Discipling The Second Generation: Parent Education For Latino Immigrants

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ABSTRACT

DISCIPLING THE SECOND GENERATION: PARENT EDUCATION FOR LATINO IMMIGRANTS

by

Richard Piñero-Calzada

Adviser: Ronald M. Flowers
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: DISCIPLING THE SECOND GENERATION: PARENT EDUCATION FOR LATINO IMMIGRANTS

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Name and degree of faculty adviser: Ronald M. Flowers, DMin

Date completed: December 2017

Problem

There is a perceived lack of parental knowledge and skills in first generation Latino-immigrant families that contributes to second-generation youth and young adults leaving the Seventh-day Adventist faith.

Method

The purpose of this project is the development of a psychosocial adult education seminar geared toward Latino-immigrant parents, within the context of the United States, of second-generation children ages seven and younger. This project, however, is theoretical in nature, and has not been implemented. To assess the effectiveness of the
Results

This project consists of a seven-part series comprised of three sermons and four more conventional seminar presentations that especially focus on the topics of parenting as stewardship, helping offspring to mature faith, and the dynamic effects of parenting styles on the development of faith maturity in children.

Also, the project includes an extensive review of current literature on the Latino migration experience and its multiple effects on the settling and assimilation within the context of the United States.

Conclusions

My hope is that Latino immigrant parents will benefit from this church-based adult educational resource and, in turn, their children embrace a mature faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The project was educational and growth producing for me, further fueling my passion for parenting ministry. A seminar that I recently led, based on many of the elements detailed in this project, has resulted in many positive comments from parents and increased interest in such family ministry on the part the church.
DISCIPLING THE SECOND GENERATION: PARENT EDUCATION FOR LATINO IMMIGRANTS

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

by
Richard Piñero-Calzada

December 2017
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dear wife Annette V. Piñero for her unwavering support. You are a true role model of a godly mother and wife, and I love you all the more for it.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

One is only as strong as those with whom he surrounds himself. For this reason, I would like to express my gratitude to those who embraced me through this laborious journey.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my adviser Dr. Ron Flowers for the continuous support of my Doctor of Ministry (DMin) coursework and related research, for his encouragement, patience, and immense knowledge. His guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this project. I could not have imagined having a better adviser and mentor for my DMin study. Thanks to all of my professors—Deborah Berecz, Jeffrey Brown, Jon Dybdahl, Curtis Fox, Willie Oliver, Monte Sahlin, and Calvin Thomsen—for challenging me to be intentional and enriching my professional formation in the field of family ministries.

To my colleagues of the 2010 Family Life Cohort, thank you for support and inspiration along the way. To Dr. Carlos Tamay for the many prayers and words of encouragement. In a special sense, Dr. Ronald Rojas who through this entire trek has epitomized the meaning of the proverb “There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Prov 18:24). “¡Mil gracias Walter Watertower, lo logramos!”

To my father, Carlos J. Piñero Padró, who rests awaiting the Glorious Morning. To my mother and siblings, Andreita, Janice, Carlos, Israel, Jesse, and Amy. You have all
been an inspiration in ways you may never really know. Thanks for all your support and encouragement, for putting up with me being “present in the body” but absent in mind at significant family functions and not holding it against me. I love you all and am proud to call you family… “¡Póngase ahí, Piñero!” A special thanks goes to my mother- and father-in-law Migdalia Guzmán and Víctor Vélez for their financial support and constant encouragement.

To J.D. and Shelley Quinn, and the entire 3ABN and 3ABN Latino family for your constant encouragement and support. To the local leadership team of the Chestatee and Cleveland Seventh-day Adventist churches for holding up the fort during the most grueling times of my research. To Mark and Carmela Rotscowski of South Bend, Indiana for opening up your hearts and your home to us. May God reward your faithfulness!

Lastly, but by no means least, my deepest appreciation is for my loving wife Annette V. Piñero, who has been my rock and my inspiration throughout this entire process and life. Without her unwavering support and sacrifice, the completion of this doctoral degree would not have been possible. To my children Mileidys Annette and Jonathan Richard. This journey has been well worth it because of you. Thanks for making it an adventure worth taking. For being willing to sacrifice of your time so that Daddy could complete this project, and become a doctor. May God reward you as you now enter your personal journey to professional success. I love you and am proud to be your father.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

According to Martinez (2017), by the 2040s most people living in the United States will not be of White descent, but Hispanic, Black, and Asiatic. Latino-immigrant families are increasingly becoming a significant part of the fabric of the United States and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. Many of them are productive citizens though they also long for their homeland. For them the process of migration is not an easy one, taking a toll on the celebrated family unit and the rearing of children. Research (Perez & Fortuna, 2005) has shown that the distress and anxiety experienced through their journey have significantly impacted the physical and emotional health of Latino-immigrant families. This, coupled with the complicated process of rearing children within a foreign and complex society, has adversely affected those that come behind, namely the second-generation.

Latino-immigrant parents are in desperate need of a system of support to aid them in successfully navigating through the process of adapting to a new society while at the same time preserving their cultural values that give them a sense of identity. The Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America can do better in offering that support to help Latino-immigrant families find a better future here, and in the world to come.
Personal History

Being born in New York to native-born Puerto Rican parents put me in an interesting position when it comes to the immigration debate. To “Americans,” we really are not “from here” because we are Hispanics. To Hispanics—Puerto Ricans in particular—we are not really Puerto Ricans because we are too “Americanized.” So, I think I can relate to a certain extent with what it is like to feel “odd,” debased because I really could not identify with the “dominant culture.” Actually, I was not really aware of the dichotomy I was in until my parents decided to move back to Puerto Rico when I was 14 years old. What a culture shock!

There I was, surrounded by people that I could relate to from a physical perspective, but could not for the life of me understand their way of doing things and their thought processes. Being asked to identify where I was from always put me in an interesting mental gymnastics exercise. Do I say I am from Fajardo (small eastern town in Puerto Rico), or do I say I am from New York? Either response put me in a situation where I was reminded that I was not accepted. It was definitely not a good situation to be in for a teenager who was still attempting to find his own identity and answers to the most fundamental questions to form his worldview.

Interestingly enough, it was during that time that I felt God’s call to ministry. I was just shy of turning 16 years old when attempting to decide who I wanted to be in life, God spoke to my heart and I agreed to go on this journey of faith and save souls for the kingdom. I proceeded to attain my BA in Theology and got married to my darling wife Annette. After having finally adjusted to my surroundings in Puerto Rico and finally felt a part of a larger ethnic family, God prompted my wife and me to move back to the
United States, as newly-weds and new parents. Then He led us on an unexpected journey to plant Hispanic churches in the southeastern part of the United States. We encountered so many Hispanics who seem lost and somewhat misplaced, not having a Spanish-speaking church to address their spiritual needs and help them find support and guidance in this complex American society. This we found unacceptable. Therefore, God led my wife and me completely out of our comfort zone to address a need that was pressed upon our hearts in ways that only God can do.

It took six long years to see one small group form into the first organized Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist church in Columbia, South Carolina. During that time, we became parents a second time. The Lord then led us to journey together with our Latino-immigrant brothers and sisters to seek a country “whose builder and maker is God” while forming a suitable, prosperous life in this world of America. It was during this time, witnessing firsthand the struggles and complexities that Latino-immigrant families experience, that the passion to help them in any way possible truly awoke in me.

Since then God has allowed my wife, my children, and me to serve Latino-immigrant families in various ministry contexts—from church planting, to pastoring, to television evangelism via 3ABN Latino. Today, though not directly involved in Hispanic pastoral ministry, our hearts still yearn to help the Seventh-day Adventist Latino-immigrant families reach their ultimate goal of being heirs to the Kingdom. Thus, this project was conceived in the hopes of making a lasting difference in first-generation Latino-immigrant parents and their offspring.
Statement of the Problem

According to recent estimates, 24% of the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America is between the ages of 11 and 35 (Bryant, 2011). Conservative estimates based on research (Dudley, 2000) conducted within the Seventh-day Adventist Church suggest that 40 to 50% of Adventist youth stop attending church services in their 20s, while the national attrition rate among youth between the ages of 18 and 22 is approximated at 70% (Dyck, 2010). As evidenced from my personal pastoral observation and conversations with other Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist ministers, this trend is also witnessed among second generation Latino youth, which poses a threat to the mission of the Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist church in the United States of America. One of the causal factors that research (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003) has identified is the lack of knowledge that many first-generation Latino-immigrant parents have for the development of mature faith in their children within the complex secular and multicultural society of the United States of America.

Statement of the Task

The task of this project is to develop a seven-part psychosocial seminar to be used within the context of an average Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist church in the United States of America to educate first-generation Latino-immigrant parents in developing mature faith in their children.

Justification for the Project

There are at least four paramount reasons why this project is needed:

1. Effective parenting has been linked with increased parental knowledge of child development and parenting skills, improved parent-child communication, and more
effective parental monitoring and discipline (Bunting, 2004). Similar qualities are essential for effective parental transmission of values that foster the developing of a mature faith (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003).

2. There exists a large body of literature that shows that an individual’s own personal education is the most important correlate in the well-being of their children (Grossman & Kaestner, 1997; Grossman, 2006). Thus, a seminar on effective spiritual parenting practices seems ideal for obtaining the desired results of this project.

3. The use of seminars as effective tools for ministry has blossomed within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This, in part, stems from the realization that Jesus’ ministry was mostly composed of teaching and His Gospel Commission (Matt 28:18-20) calls pastors to the task of teaching new disciples. Thus, this proposed seminar can become a potential tool to assist pastors in helping Latino-immigrant parents succeed in developing mature faith in their children.

4. Addressing these issues within the context of the local Hispanic church, as the proposed seminar intends, gives Latino-immigrant parents an ideal setting in which to assimilate essential concepts and practices in their endeavor to become optimal spiritual parents.

Expectations for the Project

There are three major expectations for this project:

1. This project will sharpen the awareness of Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist leaders and Latino-immigrant parents regarding the potential challenges present in raising children in the United States of America, and of the importance of Christian parenting skills in disciple making. It is understood that though this project is done in English, the
seminar will be produced in Spanish and will focus on Christian parenting and disciple making skills.

2. It is expected that this seminar will become an effective tool for Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist ministers and parents in their efforts to minimize the attrition of second-generation Latino youth within their churches.

3. It is expected that this project will help the researcher in becoming more effective in his personal role as a parent and in the discipleship of his children, alongside his professional role in ministry to families.

**Delimitations**

The scope of this project is limited in several ways. First, while still useful for all Latino-immigrant parents, the project itself is framed within a faith-based viewpoint and designed to be implemented in a Seventh-day Adventist Church context.

Second, the project only contains seven sessions significantly limiting the broad scope of parenting skills that can be addressed.

Third, due to the limited time-span covered and the brevity of time between each session, behavioral change may be limited.

Fourth, though the project addresses Latino-immigrant parents, it was designed within the dynamics of the context of the United States, which likely imposes some cultural limitations for generalization to other contexts.

Fifth, the study will not address the impact of the seminar on lifestyle changes made by participants over an extended period of time. It is not a longitudinal study. In addition, participation in the seminar is limited to Latino-immigrant parents of children under seven years of age.
Finally, though the project is aimed at Latino-immigrant parents, it has been developed in English, thus implying that the facilitator(s) need to have an adequate knowledge of the English language.

**Limitations**

This study gave no consideration to the various moderators of attendance. Participation is voluntary; there may be various moderators of attendance, which limit learning outcomes. Participants will be Latino-immigrant parents of young children which represents unexpected life challenges such as accidents, unexpected health issues, etc., that can limit the attendance to all of the sessions.

Third, the study does not screen participants for their abilities to read and write. Illiterate participants may not benefit as greatly from the seminar.

Lastly, the post-seminar questionnaire will be administered at a follow-up program approximately 12 weeks later. There is no way to ensure they will complete their post-seminar survey responses.

**Definition of Terms**

*Acculturation* “constitutes those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, p. 149).

*Assimilation* is a process by which members of an ethnic minority group lose cultural characteristics that distinguish them from the dominant cultural group or take on the cultural characteristics of another group (The Free Dictionary.com).
Immigrant is a person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence (Merriam-Webster, n.d.b.).

Faith maturity is “the degree to which a person embodies the priorities, commitments, and perspectives characteristic of vibrant and life-transforming faith, as they have been understood in ‘mainline’ Protestant traditions” (Benson, Donahue, & Erickson, 1993, p. 3).

First-generation Latino-immigrant is a foreign-born individual from a Spanish-speaking country who was born outside the United States or on the island of Puerto Rico, is not a U.S. citizen at birth or, in other words, who is born outside the United States and whose parents are not U.S. citizens (Fry & Passell, 2009).

Hispanic is an individual who speaks Spanish, whether that person’s original background is in Latin America or Spain (Merriam-Webster, n.d.a.).

Latino/Latina is an individual of Latin American origin living in the United States (Merriam-Webster, n.d.c).

Second-generation Latino-immigrant is an individual who is a U.S. citizen at birth with at least one first-generation Latino parent (Fry & Passel, 2009).

Socialization is the manner by which a child, through education, training, observation, and experience, acquires skills, motives, attitudes, and behaviors that are required for successful adaptation to a family and a culture (Parke & Buriel, 1998; Ladd & Pettit, 2002)

Xenophobia is the fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign.
Description of the Project

Latino immigration to the United States poses significant challenges to effective childrearing and disciple making. A statement of the problem will include the review of statistical data from the U.S. Census Bureau as well as qualitative studies on Latino immigration and its effects on parent-child relationships.

A theological reflection will center on the following things: First, the divine origin and purpose of human parenting; second, an examination of the scriptural teaching in both the Old and New Testaments on God’s plan for human parenting; third, a survey of examples of immigrant parents in Scripture to discern principles and practical lessons that will be of value to the parents of the immigrant population being served by this project.

Current literature will be reviewed including books, selected articles and research papers on (a) stressors Latino-immigrant families face in their migration and acculturation experience within the U.S. and the effect of these have on their family systems and second-generation children, (b) factors of resiliency unique to Latino-immigrant families, and (c) effective parenting skills for successful acculturation of immigrant families, and parental mature faith development in children.

The seminar will be designed for Latino-immigrant parents of children aged seven and under of Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist churches within the United States of America. The seminar will consist of seven 90-minute sessions, each divided into two parts: the first being instructional followed by interactive group exercises.

The seven-part seminar is designed to run concurrently with the North American Division Christian Family Month that is typically celebrated in February. The second
Sabbath of that month is designated Christian Marriage Sabbath and the third is Christian Parenting Sabbath. This intervention is designed to begin on the Sabbath prior to Christian Marriage Sabbath, and culminate on Christian Parenting Sabbath. Between those dates, Sabbath afternoon and Wednesday night sessions will be presented.

Preaching and more conventional seminar presentation methods will be used.

The *Parenting Version of Prepare-Enrich® for Couples Workbook* incorporates the psychological construct of parenting styles. This *Prepare-Enrich®* program will be a primary resource.

The effectiveness of the ministry intervention will be assessed by a pre- and post-questionnaire. These will assess any changes in knowledge and attitudes toward Christian parenting and the development of faith maturity in children.

A final chapter will provide a summary of the project and recommendations for further research based on the review of literature and this researcher’s experience gained in developing this ministry intervention.
CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Parenting has significant implications for life here on this earth and for eternity. This chapter provides biblical and theological reflection to support this ministry project, which is a seven-part interactive seminar, to be used within the context of an average Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United States, to educate first-generation Latino immigrant parents in discipling their second-generation children.

This chapter will explore three areas of theological inquiry: (a) the divine origin and purpose of human parenting, (b) the scriptural teaching in both Old and New Testaments on God’s plan for human parenting, and (c) a survey of a few examples of immigrant parents in Scripture to discern principles and practical lessons that will be of value to the parents of the immigrant population being served by this project. Unless otherwise noted, biblical references will be cited from the New King James Version.

God as a Parent

The notion of parenting is derived from God Himself. Throughout the Bible, God is portrayed as the ultimate Parent. It is an overarching theme throughout Scripture that describes God’s relationship with the human race.
In Old Testament Teachings

A survey of the Old Testament reveals that He is specifically referred to as the Father of the people of Israel (Deut 32:6; Isa 63:16; Jer 3:4, 19; 31:9; Mal 1:6; 2:10), of specific individuals (2 Sam 7:14; 1 Chr 7:13; 22:10; 28:6; Ps 89:26), and of widows and the fatherless (Ps 68:5). At times, the father imagery is present although the term “Father” is not used (Exod 4:22-23; Deut 1:31; 8:5: 14:1; Ps 103:13; Hos 11:1-4; Mal 3:17).

God’s parental love and care is also compared to that of a concerned and caring mother (Isa 49:14-16; Isa 66:13; cf. Luke 13:34). Though the Bible mainly represents God as a father, it is important not to infer from this that God is a male or female. Gulley (2011) affirms that these inspired descriptions of God’s form are, “drawn from the sphere of our experience in order to make who God is comprehensible to humans . . . It is wise to understand these descriptive words as anthropomorphic, accommodating our finite intellect, keeping in mind that God is also a spirit” (pp. 57-58). Thus, for the purpose of this study, God’s paternal love and care will be characterized under the term of Parent.

In the Teachings of Jesus

The teaching of God as a loving parent is most explicitly revealed in the New Testament. “Father” was Jesus’ favorite term for addressing God. He directed his disciples to refer to God as “Father” when they prayed (Matt 6:9; Luke 11:2). Jesus appears to have expressed this “God as Father concept” approximately “sixty-five times in the Synoptic Gospels and over one hundred times in John” (Stein, 1996, p. 247). What stands out most regarding Jesus’ teaching of God as “Father” is His use of the Aramaic term “Abba.” This term implies intimacy and was believed to be used mostly by little children when addressing their fathers (Block, 1994).
The essence of the parenthood of God in the teachings of Jesus is best portrayed in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24). In this parable, God is portrayed as a loving and patient father who, despite the ill musings of his younger son (vv. 13-15), grants him his desires. His steadfast compassion is evidenced through the reflections of his younger son regarding the treatment of the servants of his household (v. 17). His love and mercy are witnessed through the manner in which he received his wayward son, despite his disappointing decisions, and restored him back to his prior status (vv. 20-24). The manner in which he sought out, pleaded and affirmed his love toward his older son (vv. 28-32), speaks to the essence of God as a Parent (Wiersbe, 1996). This father loves his two sons, in spite of pain, disrespect, and discontent. It paints a vivid “picture of God as our heavenly Father with his generosity, patience, mercy, and tenderness” (Veith & Moerbe, 2012, p. 119).

**In the Teachings of Paul and Other New Testament Writers**

Paul, throughout his writings also emphasizes God as “Father.” He employs it in blessings (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3), doxologies (Rom 15:6), thanksgiving praises (2 Cor 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2-3), prayers (Col 1:12), and exhortations (Eph 5:20). For Paul, this parenthood has been made available only through Jesus Christ (Stein, 1996). That is why he refers to “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 15:6; 2 Cor 1:3; 11:31). The prevailing emphasis throughout the epistles of the New Testament (Rom 8:12-6; 1 Pet 1:3-4; 1 John 3:1) is God’s “fatherhood” through adoption by means of Jesus Christ.

The “parenthood” of God is important to keep in mind when considering the origin of human parenting. This will afford a more complete understanding of God’s plan for human parenting.
Divine Origin of Human Parenting

Human parenting is first implied within the procreative command given to the first human pair, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Gen 1:28 NRSV). This command follows the special act of their creation, with several features that bear directly on their parenting. A close reading of Genesis 1-2 brings to light key aspects surrounding the creation of humankind that reveal the divine purpose of human parenting: (a) the unity of the Godhead, (b) an intimate, personal creation, (c) created to be responsible, and (d) joy in creation and procreation. These encompass the fact that humankind was created in the image of God.

The Unity of the Godhead in Creating Humankind

“God said, ‘Let Us make man [humankind] in Our image, according to Our likeness . . .. So, God created man [humankind] in His Own image, in the image of God He created him. Male and female He created them’” (Gen 1:26a, 27a). The creation narrative depicts the Godhead intricately involved in creating the first human pair. Hasel (1975) denotes, “a plurality of persons is here represented as a germinal idea…a ‘unanimity of intention and plan’” (p. 65). Being created in God’s image suggests that the first human pair were endowed with the capability of coming together to form a united bond to successfully accomplish the intended plan for their having been created: to fill the earth with like humans, made in the image of God. Gulley (2012) states, “As male and female, the first humans in their relationship with each other imaged the relationship among the three Persons of the Trinity” (p. 87).

This relationship of unity is further emphasized by the use of the Hebrew term há’ādām in Genesis 1:26, 27. “Let Us make ‘man’ (há’ādām) in Our image” (v. 26), “So
God created ‘man’ (חָ֣דָם) . . . male and female He created them” (v. 27). It is a singular term, but in verse 27b, the inspired author refers to (חָּדָם) as “them.” This specific attribute of the image of God, oneness, was woven in to the first pair at creation and is fundamental to human parenting. God’s ideal for human parenting is that father and mother be as intricately united in rearing their children as the Trinity was in creating humankind. God’s original intent was that human parenting be a united enterprise.

Here implied is another important characteristic of human parenting. Just as the Godhead counseled and worked in unison to bring about the most ideal scenario for humankind to thrive, parents, and those to be, are to plan together how to best provide the safest and most productive environment for their children to thrive in. Balswick and Balswick (2007) state, “Together, husband and wife must be coleaders in deciding what is in the best interest of their unique children” (p. 104). They must set clear guidelines as to what role each will play in supplying the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of their children. Kiš (2000) states,

Childbearing must be purposeful and planned, not a thoughtless incident of insignificant consequence. . . . God prepared everything needed for the human creature: air for the lungs, food for the stomach, light for the eyes, work and sleep for the muscles, mysteries and laws of nature for the mind, and the Sabbath for communion with God. A Christian lifestyle beckons modern parents to imitate our heavenly Father in upholding the principles of care and support of the family. (p. 692)

An Intimate, Personal Creation

Second, is the unique manner in which God fashioned humankind. Genesis 2:7 reveals a more intimate and personal approach in the creation of humankind. “The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground.” In contrast to the impersonal manner that God commanded things into existence at the beginning of his creative prowess: “let there be light” (Gen 1:3), “let there be a firmament” (Gen 1:6), “lights in the firmament” (Gen
1:14), sea creatures and fowls (Gen 1:20-21), “living creatures . . . and everything that creeps on the earth” (Gen 1:24-25), the pattern changes when creating humankind. “The word ‘to form,’ yaṣar, implies an act of molding and fashioning into a form corresponding in design and appearance to the divine plan” (Nichols, 1978, p. 222). It is also used to describe the activity of a potter as he fashions the clay (Isa 29:16; 49:5), and a goldsmith fashioning idols (Isa 44:9; Hab 2:18). It infers God being hands-on in creating humankind.

