lot of questions from their mentee and initially could not answer some of them. However, Aja would look up the questions at home and would text the response to their mentee during the week. As the study progressed, Aja would begin to anticipate the questions their mentee would ask and prepare for them. Aja also encouraged their new believer to purchase a Study Bible to help them in their biblical knowledge.

What did you think of the time frame?

The next question the mentors were asked was in regard to the length of the project. The mentors were asked to give input on the effectiveness of the length of the project in regard to the overall time of the entire project, along with the amount of time spent in each session. The project was an eight-week study, with each session being, in general, forty-five minutes to an hour.

Dae initially considered forty-five minutes would be too long to meet. However, after meeting with their new believer, they discovered that the time was easier to fill than they originally believed and that the time would go fast. Abi asserted that a time frame of forty-five minutes to an hour was a "perfect" time frame. Abi indicated that the forty-five-minute mark was easy to reach and removing time from each session would not be sufficient to cover the

necessary material and conversate with their new believer. Aja felt that forty-five to sixty minutes was a good time frame. However, at times, they would exceed the sixty-minute time frame. Aja indicated that the study was a good commencement for the new believers; however, they felt that additional material and time should be spent with a new convert. Ove shared Aja's belief that the study was a great commencement but should be supplemented with additional material and time with the new believer.

Would you recommend the study to others? Would you do the study again?

The mentors were then asked to share if they would recommend the study to others based on their experience and interaction with it. Ove stated that they “loved the study.” Ove affirmed that seeing their new believer apply the spiritual, practical steps offered was encouraging. Ove asserted that it was encouraging to know that they could help someone spiritually. Ove believes there are others in the congregation who have the experience and knowledge to assist other new believers in their journey. Dae indicated that they have biblical knowledge and Christian experience, but they never had an avenue to pass it on to others. Dae was pleasantly surprised at how much scriptural knowledge and Christian experience they possessed. Moreover, Dae shared that they would recommend the study to others. Aja shared that the study was not only beneficial to the new believer but for the mentor as well. Aja was encouraged and reminded of God’s goodness as they shared their personal stories with their new believer. Likewise, seeing their new believer relate to the stories was particularly special for Aja. Abi indicated that they would recommend the study to others and participate again if the opportunity presented itself.

What was good, missing, challenging, and needed improvement?

The last question the mentors were asked was to share what was good, missing, challenging, and needed improvement in the study (if not already previously mentioned). Abi indicated that scheduling at times was challenging with his new believer. Aja shared that having a few sessions in person rather than all on Zoom would provide a more personal touch and some more hands-on teaching with their new believer. Similarly, Dae indicated that meeting in person would have provided a richer time together. Ove asserted that offering the option of doing Zoom with competing schedules would be beneficial. Likewise, Ove asserted that offering an in-person option would be more prudent so that all desiring to participate can without any impedance. Aja, Abi, and Dae agreed with Ove's comment about having an option of in-person or Zoom for the study.

Conclusion

The feedback received from both new believers and mentors was evaluated through the implementation of various assessment tools, including evaluations and focus groups.⁵ The results of the feedback from the mentors and mentees were largely positive, with suggestions for minor changes in the mentor training and the method of accomplishing the sessions. The mentor training was challenging for the mentors because the study did not arrive on time. The mentors underwent training on the framework of the sessions and the appropriate methods of engaging with the new believer.⁶ However, the absence of the book made it challenging for them to acquire a solid understanding of the study. The project coordinator will ensure that the mentors receive their books prior to the training session. During the discussion, some mentors and new

⁵ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 196.

⁶ Daniel W. Bixby, *Product Training for the Technical Expert: The Art of Developing and Delivering Hands-on Learning* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018), 43.

believers proposed having in-person sessions instead of using Zoom. However, after further consideration, the convenience of Zoom gatherings became apparent to the new believers. They decided that a hybrid approach, combining both in-person and Zoom sessions, might be more beneficial. The mentors emphasized that the decision should be left to the participants to ensure that everyone could participate in the study.⁷

While there were minor challenges in the study, the positive feedback seemed to outweigh the negative. The new believers discovered crucial biblical truths and the importance of becoming disciples of Jesus through reading the book of Mark. Furthermore, the mentor and mentee formed a connection that is likely to extend beyond their meetings. The mentors developed confidence in their ability to guide spiritually and biblically, while the new believers discovered spiritual habits and a desire to delve deeper into them. It appears that a passion for a deeper relationship with Christ and Christian community was ignited in the new believers.

The feedback provided by the participants in the project revealed several recurring themes. These themes will be reported in this portion of the chapter while also discussing the three critical aspects of the project to determine its efficacy.⁸ In this discussion, three key aspects of the project are analyzed, including the bond between the mentor and the new believer, the efficacy of the study, and the spiritual advancement of the newly converted.

The first recurring theme evident during the feedback portion of the project was the personal bond that occurred between the new believer and the mentor. While all the new believers and mentors were acquainted with each other as members of the same church, a relational bond occurred with each mentorship group in the project. As reported in the

⁷ Dermot Crowley, *Smart Work: How to Increase Productivity, Achieve Balance and Reduce Stress* (Milton, QLD: Wiley Australia, 2023), 1.

⁸ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 195.

evaluations previously, the new believers shared the portion of the project that they enjoyed the most. The responses may have varied as there were several parts, including study preparation, Bible reading, study questions, prayer, or even the study book itself; however, three out of the four new believers stated that their favorite portion of the project was the bond or “click” with their mentor.⁹ The one new believer who did not name the mentor connection as the most enjoyable part of the project later stated that they enjoyed their time with their mentor and emphasized that the interaction with their mentor was very natural.

As mentioned previously, all the mentors and new believers were generally familiar with each other as they were all a part of a small church setting. However, while there were relationships between the participants, most were superficial, as most participants did not know each other outside the church walls (except for one mentorship group). The positive bond between each of the groups confirms a successful outcome for one-on-one mentorship. While each of the mentorship partnerships was matched based on several criteria such as personalities, career paths, shared abilities, goals, and gender, most of the relationships between mentor and mentee were superficial.¹⁰ Most of the participants stated they were uneasy in some form at the beginning of the project; however, despite the concerns, a strong bond between the mentorship groups still emerged. In their feedback, the participants mentioned several reasons that aided in creating a bond between the mentorship groups. Some of those reasons include personal conversations between mentor and new believer, the non-Bible study conversations prior to the study that created a warm and comfortable environment for the new believer, and the prayer time and personal stories shared by the mentors. One new believer stated, “There was a deep

⁹ Edwards, *Organic Mentoring*, 58.

¹⁰ Keay, *Mentoring Ministry*, 76.

connection with my mentor that allowed ease in conversation.” Likewise, all the mentors shared that the experiences and interactions with their new believers were enjoyable.

The new believers were also asked to compare the results of their experience if the sessions had taken place in the context of a small group or class compared to one-on-one mentorship. While one new believer considered the results might be the same in the three settings, the other new believers offered varying feedback. One new believer stated that one-on-one mentoring can be a more comfortable environment for those who are uneasy in crowds or introverted in nature.¹¹ Likewise, another new believer indicated that one-on-one mentoring forces the participant to engage in both the relationship and the information aspect of the studies. All the new believers agreed with the statement. The responses of the new believers once again express the advantage one-on-one mentorship can have over a small group or class involving the same material. The one-on-one mentorship setting provides a comfortable and inviting environment for the new believer to ask questions and speak freely in ways that other environments may not provide.¹²

The positive mentorship experiences and feedback by both the mentor and new believer are confirmation that one-on-one mentorship can be effective and, at times, more successful than other approaches to discipleship. The mentorship experiences between the groups fashioned deeper-rooted believers and created deep-rooted relationships for new believers moving forward. The responses from both mentor and mentee are well received as the project is predicated on the effectiveness of one-on-one mentorship.

¹¹ Glaser, *Conversational Intelligence*, 10

¹² Karl Vaters and Karl Vaters, “Mentoring Is Better than Curriculum: Seven Steps to Better Discipleship,” Pivot | A Blog by Karl Vaters, Last modified 2015, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/karl-vaters/2015/august/mentoring-is-better-than-curriculum-seven-steps-to-better-d.html>, 2.