He then “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (Gen 2:7b) implying an intimate approach unique only to humankind. God’s command becomes personal: “Let Us make” (Gen 1:26). Thus, “the creation of [humankind] is an exception to the rule of creation by divine fiat” (Sarna, 1989, p. 11).

This personal and intimate attribute is further witnessed in the addition of the name Yahweh by the inspired author of the creation narrative in Genesis 2. Moses, whom most Old Testament scholars believe to be the author, identifies God with Elohim (אֱלֹה ִּים), throughout Genesis 1. This is the generic name for God, meaning “The Mightiest One” (Davidson, 2009). In Genesis 2, the inspired author introduces the name Yahweh (יהוה) alongside Elohim (אֱלֹה ִּים). Yahweh is the personal, covenant name of God (Davidson, 2009). According to Davidson (2009), it “depicts the intimate, caring God” who delves Himself fully into this specific act of creation (p. 7). This personal and intimate attribute is witnessed in the description given in verse seven, “the LORD God (Yahweh Elohim) formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being” (NRSV). Gulley (2012) further explains,

_Yahweh Elohim_ is the powerful Christ who creates humans up close and personal—in a way distinct from His creation of all the rest of created reality in Genesis 1. As the
Yahweh Elohim, He drew close and formed Adam and breathed the breath of life into him (Gen. 2:7) . . .. The contrast emphasizes the stark distinction between the way humans and the rest of creation were created by Christ. Humans are singled out as unique. (pp. 82-83)

It thus implies that God was creating beings that would enter into a loving covenant relationship with their Creator. This specific act also highlights the capacity for intimacy that was woven into the fabric of humankind from the onset. It is this attribute that enables open communication and leads to deeper bonds of love (Balswick & Balswick, 2007). This is one of the underlying bedrocks of human parenting: the ability to intimately communicate to and with children in a safe environment where the bonds of love can be strengthened and expanded. Thus, parents need to seek to strengthen bonds of love and intimacy between themselves and in doing so, develop an environment wherein their children can thrive emotionally, as well as spiritually (Balswick & Balswick, 2007).

God instituted the loving covenant relationship of marriage to offer children a safe environment where ties of love can be fortified and increased (Gen 2:21-24). Gulley states, “Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live in mutual love for each other, so male and female were to image God in their relationship of love for each other” (p. 87). Chapman (2003) adds, “A loving and growing marriage is the greatest gift any couple can give their children. It is the most important of all parenting skills” (p. 2). This capacity to love and be loved may be the most crucial aspect of the image of God that is found in humans.

It is important here to underline that God’s ideal for marriage is between one man and one woman, thus establishing an intimate bond that no one shall “put asunder” (Matt 19:6). This was to provide exclusivity. The mere fact that Christ compares His relationship to His people as that of a marriage (Rev 19:7-9) speaks volumes to its
importance before Him (Kiš, 2000). God designed marriage to be an exclusive relationship between a man and a woman because it was to be the ideal environment for the perpetuation of the human race. Stott (1984) aptly defines it this way,

Marriage is an exclusive heterosexual covenant between one man and one woman, ordained and sealed by God, preceded by a public leaving of parents, consummated in sexual union, issuing in a permanent mutually supported partnership, and normally crowned by the gift of children. (p. 163)

Created to be Responsible

A third and seminal attribute that is implied in the first human pair being created in the image of God is that of stewardship. It is the first attribute mentioned within the context of the creation of mankind, and repeated immediately after the procreative command (Gen 1:26, 28). According to Cairus (2000), “The idea of human creatures as an image of God primarily points toward their role as God’s representative over the whole of creation (Gen 1:26, 27; Ps 8:6-8). Humankind’s function was to be analogous to God’s in his sphere” (p. 208). “Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion” (Gen 1:26, NRSV, italics added). It was not to be a dominion characterized by force, but rather one that represented the Creator fully. Gulley (2012) notes, “They were to exert careful dominion over planet earth in the same way that God has loving dominion over all things” (p. 89). God gave to humankind access to the natural resources of the earth with full stewardship of these resources. They were not to abuse but rather to care for them. In this was included their parental responsibility. Flowers (2000) adds,

Parenting [is] a high form of stewardship—caring for the children God entrusts to human beings as partakers in creation. Stewardship of life, especially of children who are received into the family as gifts from God, also involves caring for the environment in which they are socialized and influenced to grow in human intimacy. (p. 49)
This concept bears major significance in regards to parenting because the first human pair was made responsible for “filling the earth” with humans procreated in the image of their Creator (Cairus, 2000). Their primary function was to represent the Creator in their governance over His creation.

Joy in Creation and Procreation

God created the first human pair in His image and blessed them with the gift of procreation in order to “fill the earth” (Gen 1:28) with beings made in His own image and likeness. Beings with whom He could enjoy reciprocated love and companionship through an eternal covenant relationship (Balswick & Balswick, 2007). For God, creating beings in His image is His ultimate joy. Davidson (2006), in supporting his research on wisdom being Christ in Proverbs, presents a candid picture of the joy experienced by the Godhead in creation:

The term mĕšaheqet [found in Prov 8:29, 20] is a participial form of the root šhq, “to sport, play, laugh.” Here is represented the mood of joyful celebration, pure delight, of the Son with Yahweh, and pure delight, joyful celebration with humanity. This verb šhq is used elsewhere of children “playing” in the streets (Zech 8:5). The Father and the Son are having “the time of their life,” as it were, rejoicing, laughing, playing, as they work together, Co-creators, fashioning this world and its inhabitants. Likewise, the Son is having “the time of His life,” as it were, rejoicing, laughing, sporting with the humans He has created. (p. 53)

This vividly portrays what the Godhead and all the heavenly hosts could have experienced with those created in God’s image. It is this experience God desired to perpetuate and enjoy with humankind, made possible through the procreative powers given to the first human pair.

Thus, God created the first human pair in His image, granting them the capacity to unite as one through the divine institution of marriage for the purpose of procreating like human beings that could live in an eternal loving relationship with Him and the rest of the
created beings. However, God’s ideal would be thwarted before the first human pair could experience the gift of parenthood; sin would enter the world.

**Parenting in the Bible**

As alluded to earlier, human parenting is a stewardship responsibility (Flowers, 2000, Chartier, 1996). Parents receive children from God as a gift or reward, and each child is considered a “heritage of the Lord” (Ps 127:3). They are “a sign of His blessing” (Dybdahl, 2010, p. 744). As such, parents have a significant responsibility to help children grow physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, and most importantly spiritually. Bradford (2000) states, “[Children] are placed in the hands of parents, who become responsible for preparing them for service in this life and the world to come, when God will ask, ‘Where is the flock that was given you, your beautiful flock?’ (Jer 13:20)” (p. 670). To fulfill this responsibility, parents should learn and understand how the Bible portrays parenting (Chartier, 1996). White (1954) states, “Fathers, mothers, you need to seek God morning and evening at the family altar, that you may learn how to teach your children wisely, tenderly, and lovingly” (p. 517). This study is rooted in the theological foundations that follow.

**Parenting in the Old Testament**

In the Old Testament, there are a number of verses that allude to parental responsibilities. The most prominent description of parental responsibilities can be found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, called commonly the *Shema.*
The Shema (Deut 6:4-9)

The Shema is known as “the fundamental tenet of Jewish faith” (Merrill, 1994, p. 163). It is derived from a Hebrew word meaning “hear,” which is the first word in Deuteronomy 6:4 (McIntosh, 2002). The word portrays a parent calling his child to get the child’s attention to teach him for his own good (Brueggemann, 2001; Wright, 1996). In the Shema, God reiterates through Moses, the stipulations of the Deuteronomic covenant to the Israelites prior to their entry into the land promised to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Merrill, 1994).

Love for God first

The first part of the Shema (vv. 4-5) is a command for Israel to love God “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” This love toward God is the expected response of the Israelites to God’s mercy in delivering them from Egyptian captivity via the Exodus (Deut 4:9-10). The stipulations of the covenant were to keep all of God’s “statues and commandments” (Deut 6:2), and these were to be perpetuated “beyond the immediate generation of those whom the Lord made [to] generations yet unborn (Deut 4:25, 40; 5:9-10, 29)” (Merrill, 1994, p. 166). In referring to the “heart” the Shema infers more toward the intellect or rational side of the being (Merrill, 1994). According to Wolff (1974), “to be put on the heart means that hearers should ‘remain conscious’ of what they have learned” (p. 48). Thus, God, as part of the covenant initiated with Israel, commands the Israelites to love Him with their very “essence and expression” (Merrill, 1994, p. 164).

Often in Deuteronomy, the command to love is synonymous with the command to obey (Wright, 1996). Thus, “to obey is to love God with every aspect and element of
one’s being” (Merrill, 1994, p. 163). Therefore, the Israelites express their love for God within a willing and joyful obedience to the commandments, and they see obedience to the commandments as a response of love for God (Craigie, 1976).

Parental obligations

The remaining portion of the *Shema* focuses on parental duties toward children. Within the context of the family, God commands the Israelites to demonstrate the love they profess toward Him by diligently teaching His commandments and statutes, the stipulations of the covenant, to their children by always talking about them whenever and wherever they go (Christiansen, 2001). Moreover, it clearly implies that God expects the Israelites to teach the commandments from generation to generation (Merrill, 1994).

Based on the *Shema*, parenting represents a loving covenant relationship with God by loving Him with one’s “whole self.” Parenting is a willing and joyful obedience to God. Deuteronomy 6:6 reaffirms the importance of parents understanding and internalizing God’s commandments and thus providing spiritual training to the children. White states, “Parents themselves are to be connected with God; they are to have His fear before them and to have a knowledge of His will. Then comes their work” (White, 1855, p. 328).

Deuteronomy 6:7 implies that teaching and training should be done diligently and in every situation. It should not be done haphazardly (White, 1954). It requires intentionality. “You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (v. 7). Merrill (1994) declares, “whether while sitting at home or walking in
the pathway, whether lying down to sleep or rising for the tasks of a new day, [parents] must be preoccupied with covenant concerns and their faithful transmission” (p. 167).

Verse 8 infers that the teachings and training rendered by parents should be modeled by their actions. “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.” Though some Jews today take this in a literal sense, Rad (1966) suggests, “Probably we still have to do here with a figurative mode of expression, which was then later understood literally and led to the use of the so-called phylacteries” (p. 64). LaRondelle (2007) adds, “Its spiritual meaning for Israel was obvious: to act and think in harmony with the will of God and to remember daily their exodus redemption” (p. 247). Thus, parents today are called to live out the instruction and training they expect their children to internalize and emulate.

“Train up a Child” (Prov 22:6)

The parental duties mentioned above are echoed throughout the rest of the Old Testament. In some instances, they are indirectly alluded to (e.g. Exod 10:2; Isa 38:11; Joel 1:3), in others more explicitly (e.g. Deut 11:18-21; Ps 78:1-8). The importance of training up children is further emphasized in the book of Proverbs. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Though Proverbs 22:6 may be worded as a promise, its literary context and genre does not substantiate it. The book of Proverbs is classified under wisdom literature of the Bible. Geisler (1999) states, “Wisdom literature applies God’s universal truths to life’s changing circumstances. The results will not always be the same. Nonetheless, they are helpful guides” (p. 80). Rock (2000) adds, “The words of Solomon . . . are not absolute assurance that proper training guarantees proper adulthood. But it does apply the law of probability
to the enduring effect of parental influence upon one’s character and happiness” (p. 734). This verse emphasizes the principle previously revealed within the *Shema* (Deut 6:4-9). It is a call to parents to diligently fulfill their responsibility before God in guiding their children from an early age (Brown, Driver, & Briggs, 1977).

**Parental Discipline in Proverbs**

Another reference to parental duties in the Old Testament is that which pertains to disciplining children. The issue of discipline within the Proverbs has not been without controversy (Wegner, 2005). Several strong references are found in Proverbs: “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly” (Prov 13:24); “Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction, (Prov19:18); “The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother” (Prov 29:15); and “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him” (Prov 22:15). Such declarations tend to infer that corporal punishment is commanded by Scripture to lead a child down a correct path. Clifford (1999) declares,

> Sparing the rod and hating the child are paradoxical and memorable ways of stating the effects of parental indifference to their children. The necessity of parental discipline is a common topic in the wisdom literature: Prov 19:18; 23:13-14; 29:17; Sir 7:23 and 30:1-13. It goes without saying that this paradoxical language cannot be used as an argument for the corporal punishment of children. (p. 140)

One interesting point is that of the passages mentioned by Clifford above, only Proverbs 13:24 has paradoxical language (Wegner, 2005). Thus, the controversy over the true meaning of these passages continues on.
In reality the book of Proverbs, when taken as a whole, encourages parents to use multiple levels of discipline ranging from pointing out improper behavior to the use of corporal punishment. According to Wegner (2005),

The Hebrew word *musar*, commonly translated as “discipline” in the OT, has a wide range of meanings that suggests various levels of discipline, including on one end of the spectrum ‘teaching or instruction’ (Prov 1:2, 3, 7; 4:13), then progressing to ‘exhortation or warning’ (Ezek 5:15; Job 20:3), and climaxing with ‘discipline or chastening’ (Prov 13:24; 22:15; 23:13). To draw from only a few Proverbs (e.g. Prov 13:24 or 23:13-14) would be to miss the complexity and range of discipline discussed in the book. (pp. 719, 720)

According to Wegner (2005, p. 728), the book of Proverbs teaches the following principles about parental discipline:

1. All children need some form of discipline, though not all children may need corporal punishment. Proverbs 22:15 states: “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.” Thus, parents are to use the least amount of punishment necessary to curb improper behavior.

2. The word “discipline” (*musar*) (e.g. Prov 13:24; 22:15; 23:13), covers a wide range of disciplinary techniques from “instruction” to “spanking.” Therefore, parents should use a variety of levels of discipline when encountering improper behavior. They should prayerfully use them in increasing severity until the behavior is curbed.

3. Parents should start early (Prov 19:18; 22:6) with age-appropriate disciplinary techniques and be consistent and diligent in their follow-through. Both reasoning and disciplinary techniques can be used to encourage proper behavior from a child.

4. Parents should encourage proper behavior by a variety of methods (Prov 22:6). These can include relating negative examples of the consequences of sin, explaining with examples the proper guidelines of behavior, etc.

5. Parents are to always discipline in love, never in anger, with the purpose of
helping the child. God disciplines those whom He loves (Prov 3:12).

White (1954) stresses that the main object of discipline is the “training of the child for self-governance . . . and self-control” (p. 237). She continues, “In order to maintain . . . authority, it is not necessary to resort to harsh measures; a firm, steady hand and a kindness which convinces the child of your love will accomplish the purpose” (p. 283, emphasis added).

Parenting in the New Testament

The New Testament solidifies the foundational principles established in the Old Testament regarding parenting children, the first being that children are of great worth to God (Ps 127:3). In Mark 10:13-14, Jesus is described as being “greatly displeased” with His disciples for hindering the children from having access to Him:

Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.

Understanding this principle, the apostle Paul stresses that young women within the church should be “train[ed] to love their children” (Tit 2:4, ASV). Likewise, fathers are admonished not to “provoke their children to anger, lest they become discouraged” (Col 3:21, KJV). Both these references point to the parental responsibility of treating children with love and respect as they are considered the Lord’s heritage (Ps 127:3).

White (1954) adds,

Fathers and mothers, you have a solemn work to do. The eternal salvation of your children depends upon your course of action. How will you successfully educate your children? Not by scolding, for it will do no good. Talk to your children as if you had confidence in their intelligence. Deal with them kindly, tenderly, lovingly. . . . When you act your part, you can trust the Lord to act His part. (p. 33)
In Ephesians 6:4, Paul again reiterates the sentiment mentioned above and adds, “Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (KJV). Here implied again, is the importance of parents being consistent both in word and in action, while rearing their children. Elements of the principles outlined in the Shema, though not as obvious, can be traced again here. As affirmed by LaRondelle (2007), parents are “to act and think in harmony with the will of God” (p. 247). They are to model what they are teaching (Deut 6:8). White (1917) states regarding parents, “By their example and teaching the future of their children is largely decided” (p. 245).

**Major Parental Duties Found in Scripture**

A brief survey of the Bible will render what parents should do as they nurture and raise their children understanding God’s plan for parenting. Six major duties are: (a) to love and bless them, (b) provide for their needs, (c) pray for them, (d) lead them to Christ, (e) instruct and train them, and (f) help them develop a mature faith. These will be presented next.

**Love and Bless Children**

Parents should treat children with love. Titus 2:4 states, “train the younger women to love their husbands and children” (RSV). This verse was considered “a fundamental proof of being a good wife and a good mother in Hellenistic and Jewish cultures” (Towner, 2006, p. 726).

Parents should love their children based on the new command Jesus gave to love one another as He has loved (John 13:34-35; 15:12). This love command is called “new” because it indicates “God’s love for Jesus and Jesus’ love for [his followers],” and demonstrates Jesus’ self-giving love on the cross (Michaels, 1989, p. 254). Therefore, as
Jesus commanded, parents should love their children following the example He emulated—with sacrificial love.

A tangible way in which love can be expressed is by means of blessing children. Genesis 48:15 describes the moment when Jacob was blessing Joseph’s two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Jacob’s act of blessing is in line with the Hebrew custom of passing the promise of God from generation to generation (Hagner, 1990). This moment of blessing is mentioned in Hebrews 11:21-22. Both verses indicate a moment of blessing done by faith. According to Thompson (2008), these verses portray complete trust in God’s promise and His faithfulness. In other words, Isaac blessed Jacob and Jacob blessed Joseph’s sons knowing and trusting that God would be faithful to His promises (MacArthur, 1983). In like manner, parents should bless their children having total faith that God will fulfill His promises.

Provide for Children’s Needs

The Bible also instructs parents to provide for the needs of their children. Parents have a responsibility to support their children by supplying their needs (2 Cor 12:14). To those parents who fail to perform this duty, Paul says they have, “denied the faith and [are] worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim 5:8). Paul emphasizes that believers have a parental responsibility to care for all the needs of those who live within any given household. If parents fail to care for their family, they are considered to be denying “the meaning of the Christian faith and live as an unbeliever” (Mounce, 2000, pp. 285-286). This principle was clearly emulated in Christ’s way of dealing with all of God’s children. White (1905) in referring to the manner in which Christ treated all those whom He encountered declares, “The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He
showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’” (p. 143). Therefore, Christian parents must care for and provide for their children’s needs.

Pray for Children

Another important parental duty evident throughout Scripture is to pray for their children. The Bible provides many examples of parents who prayed for their children. Job is one who presented sacrifices to God on behalf of his children (Job 1:5). His concern was for the sins of his children. According to Wilson, the offering Job offered was a “fully burned” offering, which was often used for atonement of sin to restore a right relationship with God (Wilson, 2007, p. 20). Job’s act of presenting these sacrifices was customary (lit. “all the days”), indicating that he prayed regularly for the forgiveness of the sins his children might have committed and for the restoration of their relationship with God.

Some parents in the Bible prayed when their children were physically ill. Jairus, a leader of a local synagogue, fell at the feet of Jesus and earnestly pleaded with Him to heal his daughter by laying on of hands (Mark 5:23). A royal official also came to Jesus while at Cana in Galilee and begged for him to heal his son (John 4:46-50). In both cases, Jesus answered the parents’ plea and healed their children.

As with the biblical examples stated, parents today should pray for their children’s physical and spiritual needs. Prayer is a parental duty that should be performed regularly and continuously (1 Thess 5:17-18). Most importantly, parents should pray for the salvation of their children and for them to establish a right relationship with God. White (1880) affirms, “To neglect the duty of praying with our children is to lose one of
the greatest blessings within our reach, one of the greatest helps amid the perplexities, cares, and burdens of our life-work” (p. 17).

Bring Children to Christ

The most significant parental duty is to lead children to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Matthew 19:13-15 illustrates the attitude and the heart of Jesus toward parents who strive to bring children to a personal knowledge of Him. Just as those parents brought their children before Jesus, today parents are to diligently do likewise. White (1892) states, “The story of Jesus blessing the children should encourage all [parents] to seek the Lord, and bring their little ones to Him” (p. 92). She continues, “The soul of the little child that believes in Christ is as precious in His sight as are the angels about His throne. They are to be brought to Christ” (White, 1964, p. 40). As parents lead their children to Christ, He will gather them in His arms and bless them. “[Parents] should teach [their children] to bring their sins to Jesus, asking His forgiveness, and believing that He pardons and receives them as He received the children when He was personally on earth” (White, 1898, p. 515).

Instruct and Train Children

Proverbs 22:6 explicitly tells parents to train their children: “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” These words of Solomon, found in Proverbs 22:6, are not absolute assurance that proper training guarantees proper adulthood. But it does apply the law of probability to the enduring effect of parental influence upon one’s character and happiness (Longman, 2006). This goes in line with what God commanded through the Shema. It is the parents’ responsibility to teach God’s word to and train children for God. This responsibility is implied in Genesis 18:16-19. In
this passage, God explains why He chose Abraham to “become a great and powerful
nation” (v. 18): “so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the
way of the LORD by doing what is right and just” (v. 19). God wanted Abraham to
remember his great responsibility to direct or instruct his children to do right in the sight
of the LORD, and to keep a close relationship with Him. Children need training to avoid
following their natural tendency to sin (White, 1903). Therefore, parents must properly
train their children by pointing them in the right direction, even after having brought
them to Christ. White (1855) states,

If you consent to the baptism of your children and then leave them to do as they
choose, feeling no special duty to keep their feet in the straight path, you yourselves
are responsible if they lose faith and courage and interest in the truth. (pp. 94-95)

When the parents instruct and train their children, they must be cautious not to
“provoke” their children to anger. In Ephesians 6:4, Paul urges parents, especially fathers,
to avoid certain attitudes, words, and actions to prevent provoking their children to anger.
Therefore, parents must rely on the Holy Spirit to help them to be gentle and patient
when instructing their children (Hoehner, 2002).

Help Children Develop Mature Faith

Another inherent responsibility implied here in Proverbs 22:6 is that of helping
children develop a mature faith. Hildebrandt (1988) rightly affirms that training a child
could also be interpreted as a “careful nurturing, instructing, and disciplining of a child to
develop a wise and moral character” (p. 5).

Mature faith has been defined as “the degree to which a person embodies the
priorities, commitments, and perspectives characteristic of a vibrant and life transforming
faith” (Benson, Donahue, & Erickson, 1993, p. 3). This falls very much in line with
God’s call to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 and 18:16-19. Upon promising him that he would become “a great and mighty nation” through which “all the nations of the earth” would be blessed, God entrusted Abraham with the responsibility of developing a mature faith in his offspring. Nichol (1978) affirms,

Abraham could be trusted; he would not betray God. . .. The intelligent discharge of his divinely appointed task required that he share in a knowledge of God’s purposes. Abraham’s posterity must also understand. . .. It was to be his duty to pass on to future generations what he knew of God’s dealings with the human race. God’s moral and ceremonial laws were also part of the sacred heritage he was to transmit to future generations. Abraham . . . instructed his family in both the theory and the practice of religion, with emphasis on the practical virtues. He taught his family not only to know these things but to do them as well. A benevolent husband, father, and supervisor, he gave positive direction to the social and religious life of his vast family. (p. 321)

The concept of developing mature faith in children is also implied within the immediate context of the Shema. After God, through Moses, instructs His people to diligently teach and train their children in Deuteronomy 6:6-9, verses 20-25 encapsulate the concept by internalizing the reasons for embracing a vivid, life transforming faith: “for [their] good always, the He might preserve [them] alive,” and it will result in “righteousness for [them]” (Duet 6:24-25).

Based on the biblical perspective, parenting should embody a loving relationship with God and a joyful obedience to Him by teaching His commandments to their children. Biblical parenting requires parental duties including blessing and loving children, providing for their needs, praying for them, bringing them to Christ, instructing and training them, and eventually helping them develop a mature faith.

Survey of Biblical Immigrant Parents

Thus far, we have examined the divine origin and purpose of human parenting, and scriptural teachings in both Old and New Testaments that shed light as to God’s plan
for human parenting. At this juncture, we will survey the lives of various immigrant parents found in the Scriptures to extract principles and practices that give evidence to whether these parents embraced their God-given responsibility of transmitting eternal values that aligned with God’s plan to redeem and restore humankind.

Adam and Eve

The first immigrant parents registered in the Bible are Adam and Eve. Essentially, they were born in Eden, but became parents outside of Eden. “The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed” (Gen 2:8, NKJV). As a consequence of humanity’s first sin, the Bible clearly states in Genesis 3:22-24,

The Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So he [God] drove out the man (ha’adam); and he placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life (NKJV).

*Merriam-Webster* (n.d.b.) defines an immigrant as “a person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence.” Since Adam and Eve never returned to the Garden of Eden, it can be safely assumed that they were the first immigrant couple, and consequently, the first immigrant parents to ever walk the earth. A closer look at their experience as parents as recorded in Genesis 4-5 can afford implications and practices that serve as examples for immigrant parents today.

First, it is evident that Adam and Eve understood their responsibility before God as parents even after the Fall. The Bible states that they named their firstborn son Cain (as mentioned above), with the full intent of keeping before themselves the God proclaimed promise of a “Seed,” a son, that would fulfill God’s promise of redeeming the
human race (cf. Gen 4:1). In referring to Eve’s choice of name for her firstborn son and the expression of her faith in a God-derived Savior, Davidson (2015) states,

[It] indicates that when Eve gave birth to her first-born son, she thought that he was the promised Messianic Seed—the Lord. And Eve understood that this Messiah was to be not only human (“man”), but divine (“the Lord [Yahweh]”). (p. 76)

From Genesis 4:1-5, it can also be inferred that the first parents were diligent in teaching their children about their faith in the promised Seed. It clearly states that both Cain and Abel presented offerings before the Lord. “Cain brought an offering . . . to the Lord. . . . Abel also brought . . . his offering” (Gen 4:3-4). Being that there is no prior mention of this practice in the book of Genesis, it must be assumed that they were instructed of this directly from their earthly parents. The closest indication of a sacrificial offering can be inferred from Genesis 3:21, “And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them” (ESV). Note that it was God Himself who acquired the garments for them, inferring that He explained to them the meaning of the sacrificial system (cf. 1 Pet 1:18-20; John 1:29). Some commentators (Matthews, 1996; White, 1890) believe that what is implied here is the sacrificial services instituted by God which typified Jesus as the “Lamb of God” (John 1:29) that was “slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8b). Matthews (1996) points out,

Although this is the first recorded offering in the Bible, there is no indication that the narrative is announcing the first occasion of sacrifice. “In the course of time” (v. 3) is vague and may imply that the practice of giving offerings was customary for the brothers, perhaps learned from Adam. (p. 267)

White (1890) adds,

The Garden of Eden remained upon the earth long after man had become an outcast from its pleasant paths. The fallen race were long permitted to gaze upon the home of innocence, their entrance barred only by the watching angels. . . . Hither came Adam and his sons to worship God. (p. 62)
There is an important point to be made here. Adam not only taught, but also modeled his faith before his children. Herein lies an essential principle for immigrant parents. Despite the fact that the “pleasant and familiar paths” of their native land may not surround them, they must diligently teach the foundational principles of the plan of salvation not merely by precept but, more importantly, by example.

Additionally, the fact that Cain’s offering was disregarded by God (Gen 4:5) and, in turn, that he reacted angrily bears witness to his parents’ diligence in teaching their children the plan of salvation. God’s subsequent conversation with Cain, as registered in Genesis 4:6, 7 bears direct testimony to this.

The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it (NRSV).

Nichols (1978) denotes, “If God had not issued definite regulations concerning sacrifices . . . His disapproval of Cain’s offering would have been arbitrary. That Cain did not accuse God of partiality is evidence that he as well as his brother knew what was required” (pp. 235-236). What may also be implied in verse 7 is that perfect obedience to God’s requirements renders a right relationship with Him. Notice the direct implication in the verse when it mentions, “If you do well, will you not be accepted.” Therefore, it is essential for immigrant parents to demonstrate that biblically grounded religious practices are not empty rituals, but when practiced in faith, are designed to establish a vibrant relationship with the Lord that leads to eternal life (John 17:3).

Despite the sad realization that Cain was not the promised Seed, the first parents continued steadfast in the hope of a Redeemer that would deliver them from their current state, and restore them to their former state as image bearers of God. This is evident by what is stated in Genesis 4:25. “Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and
named him Seth, for she said, “God has appointed for me another child instead of Abel, because Cain killed him” (NRSV). As a testimony to Adam and Eve’s diligence in parenting, the Bible states regarding Seth, “To [him] also a son was born, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to invoke the name of the Lord (Gen 4:26, NRSV). To this, White (1890) adds,

[Seth] was of more noble stature than Cain or Abel, and resembled Adam more closely than did his other sons. He was a worthy character, following in the steps of Abel. . . . While Adam was created sinless, in the likeness of God, Seth, like Cain, inherited the fallen nature of his parents. But he received also the knowledge of the Redeemer and instruction in righteousness. (p. 80)

The phrase “people began to invoke the name of the Lord” (Gen 4:26) is presented in contrast to the description given of Cain in Genesis 4:16, “Then [he] went away from the presence of the Lord” (NRSV, italics supplied). When it is said of Jonah trying to “flee from the presence of the Lord” (John 1:2), it points to his decision to go against a clear command, against the expressed will of God. The same can be said of Cain. It seems to be describing the intentions of the heart. In reference to Genesis 4:26 and people invoking the name of the Lord, it would seem to imply that Seth’s descendants were more inclined to follow God’s will for their lives. Here lies another testimony to the diligence in his parenting endeavors, which he in turn received from his parents, Adam and Eve.

Here is another important point to be made. Though the Bible does not elaborate in detail as to what Adam and Eve did to transmit their beliefs to their children, it can clearly be inferred by observing their children’s conduct that Adam and Eve lived out what they believed. Their religious practices were consistent with what they believed. That included the belief that God grants every individual the freedom to choose. Clearly,
they allowed their children to exert that freedom, as seen in the dissimilar choices Cain and Abel elected.

There is another important point to be considered. Though Adam and Eve seemed to be diligent in transmitting godly values to their children, not all of them chose to adhere to them. Cain stands out as one who chose to follow his own set of values, in spite of the good intentions of his parents. This signals to the freedom of choice that God has given all His created beings and the reality of the sinful nature of humanity (Rom 7:13-25). It points to the reality that though parents may diligently embrace their responsibility to “train up a child in the way he should go” (Prov 22:6), and “teach their children diligently” (Deut 6:5), there are no guarantees that children will end up following the Lord whole-heartedly. Ultimately it is up to the child to exert the God-given freedom to choose whom they will serve (Josh 25:14).

Abraham and Sarah

The Bible teaches that Abraham and Sarah were immigrant parents as well. God called him out his country to a land he did not know and was unfamiliar with. Genesis 12:1 states, “Now the LORD had said to Abram: Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you.” So much can be said regarding Abraham and Sarah. Due to the limitations of this study, we will only share three major principles extracted from their lives as immigrant parents.

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going” (Heb 11:8, italics supplied). When the inspired author of Hebrews states that Abraham “went out, not knowing where he was going,” it might seem as contradictory for Genesis
12:5 clearly states that he set out with Canaan in mind. It seems to infer rather to the uncertainty of the journey and the final destination God had in mind for him. Abraham stepped out in faith, trusting God would lead and provide. Thus, the moniker “Father of Faith.”

Despite being in a foreign land, Abraham did not waver from his faithfulness to God. He did not allow the influences of the societies around him to sway him from his duty before God.

**Abram’s Unwavering Obedience to God**

The Bible does not record any question or hesitation on Abram’s behalf toward God’s command. It simply states, “So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran” (Gen 12:4, NKJV). An important aspect to point out is that Abram’s faith was not a blind one. He carefully planned out his movements in faith. Genesis 12:5 states that Abram took his wife Sarah, his nephew Lot, “and all the possessions that they had gathered . . . and then they departed to go to the land of Canaan.” Strict obedience to God’s commands without careful planning can lead to unstable living situations that can affect the home. A complete and total surrender to God on behalf of immigrant parents is paramount in their endeavors to effectively transmit lasting spiritual values to their children. Weathering the task of supplying for essential needs in a foreign land can tempt many to adopt means of survival that go against God’s clear directives. It seems that Abram took this into account and prepared for the unknown journey as best he knew could. In their endeavor to search for better conditions for the well-being of their families, Latino immigrant parents would do well in prayerfully planning their move carefully under the divine guidance of Godly
principles found in His word. Immigrating to a foreign land presents unnumbered challenges that can cause a breakdown in religious practices that effect spiritual growth. Abram not only prepared for their journey materialistically as best he could, he also made preparations to continue fostering religious practices that strengthened his relationship with the Lord. Thus, Abram’s example is one worthy to emulate.

**Abram’s Devotion to God**

**Genesis 12:7-9** continues,

> Then the **LORD** appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” And there he built an altar to the **LORD**, who had appeared to him. And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the **LORD** and called on the name of the **LORD**. So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

Note that Abram erected altars to God along every stop in his journey; at every location God had appeared to Him. White (1890) adds,

> Abraham, “the friend of God,” set . . . a worthy example. His was a life of prayer. Wherever he pitched his tent, close beside it was set up his altar, calling all within his encampment to the morning and evening sacrifice. When his tent was removed, the altar remained. (p. 128)

With this he testified of God’s ever-abiding presence in his life and left a legacy not only to those who journeyed through the places he traveled, but more specifically to those of his household, namely, his sons Isaac and Ishmael. Frequently he would pass alongside the places where he had previous been and there would rebuild the altars again (See Gen 13:3-4). These served as monuments and reminders of his relationship with the God who called him.
Abraham’s Compromise

Though known as the “Father of Faith” and a “friend of God,” Abraham was not immune to doubt and distrust. The Holy Writ registers instances where Abraham and Sarah found themselves compromising their religious beliefs. These instances should serve as valuable lessons for immigrant parents today. The first of these instances is found in the account of Sarah urging Abraham to take her maid Hagar as a wife in order to bring about God’s promise (see Gen 16:1-4). The second and third accounts, registered in Genesis 12:1-11; 20:10-20, attest to Abraham deceiving Pharaoh in Egypt and Abimelech, king of Gerar respectively, into believing that Sarah was not his wife, but rather his sister. Faced with the stress of a potentially precarious situation, Abraham and Sarah chose to engage in practices that were deemed acceptable to the society around them, but clearly unacceptable before God.

Herein lies another significant lesson for Latino immigrant parents. Being in a foreign land affords many unexpected and complex difficulties that can birth stress and anxiety. It can lead parents to compromise godly principles that were put in place by Him to protect the integrity of the family. Such was the case with Abraham and Sarah, and consequently with Isaac and Rebecca. These examples show how the pressures, stresses, and fears associated with being immigrants can affect one’s personal relationship with Christ and the effects these compromises can have on second-generation children. The Bible registers that Isaac followed in his father’s footsteps by using deception to protect himself from apparent danger (see Gen 26), and in this manner, not placing complete faith in God. It can safely be surmised that children tend to emulate what they observe and whom they admire. The similarities between the sin of Abraham and his son Isaac are too close to be taken lightly. All the more important it should be for Latino immigrant
parents to intentionally strive to embody the principles that form the basis of their personal relationship with God.

White (1952, p. 317) avidly states, “Religious instruction means much more than ordinary instruction.” It means, she goes on to say, that we are to pray with our children, teaching them how to approach Jesus and tell Him all their wants. It means that we are to show in our life that Jesus is everything to us, and that His love makes us patient, kind, forbearing, and yet firm in commanding our children after us, as did Abraham.

Lot and his Wife

When Abraham (then Abram) departed to go to the land of Canaan, he took his nephew Lot along with him (Gen 12:5). Lot and his wife were immigrant parents as well. Apparently, they were motivated mostly by material gain, as may be implied by their decision to “dwell in the cities of the plains . . . as far as Sodom,” where the men where “exceedingly wicked” (Gen 13:12-13), and the quarrels that arose between Abraham and their servants over the land (see Gen 13:5-11).

Though there is no direct mention of their parenting prowess, enough is inferred to gain valuable insight. Their search for material comfort and desire to amass wealth turned out to be disastrous for their household. Despite the providential intervention to save their family (Gen 19:15-21), the influence of their surroundings wreaked havoc on their family values. Lot’s wife was turned into a pillar of salt (Gen 19:26), and the depravity of the Sodomites had corrupted his daughters as well (see Gen 19:30-38).

There is a valuable lesson to be learned here for Latino immigrant parents. In their quest for seeking a better quality of life, it is important to consider the cost. Second Peter 2:6-8 infers that Lot was tormented “from day to day by seeing and hearing [Sodom’s]
lawless deeds.” Nichols (1980, p. 606) identifies that the Greek term for “tormented” is *kataponeō*, which means “to tire down with toil,” giving the picture of Lot being utterly worn out and disgusted by the immorality of the people of Sodom. The quest for a better life here on earth should not go contrary to God’s intended plan for human parenting: To restore the image of God in His children. The focus should be on things that are eternal. Latino immigrant parents should keep in mind Jesus’ words found in Matthew 6:31-34:

> Do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

**Summary**

The above examination of the Biblical and theological foundations for parenting in Scripture suggests that parenting is a divine construct, originating in God Himself. The clear intent was that of populating the Earth with beings procreated in His image with whom He could enjoy an eternal, loving relationship. Despite the fall of the first human couple into sin, God instilled hope in humankind by the promise of restoration through His Son Jesus Christ, and His chosen plan of salvation. Thus, God’s original intent for parenting remains the same. The ultimate goal of all parents is to rear children according to God’s expressed will, helping them to develop a mature faith, in order to ultimately restore the original purpose for parenting as described in Genesis 1-2.
CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

A recent study (Bryant, 2011) within the Seventh-day Adventist Church asserted that 24\% of the membership in North America is between the ages of 11 and 35. A national study among Christians (Dyck, 2010) found that among youth between the ages of 18 and 22, 70\% of them stop attending church services. This researcher and other Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist ministers within their churches have witnessed this trend as well. This poses a threat to the health and longevity of the Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church within North America. One causal factor that research has identified is the lack of knowledge that many first-generation Latino immigrant parents possess regarding mature faith development in their children (Ramírez-Johnson & Hernández, 2003).

This literature review will focus on the stressors Latino immigrant families face in their migration and acculturation experience to and within the United States, the effect these have on their family systems and second-generation children, and the intergenerational transmission of spiritual and religious values. Factors of resiliency unique to Latino immigrant families will be reviewed and the role that parenting styles play in the transmission of intergenerational values. This review will inform a seminar to be used in the context of a Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist congregation in the United States with the purpose of educating Latino immigrant parents on how to develop mature
faith in their preadolescent children.

Who They Are

Immigrants that arrive to the United States come with varied levels of education. On one hand are the highly-educated immigrant adults (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). These highly educated immigrants “comprise a quarter of all U.S. physicians, 24% of the nation’s science and engineering workers with bachelor’s degrees, and 47% of scientists with doctorates” (American Psychology Association, 2012, p. 3). On the other hand, some immigrant adults have far lower educational levels than their U.S.-born contemporaries (Congressional Budget Office, 2011; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

Among the least educated immigrant groups in the United States are Hispanics. According to the Colby and Ortman (2015): 14 % of those over age 25 have earned a bachelor's degree or higher compared with 20 % of Blacks, 33 % of Whites, and 54 % of Asian Americans in the same age group (Ryan & Bauman, 2016). Even more troubling, more than one-fourth of Hispanic adults have less than a ninth-grade education (Therrien & Ramirez, 2000). All Hispanic groups and recent immigrants are included in these numbers. According to Tienda and Mitchell (2006), “Mexican Americans, who are the largest and fastest growing Hispanic subgroup in the United States, have the lowest rates of educational attainment compared with other groups” (p. 180).

The Latino population is the largest heterogeneous ethnic minority group of the immigrant population in the United States (Brown & Lopez, 2013). Latino children currently account for 25% (18.2 million) of U.S. children under age 18 (Colby & Ortman, 2015), and by 2050, they are projected to make up nearly 32% (23.5 million) of the child population. A large majority of Latino children were born in the United States. In 2014,
only 6% (1.1 million) of Latino children were first-generation U.S. residents. Between 2008 and 2014, the share of second-generation residents—those with one or more parents who are foreign-born—was 48% (7.3 million) (US Census Bureau, 2015). These current demographic realities have yielded significant challenges, especially to Latino immigrants and their parenting practices.

Factors That Propel Migration

Of the 56.6 million people who self-identified as Hispanic or Latino in 2015 (Colby & Ortman, 2015), 35% (19.5 million people) were immigrants. Though various factors can motivate mass migration, three factors in particular have been identified as driving migration trends: (a) search for work, (b) family reunification, and (c) humanitarian refuge (Zhou, 2001).

Search for Work

The absence of economic opportunities in their homeland, along with wage differentials in many well-traveled migration corridors has motivated large numbers of migrants to seek jobs in regions other than their birthplace (Polaski, 2004). This is primarily the case for Latino immigrants. For those in search of work, the ways of entry into the United States can be complicated. The highly skilled workers usually face very restrictive visa requirements. Paths for lower skilled jobs have been largely unregulated (Avendaño & Fanning, 2013).

The U.S. agricultural industry relies heavily on the immigrant population (Congressional Budget Office, 2011; Schumacher-Matos, 2011). Approximately 75% of all hired farm workers in the United States, and nearly all those involved in the production of fresh fruits and vegetables, are illegal or undocumented immigrant adults.
Historically, many undocumented immigrant workers have traveled back and forth to their own countries, following the cycles of work, but this “back door” system became a trap door after September 11, 2001. Stricter border control policies have significantly reduced this “back door” flow and it has become too costly and dangerous to cross the border multiple times (Massey, 2008).

The combination of inadequate opportunities in the country of origin and the draw of employment opportunities in the United States has been a significant contributing factor to the growth of undocumented Latino immigrants over the last 20 years (Anderson, 2010; Massey, 2008).

**Humanitarian Refuge**

Humanitarian refuge is also a contributing factor to U.S. immigration. In the first decade of the 21st century, there were over half-a-million refugee adults and children in the United States—1.3% of its entire foreign-born population and 8% of the world’s refugee population (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2010).

United States immigration policy goal is to provide shelter to those fleeing their native countries who face risk of persecution (Congressional Budget Office, 2006). U.S. refugee policy historically has usually favored individuals coming from countries with political conflicts (e.g., Cuba, Vietnam, and Iraq), though it also considers those affected by war, violence, and environmental catastrophes. In recent years (2000-2009), the top 10 nations for asylum seekers have been China, Mexico, Haiti, Ethiopia, Nepal, Russia, Guatemala, India, El Salvador, and Colombia (Wasem, 2011). During the same period, asylum has been granted to seekers from the following countries: China, Colombia, Haiti, Ethiopia, Venezuela, Armenia, Somalia, Iran, Iraq, and Indonesia (Wasem, 2011). Four
out of ten Hispanic countries made it to the top ten. The asylum denial rates have been quite high. According to Wasem (2011), much depends on the national origin, presiding judge, and whether the individual is represented by an attorney. When asylum is denied, many of those seeking for asylum stay illegally within the United States for fear of returning to their home countries (Kanstroom, 2010).

Family Reunification

Whether immigrants migrate for economic reasons or to seek refuge, the migration process usually represents a separation of families. Some bring their families along with them. Others, typically the majority, leave family members behind in their country of origin with a promise of returning after sending significant financial support to better their quality of life, or bringing them over to the United States permanently.

Many immigrants realize early on in their journey that it is extremely difficult to gain legal status via the U.S. immigration system. No major federal legislation on immigration has been passed in over two decades. For instance, in 1996 Congress passed what is officially known as the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRAIRA) (Rosenblum, 2011). It is informally known as the three-10-year bar. The IIRAIRA applies to undocumented immigrants upon entry to the United States. For those whom have spent between six and 12 months of unlawful presence in the U.S., they are barred from re-entering the U.S. for three years (Rosenblum, 2011). Other undocumented immigrants who have spent more than twelve months of unlawful presence within U.S. borders are barred from reentry for ten years (Rosenblum, 2011). Thus, for immigrants to go about the legalization process, they would be required to leave the U.S. due to unlawful entry and presence, then be subject to the harsh penalties of the three-10-year
bar (Rosenblum, 2011).

To circumvent this, there are two options for immigrants. First, an immigrant can file for a waiver in his or her home country of origin. However, most government officials are extremely hesitant to grant these waivers to the bar. Those seeking waivers must leave the U.S. and return home in order to even qualify and apply for such waivers. The second option is for an immigrant to admit fault for unlawful presence, return to their home country, and apply for legal permanent residence. In these circumstances, an immigrant must return home because one who enters the U.S. unlawfully without documents or inspection is not entitled to an adjustment of status.

A third “unofficial” manner for undocumented immigrants to avoid the punitive effects of the three to 10-year bar under the IIRAIRA is to simply remain in the United States. If for any reason they leave, they are subject to the three to 10-year bar. This represents the current situation of a significant portion of the immigrants currently residing in the United States. Though a number of them come illegally as undocumented immigrants, about 40% are individuals who entered legally on a visa, that has since expired (American Psychological Association, 2012). These represent the estimated 11 million aliens within U.S. borders (Krogstad, Passel, & Cohn, 2017).