The next topic of significance is the effectiveness of the study textbook, *The New Believers Handbook*, by Charles Crabtree.¹³ The mentors determined that while the study was foundational in nature, it provided a setting for deeper questions and conversations in the sessions. The mentors also agreed that the study provided foundational biblical topics that they found essential to understanding the Christian faith. Moreover, most of the mentors indicated that the weekly study questions done at home and the Bible reading in Mark would inspire additional questions and deeper conversations during the sessions. The mentors also indicated that they appreciated the answers to the questions provided in the study, allowing them to move confidently through the session. The new believers were also pleased with the study as they indicated it provided a deeper understanding of the weekly reading, straightforward questions, and weekly practical application. The mentor and mentee feedback indicated that the study effectively provided the new believers with foundational biblical truths for their Christian journey. *The New Believers Handbook*, by Charles Crabtree, provided a deeper understanding of the Christian faith and the priority of learning about Jesus as they studied the whole book of Mark during their project. While other new believer studies exist that may be viewed as more effective, *The New Believers Handbook* created space for the new believers to ask questions, offer feedback, share challenges, and practice spiritual habits.¹⁴ However, one of the most important features of the study is that it was created solely to be accomplished in the context of one-on-one mentorship.

One of the key outcomes of the mentorship initiative is the spiritual efficacy produced in the new believers. In other words, central to the project is to discover what changes occurred

¹³ Crabtree and Guillion, *The New Believer's Friend Handbook* .

¹⁴ Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 26.

both spiritually and practically in the life of the new believer.¹⁵ The new believers were evaluated and responded with similar responses. While the new believers shared that the Bible reading, study book, and interaction with their mentor were inspirational, three out of four new believers indicated that the study encouraged their practice of spiritual habits moving forward. Most of the new believers indicated that they were now going to begin or resume practicing spiritual habits such as daily praying and reading Scripture.¹⁶ Some new believers went even further to articulate specific amounts of time that they would dedicate to these practices moving forward. The study text encouraged the importance of spiritual habits; however, the desire to practice spiritual habits moving forward was initiated by the new believers. While developing spiritual habits in new believers was not the ultimate goal of the project, it is clearly the result of a person who desires to follow Jesus.

Following the project's completion, the project coordinator conducted brief exit interviews with each participant. However, the feedback collected during these interviews was largely repetitive, already being addressed in the questionnaires and focus groups. The exit interviews may have lacked participant feedback due to their timing, which was immediately following the final week of the mentorship group and the questionnaire submission due the same week. Despite this redundancy, the data gleaned from the exit interviews served to corroborate the participants' overall impression of the project.

One of the only changes both the new believers and mentors suggested was moving the sessions to in-person. Some of the participants suggested that the study might benefit more if there was an in-person connection between the mentor and the new believer. However, after

¹⁵ Tony Evans, *Kingdom Living: The Essentials of Spiritual Growth* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2022), 13.

¹⁶ Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 26.

further discussion, the participants, specifically the mentors, indicated that the context of the sessions should be decided by the mentorship groups so that the study does not exclude someone.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this DMIN action research project was to create a mentoring ministry to assist new believers in maturing and establishing their faith. While many Christian churches provide opportunities for individuals to embrace faith in Christ, some do not offer spaces for new converts to grow in discipleship.¹ The NBMM project is an eight-week program creating partnerships for new believers in the beginning stages of their spiritual journey. While teaching biblical doctrine and learning new rhythms of spiritual growth is essential for new believers to understand, the NBMM is designed to not allow any new convert to journey on their own during this crucial stage. The NBMM provides a guide and a partner to the new believers known to them as a mentor for the duration of eight weeks. During those weeks, the mentor will present biblical teaching, offer prayer, answer questions, teach the importance of spiritual rhythms, and even sit with them in church on Sunday. The project was accomplished at TBCC, a local church, using members of the congregation.

Chapter five highlights the data uncovered during the project's duration, the resolution of the problem presented, and the potential application of the project in alternative settings.² Finally, the chapter presents any other questions requiring further exploration. All information conveyed in this chapter will be analyzed considering the acquired research.

In chapter one, the project coordinator presented the ministry context at TBCC, where the project would take place. The ministry context discovered the origins, outreach and ministry,

¹ Malan Nel and W.J. Schoeman, "Rediscovering 'Disciplemaking' and the Role of Faith-Sharing," *HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 75, no. 4 (2019), doi:10.4102/hts.v75i4.5119, 2.

² Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 194.

challenges, and culture at TBCC. One of the pressing challenges discovered while unearthing the ministry context was the general leadership focus on tasks rather than people at TBCC.³ Since TBCC is a portable church (requiring setup and teardown of all ministry items), it was observed that some of the leadership would spend their energy and attention on accomplishing the task of setting up and tearing down and not on the new individuals entering the church. In turn, the mistaken emphasis on tasks and not individuals created the beginning stages of an adverse culture at TBCC. Chapter one begins to address the idea of church culture and how it can support or decay any church ministry, specifically mentorship ministry to new believers. Chapter one addresses the problem of new believers failing to mature and establish their faith, along with the response to the problem of creating a mentorship ministry to aid new believers in the growth process. Finally, chapter one confirms that if new members at TBCC dedicate themselves to the mentoring ministry, they will grow and strengthen their faith, which will ensure the church's continued health.

Chapter two examines other sources and their observations on mentorship for new believers in the literature review. Likewise, chapter two addresses the biblical support for the model of mentorship in the theological foundations, as well as assessing other existing mentorship ministries for new believers in the theoretical foundations.⁴ Chapter one begins by affirming the purpose of the Christian church, the Great Commission, which is to make disciples stated by Jesus before His ascension (Matt 28:18-20). While churches may find themselves invested in other endeavors, Jesus makes it clear that this one task is the goal. Moreover, if churches are to fulfill the Great Commission, they need to have a deliberate approach to equipping and mentoring believers, which will, in turn, provide continued health to the church.

³ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 18.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

In addition, chapter two provides a general and ministerial definition of mentorship along with a brief overview of mentorship in Scripture, as well as mentorship in the Christian church throughout the centuries. One of the key portions of research continued from chapter one in the literature review is the correlation between the success of a mentorship ministry and the existing church culture.⁵ The literature review examines the idea that a mentorship culture fosters an atmosphere where relationships are naturally formed, laying a strong foundation for effective mentorship matching. This, in turn, facilitates the development of mutually favorable mentoring relationships, which can lead to positive outcomes for both mentors and mentees.⁶ Overall, an essential piece of the research emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive environment for mentorship and highlights the role that a mentorship culture can play in achieving this goal.

The methodology in chapter three introduces the details of the project's objective, which is to establish a mentorship ministry tailored to new believers. All aspects of the intervention design will be categorized into one of these three stages. The project's methodology will be segmented into three distinct parts: recruit, mentor, and evaluate. The initial step, in the recruitment stage, involves effectively communicating the expectations and framework of the project to potential participants. If the participants demonstrate a willingness to participate, they will be requested to complete a consent form. In addition, an assessment of their spirituality will be conducted, followed by the identification of an appropriate mentor and mentee based on shared qualities and personalities.

In addition, chapter three discusses mentor training for the mentors. The mentors who have been selected will receive training on the best practices of mentoring and will familiarize themselves with the study. Likewise, chapter three discussed the mentor and mentee sessions,

⁵ Brailey and Parker, "Learning from Experience," 69-90.

⁶ Steinmann, *Crucial Mentoring Conversations*, 15.

using *The New Believer's Handbook*,⁷ which will extend over an eight-week period, comprising weekly sessions between mentors and mentees. These sessions will comprise forty-five minutes to an hour via Zoom and encompass reading the book of Mark, preparing and accomplishing weekly studies, engaging in discussions, and praying together. The evaluation process will involve conducting a survey, exit interviews, organizing focus groups, and making necessary adjustments based on the feedback received. Likewise, the evaluation process will involve the implementation of a questionnaire, exit interviews, organizing focus groups, and implementing necessary alterations based on the feedback obtained.⁸ All action steps associated with the study will be categorized into one of the three steps: recruit, mentor, and evaluate.

In chapter four, a comprehensive summary of results gathered from all participants in the evaluation process is presented. The project coordinator uses different assessment methods to collect feedback from each participant. The feedback tools include interviews, surveys, and focus groups. During the interview process, selected participants will be asked specific questions to gain insight into their experiences. In addition, the project coordinator will survey both mentors and new believers on the different aspects of the study and how effective they are. Finally, focus groups will be held for each participant group to address a predetermined set of questions collaboratively. The data collected from the evaluation tools will be presented in a systematic manner to assess the project's efficacy and discover any required modifications. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used for all participants in this part of the project. Chapter four concludes with the project coordinator providing a summary of the key factors that were presented in the results.