Family reunification can be an extensive and strenuous process. Immigrant family members originating from the largest “sending” countries (where the largest numbers of immigrants originate) can face as long as 10 years of waiting due to many bureaucratic gridlocks (Payan & De la Garza, 2014) and legal complications (Thronson, 2008).

Regardless of the motivating factor behind the immigration impetus to the United States, immigrants suffer a myriad of challenges that bear heavily on the family structure
and the rearing of children. The effects of these stressors and the challenges they represent for Latino immigrant parents will be discussed.

**Stressors Latino Immigrant Families Face**

As previously stated, immigrants migrate to the United States for mainly three reasons: (a) search for work, (b) humanitarian refuge, and (c) family reunification. Most often, they come to provide a better opportunity for their children and families. Although immigration policy has a long history within the United States, no major legislation in regard to immigration has been passed at the federal level in several years. As states continue to create their own policies in regards to immigration reform, this continues to be a debated subject with undocumented immigrants caught in the middle.

**Distress and Anxiety**

Perez and Fortuna (2005) conducted a study of 197 outpatient adult psychiatric charts in a Latino mental health outpatient treatment program. Clinical diagnosis and mental health care use of undocumented Latinos were compared that that of documented and U.S. born Latinos. It was discovered that undocumented Latinos were more likely to have diagnosis of anxiety, adjustment disorder, alcohol abuse disorder, and other psychosocial problems related to occupation, access to healthcare, and the legal system. An average of five stressors that undocumented Latinos faced were also identified (i.e. family/primary support, social environment, occupational problems, legal difficulties, and health care). These were compared to an average of three stressors that were identified by both documented Latino immigrants and U.S. born Latinos.

Their findings suggest that undocumented Latinos experience increased distress, more so than their documented immigrant and U.S. born Latino counterparts. In addition,
undocumented Latino immigrants may experience concerns about their legal status. Anxiety arising from the risk of disclosure and deportation may increase the risk for emotional distress and affect their quality of health (Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas, & Spitznagel, 2007).

For undocumented Latino parents, returning to their country of origin and leaving their children behind would be traumatic for the entire family. Reuniting with their children may take years, especially when complicated by financial obstacles and immigration regulations. The longer the separation, the more complicated the family reunification and the greater the likelihood that their children will be affected.

Xenophobia and Discrimination

Currently in the United States, xenophobia (the fear or hatred of foreigners and their culture) and discrimination significantly impact the lives of immigrant populations (Deaux, 2006). Their broken or accented English, along with their “unusual” names and the style in which they dress, make immigrant adults and their children easy to signal out. American citizens discriminate against them in employment (Dietz, 2010) because they view them as taking away their jobs (Transatlantic Trends, 2010), social service benefits, and taking over their neighborhoods (Zárate, Garcia, Garza, & Hitlan, 2004).

Research (Berry & Sabatier, 2010) has shown that immigrants who are racially different from the majority are usually at greater risk for experiencing discrimination than those who are not. Many immigrants from Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa encounter racial discrimination for the first time in the United States. Stress associated with racial discrimination has been well documented (Hughes et al., 2006),
and racism has a substantial impact on minority health and mental health (Brown et al., 2000).

Xenophobia affects both immigrants and native-born minority populations. According to a recent Pew Hispanic Center survey (Lopez, Morin, & Taylor, 2010), 61% of Latino U.S. citizens believe discrimination against Latinos is a major problem—a significant annual increase from 47% in 2002. The reasons most cited for discrimination were immigration status (36%), skin color (21%), language skills (20%), and income and education levels (17%). Thirty-two percent of U.S.-born nonimmigrant Latinos worry either a lot (19%) or some (13%) about being deported (Lopez et al., 2010).

Prejudice and Racism

For some segments of the U.S. population, the growth in the number of undocumented immigrants, and the “war on terror” has, to a certain extent, legitimatized expressions of prejudice. Immigrants in general, more so undocumented immigrants, are viewed as deserving of vilification and poor treatment (Massey, 2008). Regularly, immigrants are portrayed in a negative light within the media, emphasizing the burden they place on the economy and social well-being of the United States (Chavez, 2008).

Latino immigrants in particular face difficult challenges as their opportunities to move up the economic ladder are often affected by limited resources and targeted racism (Sweet & Meiksins, 2008). Although Americans of Latino ethnicity may be of any “race,” it has been demonstrated that being Latino in the United States has been “racialized” (Golash-Boza, 2006), making it difficult to “blend in” with the White middle class.
Assimilation Ideology

Ethnic identity is often found to be an important part of the self-concept (Carpenter, Zárate, & Garza, 2007; Zárate & Garza, 2002). Therefore, attempts to force people to relinquish or hide that identity can produce negative reactions. Some researchers (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000) have demonstrated that attention to a salient group identity is more effective at reducing intergroup prejudice than attention to a common identity.

With the arrival of a new racially diverse wave of immigration, public dialogue in the United States has emphasized the distinctions between assimilation (i.e., the melting pot) and multiculturalism (i.e., the salad bowl). This new immigrant wave, (unlike the previous wave of 1880-1920), has been largely non-White and arriving mainly from Latin America and Asia. Proponents of the cultural assimilation ideology believe that the best approach to managing differences across cultures is for immigrants (and other minority groups) to rapidly assimilate to the dominant culture. They argue that assimilation toward common norms and rules is the desired goal and that by eliminating ethnic group boundaries, intergroup prejudice will reduce drastically. For example, “English-only” laws, which require all government activities to be conducted in English (e.g., banning Spanish-language voting ballots), can be viewed as strategies to help rapid assimilation. Nevertheless, others suggest such English-only laws are instead motivated by concerns some U.S. citizens have about their own changing economic and cultural landscape (Zárate & Shaw, 2010).

Multicultural Ideology

Conversely, those that ascribe to a multicultural ideology believe that all cultural
groups should have the opportunity to retain their basic cultural customs, values, traditions and language within a greater cultural framework. Those who support multiculturalism believe that prejudice is reduced and self-esteem enhanced through an appreciation of the differences each group cherishes (Zárate & Garza, 2002). According to this perspective, the country benefits from the presence of diverse groups that bring a broad spectrum of skills. For example, many jobs in the business and service sectors are born due to the diverse language skills that are necessary (Kristof, 2010).

Perceiving others as belonging to an “outgroup” can lead to prejudice and discrimination. In accordance with the assimilationist ideology, the common in-group identity model suggests that prejudice is reduced through the creation or identification of a common group membership (Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman, & Anastasio, 1996). In the context of immigration, people who were originally perceived as out-group members can become re-categorized by creating a shared national in-group identity, as members of a shared common group, and in that manner prejudice can be reduced. Within this framework, terms like Asian American or Mexican American are seen as divisive because they emphasize between-group differences rather than a common in-group identity such as “American.”

Language Barrier

Studies have indicated that language barriers are also a common stressor among Latino immigrants (Kim-Goodwin & Bechtel, 2004). Many immigrants living in established Latino communities have functioned well using Spanish only, however, over time language barriers have been proven to limit their economic and social mobility (Tienda & Mitchell, 2006). The stress associated with language barriers can be significant.
for immigrants living in developing Latino communities that have few Spanish-speaking resources. Accordingly, researchers (Ding & Hargraves, 2009; Torres, 2010) have shown language barriers and English competency pressures can lead to higher rates of depressive symptoms, particularly among immigrants who have been in the United States ten years or less. Language barriers can also impact immigrants’ access to and use of health services, which can result in diminished treatment and care for those struggling with health problems (Ornelas & Perreira, 2011).

The National Center for Education Statistics affirms that between 1979 and 2008, the percentage of children who spoke a second language at home more than doubled, from 9% to 21% (Crouch & Banks Zakariya, 2012). Among those individuals who spoke a language other than English at home, 62% spoke Spanish (Shin & Komiski, 2010). Furthermore, a Pew national survey found that 96% of foreign-born Latinos reported that it was important to them for their children to learn English (“Hispanic Attitudes Toward Learning English,” 2006).

Urban Neighborhoods and Ethnic Communities

Latino immigrants, particularly new arrivals, often settle in highly segregated and impoverished urban neighborhoods (Jargowsky, 2006) and experience a series of negative consequences. Normally within the larger culture, a negative perception exists regarding ethnic communities as “ghettos” (Walks & Bourne, 2006).

On the other hand, research supports that living in ethnic neighborhoods has been found to be beneficial for immigrants. They are more likely to retain their native culture (Birman, Trickett, & Buchanan, 2005). Additionally, living in these communities seems to protect them from cultural isolation. Pressure to assimilate can be strong outside ethnic
communities (Miller et al., 2009) and may lead to greater incidences of discrimination and its consequences.

Nonetheless, impoverished urban settings pose a threat to the safety and well-being of Latino immigrant families. A recent study (Roche, Esminger, & Cherlin, 2007) identified that African American youth fared better than their Latino counterparts in neighborhoods characterized by high crime and poor social order, low levels of trust, support and unity among neighbors. These conditions generate considerable amounts of stress that may lead to higher rates of depressions and diminished mental health among Latino immigrant families.

**Effects of Migration on Second-Generation Latino Children**

The migration experience of Latino immigrants to the United States not only affects the parents, but also the children in tangible ways. In 2010, there were 5.5 million children with at least one unauthorized immigrant parent (Passel & Cohn, 2011), these being second-generation immigrants. Seeing that according to the latest United States Census Bureau (2015) estimates, the majority of immigrants within the U.S. are of Hispanic origin, it can be presumed that these second-generation immigrants are of Hispanic descent.

**Low Cognitive Development and Educational Progress**

Researchers (Yoshikawa & Kholoptsev, 2013) affirm, “a parent’s unauthorized status is associated with lower levels of child cognitive development and educational progress” (p. 3). In adolescents, studies have shown that having an unauthorized parent was associated with higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms (Potochnick &
The emotional and behavioral harms experienced by children caused increasing risks of poor cognitive and behavioral outcomes. The most damaging event associated with parental unauthorized status among the children is the extradition of a parent from the United States (Dreby, 2012).

**Lower Child Development Levels**

Other factors that have proven to adversely affect second-generation immigrant children are low-wage jobs and poor job conditions attained by their unauthorized parents. Yoshikawa and Kholoptseva (2013) identify several studies that indicate, “unauthorized low-wage workers experience substantially poorer work conditions than authorized low-wage workers” (p. 7). In turn, these jobs are characterized by lower access to sick days, vacation days, and healthcare benefits. They greatly limit the time spent with children and heighten the possibility of experiencing debilitating health issues that can result in additional stressors that can affect quality of life.

Additionally, studies (Gershoff, Aber, Raver, & Lennon, 2007) have shown that parents’ psychological distress and material hardship are directly associated with lower levels of child development and emotional well-being. Wang and Beydoun (2007), suggest that economic and sociocultural factors such as distress due to economic hardships, elevated immigration-related stress, and acculturation may contribute to elevated rates of overweight and obese profiles in Latino children. Moreover, Lopez and Velasco (2011) conclude that children of Latino immigrants pose an increased mental health risk because of their disproportionate likelihood of living in poverty.

**Resilience Among Latino Immigrant Families**

Despite the fact that the challenges referred to earlier have been shown to produce
negative outcomes, research points to qualities among Latino immigrant families that help them cope successfully.

Though some research has implied that Latino immigrant families may have experienced greater risk (Quandt, Shoaf, Tapia, Hernandez-Pelletier, & Clark, 2006), children of Latino immigrants appear to be highly resilient (Castro et al., 2007). This review suggests that immigration itself is not a risk factor for negative outcomes; moreover, the intrinsic and extrinsic risk factors associated with Latino immigrants’ experiences is what often threatens their successful development and adaptation.

Familism and Extended Family Networks

Recent research on Latinos has focused on the importance of cultural traditions as protective factors (Chapman & Perreira, 2005). Familism (familismo) is a term often used to describe a broad group of cultural characteristics, such as loyalty, respect, solidarity, and interdependence, (Falicov, 2005; Padilla & Villalobos, 2007). This characteristic exists within nuclear and extended Latino family networks. A key component of familism is family connectedness, which is defined as the obligation to take care of nuclear and extended family members (Behnke et al., 2008). Family obligations and expectations are collectively shared (Padilla & Villalobos, 2007), and as a result, parents and children make decisions that promote the social and economic stability of the entire family system (Espinoza-Herold, 2007). Familism often helps maintain close ties with distant family members, even in cases where the nuclear and extended family remains in the country of origin (Falicov, 2005).

Family involvement, supervision of children, and communication are essential resources that lead to resilience among Latino youth in immigrant families. Due to the
fact that families share a common migration history, Latino parents are able to empathize with the difficulties their children experience, and seek help from religious and professional sources. These foster the development of bicultural skills, and emphasize positive communication (Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006). Latino immigrant parents tend to place a great deal of emphasis on helping their children succeed in school, despite barriers associated with language, employment, and differing cultural, etc. (Perreira et al., 2006). Parental support and involvement have been found to deter substance abuse (Parsai, Voisine, Marsiglia, Kulis, & Nieri, 2009), risky sexual behavior (Clauss-Ehlers, 2003), psychological stress (Blanco-Vega, Castro-Olivo, & Merrell, 2008), and depression (Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007).

Nuclear and extended family networks also protect against a variety of negative outcomes, such as psychological stress and substance abuse (Guinn, Vincent, & Dugas, 2009). Researchers (Parra-Cardona, Bullock, Imig, Villaruel, & Gold, 2006) found that family support, togetherness, and familism were critical sources of resilience among migrant families who experienced extreme discrimination and labor exploitation.

Cultural Factors

Culture also plays a prominent role in the development of resilience among Latino immigrant families. Often, cultural rituals and spiritual systems reinforce ethnic and family identity. These cultural safeguards increase family connectedness and solidarity through loyalty, personalismo (the unconditional recognition of value in an individual, rather than from their social status or professional accomplishments), respeto (respect), consejos (advice), dichos (oral folklore), and fatalismo (acceptance). These mechanisms often decrease the impact of the economic, social, and emotional stressors associated with
migration and acculturation (Chapman & Perreira, 2005; Castro et al., 2007; Parra-Cardona et al., 2006; Perreira et al., 2006).

Another common factor associated with resilience among Latinos is bilingualism. Bilingualism is defined as the ability to effectively maneuver within the dominant culture while maintaining a strong connection to the social, cultural, and linguistic culture of origin (Hull, Kilbourne, Reece, & Husaini, 2008). A large number of studies (Blanco-Vega et al., 2008; Castro et al., 2007; Gonzalez, 2009; Hull et al., 2008; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007) have shown that cultural orientation and bilingualism can alleviate the negative consequences of discrimination, racism, and acculturative stress. It can also protect against depression and substance abuse. Ethnic pride and cultural orientation are characteristics of bilingualism that are linked to positive psychological/cognitive development, academic motivation, and successful community and family relationships (Espinoza-Herold, 2007; Park-Taylor, Walsh, & Ventura, 2007).

Community Support Networks

Community networks have been shown to play a significant role in the continuity and resilience of Latino immigrant families (Hull et al., 2008). Research suggests community support networks positively influence health (Clauss-Ehlers, 2003), psychological well-being (Hull et al., 2008; Thompson & Gurney, 2003), and academic attainment (Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor, & Bámaca, 2006). These include peer groups, schools, neighborhood, and church membership.

Community supports are helpful to recent immigrant parents who must overcome countless practical and cultural challenges associated with the acculturation process, such as navigating new social systems (e.g., health care, school, employment), cultural
differences, and language barriers (Perreira et al., 2006). Furthermore, peer support networks rooted in cultural principles of trust, loyalty, and solidarity seem to protect against acculturative stress, neighborhood crime, and marginalization (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2005). Mentoring programs, parenting classes, and health care through neighborhood clinics also provide instrumental support because they help families get acquainted with resources otherwise unknown (Park-Taylor et al., 2007), and in adapting to new environments (Blanco-Vega et al., 2008).

**Faith Communities**

Finally, religious faith communities can be a major source of support for Latino immigrant families. Religion is a fundamental part of life for most people throughout the world (Holden & Vittrup, 2009). Newly arrived immigrant adults and children who are feeling disoriented in their new land are particularly likely to turn to their religious communities in times of transition (Levitt, 2007; Stepick, 2005). Following migration, religious traditions can provide a sense of familiarity and connection to the country of origin.

During the last 30 years, the immigrant population in the United States has had an impact on the country’s religious makeup (Levitt, 2007). Immigrants from Central America and the Caribbean who were converted to evangelical churches prior to migration continue their participation after migration, and networks of relatives perpetuate further conversions as immigrants are drawn to religious institutions in search of support networks (Levitt, 2007).

Spirituality and religiosity are associated with greater resilience (Hull et al., 2008; Thompson & Gurney, 2003). They can act as a form of social control for adolescents
(Kelly, 2007), and solidify family relationships. Youth groups and bible classes can help foster community and social support and even provide guidance related to psychological distress, substance abuse, premarital sex, and parenting (Thompson & Gurney, 2003).

These findings discovered within the literature surveyed represent significant challenges for the Latino immigrant parents with second-generation children. For parents to be intentional about developing a mature faith in their second-generation children, it is vital they understand the culture and religiosity that currently pervades among adolescents today. Doing so affords them the opportunity to foreshadow the plausible influences their current young children and tweens may face and focus with intentionality on transmitting spiritual and religious values that will counter negative stimuli capable of hindering the development of a mature faith. The following sections reveal what recent studies foreshadow for Latino immigrant parents rearing second-generation children within the United States.

Adolescent Development and Youth Culture

Developmental theorists have long portrayed adolescence as a period of continual conflicts with societal and parental norms, irrational behavior, and emotional turmoil (Blakemore, 2008; Casey, Getz, & Galvan, 2008a; Casey, Jones, & Hare, 2008b). American psychologist G. Stanley Hall (1904) was the first to describe the adolescent life stage as a period of “storm and stress.” Although early adolescence research held to the storm and stress theory, current research sees low levels of conflict, moodiness, and risk-taking as “normative” and typical of the transitions of the adolescent life stage (Hines & Paulson, 2006).

Contemporary researchers (Mueller, 2007; Smith, 2005) support the rejection of
the current cultural pessimism surrounding adolescence as a life-stage of restlessness and rebellion. They advocate for a departure from the common stereotype of the American teenager as a defiant person always looking to go against the guidance and authority of parents and societal institutions. Barna (2001) identifies adolescence as a time of exploring, reflecting and self-determination. Tripp (2001) suggests that adolescence be recognized as a stage where “wonderful parental opportunities” arise and can lead to superb discussions and opportunities for ministering (p. 19). Though there is a prevailing stereotypical understanding that American teens are restless, alienated, and determined to oppose the faith of their parents, Smith (2005) found that teenagers tend to be relatively conventional in their religious practices, suggesting that they are willing to follow their parent’s religious tradition.

Though current research suggests that teenagers may be willing to follow their parent’s religious tradition, the influence of today’s culture poses problems and challenges that they will undoubtedly face in their lives daily. Today’s fast-paced culture represents an assortment of challenges and opportunities for the present and future generation of youth. It can influence how they think and act in both positive and negative ways.

Research conducted by Barna (2001) portrays a bleak picture showing that 63% of teenagers interviewed expressed that they do not have a far-reaching and clear philosophy of life on which to guide their lifestyle decisions. Seventy-four percent identified that they are still trying to figure out the meaning and purpose for their lives.

All of the problems, challenges, and opportunities that culture imposes on youth today require clear and decided action on the part of parents, teachers, and spiritual
leaders to help youth develop a clear worldview and philosophy of life. Jiménez (2009) explains these findings reveal that “the majority of young people will make decisions based on feelings, propensities, peer pressure, and media influence. A clear set of principles is not entrenched and integrated in their lives to guide their decisions, goals, and priorities” (p. 37).

Influence of Friends and Mass Media

Two major things that are influencing today’s youth are, (a) friends and (b) mass-media. Today’s youth are highly relational. Friends are at the top of their list. According to Barna (2001), youth are more likely to discuss important things with their friends than with their parents. Zollo (2004) reports that when youth need advice, 55% of them consult a friend, 44% go to their mother, 23% to a boy or girlfriend, and 20% to their father. Over half (51%) of teenagers admit that their friends have a lot of influence on them (Barna, 2001). In the absence of a clear worldview and philosophy of life, teenagers fall prey to negative influences of their peers (Albert, Chein, & Steinberg, 2013).

If friends are important to teenagers today, attachment to mass-media is even more important. According to Barna (2001) teenagers gain a “sense of connection with the larger world” through mass-media (p. 25). Mueller (2007) asserts: “This generation of teenagers is the most media-saturated and media-savvy generation of all time” (p. 49). Parents are granting their children more free and unsupervised access to mass-media than ever before. A recent study (Common Sense Media, 2015) found that teenagers spend close to nine hours on entertainment use of media, and tweens close to six hours daily. It states,

On any given day, American teenagers (13- to 18-year-olds) average about nine hours (8:56) of entertainment media use, excluding time spent at school or for homework.
Tweens (8- to 12-year-olds) use an average of about six hours’ (5:55) worth of entertainment media daily. (p. 15)

When considering markers such as socio-economic status (SES), ethnicity, and parent education, the same study revealed that,

Tweens and teens from lower-income families spend more time with media than those from higher-income homes. ... Tweens and teens whose parent has no more than a high school education spend more time with media than those whose parent graduated from college ... [and] black youth report spending substantially more time with media than white or Hispanic youth. (p. 27)

Elevated exposure to mass-media has the power to influence teenagers’ values, attitudes, and behaviors (Mueller, 2007). There is a significant relationship between teenagers’ exposure to mass-media and engagement in at-risk behaviors. Mueller (2007) states, “When media offer depictions of sex without boundaries or consequences, teenagers are prone to imitate sexual activity earlier, more often, and in a variety of ways” (p. 86). He continues, “Teenagers who view depictions of characters who smoke and drink are more prone to engage in those behaviors themselves” (p. 86).

Many researchers (Barna, 2001; Smith, 2005; Mueller, 2007) have expressed concern with the amount of risk-taking behavior that characterizes this generation. Alcohol is the number one drug used among teenagers. It is estimated that by the time they are seniors, 70% of high school students will have tried alcohol, half will have taken an illegal drug, nearly 40% will have smoked a cigarette, and more than 20% will have used a prescription drug for a nonmedical purpose (Johnston, O’Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2013). According to Mueller (2007), more than half of all teenagers will, in an attempt to satisfy their need of love and acceptance, engage in sexual promiscuity.