⁷ Harris, *The New Believer's Handbook*.

⁸ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 138.

Research Implications

The primary objective of the action research project was to establish the groundwork for implementing a mentorship program catered to new believers at TBCC. The current study comprised eight participants who dedicated eight weeks to the mentorship initiative. This section of the chapter will delve into the various themes, insights, and conclusions uncovered in the action research project.

One of the most prominent recurring themes apparent in the NBMM project was the personal bond or “click”⁹ that occurred between the new believer and the mentor. This aspect was considered crucial in ensuring the smooth transition of the individual into discovering or rediscovering their newfound beliefs and guiding them towards a path of spiritual growth. The emphasis on this personal connection emphasizes the importance of a supportive and nurturing environment, where the mentor assumes the responsibility of developing a strong bond with their mentee and providing them with the necessary guidance and resources to navigate their spiritual journey. While all the new believers and mentors were acquainted with each other as members of the same church, most groups were not closely interconnected. Despite the nature of the relationships, a relational bond occurred with each mentorship group in the project. When the new believers were asked to share the portion of the project that they enjoyed the most, three out of the four new believers stated that their favorite portion of the project was quality time with their mentor. The one new believer who did not name the mentor connection as the most enjoyable stated that they enjoyed their time with their mentor and emphasized that the interaction with their mentor was very natural.

⁹ Edwards, *Organic Mentoring*, 58.

The results that have been obtained imply that despite limited familiarity between mentorship groups, a positive outcome can be obtained. In addition, a focused time of one-on-one interaction over a period creates an environment where deep bonds are produced. This may not be the case in other approaches to discipleship. It is worth noting that superficial relationships between two individuals can produce effective results, if they are undergirded with a healthy approach to intentional mentorship matching. Each of the mentorship partnerships was matched by the project coordinator based on several criteria, including personalities, career paths, shared abilities, goals, and gender. Most of the relationships between mentor and mentee were superficial. However, one of the groups was matched because of previously established relational roots or a relational “click.”¹⁰ A relational click, specifically one where a mentor and mentee dynamic exists, can be the most effective environment for a successful outcome in mentorship ministry.¹¹ The participants indicated the different factors that contributed to building a positive relationship between the mentorship groups. Some of these reasons included sharing personal conversations and life stories, engaging in non-Bible study conversations before the study to create a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, and sharing personal prayer requests for the prayer time during the sessions. One new believer mentioned feeling a strong connection with their mentor, which made conversations easy. A positive bond between each of the mentorship groups is indicative of the importance of intentional mentorship matching when establishing a mentorship program.

Another key insight that emerged was comparing the NBMM project if done in a small group or classroom setting. While there are several approaches to discipleship in various contexts, the project coordinator desired to receive input from those who directly participated in

¹⁰ Edwards, *Organic Mentoring*, 58.

¹¹ Keay, *Mentoring Ministry*, 77.

the project. All of the new believers took part in classroom sessions and small groups within various ministries. With this understanding, the new believers were asked to compare the efficacy of the mentorship results if the sessions had taken place in the context of a small group or class compared to one-on-one mentorship. While one of them considered the outcome would be similar in all three settings, three out of four agreed that being mentored would be a more beneficial experience.¹² The new believers indicated that one-on-one mentoring can be a more comfortable environment for those who are uneasy in crowds or introverted in nature. Likewise, one-on-one mentoring forces the participant to engage in both the relationship and the information aspect of the studies. All of the new believers agreed that one-on-one mentorship compels the participants to engage and walk away with a better experience. The new believer's responses express the advantage one-on-one mentorship can have over a small group or class involving the same material. The one-on-one mentorship setting provides a comfortable and inviting environment for the new believer to ask questions, speak freely, and actively engage in the study in ways that other environments may not provide.

The implication drawn directly from the participants is confirmation that one-on-one mentorship can be effective and, at times, more effective than other approaches to discipleship. The mentorship experiences between the groups fashioned deeper-rooted believers and created established relationships. New converts to the faith may be more comfortable engaging in a study when they are not part of the crowd. Furthermore, the mentorship connection provides the new believers with a time-honored relationship that can be an aid in the future. The responses from both mentor and mentee are well received as the project is predicated on the effectiveness of one-on-one mentorship.

¹² Vaters and Vaters, "Mentoring Is Better than Curriculum," 1.

Another topic of interest to the project coordinator was the effectiveness of the study textbook and whether the book required a replacement. The project coordinator's aim was to retrieve the information from the newly inducted mentor participants.¹³ The mentors indicated that while the study was introductory in nature, it provided a setting for deeper questions and conversations in the sessions. Likewise, the mentors agreed that the study provided foundational biblical topics essential to understanding the Christian faith. Moreover, most of the mentors specified that the weekly study questions accomplished at home and the Bible reading in Mark consistently inspired additional questions and deeper conversations during the sessions. The mentors also indicated that they appreciated the answers to the questions provided in the study, allowing them to move confidently through the session. The positive response from the participants implied that *The New Believer's Handbook*¹⁴ provided a deeper understanding of the Christian faith and a pathway to learn about Jesus as they studied the whole book of Mark during their project. Additionally, *The New Believers Handbook* created space for the new believers to ask questions, offer feedback, share challenges, and practice spiritual habits. While other new believer studies may be viewed as more effective or relevant, the project coordinator concluded the study for the NBMM is an effective tool to mentor new believers. Unlike other discipleship studies that simply provide information, *The New Believers Handbook* was created with the intention of fostering relationships and mentorship. This idea is evident in how much time the author spends in guiding the mentor towards a positive experience with the new believer and the name of the mentor copy of the study, *The New Believer's Friend Handbook*.¹⁵ It is evident that

¹³ Alison Waterhouse, "The Learning Mentor Toolkit," *Routledge*, 2021, doi:10.4324/9781003094319, 79.

¹⁴ Harris, *The New Believer's Handbook*.

¹⁵ Crabtree and Guillion, *The New Believer's Friend Handbook*, viii.

the study was created to produce a positive relational bond between the mentor and new believer, and the study does not need to be replaced.

Another essential piece of the NBMM project necessary for its success is the implications of the project's spiritual efficacy on new believers. Such an evaluation is essential for ensuring that the project is meeting its intended objectives and that new believers are receiving the support and guidance they need to strengthen their faith. In other words, central to the project's success is to discover what changes occurred both spiritually and practically in the life and faith of the new believer. All the new believers agreed that the Bible reading, study book, and mentor interaction were inspirational; however, three out of four new believers indicated that the study encouraged their practice of spiritual habits moving forward.¹⁶ Three out of four new believers indicated that they were now going to begin or resume practicing spiritual habits such as daily praying and reading Scripture. Some new believers went as far as to articulate the amount of time they would dedicate to their spiritual habits. While the study encouraged the importance of spiritual habits, the desire to practice them moving forward was instigated by the new believers. A new excitement for community and a deepened relationship with their mentor was also evident in the new believers.

One of the only changes both the new believers and mentors suggested was moving the sessions to in-person. Some of the participants suggested that the study might benefit more if there was an in-person connection between the mentor and the new believer. However, after further discussion, the participants, specifically the mentors, indicated that the context of the sessions should be decided by the mentorship groups so that the study does not exclude someone.

¹⁶ Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 26.

Research Applications

As part of the project's research phase, particularly the literature review, a handful of Christian mentorship programs were discovered. These programs provide Christian companionship to those seeking biblical guidance, counsel, and positive role models.¹⁷ The Christian mentorship programs were typically designed with demographic and contextual considerations in mind. Some were tailored to specific groups, such as men, while others were geared towards contexts, like college students. The Christian mentorship programs discovered were available both online or fashioned to be plugged into a church, ministry, or non-profit.¹⁸ Most of the online Christian mentorship programs discovered commenced with registration and introductions online, followed by mentorship sessions usually conducted on the phone or via Zoom. Likewise, the mentorship programs created to plug into a ministry or non-profit were produced with all the details in mind. They provided training for counselors, background checks, curriculum and activities for participants, and even methods to evaluate the progress.

While these Christian mentorship programs exist, they are rare, with even fewer new believers' mentorship programs. While research reveals that there are a limited amount of Christian mentorship programs and even fewer Christian new believer programs, mentorship in the corporate world seems to be established and increasing in number.¹⁹

Upon examining the research findings and the scarcity of new believer mentorship programs, it would be presumed that local churches are predominantly offering mentorship programs; however, the research actually reveals the contrary. The lack of both written curricula

¹⁷ “Changing the Face of Christianity.” Accessed September 11, 2022. <https://changingthefaceofchristianity.com/>.