Stress and Anxiety in Youth

The amount of stress and anxiety that youth are dealing with today poses an
additional threat to their emotional well-being. Researchers (Merikangas et al., 2010) suggest that more and more teenagers are suffering from symptoms of depression and anxiety. In the United States in 2015, an estimated three million adolescents aged 12 to 17 had at least one major depressive episode in the past 12 months. This number represented 12.5% of the U.S. population aged 12 to 17 (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2016). Suicide is the second leading cause of death for ages 10-24 and among college-age youth. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 17% of high-school students seriously considered attempting suicide, 14.6% of students had made a plan to attempt suicide, and 8.6% had actually attempted suicide (Kann et al., 2016).

According to results of Barna’s research (2001), Christian teens’ top priorities for life are: educational achievement (88%), good physical health (87%), close personal friendships (84%), and having a comfortable lifestyle (83%); compared to having a close relationship with God (66%), being deeply committed to the Christian faith (50%), and being personally active in a church (43%). Based on these findings Barna (2001) concludes: “American teens are much more interested in what they own or accomplish in life than in the development of their character. Given the cultural context in which they have been raised, this is not surprising” (p. 87).

Today, parents, pastors, and youth workers need to understand the influence that today’s culture wields over the life of young people. It is virtually impossible to shield youth from the influences of the culture they live in (Mueller, 2007). Therefore, to ignore the power of cultural influence by exposing young people to its forces without any guidance is unacceptable for Christians today. In the center of all external influences,
research (Barna, 2001; Ramírez-Johnson & Hernandez, 2003; Smith, 2005) supports that parents still exert the highest degree of influence in the lives of their children.

**Parental Influence**

Parents are given the opportunity daily to shape and influence the lives of their children. Seventy-eight percent of teenagers acknowledge that their parents have a lot of influence on the way they think and act (Barna, 2003). Smith (2005) purports that according to studies in the sociology of religion, “the most important social influence in shaping young people's religious lives is the religious life modeled and taught to them by their parents” (p. 56). Additionally, “only 6% of teens consider their religious beliefs very different from that of their mother, and 11% very different from that of their father” (Smith, 2005, p. 34). Researchers (Smith & Snell, 2009) state, “parental factors were always significantly related to outcomes in every statistical model, no matter how many other variables are also introduced into the equation” (p. 285).

Although these findings have substantiated the degree of influence that parents have in the spiritual lives of their teenagers, parents, in a general sense, hold to the belief that teenagers do not want to maintain a close relationship with them. In regards to this, The State of Our Nation’s Youth 2005-2006 report found that when high-school students were asked what were their wishes for a better life, 27% said they wanted more money to buy things; 14% wanted a bigger house; and the majority, 46% of them wished for more time spent together as a family (Mueller, 2007). Barna (2001) discovered that teenagers strive to have a close connection with family and friends on a daily basis.

These studies present evidence of the high regard teenagers place on family interactions for the improvement of their lives. The unfortunate reality is there are a
series of factors that are currently threatening the traditional construct of the institution of the family. Researchers argue that we are “living in a period of unprecedented change in family composition, family life, and family experience” (Mueller, 2007, p. 41).

Intergenerational Transmission of Values

The intergenerational transmission of values within families has gained more and more interest in recent years, mostly due to the changing demographics within the United States. Cultural transmission is important for the continuity of a society as it facilitates the communication between members of different generations while sustaining culture-specific knowledge and beliefs over generations (Schönpflug, 2001; Trommsdorff, 2009).

However, the transmission of values from one generation of the family to the next should not always be taken for granted. In the course of social change the younger generations are confronted with new challenges and new societal values to which they may adapt in order to lead a successful life (Trommsdorff & Nauck, 2006). Because new generations may have to adapt to new living conditions, a full transmission of values from one generation to the next without any variation is not always suitable; therefore, a complete transmission without any change would be as damaging for the individual person as the complete absence of transmission (Schönpflug, 2001; Trommsdorff, 2009).

Value Transmission in an Immigration Context

In all cultures, parents socialize their children into the values and practices of their society. Immigrant parents bring along with them values of their culture of origin and strive to preserve them in their new environment and teach them to their children. In reality, however, in an immigration context, parents and adolescents are involved in an acculturation process, during which they usually have different experiences of the two
cultures, and have different future expectations (Bornstein & Cote, 2006). Following immigration, there are clear, sometimes competing, messages promoting the values of both the originating culture and those of the society in which they are settling in. There is often a strong emotional value for maintaining the traditional cultural values and customs of the originating culture: their continuity may be endorsed by involvement in the same ethnic social network made up of parents, other ethnic adults, ethno-cultural institutions, and peers. The experiences with the society of settlement seem to become very attractive for adolescents through the influence of their school and peer group relationships within the society at large (Birman, Trickett, & Vinokurov, 2002). Consequently, immigrant parents may become acutely aware of the need to transmit particular values to their children, such as those related to their originating national culture or similar cultures represented within the cultural diversity of the society they are settling in (Aboud & Doyle, 1996).

As a result of differences between the cultures of immigrants and the cultures of the society of settlement, immigrant parents face the task of teaching their children to accept specific culture-related family values while living in a new society that often holds different values. Their children are exposed to the values of their parents but also to the values of the larger society in which they live.

Effective Value “Transmission Belts”

In a landmark study among Turkish fathers and their sons within two regions in Germany (representing an immigrant population) and one in Turkey, researchers explored the effectiveness of particular “transmission belts” in conveying similar values from Turkish fathers to their sons (Schönpflug, 2001). Transmission belts are defined as
conditions or factors that enhance transmission” (Schönpflug, 2001, p. 175). Among the most effective transmission belts identified within the immigrant population studied were, (a) parenting styles that create a positive emotional interaction between parent and child, (b) a positive attitude (on behalf of the fathers) toward being married, (c) and a younger, less-autonomous stage of development in adolescence (e.g. early and middle adolescence) (Schönpflug, 2001).

Conversely, among the transmission belts that were more ineffective were, (a) rigid-authoritarian parenting styles, (b) low or negative attitudes (on behalf of the fathers) toward being married, and, (c) as adolescents approach adulthood, values are less accepted (Schönpflug, 2001). An additional significant factor noted was the parental educational levels. Schönpflug states, “values . . . were transmitted in families with medium and high educational levels, but not in low-education families. In this subgroup [low-education families], apparently no transmission takes place” (Schönpflug 2001, p. 184).

Another important aspect noted is that transmission is selective depending on the content to be transmitted. It can be argued that values that are in line with the respective dominant or settling culture are transmitted more effectively than other values (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard, 2003). Researchers (Hoge, Petrillo, & Smith, 1982) have stated that the important values for family life and family members are usually transmitted more effectively. Goodnow (1997) also assumes that generally speaking, parents want to transmit those values that are important for them. Therefore, parents’ personal values and their socialization values are often interrelated (Whitbeck & Gecas, 1988). Some empirical findings support these ideas. For example, Schönpflug and
Silbereisen (1992) found that those values that were held as more important by adolescents also showed a stronger similarity between parents and adolescents. Knafo and Schwartz (2003) found that the more important these values were for the parents, the more accurately they were perceived by the children.

Also, the parents’ motivation to transmit certain values is important for their successful transmission. Schönpflug (2005) reports that the motivation of parents to transmit conservative values enhanced the success of transmission. However, some values of self-transcendence values were transmitted even when there was no specific apparent motivation of the parents.

In their acculturation development hypothesis, Oppedal, Røysamb, and Sam, (2006) argue that the developmental path an immigrant adolescent follows will highly depend on the groups they interact with and the kinds of social support they get from those groups. The fact is that influence from outside the home is quite influential. Thus, immigrant parents need to put in extra effort in the socialization of their children, to transmit their desired values, especially when their child begins to spend more time with national peers (e.g. non-immigrant children of his/her age group). Perhaps, it could be stated that the major reason for the intergenerational discrepancy in family values is due to the stronger influence that society at large has on children through group socialization (e.g. peers, school, neighborhoods, etc.) (Portes, 1997; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993).

**Intergenerational Transmission of Religious Values**

Studies (Min, Silverstein, & Lendon, 2012) have shown that the family remains the principal agent of socialization when it comes to religious beliefs and values (Bengtson, Copen, Putney, & Silverstein, 2009), and that religious orientations are
strongly transmitted across generations within families.

Common values that are shared via religious traditions form a foundation for intergenerational continuity that is beneficial to having more intimate and supportive relationships (Bengtson, 2013). Additionally, joint participation in the same religious institution is likely to stimulate social ties between parents and children by means of family-bonding activities that are encouraged and habitually practiced within religious contexts (Stokes & Regnerus, 2009).

Research (Pearce & Axinn, 1998) also suggests that parents and children who attend religious services together often spend more time commonly engaging in other religious as well as nonreligious activities. To the contrary, if parents and children have different religious orientations, as defined by affiliation, intensity, and attendance, they may be exposed to conflict in their relationships. Existing research regarding the impact of parent–child religious discordance on intergenerational solidarity have generally found negative impacts of discordance on the quality of relationships (Stokes & Regnerus, 2009) and on successful communication between generations (Colaner, Soliz, & Nelson, 2014). However, little is known about whether these negative associations persist, grow, or dissipate over time, or whether one aspect of religiosity is more important than another in predicting relationship outcomes.

Three Overarching Models

Schwartz (2006) describes the parent-child transmission of religious values process in three overarching models: (a) the transmission model, (b) the transactional model, and (c) the transformational model. First, the transmission model portrays the religious socialization process as unilateral. In this phase, the child is a passive recipient
of the religious values that parents transmit. Second, the *transactional model* describes the process of the parents and children interacting actively and internalizing their common religious beliefs. Schwartz argues that parents are not the only influence in the religious socialization process of adolescents; peers and friends also exert a strong influence. Therefore, the *transformational model* proposes that friends supplement how parents influence the religious faith of their children. In her study, she discovered that both the *transmission* and *transactional models* positively correlated with religious faith. The *transformation model* was also found to be significantly and positively correlated with religious faith as the “perceived faith support of friends mediated the influence of similar parental support on adolescent’s religious belief and commitment” (p. 320).

Schwartz (2006) states that peers do not completely invalidate the influence of parents in the religious faith of their children, but that parent-adolescent relationships are influenced by the role that friends and peers play.

Alicea (2014) notes, “The quality of parental relationships with the adolescent was found as the most important religious influence in favor or against the spiritual life of the teens” (p. 51). In a study (Kuusisto, 2003) among Adventist families in the southern and central portion of Finland, Kuusisto found that two of the most important factors transmitting religious values to the children were, (a) a democratic relationship between parents and children and (b) a positive parental example.

**Parental Diffidence**

Unfortunately, parents today have little confidence in the influential role they have on their children. Barna’s surveys (2007) point out that most parents underestimate the influence they can exert on their children. Consequently, they lack a strategy or plan
for how to exert a positive, lasting influence on their children. Instead, they revert to what he coins the “5 Ps of Parental Hope” (Barna, 2007). These are summarized as follows:

1. Preparation:
   Parents believe that their children should be prepared for life, but they think their role is to arrange putting their children with someone with specialized “know-how” who can train them for life.

2. Performing Well:
   Parents believe that external indicators such as success in academics, sports, and the arts, as well as feedback from others at large are measures that indicate how well they are parenting.

3. Pressure Management:
   Children struggle to maintain a healthy and balanced life because of the high and sometimes unrealistic expectations they face. Therefore, parents who recognize this endeavor to help by teaching their children how to manage all the stress associated with them.

4. Protection:
   Due to the anxiety caused by the threats of bullying, drugs and other perceived risks, parents place high priority on the security of their children.

5. Public Perception:
   Due to the image-driven society, parents go out of their way to place their families in the best light possible before others in society.
Barna stresses that though parents often focus on these “5 Ps,” they neglect to emphasize activities that can create a stronger relational bond with their children, and that of their children’s relationship with God. Thus, they fail to foster a deeper experience among their children and God (Barna, 2007).

**Parenting Styles**

Parenting encompasses the activities that parents engage in either with or for their children (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005). As their children’s first teachers, parents play a crucial role in the academic and social development of their children. The period of early childhood (between birth and age 5) has been shown to be particularly important with regard to the development of appropriate and effective language, literacy, and social-emotional skills (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2004; Meisels & Shonkoff, 2000; Springate, Atkinson, Straw, Lamont, & Grayson, 2008).

Because parenting behaviors are common methods by which parents transmit values to children, parenting style typologies may have an important regulating effect on how well values are transmitted. The four common parenting typologies today include authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful.

Dianne Baumrind (1966, 1991) had a transcendental influence on the understanding of parenting dimensions and typologies. In her early work, Baumrind (1966) discusses two dimensions of parenting: demandingness and responsiveness (i.e., warmth). Demandingness denotes the amount of control a parent imposes on a child (i.e., expectations and structure), the implementation of standards and rules, and the degree to which a parent enforces the standards and rules (Broderick & Blewitt, 2003). Responsiveness (warmth) entails the degree to which the parent is involved and interested.
in the child’s activities, listening to the child, and being supportive (Broderick & Blewitt, 2003).

Four typical styles of parenting emerged from combinations of high and low levels of these two dimensions. The first three styles of parenting described in Baumrind’s (1966) work were, (a) Authoritative, (b) Authoritarian, and (c) Permissive. Maccoby and Martin (1983) later extended her research by adding a fourth style category of parenting known as (d) Neglectful.

**Authoritative**

Authoritative parenting represents parents who have both high levels of demandingness and high levels of responsiveness. These parents have high and clear expectations for their children, but also demonstrate high levels of warmth and support towards their children (Baumrind, 1991). Because of these combined dimensions, Authoritative parents regularly spend time reasoning with their children as well as disciplining. From the perspective of an Authoritative parent, disciplining with reasoning is more of an educational opportunity for the child than it is an opportunity of control for the parent. These parents “want their children be assertive as well as socially responsible, and self-regulated as well as cooperative” (Baumrind, 1991, p. 62).

**Authoritarian**

Authoritarian parenting represents high levels of demandingness accompanied by low levels of responsiveness. These parents create a structured, highly demanding environment with clearly stated rules and no parental responsiveness. They are considered controlling, expecting their orders to be followed without explanation, and do not demonstrate much support for their children on a day-to-day basis (Baumrind, 1991).
Permissive

Permissive parenting is characterized by having low levels of demandingness together with high levels of responsiveness. Therefore, permissive parents are lenient, allow self-regulation and tend to avoid confrontation. They do not set clear expectations for their children, however they show them warmth and support (Baumrind, 1991). Permissive parents are often described as those who desire to be a friend to their child rather than a parental figure.

Uninvolved or Neglectful

The last style of parenting developed by Maccoby and Martin (1983) is Uninvolved (also known as Neglectful). This type of parent has low levels of demandingness combined with low levels of responsiveness. They significantly decrease their interaction time, and, in some cases, are uninvolved to the point of being neglectful. Uninvolved parents tend to be indifferent to their adolescent’s needs, their whereabouts, and/or experiences at school and with peers. They rarely consider their child’s input in decisions and generally do not want to be bothered by them. These parents are not very involved in their children’s lives, which can often lead to deviant behavior in the children (Hoeve, Dubas, Gerris, van der Laan, & Smeenk, 2011).

There has been a substantial amount of research done on the overall effects of parenting typologies on different child outcomes (Noack, 2004; Timpano, Keough, Mahaffey, Schmidt, & Abramowitz, 2010), including child values (Hardy, White, Zhang, & Ruchty, 2011; Martinez & Garcia, 2008), but little to no research has been done on whether, and how, parenting typologies moderate the transmission of values from parent to child.
Parenting Styles Among Latino Immigrants

Researchers have purported that Latino parents tend to be more authoritarian than authoritative in their parenting styles (Varela et al., 2004). Contrariwise, researchers (Rodríguez, Donovick, & Crowley, 2009) have shown a strong connection between level of acculturation of the parent and the presence of warmth and control in the parent-child relationship. As acculturation advances, Latino immigrants may embrace certain practices of the mainstream society and thus lose protective qualities engrained in their culture of origin.

A recent study has challenged the propositions brought forth by Braumrind’s parenting dimensions and typologies stating that they “are inadequate when understanding parenting in Latino families” (Rodríguez et al., 2009, p. 198). These researchers (Rodríguez et al., 2009) use the following reasons to substantiate their claim: (a) The majority of studies base their findings on parenting styles that were conceptualized using majority White, middle class families’ values, cultural norms, and parental expectancies, and (b) the equivocal findings in the literature regarding the predominant style for Latino parents as well as the ability of the parenting style to predict child outcomes. “These equivocal findings coupled with historical (Braumrind, 1966, 1991; Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and more recent (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002) call for a focus on the contexts in which parenting occurs” (Rodríguez et al., 2009, p. 199).

Noting that literature concerning Latino parenting styles is “sparse and inconsistent,” Rodríguez et al. (2009) propose an alternative using parenting dimensions instead. Stewart and Bond (2002) theorize that parenting dimensions are universal and therefore better indicators of parenting behaviors, especially in ethnic cultural groups.
where the culture-specific meaning of the behavior may differ.

In their study, Rodríguez et al. (2009) examined parenting dimensions among Spanish speaking Latino parents by using the individual parenting dimensions of warmth, demandingness, and added the dimension of “autonomy granting.” Autonomy granting is defined as parents’ efforts to “encourage their children to behave on the basis of self-endorsed interests” (p. 189) and to help their children make decisions based on carefully considered personal goals and motives rather than on the basis of pressures and demands from others (Soenens, Vansteenkiste, & Sierens, 2009).

The results of their study rendered two added parenting dimensions derived from Baumrind’s original theoretical model of parenting styles that better described the parenting practices and behaviors of Latino parents. These are, (a) Protective, and (b) Affiliative (Rodríguez et al., 2009). Parents who scored high on warmth and demandingness, and low on autonomy granting were categorized as “protective.” Those who scored high on warmth, low on demandingness, and low on autonomy granting were labeled “Affiliative.” Notwithstanding, it is important to assert that Baumrind’s (1966, 1991) theoretical model of parenting styles continues to be optimally useful in research and practice because they accurately describe naturally occurring clusters of parenting behaviors across cultural diversity.

A recent study (Mogro-Wilson, 2008) found that as acculturation increases, as exhibited by more use of English at home, Latino immigrant parents become less controlling and there is seen a decrease in the traditional authoritarian parenting. While acculturation is important for survival in the mainstream culture, Latino immigrants highly value the continuity of their ethnic background and therefore emphasize in their
parenting a sense of family values that entail conformity to authority and family interdependence. This helps them in adjusting to their new environment. Consequently, some factors of the parenting styles used by Latino families may resemble that described by Baumrind (1966) as authoritarian (Zayas & Solari, 1994). However, there is evidence that authoritative parenting styles with parental behaviors such as authority, supervision and warmth tend to be associated with positive outcomes in Latino families (Mogro-Wilson, 2008).

**Summary**

The literature surveyed above has granted an opportunity to catch a glimpse of the complexities that Latino immigrant families face here in the United States. Regardless of the factors that propelled them to come, these lead to a number of stressors that can negatively affect Latino immigrant families. Despite these stressors, this review has identified a number of factors, unique to Latino immigrants, which can strengthen their resolve and bolster their resiliency. Though significant challenges, proprietary to their migration experience, continue to pose a threat to the overall well-being of their families, a thorough knowledge of the effects of their influence on their second-generation children can help Latino immigrant parents in their quest to provide a better future for their offspring.

Understanding the construct of parenting styles and the dynamics of intergenerational transmission of values can empower Latino immigrant parents to develop a mature faith in their second and later-generation children. Thus, the importance of educating Latino immigrant parents with the goal of empowering them to assist their children to thrive here in the United States.
Understanding the effects that their parental influence can bear on their children and having a thorough knowledge of parenting styles can aid them in attaining a better life for their families.
CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

Pastors of Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Churches in North America have detected a disturbing trend among first-generation Latino immigrant families. Many of the children cease attending church services in late youth and young adulthood. This project is intended to help counteract this trend by providing an educational seminar for first-generation Latino immigrant parents to assist them in developing mature faith in their children.

This chapter describes all aspects involved in the implementation of the program: purpose, objectives, and content. Additionally, it considers the ministry context, the methodologies used, the recruitment of participants, the materials needed, meeting place, and the length and frequency of the sessions.

The Ministry Context

This ministry project is intended for use by Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist churches in North America in serving their immigrant populations, who face enormous challenges, not the least of which are how to help their children grow and develop in a new community context. While the seminar is designed specifically for church members, it could serve as an outreach to visiting Hispanic parents or Hispanic parents in the community as a service of the church.
White (1954) states, “The lessons that the child learns during the first seven years of life have more to do with forming his character than all that it learns in future years” (p. 193). Being that this age range is of such crucial importance for the spiritual development of children, this seminar is specifically designed for Latino-immigrant parents of children age seven and below that are members of Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist churches within the United States of America. Recent research (Barna, 2003) suggests, “the basic worldview [of a child] is established by age nine” (p. 47). Thus, the imperative exists of this project being designed for Latino immigrant families with children age seven and younger.

Methodology

The methodology used in this ministry intervention is that of an adult education seminar for Latino immigrant parents of young children. The seven-part seminar is designed to run concurrently with the North American Division Christian Family Month that is typically celebrated in February. The second Sabbath of that month is designated Christian Marriage Sabbath and the third is Christian Parenting Sabbath. This intervention is designed to begin on the first Sabbath in February and culminate on Christian Parenting Sabbath, which corresponds with the third Sabbath in February. Between those dates, Sabbath afternoon and Wednesday night sessions will be presented. Preaching and more conventional seminar presentation methods will be used.

The Parenting Version of Prepare-Enrich® for Couples Workbook incorporates the psychological construct of parenting styles. Therefore, this Prepare-Enrich® program will be a primary resource. Permission has been given by the Prepare/Enrich, LLC to use Prepare-Enrich® materials in this project (see Appendix A).
Additionally, the “What is Your Parenting Style?” self-assessment from the University of Minnesota (Pitzer, 2001), will be used to identify the parenting style that each participant most resembles. This assessment is used in this project by permission from the University of Minnesota Extension (see Appendix B).

The effectiveness of the ministry intervention will be assessed by a pre- and post-questionnaire. The pre-questionnaire will be administered at the beginning of the second session and the post-questionnaire will be administered during a follow-up program 12 weeks later, during Mother’s Day Sabbath (see Appendices C and D respectively). The assessment is done using a Likert scale and will include the following statements:

1. How familiar are you with the following parenting styles: Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Neglectful?

2. How confident are you in your parenting skills?

3. Which of the following parenting styles best describes you?

4. How familiar are you with the communication skills of Assertiveness and Active Listening?

5. How confident are you in your couple communication skills?

6. Which of the following best describes your couple relationship?

7. How familiar are you with the concept of Mature Faith or Faith Maturity?

8. How confident are you when it comes to developing Mature Faith in your children?

9. Which of the following do you agree with?

   A. The church (Pastor, Youth Leader, Pathfinder Director, etc.) is responsible for the spiritual growth of my children.
B. Parents are responsible for the spiritual growth of their children.

10. How would you rate this seminar? (For post-questionnaire)

11. What were the most helpful aspects of this seminar? (For post-questionnaire)

12. What could improve? (For post-questionnaire only)

Development of Seminar

Purpose

The purpose of the seminar is to educate first-generation Latino immigrant parents of a typical Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church within the United States on parenting styles and their impact on family dynamics and mature faith development in their second-generation children.

Objectives

This seminar has several primary objectives:

1. Develop stronger parent-couple relationships by increasing Latino immigrant parents’ knowledge of practical relationship skills in the areas of communication and conflict resolution.

2. Encourage Latino-immigrant parents to dialogue in meaningful and productive ways about intentional parenting strategies geared to develop a mature faith in their second-generation children.

3. Increase Latino-immigrant parents’ understanding of the construct of parenting styles and its effect on mature faith development in children.
Contents

The seminar includes the following sessions with topics as described. (For a list of presentation titles see Appendix E.)

1. **The Divine Gift of Parenting.** “Children are an heritage from the Lord” (Ps 127:3). Acknowledging this important concept of parenting as stewardship and the responsibilities it entails will give purpose, perspective, and courage for the task placed before every parent. It will motivate Christian parents to consecrate their lives for the purpose of being found faithful stewards of God’s gift of children.

2. **The Ideal Environment for Successful Godly Parenting.** This session will highlight the ideal physical, emotional, and spiritual environments necessary to be fostered by the parent-couple in order to develop a godly atmosphere where children can thrive and develop a mature faith.

3. **Essential Elements of Effective Communication: Assertiveness and Active Listening.** Effective communication is the foundation of all healthy relationships. Two important skills will be presented, assertiveness and active listening. Parents will learn steps on how to develop these crucial skills necessary to create a strong bond of love and understanding among themselves and their children.

4. **Sons and Daughters of God: A Call to Peacemaking.** This presentation will highlight God’s call to be peacemakers based on Matthew 5:9. It will consider God as the Ultimate Peacemaker, present biblical examples of peacemakers, and include a call to emulate the Ultimate Peacemaker within the home.
5. **Effective Conflict Resolution: 10 Steps.** All parents have differences and disagreements. A happy home is more related to how conflict is handled, rather than by the number of disagreements experienced. Parents will learn practical steps to resolving conflicts with respect, thus strengthening their relationship with stronger bonds of love.

6. **Ideal Parenting Styles and Faith Maturity.** Parenting styles refer to the types of approach parents take toward their children in providing control and support, discipline and training. Most researchers have identified four types of parenting styles: Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Uninvolved or Neglectful (Plotnik & Kouyoumjian, 2010). Parents will identify their particular parenting style and the impact it can have on the spiritual development their children. Parenting styles can be modified and improved. Understanding the key factors of the ideal parenting style based on Biblical principles can have a significant impact on faith development. Understanding how to implement these principles in a practical way is essential to developing a mature faith in children.

7. **Heaven’s Most Prized Treasure.** Jesus stated that the kingdom of heaven belonged to the children (Matt 19:14). Recent studies (Barna Group, 2011) show that nearly three out of every five young Christians (59%) disconnect permanently or for an extended period of time from church life after age 15. Understanding the infinite worth that God places on children should accentuate the key role that the congregation, as the body of Christ plays in assisting parents in developing a mature faith in their children.
Participants

This program is designed for parents who are first-generation Latino-immigrants, are members of a Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church, and have children under the age of seven. If there are Christian parents who have been visiting the church or sympathize with the church’s beliefs, they can also be invited to participate. If there are parents with pre-adolescent children, or soon-to-be parents, they also may be invited to attend. These limitations allow the freedom for both the facilitator and the participants to speak openly and candidly on parental issues. In harmony with this philosophy for the program, the facilitator can use his/her own discretion in inviting participants from other circumstances.

In order to inform the local church members, flyers will be designed and distributed among them. Posters will be posted on bulletin boards to inform all members. Since the program is for a select group (parent-couples with children under the age of seven), it will be necessary to report these requirements from the platform during the announcement time at least two weeks prior to the beginning date of the seminar. After the first session of the seminar, which will open to all church members in a typical Sabbath worship service, only eligible participants will be invited to continue to the second session to be held that same afternoon following the potluck meal.

Role of Presenter

The goal of the presenter is to facilitate the learning process for each individual parent within the participant group. In harmony with accepted adult teaching and learning techniques, it is expected that the presenter will do the following:

1. Facilitate group learning through group sharing exercises and discussions.
2. Provide clear descriptions of program guidelines.
3. Keep the group focused and on schedule.
4. Share appropriate personal anecdotes and experiences.

Materials

Copies of the following materials will be needed for distribution to the participants. The lists of specific materials for each session are listed with that session.

1. “What is Your Parenting Style?” self-assessment (Appendix B)
2. Prepare-Enrich® Class and Homework Handouts (Appendices G-N)
3. Discussion Session Guidelines (Appendix F)
4. Deluxe Family Bibles (Quantity: 2)
5. Varied parenting resources to give away (Books, media, etc.)

Facilities

The facilitator will require the use of a projector or have the ability to display information to be shared via PowerPoint, Keynote, or a software program of their choosing. The use of a laptop computer is advised from which to project the presentations. A color printer will be needed to print out the results of the parenting style quiz, along with other supporting resources. The local audiovisual ministry coordinator of the church should be contacted ahead of time to offer support to the facilitator during the presentations.

Presentation Design

The intervention is designed to run concurrently with the North American Division Christian Family Month that is typically celebrated in February. The second
Sabbath of that month is designated Christian Marriage Sabbath and the third is Christian Parenting Sabbath. This intervention is designed to begin on the first Sabbath in the month of February and culminate on Christian Parenting Sabbath, which corresponds with the third Sabbath in February. Between those dates, presentations will be given on Sabbath afternoons (except the final Sabbath which will culminate on the morning worship service) and Wednesday nights.

**Sabbath Mornings**

There will be a total of three Saturday morning sessions during the traditional worship hour service time. The morning Sabbath sessions will proceed as follows:

The entire congregation will meet in the main sanctuary, or usual meeting place. Traditional preliminaries will be modified to give the facilitator ample time for the presentation. This will allow at least a two-hour window for the potluck meal to take place between the morning and afternoon sessions. The facilitator should adapt the lecture to relate to the portion of the congregation that is not necessarily participating in the seminar. A special potluck lunch should be well coordinated and prepared by the local Hospitality Ministry team.

**Sabbath Afternoons and Weeknights**

There will be a total of two Sabbath afternoon presentations and two weeknight sessions (Wednesday is recommended) that will run as follows:

Song service, welcome, and prayer: 15 minutes

If the local church has a praise team, it would be advised that they lead out with two vibrant worship songs. The facilitator may choose a third song as the theme song for
the seminar. On some nights, selected members of the church can offer a special musical selection, if desired. The local music ministry director could be recruited to coordinate this. A brief welcome and opening prayer should follow by a local elder. This will encourage support from local church leadership.

Gifts and trivia: 10 minutes

This section will be allocated each night to review previous concepts and give away parenting resources to motivate attendance throughout the week. A Stampley’s® Deluxe Family Bible will be handed out at the second and final session respectively to the couple who arrived first and the couple who attended most, respectively. This section is led by the facilitator and should be used to segue into the topic for the night.

Main learning topic: 35 minutes

This section is designed with a hands-on approach in mind. A 30-minute window is allocated for the facilitator to present the main teaching points of the topic.

Group discussion exercises: 15 minutes

The participants are given a group or couple’s exercise sheet to fill out and share their results. Some are role-playing; others are problem-solving discussion questions. Each will be directed according to the topic being discussed. Each group or couple will be encouraged to share their results with the rest of their group what they learned from each exercise. The ideal group size should be no more than five people. If there are few participants, the facilitator may decide to make it only one group, in which he/she leads.
Closing remarks: 10 minutes

Each night, the facilitator should end with closing remarks, recapitulating the main points presented and a prayer. Prior to the closing prayer, the participants should be reminded of the upcoming topic and the take-home activity sheets (homework) that are required for the following presentation.

The duration of the sessions should be closely monitored in consideration for those parents who live afar off and may have brought their children with them each night. Each nightly program is designed to not be more than 90 minutes in duration.

Discussion Session Guidelines

Group discussion guidelines in regard to the discussions and exercises need to be clearly established (see Appendix F). These are:

1. All sharing with other couples in a group setting is voluntary. Opportunities will be given for group discussions with other parent-couples. The participants should never be forced to share with the group.

2. When sharing in a group, each individual is to speak for themselves and not on behalf of their partners. Participants should be asked to use “I” statements instead of “we” statements. For example, it is suitable to say “I feel,” or “I think” but not “we . . .”.

3. Before sharing anecdotes or facts about their couple relationship, clearance from the other partner is to be granted. Before doing so, individuals should be explicitly advised to ask their partner before sharing something personal about their relationship.
4. Everything shared in the group is confidential. Confidentiality is defined as not sharing or discussing any information learned in the group with anyone else other than the partner.

General Program Rundown

Saturday Morning Sessions
11:00 – 11:20 am  Abbreviated Traditional Sabbath Worship Preliminaries
11:20 – 12:05 pm  Presentation of Lecture/sermon
12:25 – 2:30 pm  Potluck Lunch

Saturday Afternoon Sessions
2:30 – 2:45 pm  Song Service, Welcome, and Opening Prayer
2:45 – 2:55 pm  Gifts and Trivia Questions
2:55 – 3:30 pm  Main Learning Topic
3:30 – 3:45 pm  Group Discussion Exercise
3:45 – 3:55 pm  Closing Remarks, Prayer, and Dismissal
4:00 – 4:15 pm  Consecration Ceremony (Final Sabbath session only)

Weeknight Sessions
7:00 – 7:15 pm  Song Service, Welcome, and Opening Prayer
7:15 – 7:25 pm  Gifts and Trivia Questions
7:25 – 8:00 pm  Main Learning Topic
8:00 – 8:15 pm  Group Discussion Exercise
8:15 – 8:25 pm  Closing Remarks, Prayer, and Dismissal
Program Implementation

This section describes the manner in which the program is to be implemented. First, a description of the preparatory work leading up to the start of the program will be identified. This will include some practical aspects that should be taken into consideration and adjusted during the actual development of the program, like starting times of the presentation and other logistical issues, and ways in which to measure the effectiveness of the program.

Before the Seminar

The facilitator should contact the local Pastor of the church at least six months before the desired starting date of the program. In this case, it is recommended that the facilitator approach the Pastor and local church board early in the month of August to present the complete plan for the intervention, to seek authorization to present the program.

Once the program is approved, the facilitator should contact the Pastor or his representative (an elder and or the treasurer) to identify budgetary details for promotion and materials to be used during the implementation of the program. Ideally, the program should begin to be promoted at least three months prior to the starting date, every Sabbath from the platform and included in the bulletin announcement section.

During the Program

Once the preliminary steps mentioned above are completed, the program is ready to be initiated. In order to secure a successful implementation, the following observations are recommended:
Session Times

The starting times for the nightly sessions should ideally begin at 7:00 pm. However, a later starting time can be chosen due to factors such as the work schedule of the majority of the parents, etc. If the sessions start too late, the participants could tire and attendance would diminish throughout the program. The facilitator should designate a timekeeper to aid him in the sessions. The Sabbath afternoon sessions should begin no later than 2:30 pm. This will allow ample time for the presentations and not make it too long of a Sabbath as to wear them down.

Attendance

Equally crucial to the success of the seminar is the consistent attendance of all the participants. It is advised that the facilitator stimulate consistent attendance each night by offering gifts such as Stampley’s® Deluxe Family Bible and other valuable parenting books and resources.

Engaging group sessions involving role-playing and other techniques should be added to dispel the notion of the sessions being just another sermon. This will aid in the momentum building as the week continues on.

After Each Session

At the end of each individual session, the facilitator should hold a short five-minute briefing meeting with the local Pastor and other department representatives participating in the implementation to assess progress of the program intervention.

If possible, the local Hospitality Ministry director should arrange to have different families bring a hot beverage and finger foods to share after each nightly program. This will afford the facilitator with the opportunity to mingle with the participants and get to
know them on a more personal level. In this manner, the presenter will be able to elicit feedback from different participants.

Session Implementations

The seminar consists of seven 90-minute sessions that are designed to educate first-generation Latino-immigrant parents about the topic presented, provide opportunities to practice skills, and, most importantly, highlight the development of mature faith in their second-generation children. Parents will be often asked to reflect on their own experiences and engage in developing self-awareness as a means of edifying the emotional value of the skills presented. Each module seeks to emphasize not only “what” skills are needed, but also “why” each one is necessary. This empowers parents to develop their own solutions to difficult parenting problems by providing a framework for how to make decisions rather than simply applying certain techniques. As a means of modeling what is described in the sessions, it is requested that each begin with prayer as a matter of consistency and reverence to the values of the faith community.

During the opening remarks of the second session, a Pre-Questionnaire will be handed to each of the participants to fill out then and there (see Appendix C). They will be instructed to answer the questionnaire and turn it in. After having gathered all of the questionnaires, they will be folded and placed in a box. Then the facilitator will randomly select one from the box. The person who filled out that questionnaire will receive one of the Stampley’s® Deluxe Family Bibles as a prize. This will be done to incentivize the participants to actively participate in filing out surveys and questionnaires throughout the seminar.
Session 1: “The Divine Gift of Parenting”  
(First Sabbath Morning)

There are multiple objectives for this first module. It serves as an introduction to the program and describes the philosophy of integration that will be used throughout. The presentation and tasks in this session are designed to (a) heighten parental self-awareness of being God’s stewards of His children, (b) instruct parents on the major aspects of faith maturity, and (c) motivate parents to be intentional in their quest for developing mature faith in their children.

Materials that will be needed include: Projection screen/ability to display a PowerPoint or Keynote presentation.

This session is presented within the framework of the traditional Sabbath morning worship hour; therefore, the facilitator needs to aim to capture the attendees with an intriguing introduction and proceed to present the main learning topic in a manner that motivates parents to continue on to the afternoon session where a more didactic style will be employed. It is important that the facilitator build up an expectation for the session that will be held after the potluck meal to be served immediately after the service. The delivery and effectiveness of this first presentation will determine to a large degree the continued attendance of the participants to the following presentations.

Sermon content

This presentation aims to bring awareness of the Biblical concept of stewardship entailed in parenting. Biblical examples of successful and not-so-successful parents will be presented along with the promise of God’s enabling grace. The presentation will end with a call for parents to consecrate their lives to God with the purpose of being intentional about developing mature faith in the children.
The sermon begins with an illustration of the value of a costly gift and emphasizes the responsibility that is entailed in receiving that gift. The fact that one receives it freely does not exclude the responsibility entailed in taking ownership of that gift, e.g. a young man who receives a brand-new car as a graduation gift from his father needs to be responsible for the upkeep.

**Parenting as a gift from God: Genesis 1:26, 28.** Among the many gifts that God gave to humankind during creation week, one stands out as unique—the gift of parenting. In Genesis 1:28, two things stand out: God blesses the first human couple; God commands them to procreate. Parenting is a divine gift by its very nature. Only God can create (Gen 1:1; Col 1:16), yet He chose to give the unique privilege of procreating in His image, nonetheless, to humankind (Gen 1:26-28)! Human parenting is not only a gift, it is also a mandate (Gen 1:28a), and therefore it implies a responsibility.

**Parenting as Stewardship: Psalm 127:3-5; Matthew 25:15-30.** The Bible establishes that every good gift comes from God above (Jas 1:17), and every gift from God entails a responsibility. This principle is seen in the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14, 19). God gives (v. 14); God holds receivers accountable (v. 19); the greater the gift, the greater the responsibility.

God considers children in high esteem. They are “a heritage of the Lord” (Ps 127:3). Jesus said, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 19:14). God places a great responsibility upon parents: “A great responsibility rests upon parents, for the education and training which shape the eternal destiny of children and youth…[It] is to sow the good seed diligently and untiringly in the hearts of their children” (White, 1964, p. 40).
Specific responsibilities are implied with “God’s heritage” (Deut. 6:4-9): (a) Love and devotion to God (v. 5; cf. Matt 6:33), (b) Internalization of His word (v. 6a; cf. Ps 119:11), and (c) Diligently/intentionally teach His word: “When you sit in your house,” i.e., family worship. “Parents should be united in their faith, that they may be united in their efforts to bring their children up in the belief of the truth. . . . Let parents work unitedly, instilling into their children’s hearts the principles of righteousness” (White, 1967, p. 208).

“When you walk by the way, lie down, and rise up” implies that parents live out/model the truth they profess (v. 6c; cf. Ps 101:2). White (1967) adds, There are few parents who realize how important it is to give to their children the influence of a godly example. . . . No other means is so effective in training them in right lines. The children and youth must have a true copy in right-doing if they succeed in overcoming sin and perfecting a Christian character. This copy they should find in the lives of their parents. If they enter the city of God . . . someone must show them the way. By living before their children godly, consistent lives, parents may make the work before them clear and plain. (p. 212)

Guiding children to develop mature faith is a major responsibility of parental stewardship (“Train up a child,” Prov 22:6). Mature faith may be defined as, “The degree to which a person embodies the priorities, commitments, and perspectives characteristic of a vibrant and life transforming faith” (Benson, Donahue, & Erickson, 1993, p. 3). Some biblical examples of individuals with maturity of faith include Seth (Gen 4:26), Joseph (Gen 39:8, 9), and Jesus (Luke 2:52). White (1890) states,

Children may be trained for the service of sin or for the service of righteousness. . . . The training that Solomon enjoins [in Prov 22:6] is to direct, educate, develop. But in order for parents to do this work, they must themselves understand the “way” the child should go. It is impossible for parents to give their children proper training unless they first give themselves to God, learning of the Great Teacher lessons of obedience to His will. (p. 128)
Conclusion. God has given us the gift of parenting. He has entrusted humanity with His children, His heritage, as a special blessing. He will inquire of us what we have done with that which He entrusted to us. He has also instructed us how to faithfully fulfill our parental responsibilities before Him. We, as parents, must first do this individually: to love the Lord with all our hearts, soul, and strength (Deut 6:5); to seek first the Kingdom (Matt 6:33); and to consecrate ourselves, i.e., by definition, to make or declare sacred; set apart or dedicate to the service of a deity: to consecrate a new church building (Dictionary.com, n.d.). White (1892) exhorts,

Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, “Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.” This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ. (p. 70)

Second, we must consecrate our lives collectively, as a family unit (Josh 24:15). This encapsulates the essence of parenting as stewardship. White (1902) adds,

Each morning consecrate yourselves and your children to God for that day. Make no calculation for months or years; these are not yours. One brief day is given you. As if it were your last on earth, work during its hours for the Master. Lay all your plans before God, to be carried out or given up, as His providence shall indicate. Accept His plans instead of your own, even though their acceptance requires the abandonment of cherished projects. Thus the life will be molded more and more after the divine example; “and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus Philippians 4:7.” (p. 44)

Call to consecration. Parents will be invited to gather their children and come to the altar, embracing each other as a sign of commitment to the intentional task of faithfully developing a mature faith in their children. The facilitator will pray over them to end the session, then invite them to the following session to take place after the potluck meal.
Session 2: “Eden in the Home” (First Sabbath Afternoon)

There are multiple objectives for this module. Though it is the second session in the seminar, it represents the first didactic session in the series. The presentation and tasks in this session are designed to (a) heighten parental self-awareness of being God’s stewards over the home environment, with special emphasis on the parent-couple relationship, (b) instruct parents on principles that help cultivate love and maintain a healthy relationship, and (c) motivate parents to identify strengths and weakness in their parent-couple relationship and be open to seeking help to strengthen said relationship.

Materials that will be needed include: (a) Projection screen/ability to display a PowerPoint or Keynote presentation, (b) Pre-Seminar Questionnaire (Appendix A), and (c) Prepare-Enrich® “Sharing Strengths and Growth Areas” handout (Appendix G).

This session will begin with a lively song service, to be led by the local praise team or designated individuals. This will afford the opportunity for parents to drop off their young children at the respective programs and proceed to the presentation. A brief welcome and opening prayer by the local pastor or elder will follow. This will encourage support from local church leadership. The delivery and effectiveness of this presentation will determine to a large degree the continued attendance of the participants to the following presentations.

During the “Gifts and Trivia” section, the facilitator will ask a few simple questions to review previous concepts and give away parenting resources to motivate attendance throughout the rest of the seminar.
Seminar content

This presentation aims to heighten parental self-awareness of being God’s stewards of their home environment, giving special emphasis on the parent-couple relationship. Healthy relationship building principles will be discussed, and parents will be motivated to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their family relationships and to be open to seek help.

The presentation begins with brief review of the concept of stewardship entailed in parenting as discussed in the previous session to emphasize that that same responsibility exists over the home environment. To illustrate this, the Biblical concept of God as Parent will be discussed.

**God as Parent - Genesis 1.** Throughout the Bible, God is portrayed as the ultimate Parent in His relationship with the human race. Nowhere else is that best portrayed than in the Creation account (Gen 1-2). The ascending order of creation points to God lovingly supplying all the needs of the first human pair prior to their being created. A careful reading of Genesis 1 renders a vivid picture of the Godhead purposefully creating everything in a specific and intentional manner, in order to furnish an environment where the first human pair could thrive, physically, emotional, and spiritually.

In Genesis 1, the creation acts are divided into three major sections (Sailhamer, 1992), the physical world (Gen 1:1-19), the living creatures (vv. 20-25), and Humankind (Gen 1:26-31; 2:8-15). Before creating each of these, the Godhead is pictured preparing the ideal environment for each milieu to thrive. Prior to creating the physical world, the Godhead separates the light from the darkness (Gen 1:2-5) and divides the waters from
the dry land (vv. 6-10), in order for the vegetation to thrive and provide ample sustenance and shelter for the living creatures that were to be created.

In like manner, the Godhead is pictured creating the ideal environment for all living creatures to thrive. Having separated the firmament (Gen 1:6-8) God fills it with birds; having divided the waters, they are replenished with sea creatures (vv. 20-23). Having separated the dry land, God creates the beasts, cattle, and every creeping thing according to its kind (vv. 24, 25).

Ultimately, the Trinity creates Humankind in Their image, with the capacity to rule (Gen 1:26, 27), only after having furnished them with everything necessary for them to thrive physically (Gen 2:8-14), emotionally (Gen 2:21-24), and spiritually (Gen 2:1-3). Clearly, God in His love, created the world with humankind’s overall well-being in mind. What a loving God and Parent we have!