¹⁸ “Youth Mentoring Programs,” CAYM, accessed September 11, 2022, <https://www.caym.org/>.

¹⁹ Muzaffar Hussain Shah, Abdul Rahim Bin Othman, and Mohd Najib Bin Mansor, “Mentoring and Organizational Performance: A Review of Effects of Mentoring on Small and Medium Enterprises,” *Journal of Business and Social Review in Emerging Economies* 2, no. 2 (2016): 143–58, doi:10.26710/jbsee.v2i2.31, 1.

and online programs for new believers indicates that not all churches are providing mentorship or even discipleship for this demographic.²⁰ While written resources were more available twenty to thirty years ago, they are on the decline today. The absence of such resources suggests that these ministries are not as prevalent in the local churches as they should be. These findings demonstrate that more new believer ministries and curricula are needed in the mainstream Christian market, but more importantly, in the hands of the local church. During the research phase of the project, it was noted that creating a culture of mentorship is essential for a thriving mentorship ministry.²¹ Mentorship programs, like any ministry in the church, require a solid framework and a clear and defined process. In comparison to a mentorship culture, this can be the easy part, simply by mirroring or plugging in a program that is already created. However, more essential to the longevity of the program is establishing a mentorship culture. Church culture refers to the distinctive expression of beliefs and values held by a particular church, which informs its overall conduct and reveals its individual character.²² In other words, having a leadership team and church congregation that cares about establishing and cultivating relationships with one another is a vital part of the success of mentorship ministry. While fashioning any positive culture can be challenging (as it will be attempting to change a negative culture that already exists), the promotion of a mentorship culture within a religious organization can be achieved through intentional actions taken by its leadership. One such action is the creation of opportunities for congregants to build relationships that foster personal and spiritual growth. Moreover, the path to creating a healthy culture can be reached, though it is important to

²⁰ Barna Group, "Two in Five Christians Are Not Engaged in Discipleship," Barna Group, Last modified August 16, 2023, <https://www.barna.com/research/christians-discipleship-community/>, 1.

²¹ Brailey and Parker, "Learning from Experience," 69-90.

²² Chiroma and Cloete, "Mentoring as a Supportive Pedagogy in Theological Training."

identify and celebrate behaviors that are deemed valuable and worthy of emulation within the congregation.²³

TBCC continually aspires to create environments where such relationships can be created within the various aspects of the church ministries. The leadership team at TBCC has discovered that when formal spaces are created for relationships to be cultivated within the confines of the church ministry, informal relationships will continue to form outside of the church walls. The relationships that form are the “wood for the fire” that will continue to nurture the mentorship culture that is needed within the church.

Another aspect discovered in the research process that assisted the NBMM is the correlation between a mentoring culture and mentorship matching. Mentor matching involves pairing a mentor and a mentee together. The project coordinator, also serving as the TBCC Pastor, discovered that when environments were intentionally created that fostered relationships, unplanned and natural mentor matching would occur. However, even while there are prime relational environments within the church context where unforced mentor matching occurs, there will also be times when forced mentor matching is required. While some experts in the field of mentorship view forced mentor matches as akin to “forced marriages,” which can prove to be more detrimental than beneficial,²⁴ others argue that strategic forced matching is a necessary process. The project coordinator began by assessing the participants and discovered which individuals naturally gravitate toward each other.²⁵ After discovering one natural partnership, the remaining participants were matched based on criteria such as personalities, career paths, shared abilities, goals, and gender. Once potential matches were determined, the project coordinator

²³ Sonksen, *When Your Church Feels Stuck*, 148.

²⁴ Steinmann, *Crucial Mentoring Conversations*, 15.

²⁵ Keay, *Mentoring Ministry*, 77.

prayed over each match, recognizing that the NBMM is a ministry requiring God's supernatural involvement in the mentorship groups. The NBMM project is a testament that even forced partnerships can be successful when approached strategically. The success of the mentor matches was evident in the unanimous positive praise from the new believers and mentors in their partnerships.

Extensive research efforts largely influenced the NBMM project's success. Several concepts that were unearthed during the research phase played critical roles in advancing the project's objectives. These concepts also served as a solid foundation for the NBMM project, ensuring its longevity.

Research Limitations

The first research limitation was the limited sample size of participants available. The mentorship project was organized into four separate groups, each comprising two committed participants per mentorship group. In total, eight individuals pledged their commitment to the project. Identifying available and willing participants at TBCC, a congregation with a small membership of only twenty-five individuals, proved to be a challenging task due to the limited pool of potential participants.²⁶ While the pool of participants was small, once the project coordinator narrowed down the selection of potential candidates, all potential candidates agreed to participate. It is possible that some responses may not have been recorded, potentially leading to gaps in the research findings.

The second limitation to consider is the ages of the participants. The individuals who participated in the study were limited to those between twenty-seven and forty-two years of age. While the age spectrum was not extremely narrow, incorporating a wider array of ages may have

²⁶ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 21.

led to a more varied arrangement of responses and perspectives. A wide variety of perspectives and responses is advantageous to the project's overall health.

Another of the limitations identified in the DMIN project was the accuracy of the data obtained from participants.²⁷ Although the participants were informed that their identities would be kept anonymous and pseudonyms would be used in place of their names, some participants still may have felt apprehensive about sharing their thoughts candidly. Additionally, all of the TBCC participants were core members, and most occupied leadership positions within the church. It is possible that the positions held by these participants influenced their inclination to provide honest and transparent feedback during the evaluations, understanding that it may affect the church somehow. Furthermore, it is worth noting that each of the study participants maintains a close relationship with the project coordinator, who also serves as the pastor of the church. It is possible that this relationship could have influenced the manner in which they responded to the assessments.

Further Research

For a better grasp of a project's outcomes, it might be essential to conduct research with a more extensive group of participants. A broader participant pool can produce more substantial and dependable responses, resulting in deeper insights into the project. Likewise, a bigger participant pool could offer a broader range of people from diverse backgrounds, ages, and viewpoints, ultimately contributing to the project's success.

Another topic that can be further researched is the results of accomplishing NBMM in a different setting. The entire NBMM project was accomplished via Zoom. While this avenue of meeting accomplished the purposes of mentorship, it would be intriguing to discover the results

²⁷ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 223.

if the NBMM was accomplished in person or with a hybrid approach, meeting half of the sessions in person and the others online. Another approach would be to have the mentors meet at the commencement of the session and one other time, possibly close to the end of the project. This approach may provide a deeper connection for the participants and closure at the end of the sessions. However, it is important to understand that the participants should not allow the setting to discourage them from participating. While some individuals can meet in person, others will not. The participants should proceed in whatever context is accessible to them.

Lastly, examining the participants six months to a year after the project would be worth examining and reporting.²⁸ The project coordinator was unable to assess the progress of the participants due to the time restraints of the project. An extended study of the new believers would verify the depth of the project and its ultimate success.

Conclusion

The project coordinator attempted to find a solution for new believers who were failing to mature in their faith. While other ministries may have constructed a different solution or approach to the dilemma, the project coordinator decided mentorship would be the most beneficial approach to the issue. While a new believer class can provide the information necessary for the growth of new believers, mentorship creates an environment for a bond to occur and provides a friend for the new believer. While small groups create a more intimate setting for connection, mentorship focuses the attention on just one, the new believer.

The NBMM may require some adjustments to optimize its outcome; however, after examining the assessments from the participants and the results of the project, it would seem it was successful. The thesis statement for the project states that “if new believers at TBCC commit

²⁸ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 223.

to the mentoring ministry, then they will mature and establish their faith. . .” There was a newfound excitement among the new believers and mentors who participated in the project. The new believers discovered truths about God and their person as they personally read Scripture and discussed it with their mentor. Furthermore, they realized a relationship initiated by their heavenly Father that is meant to be cultivated daily. The mentors, likewise, unearthed a new area of ministry in which to impart their knowledge and experience. The success of the NBMM affected both the new believers and the mentors.

The last part of the thesis statement states, “providing continued health to the church.” Continued health should be the result of healthy ministries within the church. If TBCC continues to provide NBMM to those who recently converted, as well as those who came to Christ in the past yet did not receive a period of focused discipleship, it will become a strong and healthy church.

APPENDIX A

Recruitment Email

Dear Juan:

As a graduate student in the School of John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting a project as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. My project aims to understand better how mentors can assist new believers in maturing and strengthening their faith spiritually. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study. *Some questions to be answered in the study may include, what effects will a spiritually mature mentor have on a new believer when partnered together? Does a focused time of acquiring biblical knowledge and establishing spiritual growth tools bolster the new believer's growth? What are the benefits of moving through a new believer class alone compared to with a mentor? How prone are new believers to participate in "Spiritual Next Steps" after time with their mentor?)*

Participants must be at least eighteen years of age, a Christian, and demonstrate limited foundational biblical knowledge and evident room for spiritual growth (new believer), or demonstrate ample biblical knowledge and spiritual experience and maturity (spiritual mentor). New believer participants cannot have gone through a new believer's class, ministry, or program, to participate in the program. New believer participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in an eight-week New Believer Mentor Ministry where they will be partnered with a mentor or new believer and meet with them weekly. The participants will then be asked to complete an evaluation, exit interview, and focus group to evaluate the experience. The project should take approximately Nine weeks to complete the procedure listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

Week One-Eight:

- Review and answer study questions daily (10-15 minutes).
- Read short excerpts in the book Mark (5-10 minutes).
- Meet weekly with your mentor or new believer in person or via ZOOM (45 minutes to an hour).

Week Nine:

- Complete an online evaluation questionnaire. (10-15 minutes).
- Participate in an exit interview with the researcher (10-20 minutes).
- Participate in a focus group with other participants (30-45 minutes).

To participate, please click [HERE](#) and fill out the form and online survey.

Sincerely,

Moses Aleman
Pastor Moses Aleman, Doctor of Ministry Candidate



APPENDIX B

Potential Recruit Website information**What is the study about, and why is it being done?**

The study aims to partner new believers with mentors to discover biblical and spiritual foundations for their growth and maturity.

The term "new believer" is used in this study to refer to someone who has recently come to faith; however, it can also refer to someone who did not receive discipleship after conversion or someone who, in certain aspects, lacks biblical knowledge and essential spiritual concepts.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

1. First, the participant will be asked to complete a consent form committing themselves to the study and provide further details on the study. Once the consent is completed and received the researcher will send the participant a survey regarding their spiritual and biblical understanding. Once the survey is completed and evaluated, you will then be invited to an interview with the researcher. If you complete the criteria for this study and agree to participate, you will be asked to participate.
2. The participant will then be paired with a mentor or new believer (based on the survey) for an eight-week period. You will complete the work in the New Believers Handbook (NBH) every week, including answering daily study questions and reading a portion of Mark. Every week you will meet with your mentor for 45 minutes to an hour to review the questions in the NBH, discuss any questions regarding the study, and pray. Since the study is a research project, the sessions will be recorded so the researcher can evaluate the research. **The sessions recorded will be kept confidential.**
3. Lastly, the participant will be asked to participate in a three-part project evaluation. First, the researcher will provide the new believer with an evaluation questionnaire to complete and submit. The questionnaire will provide the researcher with feedback on the project. Secondly, the participant will participate in an exit interview discussing questions in the evaluation and other feedback the new believer would like to address. Thirdly, the participant will join either a new believer or mentor focus group that will meet once to discuss feedback on the project. **The focus group will be recorded on video but will remain confidential.**

APPENDIX C

Consent

Title of the Project: Creating and Implementing a Mentorship Ministry for New Believers

Principal Investigator: Moses Aleman, Ordained Minister Assemblies of God, Liberty University Doctoral Candidate.

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study
--

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be at least eighteen years of age, a Christian, and demonstrate limited foundational biblical knowledge and evident room for spiritual growth (new believer) or demonstrate ample biblical knowledge and spiritual experience and maturity (spiritual mentor). You cannot have gone through a new believer's class, ministry, or program, in order to participate in the program. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

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

The study aims to partner new believers with mentors to discover biblical and spiritual foundations for their growth and maturity.

The term "new believer" is used in this study to refer to someone who has recently come to faith; however, it can also refer to someone who did not receive discipleship after conversion or someone who, in certain aspects, lacks biblical knowledge and spiritual understanding.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

1. First, the participant will be asked to complete a consent form committing themselves to the study and provide further details on the study. Once the consent is completed and received the researcher will send the participant a survey regarding their spiritual and biblical understanding. Once the survey is completed and evaluated, you will then be invited to an interview with the researcher. If you complete the criteria for this study and agree to participate, you will be asked to participate.
2. The participant will then be paired with a mentor or new believer (based on the survey) for an eight-week period. You will complete the work in the New Believers Handbook (NBH) every week, including answering daily study questions and reading a portion of Mark. Every week you will meet with your mentor for 45 minutes to an hour to review the questions in the NBH, discuss any questions regarding the study, and pray. Since the study is a research project, the sessions will be recorded so the researcher can evaluate the research. **The sessions recorded will be kept confidential.**

3. Lastly, the participant will be asked to participate in a three-part project evaluation. First, the researcher will provide the new believer with an evaluation questionnaire to complete and submit. The questionnaire will provide the researcher with feedback on the project. Secondly, the participant will participate in an exit interview discussing questions in the evaluation and other feedback the new believer would like to address. Thirdly, the participant will join either a new believer or mentor focus group that will meet once to discuss feedback on the project. **The focus group will be recorded on video but will remain confidential.**

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study is deeper biblical and spiritual knowledge, along with gaining knowledge as you study the life of Jesus in the book of Mark. The participants will also benefit from partnering with another Christian with whom they can encourage and pray with.

Benefits to society include participating in establishing an effective new believer's ministry for future converts.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

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

How will personal information be protected?

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

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of [pseudonyms/codes]. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews and focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

What are the costs to you to be part of the study?

To participate in the research, you will need to pay \$5.00 for the New Believer's Handbook.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty or The Bridge Community Church. If you

decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

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

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

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

The researcher conducting this study is Moses Aleman. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Moses Aleman at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor.

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

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

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

Your Consent

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

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

The researcher has my permission to audio-record/video-record/photograph me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

APPENDIX D

Spiritual Growth Self-Assessment (To be taken online)

Spiritual Growth Self-Assessment

When it comes to determining spiritual maturity we look at indicators in terms of growth, not of achievement. Complete this anonymous* self-assessment to get a snapshot of where you are in regards to the 7 markers of spiritual growth Shoreline has identified as important to our spiritual growth.

**If you choose to share your results with a Shoreline leader, the results will NOT be anonymous.*

When people I know have questions about life or other challenges, I find myself searching the Bible to help them find answers that will help them navigate life's tough times.

- Never true of me
 Rarely true of me
 Occasionally true of me
 Often true of me
 Always true of me

I make attending worship with God's people a high priority and I am in gathered worship at least three or four Sundays each month.

- Never true of me
 Rarely true of me
 Occasionally true of me
 Often true of me
 Always true of me

I desire to learn more about effectively sharing my faith with others and take advantage of training opportunities to grow my faith-sharing abilities.

- Never true of me
 Rarely true of me
 Occasionally true of me
 Often true of me
 Always true of me

I pray for and with other people on a regular basis.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

If you asked people who know me, they would say that I love serving others and make space in my normal week to offer acts of service.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I often think of how Jesus served others so freely and this inspires me to live a life of humble service.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

When life is challenging or confusing I turn to God's Word for comfort, encouragement, wisdom, and direction.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I regularly talk about what I learn in the Bible with my family members and friends and seek to share what God has taught me.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

When others need prayer and want someone to lift them up before the Lord, they often come to me or contact me and ask me to pray.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I actively engage in ministry in the local church and I take real joy in serving Jesus and His people.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

People ask me to give toward causes that honor Jesus and help people because they know I love to give generously.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I have a deep passion to know the Bible better and I set goals to make sure Bible reading and learning is a regular part of my life.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I engage in service and ministry outside of the church and seek to share the love and care of Jesus through this ministry.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I am willing to share and use the things I own to further God's Kingdom.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

My first response to adversity is to go to God in prayer.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I know what spiritual gifts I have and I seek to develop and use these for God's glory.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I like to give at a level that challenges me and even causes me to give up what I want so I can help with the needs of others.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I have a deep desire to communicate with God more in prayer and I am seeking to make this a higher value in the flow of my normal day.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I have a deep desire to communicate with God more in worship and I am seeking to make this a higher value in the flow of my normal day.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I look for opportunities to give offerings above and beyond my tithe and I take joy in giving generously beyond the first ten percent.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

If someone was able to view my spending habits, they would see a life of generous giving and sacrificial living.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

Non-believers that I know well, and those I know casually, are clearly aware of my Christian faith and they know I would be glad to talk with them about Jesus and how He could impact their life in wonderful ways.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

When I am at church in Christian gatherings, I fully engage, I reach out to others, and I seek to make others feel welcome and embraced in the church family.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I am committed to be part of a Small Group, Bible Study, Community Group, Service Team, or some other gathering of believers on a regular basis (outside of my regular attendance in worship).