Humankind imaging God as parents - Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Bible establishes that the first human couple was created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-28). As such, they were to image God, not only in their physical form and attributes, but also in their relationship. Just as the Godhead is One (Deut 6:4), and was intimately united in creating the ideal atmosphere for Humanity to thrive (Gen 1:1,2; John 1:1-3), so too parent-couples are to unite together to supply the ideal environment within the home for their children to thrive. In this manner, they are to image the Godhead in their relationship: “Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live in mutual love for each other, so male and female were to image God in their relationship of love for each other” (Gulley, 2012, p. 81). This intimate relationship is to permeate throughout the home and set the ideal environment for children to thrive in. “The atmosphere surrounding the souls
of fathers and mothers fills the whole house, and is felt in every department of the home” (White, 1952, p. 16).

As God supplied the ideal physical environment for humanity to thrive, parents today are to strive to do the same for their children (Deut 6:5c). Kiš (2001) states,

God prepared everything needed for the human creature: air for the lungs, food for the stomach, light for the eyes, work and sleep for the muscles. ... A Christian lifestyle beckons modern parents to imitate our heavenly Father in upholding the principles of care and support of the family. (p. 692)

As God developed an ideal environment for humankind to thrive emotionally, human parents today are to develop a healthy emotional atmosphere within the home. White (1855) affirms,

Home should be made all that the word implies. It should be a little heaven upon earth, a place where the affections are cultivated instead of being studiously repressed. Our happiness depends upon this cultivation of love, sympathy, and true courtesy to one another. (p. 539)

Furthermore, parents today are to strive to develop the ideal environment for the development of their children’s spiritual well-being. White (1900) continues,

Children are the heritage of the Lord, and we [as parents] are answerable to Him for our management of His property. ... In love, faith, and prayer let parents work for their households, until with joy they can come to God saying, “Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me.” (p. 195)

Just as in creation everything revolved around the Godhead, in the home, everything is affected by the relationship that exists between the parent-couple. “To a large extent parents create the atmosphere of the home circle, and when there is disagreement between father and mother, the children partake of the same spirit. Make your home atmosphere fragrant with tender thoughtfulness” (White, 1952, p. 16).

**Principles for healthy relationships - Matthew 22:39.** Jesus, describing the foundational principles of His law said, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
Many attempt to love others without truly loving themselves. Others suffer from low self-worth, making it difficult to genuinely love themselves. When referring to self-love, we do not promote selfishness, but a love of self, centered on the fact that we are God’s unique creation, endowed with the image of God.

The Bible places great value on the human individual. It reminds us that we were “fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps 139:13, 14), and though all have “fallen short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23), He still loves us with an “everlasting love” (Jer 31:3; 1 John 4:7-11). On these truths lies God’s call to “love our neighbor, as [our self]” (Matt 22:39).

In the parent-couple relationship, the spouse is the closest neighbor (Gen 2:23). Therefore, the “neighbor” who deserves the most attention and love is our spouse. Husbands are commanded, “love your wives, just as Christ . . . loved the church, and gave Himself for her” (Eph 5:25). Wives are to “submit to [their] husbands . . . as to the Lord” (Eph 5:22). In doing so, parent-couples are to foster relationships that image the Creator and foster an environment that equips for eternity. White (1952) declares,

Never forget that you are to make the home bright and happy for yourselves and your children by cherishing the Saviour's attributes. The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind. And it is a blessing wherever the marriage covenant is entered into intelligently, in the fear of God, and with due consideration for its responsibilities. Every home should be a place of love, a place where the angels of God abide, working with softening, subduing influence upon the hearts of parents and children. (p. 18)

If parent-couples are found wanting in this area, they are admonished to ask of God and search (Matt 7:7-12), because He promises to supply all wisdom necessary (Jas 1:5) to successfully accomplish the task of developing a healthy home environment that mirrors the atmosphere of heaven, and is ideal to develop mature faith in their children.
Group Discussion Exercise: “Sharing Strengths and Growth Areas” (see Appendix G).

This activity (“Sharing Strengths and Growth Areas”) is meant to introduce the theme for the day and also highlight the reason for the theme: sharing strengths and acknowledging needed growth areas. Ask those parent-couples present to individually select three Strength Areas (those with most agreement and positive aspects of their relationship) and three Growth Areas (those with most disagreements and areas they would like to improve). Then invite them to come together as a couple and take turns sharing with what each perceived as their relationship strengths. Have them verbally share one at a time, until each has shared three. Instruct them to do the same with the perceived growth areas. Finally, have them discuss these three questions:

1. “Did any of your partner’s responses surprise you?”
2. “In what areas did you mostly agree with your partner?”
3. “In what areas did you mostly disagree with your partner?”

It is important for the facilitator to develop an environment where the couples can participate in a cordial and respectful manner as to not cause any discord or conflict. Seeing this is the first of many discussion activities, it’s important for the facilitator to clearly articulate the Discussion Session Guidelines (see Appendix F) prior to this and every group discussion exercise.

Closing remarks and assignments

The facilitator should end with closing remarks, recapitulating the main points presented and reiterate the confidentiality and Group Discussion Guidelines. Prior to the closing prayer, the participants should be reminded of the upcoming topic and the take-
home activity sheets (homework) that are required for the following presentation. For this specific presentation, the “homework” assignment is for parent-couples to purchase a personal journal where they can individually log their experiences. The first assignment to be logged in the journal is to answer the following questions:

1. As specifically as possible, journal what you learned about your spouse today?
2. What did you learn about yourself today?
3. What specific issue or situation do you commit to pray for during this seminar?

Explain that parents are to engage in prayerful and honest discussions as to the results of their group activity sheet. Invite them to log their daily experience in their respective journals. End the session with prayer.

Session 3: “Essentials of Effective Communication” (Wednesday Evening)

This session will require a “hands on” approach, incorporating the abstract concepts with role-play. It is recommended that the facilitator recruit some volunteers ahead of time to practice a skit for illustration purposes. A recommended script is included in the outline below. The presentation and tasks in this session are designed to (a) heighten parental self-awareness to the importance of communicating effectively to maintain healthy relationships, (b) instruct parents on the skills of assertiveness, and active listening, and (c) motivate them to put them into practice in their daily lives.

Materials that will be needed include: (a) Projection screen/ability to display a PowerPoint or Keynote presentation, (b) “What is Your Parenting Style?” handout (Appendix B), (c) Prepare-Enrich® “Assertiveness and Active Listening” handout (Appendix H), and (d) Prepare-Enrich® “Creating a Wish List” handout (Appendix I).
This session will begin with a lively song service, to be led by the local praise team or designated individuals. This will afford the opportunity for parents to drop off their young children at the respective programs and proceed to the presentation. A brief welcome and opening prayer by the local pastor or elder will follow. This will encourage support from local church leadership. The delivery and effectiveness of this presentation will determine to a large degree the continued attendance of the participants to the following presentations.

During the “Gifts and Trivia” section, parents will receive the “What is Your Parenting Style” self-assessment handout (Appendix B). The facilitator will instruct parents on to how to fill them out. Upon completion, they will be gathered up, folded, and placed in a box. The facilitator will randomly select one of the assessments and award a special gift to the participant whose name is on the form. This will encourage participants to be actively involved in the assignments required.

Seminar content

This presentation aims to bring awareness to the importance of effective communication for all healthy relationships within the family unit. The specific skills of assertiveness and active listening will be discussed. Healthy relationship building principles will be discussed, and parents will be motivated to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their family relationships and to be open to seek help.

The presentation begins with a brief review of the concept of parental stewardship of the home environment as discussed in the prior session, emphasizing that effective communication is a fundamental element of stewardship.
God as the ultimate communicator - Hebrews 1:1, 2. Throughout the Bible, God is depicted as the ultimate Communicator. The history of the Bible and how it has been miraculously preserved throughout the ages is testimony to this fact. A brief survey of the Old and New Testaments points to the fact that God believes in effective communication. He has been communicating with humankind since their inception (Gen 1:26, 27; Gen 2:15, 16). The Bible identifies that God has employed many different ways to communicate His message (Heb 1:1).

One way God has communicated with humankind is face to face (Gen 3:8a). Other examples are by audible voice (1 Sam 3), through visions (Dan 8:1cf; Rev 1-22), and dreams (Dan 2; Acts 10). The most prolific way that God communicates with humankind is through His Son (Heb 1:2). Jesus’ teaching ministry centered mostly on parables used to reveal the “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 13:11) through common things known to mankind. Jesus also communicated love non-verbally through touch (Matt 8:3), with the look of His eyes (Mark 10:21), and through His emotions (John 11:35).

Undoubtedly, God believes in effective communication. White (1952) emphasizes,

The Lord is in active communication with every part of His vast dominions. He is represented as bending toward the earth and its inhabitants. He is listening to every word that is uttered. He hears every groan; He listens to every prayer. (p. 292)

Effective communication is the bedrock of all healthy relationships. Without effective communication, relationships will deteriorate and eventually dissipate.

According to a recent study (Wilcox, 2012), marriage trends in recent decades indicate that Americans have become less likely to marry and more recent data show that marriage in the United States continues to decline. Of those who do marry, there has been
a moderate drop since the 1970s in the percentage of couples that consider their marriages to be “very happy,” but in the past decade this trend has flattened out.

A survey of counseling professionals offers compelling insight into why marriages fail. The leading cause of divorce was communication problems, followed by sexual infidelity, and “not spending enough time together/not mutually prioritizing the marriage” (Wilcox & Marquardt, 2010, p. 23).

As parent-couples that God has blessed and given the responsibility of being stewards of his heritage (Ps 127:3), it is imperative that we learn how to communicate effectively. God grants wisdom liberally to all who ask (Jas 1:5) and promises we “can do all things through Christ who strengthens [us]” (Phil 4:13).

**Speaking with grace - Colossians 4:6.** God admonishes in His word to speak graciously. “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you want to answer each one” (Col 4:6). White (1958) adds,

> The only words that should come from our lips should be pure, clean words. No one can tell how much sin is created by careless, foolish, unmeaning words. . . . Every word you speak is as a seed that will germinate and produce either good or bad fruit. (p. 236)

**Two effective communication skills.** Two valuable communication skills are Assertiveness and Active Listening.

**Assertiveness.** One way to speak graciously is by being assertive. “Assertiveness is the ability to express your feelings and ask for what you want in a relationship” (Olsen, 2014, p. 3). The Bible advises, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers” (Eph 4:29). Assertive individuals take responsibility for their messages by using “I” statements, while avoiding statements beginning with the word “you.” They are positive and respectful in
their communication, using polite statements such as “please” and “thank you.” Jesus seemed to have been referring to being assertive when he stated “say only yes if you mean yes, and no if you mean no” (Matt 5:37).

The three major steps in being assertive are, (a) identify the problem specifically, (b) Express true feelings honestly, and (c) clearly articulate what is desired, using “I” statements. A clear example of this is found in Luke 22:15, 16: “When the hour had come . . . He said to them, ‘With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.’” It is important to avoid the use of “you” statements. “You” statements tend to come across as accusatory and provoke conflict. An example of this is found in Genesis 3:12, “Then the man said, ‘The woman that you gave me, she gave me to eat of the tree, and I ate.’”

Active Listening. A second valuable communication skill is Active Listening. God admonishes to listen carefully and attentively. “My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (Jas 1:19, NIV). Active listening is the ability to let the person you are listening to know you understand them by restating their message (Olsen, 2014).

Active listening involves listening attentively without interruptions, restating what was heard, acknowledging not only the content but also the feelings of the speaker. The active listening process lets the speaker know whether or not their message was clearly understood by the listener restating what they heard and understood.

The first of three major steps in active listening is to listen intently while maintaining good eye contact, and not allowing any distraction or interruptions. The Bible states, “He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him”
(Prov 18:13). A second step is listening with the eyes and ears, interpreting the entire message being conveyed via body language, intonation, and words. It has been established that only 7% of a message shared is conveyed with words, 38% by tone of voice, and 55% via body language (Mehrabian & Ferris, 1967). The third crucial step is to confirm the message received by repeating it using different words. “There is need of [those] . . . that can listen with sympathy to heartbreaking recitals of wrong, of degradation, of despair and misery” (White, 1915, p. 184).

**Conclusion.** God is depicted in the Bible as the Ultimate Communicator. Being that parent-couples have been given the responsibility of communicating the “mysteries of the kingdom” to their children, it is paramount that they practice sound communication skills. Assertiveness and Active Listening are two foundational skills that if practiced, will lead to healthier relationships among parent-couples and in turn, will be found very beneficial in transmitting values that will aid in developing mature faith in their offspring.

Group discussion exercise

“Creating a Wish List” (from *Prepare-Enrich® Couples Workbook with Biblical References*, p. 4).

Review the differences between assertiveness and active listening using *Prepare-Enrich®* handout “Assertiveness and Active Listening” (Appendix H). Encourage parent-couples to come together privately to do the *Prepare-Enrich®* “Creating a Wish List” exercise sheet. If time permits, have parent-couples gather in small groups and practice using “I” statements, avoiding the use of statements that begin with “you” among the group participants. In like manner, encourage parents to practice active listening
attentively, without interruption, and restating what was heard, acknowledging both content and feelings of the speaker.

Homework

Have parents practice using assertiveness and active listening by using the Prepare-Enrich® “Creating a Wish List” handout (Appendix I). Instruct parents to practice active listening with their child and an adult at least once a day until the next session. Explain the importance of follow-through and consistent responses. Encourage parents to journal their experience and be prepared to share them in the next session. End with prayer and encourage parents to come to the following session.

Session 4: “Sons and Daughters of God: A Call to Become Peacemakers” (Second Sabbath Morning)

The tasks and presentation in this session are meant to (a) empower parents to see themselves as sons and daughters of the Ultimate Peacemaker, (b) highlight biblical examples of peacemakers, and (c) motivate parent-couples to be intentional in their quest of becoming peacemakers in their homes.

Equipment that will be needed include: Projection screen/ability to display a PowerPoint or Keynote presentation.

This session begins within the framework of a traditional worship hour setting; therefore, the facilitator needs to aim at captivating the attendees with an intriguing introduction and proceed to present the main learning topic in a manner that motivates parents to continue on to the afternoon session where a more didactic style will be employed.
Sermon content

This presentation will highlight God’s call to be peacemakers based on Matthew 5:9. It will consider God as the Ultimate Peacemaker, present biblical examples of peacemakers, and include a call to emulate the Ultimate Peacemaker within the home. It is important the facilitator build up an expectation for the session that will follow the potluck lunch to be served immediately after the worship service. The delivery and effectiveness of this presentation will determine to a large degree the continued attendance of the participants to the following presentation.

The sermon begins with an illustration of someone who overcame his enemies by becoming their friends. It has been said that Abraham Lincoln, in a speech delivered at the height of the Civil War, referred to the Southerners as fellow human beings who were in error. An elderly lady chastised him for not calling them irreconcilable enemies who must be destroyed. “Why Madam,” Lincoln replied, “do I not destroy my enemies by making them my friends?” Abraham Lincoln was a true peacemaker.

**God as the ultimate peacemaker - Job 25:2.** The Bible depicts God as the Ultimate Peacemaker. When conflict broke out in heaven (Rev 12:7-10), God intervened, not by destroying His enemies, but by attempting to reconcile them to Him (Job 25:2). White (1890) states,

Lucifer’s disposition to serve himself instead of his Creator aroused a feeling of apprehension when observed by those who considered that the glory of God should be supreme. In heavenly council the angels pleaded with Lucifer. The Son of God presented before [Lucifer] the greatness, the goodness, and the justice of the Creator, and the sacred, unchanging nature of His law. God Himself had established the order of heaven; and in departing from it, Lucifer would dishonor his Maker and bring ruin upon himself. But the warning, given in infinite love and mercy, only aroused a spirit of resistance. Lucifer allowed his jealousy of Christ to prevail, and became the more determined. Then there was war in heaven. The Son of God, the Prince of heaven, and His loyal angels engaged in conflict with the archrebel and those who united with
him. The Son of God and true, loyal angels prevailed; and Satan and his sympathizers were expelled from heaven. (pp. 35-36)

The conflict that began in heaven was now to continue on earth (Gen 3:12). The idyllic home that the Godhead prepared for the first human pair had been infected by the Archenemy (Gen 3:1-8). As a result, the peace and harmony that once reigned on earth, among the first human couple (Gen 2:20-24), had been lost. The first sign of this cosmic conflict within the home is recorded in Genesis 3:12. After eating of the forbidden fruit, the first human couple hid themselves from the presence of their Creator (Gen 3:8). Upon being queried, the first response of Adam was to blame his wife (Gen 3:12), and consequently, place the blame on God, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate” (Gen 3:12). Sin brings enmity against God. But God, as the ultimate Peacemaker, in His love, intervenes to bring peace (Gen 3:14, 15, 21).

God was to be manifest in Christ, “reconciling the world unto Himself.” Second Corinthians 5:19: “Christ would reach to the depths of misery to rescue the ruined race.” (White, 1890, pp. 63, 64)

God, the ultimate Peacemaker, intervened in the cosmic conflict (Rev 12:7-10; Gen 3:8-15), to reconcile all things in heaven and on earth through Christ and His great sacrifice (Col 1:19-22).

**Called to be peacemakers - 2 Corinthians 5:18-19.** Seeing that God has reconciled all things in Christ (Col 1:19-20), all those who accept Him, He calls to be peacemakers in Christ (2 Cor 5:18-19). First, He invites all to reason with Him (Isa 1:18), to pursue His peace (Heb 12:14), and promises to grant it to all who believe (John 14:27). We are called to be peacemakers in the home. White (1961) states,
Peacemakers! What a treasure is a peacemaker in the family; what a blessing in the church! Peacemakers may be tempted, but their life is hid with Christ in God. They look unto Jesus, copying His pattern. . . They receive the peace which Christ gives. . . Professed followers of Christ may possess many good and useful qualities; but their characters are greatly marred by an unkind, fretful, faultfinding, harshly judging temper. The husband or the wife who cherishes suspicion and distrust creates dissension and strife in the home. Neither of them should keep his gentle words and smiles for strangers alone, and manifest irritability in the home, thus driving out peace and contentment. . . The true quality of religion is gauged by the manner in which each member in the family does his duty to his associates. . . Learn the precious lesson of being peacemakers in your home life. (p.179)

We are called to be peacemakers to the world. White (1967) continues,

The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife. Christ’s followers are sent to the world with the message of peace. Whoever, by the quiet, unconscious influence of a holy life, shall reveal the love of Christ; whoever, by word or deed, shall lead another to renounce sin and yield his heart to God is a peacemaker. (p. 35)

**Conclusion.** God has reconciled us to Himself (Isa 32:17), and has given us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18-19). Just as sin brought conflict to God’s home (Rev 12:7-10), it has brought conflict and strife within our homes (Gen 3:8-12). God calls parents to be His sons and daughters by becoming peacemakers (Matt 5:9) as He, first in the home, then to the world (2 Cor 5:18-22).

**Call to consecration.** Parents will be invited to gather together, with their children, come forward and commit to become peacemakers within their homes and wherever God leads them. The facilitator will end with a prayer of dedication and invite them to the afternoon session following the potluck lunch.

**Session 5: “Steps to Successful Conflict Resolution” (Second Sabbath Afternoon)**

This session will build upon the foundational principles of Assertiveness, Active Listening, and the call God places on parent-couples to become peacemakers. This
session will require hands-on approach, incorporating the abstract concepts with role-play or other teaching techniques to capture the essence of main topic. The presentation and tasks in this session are designed to (a) raise parental self-awareness of the importance of keeping the peace within the home, (b) identify the key elements necessary for successful conflict resolution, and (c) motivate participants to practice these principles in their daily lives.

Materials that will be needed include: (a) Projection screen/ability to display a PowerPoint or Keynote presentation, (b) Prepare-Enrich® “Ten Steps For Resolving Conflicts” handout (Appendix J), and (c) Prepare-Enrich® “How to Take a Time Out” handout (Appendix K).

This session will begin with a lively song service, to be led by the local praise team or designated individuals. This will afford the opportunity for parents to drop off their young children at the respective programs and proceed to the presentation. A brief welcome and opening prayer by the local pastor or elder will follow. This will encourage support from local church leadership.

During the “Gifts and Trivia” section, the facilitator will ask a few simple questions to review previous concepts and give away parenting resources to motivate attendance throughout the rest of the seminar.

Presentation content

This presentation aims to raise awareness to the importance of proactively seeking to master the science of conflict resolution to perpetuate and strengthen the bonds of love within the parent-couple and parent-child relationships. This particular topic can lead to uncomfortable situations. The facilitator will need to be cognizant of the possibility of
testy situations. Caution in presenting is advised. Even talking about dealing with conflict can be a hot topic! The outline for this presentation is as follows:

The presentation begins with brief review of the concepts of God as the Ultimate Peacemaker, Assertiveness, and Active Listening of stewardship entailed in parenting discussed as discussed in the previous session to emphasize that that same responsibility exists over the home environment.

**Our example - John 13:15-17.** In a world full of turmoil and strife, the word of God exhorts us, “Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone” (Rom 12:18, NLT). Christians will therefore try to live peaceful lives. Inevitably, conflicts will arise, but those who live according to the word, will be able to manage through conflicts and live lives “more abundantly” (John 10:10b). Understanding and practicing Assertiveness and Actively Listening will go a long way in living peaceably within the home. These foundational principles, added to these 10 steps, have proven to be very successful.

Ten steps to conflict resolution

*Begin resolution as soon as possible.* The first step in effectively resolving conflicts is to set a time and place for discussion, as soon as possible. Ephesians 4:26, 27 admonishes not to let the “sun go down on your wrath, nor give a place to the devil.” A recent study (Liu et al., 2016) showed that if we fall asleep with negative thoughts they can be harder to forget in the long term. A word of caution, avoid handling conflicts in presence of the children (Eph 6:4). After all, there is a time and a place for everything under the sun (Eccl 3:1).

*Clarify the problem.* Second, after having chosen a set time and place for the discussion, be assertive: Define the problem specifically, expressing true feelings by
using “I” statements in the place of using “you” statements, speaking with grace (Col 4:6). It is imperative to use assertiveness and active listening skills during this step.

**List how each contributes to the problem.** Third, sit down together and list specific ways each person contributed to the problem. This takes courage and humility. The human heart is not naturally inclined to admit to shortcomings (Jer 17:9), but we are called to “humble [ourselves] in the sight of the Lord” for He promises to lift us up (Jas 4:10).

**List past unsuccessful attempts.** The fourth step entails making a list of past attempts to resolve the issue that were unsuccessful. This is done to avoid using unnecessary time and resources on unfruitful endeavors.

**List 10 possible solutions.** Fifthly, brainstorm together, putting together a list of 10 possible solutions to the problem. Do this without judging or criticizing. Write them down freely.

**Evaluate each possible solution.** For step six, discuss and evaluate each of the possible solutions being as objective as possible. Talk about how useful and appropriate each one of them feel for resolving the issue. Do not exclude any from the list as of yet.