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

My Christian faith is greatly impacted by the fellowship that I have with other Christians.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I pray for people who are not Christians often and ask God to soften their hearts and draw them to Jesus.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I find myself praying to God in the flow of a normal day.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I find myself singing songs of worship to God in the flow of a normal day.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I believe people are lost without Jesus and I think about the eternal condition of the people I love who are not yet followers of Jesus.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I look for ways to build bridges with people who aren't exactly like me, understanding that God's people are diverse and my growth depends partially on embracing differences and Christ-like love toward all His people.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

I make time on a regular basis to be around non-Christians because I love them and desire for them to encounter Jesus.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

When I am in a worship service I learn from the sermon, engage in the singing, join in prayer when someone is leading, and interact with others before and after the service.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

People I interact within normal life would say that I often talk about my Sunday worship experiences.

- Never true of me Rarely true of me Occasionally true of me Often true of me
 Always true of me

APPENDIX E

Assessment Average Example

Self-Assessment Score

shoreline.church/self-assessment-score/

Thank you for taking the time to complete this spiritual growth assessment. If you'd like to track your progress over time, we encourage you to click on the Print or PDF button at left to save a copy of this results page and retake the assessment in 90 days.

Below is how you scored in the seven categories of spiritual growth:

Bible Engagement 95.00%

Someone who says that they love God would want to know more about Him. The primary way we do this is by reading the Word of God given to us in the Bible. Anyone who claims to be a Christian and does not feel the need to continue to study the Bible either does not understand what the Bible is or is plagued by pride. As Christians we get our truth and guidance in large part from God's Word, so we must be committed to studying it faithfully and applying it on a daily basis.



[Click here for resources to help you grow in Bible Engagement →](#)

Passionate Prayer 85.00%

Passionate prayer includes speaking to God often as well as listening for God's voice, promptings, and whispers at all times. It also means that we pray often with other believers and seek God's face in community. In addition, a life of passionate prayer will lead us to pray for and with those who are not yet followers of Jesus. Prayer is a wonderful array of praise, thanks, supplication (asking for God's help and intervention), confession, and so much more.



[Click here for resources to help you grow in Passionate Prayer →](#)

Wholehearted Worship 95.00%

Worship is a lifestyle. We worship in community, gathered regularly with God's people. We also worship in the flow of a normal day. Our life should be punctuated by praise, celebration, and stopping to honor God for all He is and all He does. Our Worship is both Spirit-filled and Spirit-led. Wholehearted worship comes from our hearts and moves our lips and lives to exalt the God who made us and loves us.



[Click here for resources to help you grow in Wholehearted Worship →](#)

Humble Service 90.00%

Service walks hand in hand with love; it is impossible to love someone truly without serving them. Christ lived a devout life of service, even to the point of washing his disciples' feet and dying for sinful people. He calls us to live in a sacrificial way as well. This means that we must serve both regularly and faithfully in the areas of our gifting to forward the mission of the church. The way we serve and love others reflects on the way we love and serve God.



[Click here for resources to help you grow in Humble Service →](#)

Joyful Generosity 85.00%

A generous spirit comes from knowledge that God is the owner of everything, that we owe Him everything because of His generous gift of salvation. Our focus is not on getting what we can in this life, but on storing up treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy. We place our full lives in His control and our money and resources at His disposal for His use and glory.



[Click here for resources to help you grow in Joyful Generosity →](#)

Consistent Community 85.00%

Community is not only about being together, but growing towards health in all our relationships within the church. These relationships should be appropriate, supportive, selfless, rooted in humility, and they should provide avenues for grace-filled accountability. Our love for the local church should be so overwhelming that it extends to each individual that is part of it.



[Click here for resources to help you grow in Consistent Community →](#)

Organic Outreach 65.00%

We must be always be pursuing healthy relationships within the church, but also fulfilling the Great Commission by seeking to make disciples of Jesus Christ from those we know outside of our Christian Community. Our primary call on this earth is to reach others with God's love and function as his ambassadors here on earth. We do this at Shoreline through Organic Outreach to naturally help as many people as possible become totally committed to Jesus Christ.



APPENDIX F

Candidate Interview Questions**Potential New Believer Candidate Interview Questions:**

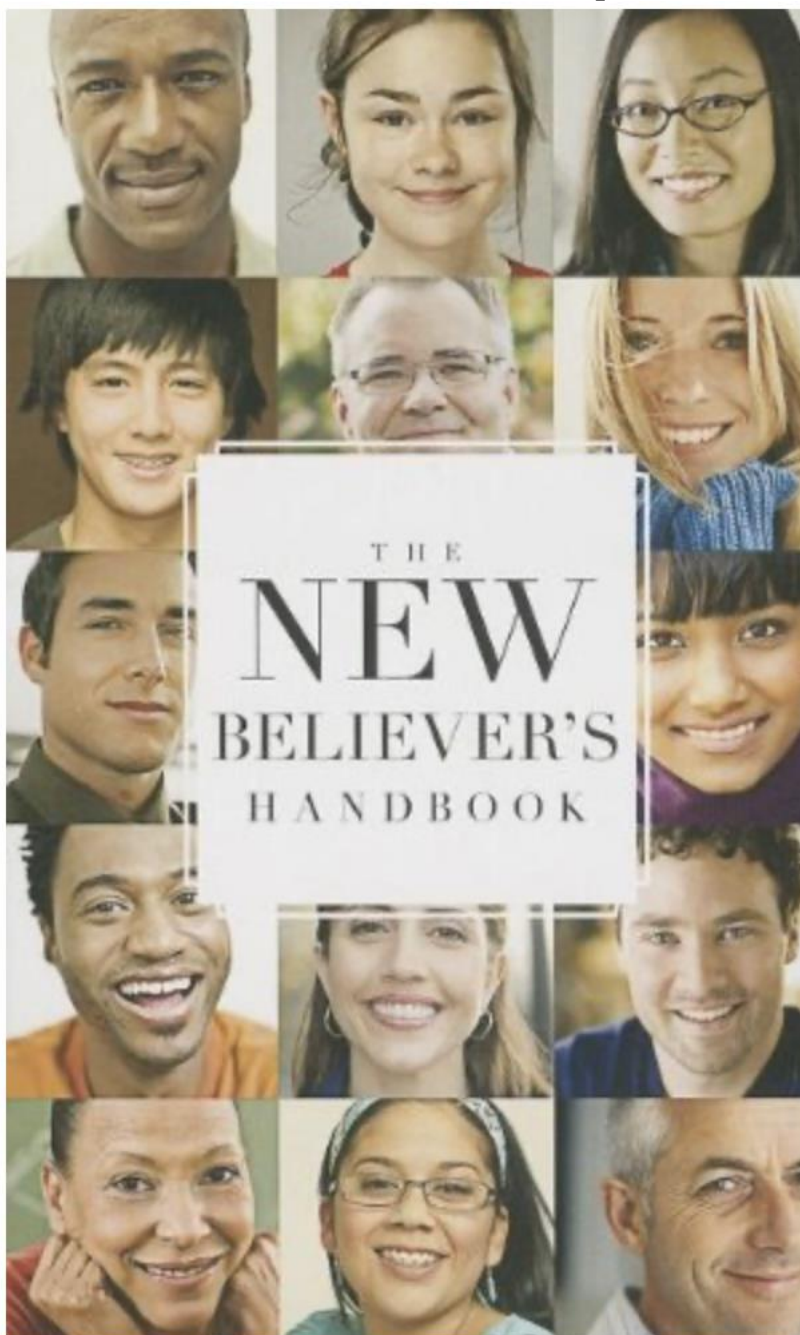
1. Have you ever been discipled as a new believer? Why or why not?
2. What would you say are the reasons for your lowest and highest scores on the survey?
3. What are your biggest challenges in serving Christ?
4. What are your thoughts on mentorship?
5. Have you ever been discipled by a mentor in your time following Jesus?

Potential Mentor Candidate Interview Questions:

1. What does your devotional life (Time with Jesus) look like?
2. What would you say are the reasons for your lowest and highest scores on the survey?
3. What would you say are your spiritual gifts and abilities?
4. Have you ever mentored or been mentored by someone?
5. How would you feel about mentoring someone for a period of time?

APPENDIX G

New Believer's Handbook Sample



Just what has happened to you exactly?

That's a good question, and an important one. Knowing what happened and what it means will help you best begin your new life as a Christian.

It may have happened in a church, in your home, anywhere. Someone may have been with you, or perhaps you were by yourself. Maybe you felt something missing in your life, or you turned to Jesus for help in a desperate situation. One way or another, you asked Him to be a part of your life.

Now, what does it all mean? To put it simply, two things have happened:

1. Jesus has become your Savior.
2. You have become a child of God.

We call this salvation. Perhaps someone has already said that now you are saved. Maybe you wonder what that means. Saved from what? Why did you need to be saved? Three things are important for you to know:

1. You were a sinner.
2. You could not save yourself.
3. Only Jesus could save you.

The Bible says, "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23). Sin is doing anything that you know is wrong, and everyone, except Jesus, has done this. The Bible also says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). This kind of death is spiritual and eternal.

No one can be saved from this death by good works, church membership, or trying to be a moral person. The only way to be saved from the penalty of sin is to somehow provide payment.

Jesus provided the only sufficient payment for sin by dying on a cross many years ago. He took upon himself the punishment for all sin. When you asked God to forgive your sins and believed Jesus died for you, God accepted you for Jesus' sake, your sins were forgiven, and Jesus became your Savior.

But something else has happened. You have become a child of God.

A child of God? What does that mean? Look at it this way. When you were born as a baby, you received natural life from your parents. Because of this, you are like them and have many of their characteristics.

When Jesus became your Savior, He brought you new life, spiritual life, life from God. The Bible calls this the new birth (John 3:3). By your first birth, you became a child of your earthly parents; by your new birth, you have become a child of God.

This is important! You now have two natures: (1) the old nature you received when physically born the first time and (2) the new nature you received with the new, spiritual birth. Jesus Christ is now living with you by His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God, living

inside Christians, giving them power to live like Jesus. You are living a new life with a new nature that draws you away from sin and to Jesus.

As far as your first, or natural, birth is concerned, you may be an adult, a youth, or a child. But as far as your new, or spiritual, birth is concerned, you are a newborn. You have received a new life, but it's just beginning.

During these next few weeks your new nature will begin to grow stronger as you develop good habits. These are very important weeks as you set the patterns to base the rest of your life on.

Next is your Bible reading plan and study questions for this first week. These will help you develop a habit of reading and studying the Bible.

WEEK ONE ▪ DAY ONE

Bible Reading & Study Questions from Mark 1:1–8

1. What did the prophet Isaiah say John would do? (Mark 1:2,3) *Prepare the way for the Lord*
2. What two things did John do to prepare the way for Jesus? (Mark 1:4) *Baptize and preach*
3. What kind of baptism did John preach and perform? (Mark 1:4) *Baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins*
4. What did John say Jesus would baptize with? (Mark 1:8) *The Holy Spirit*

WEEK ONE ▪ DAY TWO

Bible Reading & Study Questions from Mark 1:9–20

1. What was the role of the Holy Spirit at Jesus' water baptism? (Mark 1:10) *The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove.*
2. What was God's response to Jesus' water baptism? (Mark 1:11) *God said, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."*
3. What did Jesus say a person should do to prepare for the kingdom of God? (Mark 1:15) *Repent and believe the good news*
4. What did Jesus tell Simon and Andrew He would make them? (Mark 1:17) *Fishers of men*

APPENDIX H

Mentor Training

The researcher and the NBMM director will establish mentor training incorporating the WHAT, WHY, HOW, and MENTOR TOOLS of the NBMM.

The WHAT will express the objective of the NBMM, which is providing partnership and guidance for new believers so they can mature and grow in their faith. Similarly, the training team will define the term new believer to the mentors. The trainers will remind the mentors that new believers are not only those who recently converted to Christianity but also those who lack spiritual maturity and a foundation for growth.

The WHY will consist of the reason for the NBMM. Scripturally, the why will be articulated in The Parable of the Sower in Mark chapter four. The parable illustrates new believers who receive the Good News of salvation, however, fall away because of challenges that arise after their conversion. The trainer will have the mentors read, study, and explain the parable to the group. As the mentors articulate and digest the parable, they will begin to understand the importance of NBMM as it provides a partner and guide for the new believer as they navigate their newfound faith.

The HOW will entail most of the mentor training for the NBMM. The trainers will begin by walking the mentors through the *New Believer's Friend Handbook* (NBFH). The trainers will cover the expectations and roles of the mentors, including committing to be available, praying together, meeting weekly, reading the new believer's handbook, reading the book of Mark, and sharing answers to study questions. Other roles of the mentor include helping the new believer take "next steps," such as getting involved in service and small groups, baptism, and developing

spiritual disciplines. The mentor will also be responsible for involving the pastor in the mentoring process and be encouraged to be a friend to the new believer.

The trainer will discuss the behaviors to avoid in NBMM. Some behaviors include smothering or overwhelming the new believer, demanding their involvement in activity completion, being a psychologist or counselor, being critical of anyone or anything in the church, and not being responsible for the new believer but to them. The training will then walk the mentors through the NBMH so they can visualize the material they will cover.

The **MENTOR TOOLS** aspect of the training will cover the relational aspects of the program. It will include the importance of listening in mentorship relationships from Stephen E. Burt's book, *The Art of Listening in Coaching and Mentoring*. The importance of asking questions from Judith E. Glaser's book *Conversational Intelligence*, and the importance of building partnership and trust from Edwards, Sue. *Organic Mentoring: A Mentor's Guide to Relationships with Next Generation Women*. This training session will give the mentors long-term tools in their mentorship belts as they interact with the new believers. Lastly, the mentor training will engage in role-playing as the mentor walks through one or two sessions providing the mentor with hands-on experience in engaging with a new believer after their conversion.

APPENDIX I

Week One Study Sample

Just what has happened to you exactly?

That's a good question, and an important one. Knowing what happened and what it means will help you best begin your new life as a Christian.

It may have happened in a church, in your home, anywhere. Someone may have been with you, or perhaps you were by yourself. Maybe you felt something missing in your life, or you turned to Jesus for help in a desperate situation. One way or another, you asked Him to be a part of your life.

Now, what does it all mean?

To put it simply, two things have happened:

1. Jesus has become your Savior.
2. You have become a child of God.

We call this salvation. Perhaps someone has already said that now you are saved. Maybe you wonder what that means. Saved from what? Why did you need to be saved? Three things are important for you to know:

1. You were a sinner.
2. You could not save yourself.
3. Only Jesus could save you.

The Bible says, "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23). Sin is doing anything that you know

is wrong, and everyone, except Jesus, has done this. The Bible also says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). This kind of death is spiritual and eternal.

No one can be saved from this death by good works, church membership, or trying to be a moral person. The only way to be saved from the penalty of sin is to somehow provide payment.

Jesus provided the only sufficient payment for sin by dying on a cross many years ago. He took upon himself the punishment for all sin. When you asked God to forgive your sins and believed Jesus died for you, God accepted you for Jesus' sake, your sins were forgiven, and Jesus became your Savior.

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When Jesus became your Savior, He brought you new life, spiritual life, life from God. The Bible calls this the new birth (John 3:3). By your first birth, you became a

child of your earthly parents; by your new birth, you have become a child of God.

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Next is your Bible reading plan and study questions for this first week. These will help you develop a habit of reading and studying the Bible.

WEEK ONE • DAY ONE

Bible Reading & Study Questions from Mark 1:1–8

1. What did the prophet Isaiah say John would do? (Mark 1:2,3) ***Prepare the way for the Lord***
2. What two things did John do to prepare the way for Jesus? (Mark 1:4) ***Baptize and preach***
3. What kind of baptism did John preach and perform? (Mark 1:4) ***Baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins***
4. What did John say Jesus would baptize with? (Mark 1:8) ***The Holy Spirit***

WEEK ONE • DAY TWO

Bible Reading & Study Questions from Mark 1:9–20

1. What was the role of the Holy Spirit at Jesus' water baptism? (Mark 1:10) ***The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove.***
2. What was God's response to Jesus' water baptism? (Mark 1:11) ***God said, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."***
3. What did Jesus say a person should do to prepare for the king-

dom of God? (Mark 1:15) **Repent and believe the good news**

4. What did Jesus tell Simon and Andrew He would make them? (Mark 1:17) **Fishers of men**

WEEK ONE ▪ DAY THREE

Bible Reading & Study Questions from Mark 1:21–34

1. Why were the people amazed at Jesus' teaching? (Mark 1:22) **Because He taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law**
2. What did the evil spirit know about Jesus? (Mark 1:24) **That He was the Holy One of God**
3. What did Simon's mother-in-law do after Jesus healed her? (Mark 1:31) **She waited on Him.**
4. Who did the people bring to Jesus to be healed? (Mark 1:32) **All the sick and demon possessed**

WEEK ONE ▪ DAY FOUR

Bible Reading & Study Questions from Mark 1:35–45

1. What time of day did Jesus pray? (Mark 1:35) **Early in the morning**

2. When the man with leprosy asked if Jesus was willing to heal him, what did Jesus say? (Mark 1:41) **"I am willing. Be clean."**
3. What did the man with leprosy do after Jesus healed him? (Mark 1:45) **He spread the news about Jesus.**

WEEK ONE ▪ DAY FIVE

Bible Reading & Study Questions from Mark 2:1–12

1. Whose faith did Jesus respond to in healing the paralytic man? (Mark 2:5) **The friends of the paralytic man**
2. What did Jesus say to the paralytic man? (Mark 2:5) **"Son, your sins are forgiven."**
3. Why did Jesus' statement to the paralytic man upset the teachers of the Law? (Mark 2:6) **Only God can forgive sins.**
4. What did healing the paralytic man prove? (Mark 2:10) **That Jesus has the power to forgive sins**
5. If only God can forgive sins (Mark 2:6) but Jesus also has the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:10), what do these verses tell us about Jesus? **Jesus is God.**

WEEK ONE ▪ DAY SIX

Bible Reading & Study Questions from
Mark 2:13–22

1. Who did Jesus spend time with?
(Mark 2:15) ***Tax collectors and sinners***
2. Who did Jesus compare sinners to?
(Mark 2:17) ***The sick***
3. Who did Jesus compare himself to?
(Mark 2:17) ***A doctor***
4. Who else did Jesus compare himself to?
(Mark 2:19) ***A bridegroom***

WEEK ONE ▪ DAY SEVEN

Bible Reading & Study Questions from
Mark 2:23–28

1. What were Jesus' disciples doing on the Sabbath?
(Mark 2:23) ***Picking grain***
2. What person did Jesus use as an example to justify His disciples' actions?
(Mark 2:25) ***David***
3. What did Jesus say to defend His disciples?
(Mark 2:27) ***"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."***

4. Who is Lord of the Sabbath?
(Mark 2:28) ***The Son of Man (Jesus)***

APPENDIX J

Reading in MarkWeek One:

Day 1 - Mark 1:1-8
Day 2 - Mark 1:9-20
Day 3 - Mark 1:21-34
Day 4 - Mark 1:35-45
Day 5 - Mark 2:1-12
Day 6 - Mark 2:13-22
Day 7 - Mark 2:23-28

Week Two:

Day 1 - Mark 3:1-19
Day 2 - Mark 3:20-35
Day 3 - Mark 4:1-20
Day 4 - Mark 4:21-25
Day 5 - Mark 4:26-29
Day 6 - Mark 4:30-34
Day 7 - Mark 4:35-41

Week Three:

Day 1 - Mark 5:1-20
Day 2 - Mark 5:21-37
Day 3 - Mark 6:1-6
Day 4 - Mark 6:7-13
Day 5 - Mark 6:14-29
Day 6 - Mark 6:30-44
Day 7 - Mark 6:45-56

Week Four:

Day 1 - Mark 7:1-23
Day 2 - Mark 7:24-30
Day 3 - Mark 7:31-37
Day 4 - Mark 8:1-13
Day 5 - Mark 8:14-21
Day 6 - Mark 8:22-26
Day 7 - Mark 8:27-38

Week Five:

Day 1 - Mark 9:1-13
Day 2 - Mark 9:14-32
Day 3 - Mark 9:33-50
Day 4 - Mark 10:1-16
Day 5 - Mark 10:17-31
Day 6 - Mark 10:32-45
Day 7 - Mark 10:46-53

Week Six:

Day 1 - Mark 11:1-11
Day 2 - Mark 11:12-19
Day 3 - Mark 11:20-35
Day 4 - Mark 12:1-12
Day 5 - Mark 12:13-17
Day 6 - Mark 12:18-34
Day 7 - Mark 12:35-44

Week Seven:

Day 1 - Mark 13:1-23
Day 2 - Mark 13:24-37
Day 3 - Mark 14:1-11
Day 4 - Mark 14:12-31
Day 5 - Mark 14:32-52
Day 6 - Mark 14:53-65
Day 7 - Mark 14:66-72

Week Eight:

Day 1 - Mark 15:1-15
Day 2 - Mark 15:16-20
Day 3 - Mark 15:21-32
Day 4 - Mark 15:33-41
Day 5 - Mark 15:42-47
Day 6 - Mark 16:1-8
Day 7 - Mark 16:9-20

APPENDIX K

Session Aspects

BEFORE YOU MEET

- Schedule a time to meet with the new believer.
- Read Week 1 of *The New Believer's Handbook*.
- Read the Week 1 Bible readings from Mark.
- Review the study questions.
- Prepare to share your testimony with the new believer (see [Share Together](#) section).
- Use a Bible in a modern translation. Make sure the new believer has one too.

MEET TOGETHER

- ▶ Greet the new believer.
- ▶ Pray together that God will guide your time of study and fellowship.

REVIEW TOGETHER

- ▶ Answer the new believer's questions about the Introduction and the Week 1 reading.
- ▶ Highlight the following from Week 1 in *The New Believer's Handbook* and supporting information:

Understanding Salvation

- New life: You are born again spiritually.
 - New chance: The new life means that past sins are gone and guilt is removed.
 - New boss: Every believer has a new boss—Jesus is Lord of your life.
- ▶ Review Week 1 Bible readings and study questions from Mark. Ask if the new believer has any questions. (See Bible Background Information [[page 130](#)] for additional helps if needed.)

SHARE TOGETHER

- ▶ Share your testimony and include the following:
 - “How I became a Christian”
 - “How I felt after I became a Christian”
 - “What I did the first week as a new believer”
 - “God’s Word, the Bible, has helped me ...”
- ▶ Ask the new believer these questions:
 - ❓ What does being saved mean to you?
 - ❓ Did you tell your family and friends about your salvation? What did you say?
 - ❓ What kind of changes do you think are coming because of your commitment to Jesus Christ?

PRAY TOGETHER

- ▶ Ask the new believer for any prayer requests.
- ▶ Pray together.

WRAPPING UP

- ▶ Schedule your next meeting with the new believer.
- ▶ Remind the new believer to:
 - Read Week 2 of *The New Believer's Handbook*,
 - Read the Week 2 Bible readings from Mark, and
 - Complete the study questions.

APPENDIX L

NBMM Post Evaluation (To be taken online)

1. First & Last Name

2. What was your role in the study?

New Believer Mentor

3. How would you rate your overall experience?

Really bad Could have been better OK Pretty good Out of this world!

4. How Closely did it match your expectations?

0 Didn't match up
5 Was about right
10 Surpassed Them

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. What could have been better about your participation experience?

6. What did you enjoy most about your experience?

7. What did you learn most during your experience?

8. Was your experience with your partner (mentor/new believer) enjoyable? Why or why not?

9. Would you recommend this to someone else? Why or why not?

10. Would you like to add something else?

APPENDIX M

**Focus Group Evaluation
New Believer & Mentor**

Focus groups will be divided into two groups. One will be for the mentors, and the other will be for new believers. Similar to the study, the group will meet via Zoom. There will be one transcriber who will write on a Zoom shared screen all of the feedback the group brings. The four questions each group will answer are listed below.

1. What was positive?
2. What was challenging?
3. What was missing?
4. What could be improved?

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IRB APPROVAL LETTER

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

January 6, 2023

Moses Aleman
Jeffrey Cockrell

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY22-23-571 Creating and Implementing a Mentorship Ministry for New Believers

Dear Moses Aleman and Jeffrey Cockrell,

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

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office