**Choose one solution.** Step seven entails choosing one solution to try. Since this should be a bipartisan undertaking, be specific and agree on how each one of you will each work toward this solution (Gal 6:2).

**Distribute responsibilities.** Step eight involves agreeing on how each of you will contribute toward the chosen solution. This involves taking ownership. Be as specific as possible in the investment that each will contribute.
Regroup to track progress. Step nine entails setting up another time and place to meet and discuss the progress, considering again that there be no children present, and being mindful using the Assertiveness and Active Listening skills.

Reward your progress. Last, but not least, be sure to reward each other for the progress attained (1 Thess 5:11)! This will keep you both focused and motivated to reaching the desired resolution. These steps would be incomplete without including one most important aspect, apologize to one another and pray for each other. The Bible states, “Confess your faults to one another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed” (Jas 5:16).

Conclusion. The call to live peaceably with all (Rom 12:18) is one that Christian parent-couples cannot ignore. Understanding that Christian parent-couples have been blessed with the privilege of being stewards of God’s heritage (Ps 127:3), it is paramount that the environment to be fostered in the home is one free of strife and contention. Such a home will be one where the angels of heaven would find a welcoming place, one where they can exert their Godly influence, and the Spirit of God can bless the efforts of conscientious parent-couples in uniting for the cause of developing a mature faith in their children. White (1981) states,

There are few parents who realize how important it is to give to their children the influence of a godly example. Yet this is far more potent than precept. No other means is so effective in training them to right lines. The children and youth must have a true copy in right-doing if they succeed in overcoming sin and perfecting a Christian character. This copy they should find in the lives of their parents. (pp. 51-52)

Group discussion exercise

This activity is meant to review the main topic for the day in a “hands on manner.” The facilitator will invite parent-couples to come together in groups and take
turns implementing the steps to resolving conflict as outlined in the *Prepare-Enrich® “Ten Steps for Resolving Conflict”* handout (Appendix J). Invite them to use a hypothetical conflict and briefly review the Discussion Session Guidelines (Appendix F) to avoid misunderstandings or conflicts. Have each group share their experience briefly, identifying the challenges experienced. Then, emphasizing that this activity can be strenuous, the facilitator should review the *Prepare-Enrich® “How to Take a Time-Out”* handout (Appendix K) with the group. The facilitator needs to be mindful of the time during this activity.

Closing remarks and assignments

The facilitator will end with closing remarks and recapitulating the main points presented. Prior to the closing prayer, the participants should be reminded of the upcoming topic and the take-home activity sheet (homework) that is required for the following presentation. For this particular exercise, the parent will receive a fresh *Prepare-Enrich® “Ten Steps for Resolving Conflict”* handout (Appendix J). The facilitator should explain that parents are to prayerfully engage in these steps to resolve a conflict they are currently facing, encourage parents to journal their experience and be prepared to share it during the upcoming session, if they so choose. The facilitator will encourage the participants to come to the following session scheduled for the following Wednesday evening. End the session with a prayer.

**Session 6: “Reflecting God in Parenting” (Wednesday Evening)**

This session will require an animated approach, incorporating the abstract concepts with role-play or other teaching techniques. The presentation and tasks in this
session are designed to (a) raise parental self-awareness to the importance of understanding the four parenting style construct developed by Baumrind (1966) and Maccoby and Martin (1983), (b) understand the particular effects and outcomes each parenting style can potentially have on the development of mature faith in children, and (c) motivate parents to develop a more balanced/authoritative parenting styles by means of practical strategies that can be practiced and incrementally implemented in their daily family lives.

Materials that will be needed include: (a) Projection screen/ability to display a PowerPoint or Keynote presentation, and (b) Prepare-Enrich® “Five Parenting Styles Defined” handout (Appendix L), (c) Prepare-Enrich® “Creating a Balanced Parenting Style” handout (Appendix M), and Prepare-Enrich® “Family Meetings” handout (Appendix N).

This session will begin with a lively song service, to be led by the local praise team or designated individuals. This will afford the opportunity for parents to drop off their young children at the respective programs and proceed to the presentation. A brief welcome and opening prayer by the local pastor or elder will follow. This will encourage support from local church leadership.

During the “Gifts and Trivia” section, the participants who took the “What is Your Parenting Style” self-assessment (Appendix B) during session three, will receive the results of their parenting style assessment. The facilitator will instruct the parents to keep them available during the presentation because they will need to identify which style they identify more with. Those parents present that may have not filled out the assessment should be given an opportunity to after the presentation if they so wish to.
Seminar content

This presentation aims to bring awareness to the four parenting style categories developed by Baumrind (1966) and Maccoby and Martin (1983) and their effects on the mature faith development of children within the home. The parents that had previously taken the parenting assessment and handed in their results will have the opportunity to receive the results of their individual assessment and discuss the particulars during the course of the presentation. Time permitting, a question and answer segment will be included after the presentation.

The presentation begins with an illustration of a case of mistaken identity. For example, a young child is out grocery shopping with his mother when uncharacteristically, he decides to make a run for it, yelling in a loud voice, “Daddy, daddy!” The mother struggles to catch up with him when suddenly the child stopped, grabbed a stranger from the rear and embraced him saying “Daddy!” Unfortunately, it was not his father. Somehow, he had mistakenly taken this total stranger as his father. Why? What could he have seen from afar off to make him believe that he was his father?

**Becoming what we behold - 2 Corinthians 3:18.** There is a universal principle found in Scripture that implies we become what we behold. “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor 3:18). Though it is mentioned in a positive light, the same holds true for the opposite. Just as we can be transformed from “glory to glory,” by the same token, beholding things that are not virtuous and devoid of glory, can result in being transformed into that which is not of good report. The following quotation is a somber thought to consider. “Parents are
standing in the place of God to their children” (White, 1895). What image of God are children receiving from us?

The Bible infers that people can inadvertently project a negative image without being cognizant of it. That was the case with the Pharisees (John 8:39, 44). They alleged that they were justly representing their father Abraham when in fact they misrepresented him to the point that Jesus accused them of being “of [their] father the Devil” (John 8:44-47). Thus, parents are admonished to “bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4).

**Support and control.** Parenting research (Baumrind, 1966; Maccoby & Martin 1983) has identified four major parenting styles: Authoritarian, Permissive, Neglectful, and Authoritative. These are differentiated by two major factors that contribute to the atmosphere of the home and the subtleties of the parent-child relationship. These two factors are support and control.

*Support* refers to the amount of love, warmth, affection, and sense of belonging that parents demonstrate to their child. A high support level indicates high levels of responsiveness and sensitivity to the child’s need for love. High support parenting is characterized by a large amount of physical and verbal expressions of love and affirmation accompanied by quality time spent with children in activities that are pleasurable to them.

Parents who neglect their children’s needs, and often express hostility and disregard toward them are characterized by a low index of support. Low support does not always indicate lack of love. Many parents never had models of warmth stemming from
loving parent-child relationships, therefore making it difficult for them to adequately express their love. In many cases children are disrespected, abandoned, and even abused.

*Control* is the technical term used in parenting research to refer to the level which parents provide a sense of structure and management in their children’s lives. Parents that manifest high control tend to know where their children are at all times and expect observance with family rules. If children break these rules, consequences are generally expected. High control parents are poised on their children being well behaved and respectful of authority. The degree and appropriateness of the level of control can significantly determine whether said control is beneficial or detrimental in the child’s life. Appropriate limits in families are necessary, but going to the extremes can prove to be harmful.

**Four parenting styles.** As mentioned before, parenting researchers (Baumrind, 1966; Maccoby & Martin, 1993) developed four styles of parenting characterized by the support and control exhibited by each within the dynamics of the parent-child relationship.

*Authoritarian parents* are said to be low in support yet high in control. The authoritarian parenting style is associated with parents who emphasize obedience and conformity and expect that rules be obeyed without explanation in a less warm environment (Baumrind, Larzelere, & Owens, 2010). These parents create a structured, highly demanding environment with clearly stated rules and no parental responsiveness. They are considered controlling, expecting their orders to be followed without explanation, and do not demonstrate much support for their children on a day-to-day basis (Baumrind, 1991). Additionally, authoritarian parents exhibit low levels of trust and
engagement toward their child, discourage open communication, and tend to engage in strict control (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). More specifically, verbal hostility and psychological control were found to be the most detrimental behaviors of authoritarian parents. White (1903) explains,

The discipline of a human being who has reached the years of intelligence should differ from the training of a dumb animal. The beast is taught only submission to its master. For the beast, the master is mind, judgment, and will. This method, sometimes employed in the training of children, makes them little more than automatons. Mind, will, conscience, are under the control of another. . . . It is not God’s purpose that any mind should be thus dominated. Those who weaken or destroy individuality assume a responsibility that can result only in evil. While under authority, the children may appear like well-drilled soldiers; but when the control ceases, the character will be found to lack strength and steadfastness. Having never learned to govern himself, the youth recognizes no restraint except the requirement of parents or teacher. (p. 288)

Permissive parents are characterized by high levels of support and low levels of control (Baumrind et al., 2010). Permissive parents behave in a favorable manner toward the child’s desires, actions, and impulses. They tend to consult family decisions with the child. Additionally, permissive parents do not set rules, they set very few behavioral expectations, and avoid engaging in behavioral control (Baumrind et al., 2010). Children from permissive families usually report higher incidences of substance abuse, school delinquency, and tend to be less engaged in school. Permissive parenting is also associated with low self-esteem among adolescents. White (1952) adds,

Unsteadiness in family government is productive of great harm, in fact is nearly as bad as no government at all. The question is often asked, Why are the children of religious parents so often headstrong, defiant, and rebellious? The reason is to be found in the home training. Too often the parents are not united in their family government. . . . A fitful government—at one time holding the lines firmly, and at another allowing that which has been condemned—is ruination to a child. (p. 310)

Neglectful parents have been found to have the most negative effect on children’s outcomes when compared to the other three parenting styles. Neglectful parents often fail
to supervise their children’s behavior and encourage their child’s self-regulation (Baumrind et al., 2010). Also known as uninvolved, this parenting style is described as low in support and low in control. These parents typically disengage from the responsibilities of child rearing and often are seen as being uninvolved when it comes to the needs of their children (Baumrind et al., 2010). Neglectful parents do not engage in any form of structure their adolescents and there is often a lack of closeness in the parent-child interactions. That is why children of uninvolved parents often engage in more at-risk behaviors (Adalbjarnardottir & Hafsteinsson, 2001). Researchers also found an association between neglectful parenting style and criminal acts.

In addition to increased at-risk behaviors among adolescents who have neglectful parents, children tend to have lower self-esteem. In another study, it was found that the effects of uninvolved parenting were associated with higher levels of children self-reporting depressive symptoms during adolescence. In summary, research consistently indicates that children of parents with a neglectful parenting style perform most poorly in all emotional and behavioral outcomes.

*Authoritative parents* are most often associated with positive adolescent outcomes. They have been found to have the most effective and beneficial style of parenting among most families high in support and control. They tend to be more supportive than those who use harsh behaviors. Authoritative parents encourage verbal exchange. They like the reasoning behind rules, and use reason over spanking to reinforce objectives. Children with authoritative parents are less prone to at-risk behaviors, and are significantly less likely to engage in drug use than adolescents with neglectful parents (Gonzalez, Holbein, & Quilter, 2002). Recent findings show that
positive effects of authoritative parenting are amplified when both parents engage in an authoritative parenting style. Additionally, this study suggests that the authoritative parenting style is associated with the lowest levels of depression and the highest levels of school commitment and achievement among adolescents (Simons & Conger, 2007). Adolescents whose parents are both authoritative or whose mother alone is authoritative reported higher self-esteem and life-satisfaction, than participants with no authoritative parent.

**Conclusion.** Research (Smith & Snell, 2009) confirms that parental influence is one of the most significant factors in molding a child’s life, especially in the realm of spiritual development and faith maturity. Understanding the construct of parenting styles and its effects on children can facilitate the development of parental practices that will aid significantly in developing faith maturity in children. The following exercises will be directed at implementing practical ways of developing a balanced, Authoritative parenting style.

**Group discussion exercise**

During this exercise, the facilitator will review the four parenting styles as presented by Baumrind (1966) and Maccoby and Martin (1983) and categorize them with the five parenting styles as defined by the *Prepare-Enrich*® “Five Parenting Styles Defined.” The facilitator will pair them up as shown in Table 1.
Table 1 *Comparison of Parenting Styles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baumrind (1966); Maccoby &amp; Martin (1983)</th>
<th>Prepare-Enrich®</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authoritarian</strong></td>
<td>Overbearing and Strict – Combined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permissive</strong></td>
<td>Permissive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neglectful</strong></td>
<td>Uninvolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authoritative</strong></td>
<td>Balanced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The facilitator will proceed to encourage each parent-couple to gather together privately and identify which parenting style they most resembled according to their “What is Your Parenting Style” assessment they took. It is important for the facilitator to emphasize that though one may not possess the most ideal parenting style, God can transform lives and wishes to do so daily (2 Cor 3:18). Distributing the *Prepare-Enrich®* “Creating a Balanced Parenting Style” handout (Appendix M), the facilitator will proceed to review the suggestions for increasing and decreasing parental closeness (support) and flexibility (control). The facilitator will clarify any questions that may arise.

**Homework**

The facilitator will distribute the *Prepare-Enrich®* “Family Meetings” handout (Appendix N), review the process therein described, and role-play it for parents to receive a hands-on demonstration on how to develop and master this skill. Instruct parents to practice it at home, integrating the effective communication and active listening skills learned in the seminar. Encourage parents to journal their experience and be prepared to
share them in the next session. End with prayer and encourage parents to come to the
following session.

Session 7: “Heaven’s Most Valued Treasure” (Sabbath Morning - Final Session)

The tasks and presentation in this session are meant to (a) encourage the church
congregation as the “body of Christ” to see themselves as stewards before God of the
children and youth within their congregation, (b) highlight their biblical responsibilities
toward parents in their particular God-ordained role as the “body of Christ,” and (c)
challenge the church to intentionally minister to the children and youth among them.

Equipment that will be needed include: Projection screen/ability to display a
PowerPoint or Keynote presentation.

Sermon content

This presentation begins with an illustration of someone who found an
unexpected treasure. For example:

W.O. Bassum found a giant of a gemstone in 1924—a 40.23-carat diamond. It might
surprise you to hear that he wasn't digging in one of the famous South African
diamond mines at the time, but was near Murfreesboro, Arkansas, at a site that is now
the Crater of Diamonds State Park. Sitting on top of a volcanic pipe (a geologic tube
formed by an ancient underground volcanic explosion), the park is the only diamond
site in the world that is open to the public.

Bassum's big find—nicknamed “The Uncle Sam Diamond,” the largest diamond ever
discovered in North America—was later cut down to 12.42 carat and sold for
$150,000 in 1971 (About $800,000 today). But his wasn't the last valuable rock dug
out of that Arkansas soil. In 1964, “The Star of Murfreesboro” was discovered at the
same site, weighing in at 34.25 carat. Then, in 1975, came the 16.37-carat “Amarillo
Starlight Diamond.” The 6.35-carat “Roden Diamond” was found in 2006.

The crown jewel of the park has been the “Strawn-Wagner Diamond,” a
comparatively small 3.09-carat diamond that was dug up in 1990, and expertly cut
down to 1.90 carat. Despite its smaller size, the Strawn-Wagner stands out because it
was given a “Perfect” rating by the American Gem Society—the first diamond to ever receive such a high grade. But let’s not think this list of big gems means the site has been tapped out. On average, two diamonds are found every day at Crater of Diamonds. They are not all as big as The Uncle Sam Diamond, but maybe you will get lucky. (Lammle, 2009)

More than lucky, we as a church have been blessed with heaven’s most prized treasure: Children!

**Heaven’s most valued treasure. Who they are.** The Bible is clear as to how much God esteems children. He considers them “His heritage” (Ps 127:3a), a reward (Ps 127:3b). Jesus himself illustrates how big of a reward are children in God’s eyes when He rebuked His disciples for not letting them come close to Him to be blessed. “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 19:14). Is there anything of greater value than the kingdom of heaven? Yes! Those whom the kingdom of heaven was prepared for! The church that has many children is greatly blessed (Ps 127:5).

*Where are they?* Unfortunately, the alarming majority is straying away. According to recent statistics, nearly 70% of youth stop attending church (Dyck, 2010).

**What the church should do.** In Luke 15, Jesus relates three parables that refer to lost valuables. The second of these, the lost coin (vv. 8-10), refers to something that was lost within the house. This may be applied to those that are still within the house of God that may be lost, inferably the youth. Here are the steps the church can follow:

*Light a lamp:* Verse. 8a. The first action taken by the woman—which could represent the church (Jer 6:2)—was to light a lamp. The Psalmist refers to the word of God as a lamp (Ps 119:105). Could it be that the church today needs to use God’s word to search within and see if what we do as a church aligns with His revealed will?
Sweep the house: Verse 8b. The woman, in her diligent search for the valuable coin, proceeds to sweep the house. There may be certain things within the local congregation that may need to be “brushed up,” so to speak. There may be things in the way we do “church” that may need enlightenment from God’s word (Ps 119:105), in order to be more aligned with what God intended the church to be: a place of corporate worship where all come together to be led to “green pastures” (Ps 23) to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 2:18).

Why they stop attending. Another recent study (Alicea Santiago, 2014) identified that 50% of the reasons why young people stop attending church are directly related to the local congregation.

Lack of compassion for the hurting. Twenty-five percent stated they left because they sensed a lack of compassion on behalf of the congregation for the hurting.

Did not fit in. Eighteen percent felt like they did not fit into the congregation.

Too much focus on minor issues. Thirteen percent pointed to “too much focus on minor things” as their reason for leaving the church.

Conflict within the congregation. Thirteen percent pointed to conflicts within the church congregation as the reason for leaving.

Moral failures of leaders. Eleven percent pointed to moral failures among the leaders as the primary reason for leaving the church. White (1900) states,

The woman in the parable searches diligently for her lost coin. She lights the candle and sweeps the house. She removes everything that might obstruct her search. Though only one piece is lost, she will not cease her efforts until that piece is found…If one member is lost to God every means should be used for his recovery. On the part of all the others let there be diligent, careful self-examination. Let the life-practice be investigated. See if there is not some mistake, some error in management, by which that soul is confirmed in impenitence. (p. 194)
The church today needs to be carefully and diligently seeking ways to redeem those that may be lost within its walls.

A recent study (Choi, 2012) on mature faith development in adolescents identified three major predictors of faith maturity and activities in which the church can engage in order to help youth toward that level of spirituality.

*Personal spiritual disciplines.* Consistent prayer, Bible reading and meditation were found by Choi to be important to developing faith maturity.

The church can accomplish this by taking a close look at their local Children’s Ministries department and asking what can be improved. What else can be done to teach youth how to pray, study, and meditate on the Bible so that they will know how to practice these disciplines on their own? Secondly, the church can *inspire or motivate* the adolescents to engage in those spiritual disciplines by genuinely caring for them by leaders modeling those spiritual habits, and also by actively guiding and encouraging adolescents to do it. Thirdly, the church can *train* adolescents for the long term, preferably throughout youth group years, until these spiritual disciplines become *habits* in their lives by making the practice of spiritual disciplines an integral part of the youth group culture. Guiding them by providing specific resources (e.g., for praying, Bible reading, and biblical meditation), giving them spiritual disciplines assignments, and having them hold one another accountable by sharing during small group Bible study times are likely to help youth build habits of practicing spiritual disciplines in their daily lives. Moreover, once personal spiritual disciplines become habits, those disciplines are likely to help adolescents stay in relationship with God even beyond the high school years.
Influence of significant adults within the congregation. The second most powerful predictor of faith maturity is the influence exerted by significant adults within the congregation. Relationships with adults who lived their faith, adults who are respected by adolescents, exercise a key role fostering their spiritual growth. Issler and Habermas (2002) put it this way, “In the end, it comes down to modeling. It’s not a question of whether youth will emulate others; it’s a question of whom” and “the church has the responsibility to provide alternatives to worldly leaders through two sources: godly peers and godly adults” (italics in the original, p. 87).

Family religious activities. The third highest predictor of faith maturity in adolescents and youth was family religious activities. These entailed having family devotions, prayers, and family projects to help others. The study (Choi, 2012) points not to
the frequency of parents talking about God or faith-related things, but actual religious activities . . . that they did together that influenced their faith maturity more. The results seem to underscore the importance of doing God or faith-related things together as a family over just talking about God or faith-related things together. (p. 35, italics in the original)

The church should foster activities where all church members, young and old, can gather together to share in social activities such as picnics and fun days, or even a mission project within the local community where relationships can flourish. In these environments, spiritually faithful adults within the congregation can significantly influence the young.
**Conclusion.** The parable ends on a positive and joyful note (Luke 15:9) only because the woman searched carefully and diligently until she found the coin. If the Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church is to be successful in completing the mission it has been called to do (Matt 28:18-20), it must be diligent and careful in seeking those lost within its walls.

*Altar call.* The facilitator will make a specific challenge to the local leaders of the church to commit to diligently review, under the guidance of God’s word and His Holy Spirit, how the church is going about “doing” church and seek to implement better ways of developing a mature faith in the children, adolescents, and youth that are part of their congregation. The facilitator may ask the local pastor, if present, to join him in prayer of consecration to end the service.

**Summary**

This chapter described the implementation of a seven-part seminar designed to educate first-generation Latino-immigrant parents of a typical Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church within the United States on parenting styles and their impact on mature faith development in their second-generation children. Through this seminar, Latino-immigrant parents will understand and identify their particular parenting style and also understand the impact these have on the faith development of their second-generation children. They will also understand the importance of developing a healthy parent-couple relationship that will assist them in developing mature faith in their children. By implementing effective communication and conflict resolution skills, Latino-immigrant parents will be able to identify their strengths and weaknesses and be motivated to seek help in order to more effectively develop a mature faith in their children. Lastly, the local
church congregation will also understand what role they can play in assisting Latino-immigrant parents in developing mature faith in their children. A pre- and post-seminar questionnaire was also described which will be used to measure change in levels of understanding, in attitudes, and in behaviors.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary, conclusions and recommendations to this ministry project, which sought to offer support to Latino parents of young children entering the United States. The project provided a psychosocial adult education seminar to inform and equip these parents regarding parenting attitudes, skills and practices conducive to developing a mature faith in their children as they face the challenges of settlement in a foreign context.

The Problem

The Latino population is the largest heterogeneous ethnic minority group of the immigrant population in the United States (Brown & Lopez, 2013). Their migration experience has mostly been propelled by, among other factors, economic reasons and adverse political and civil unrest within their native countries. The migration process usually represents a separation of families. Some bring their families along with them. Others, which typically represent the majority, leave family members behind in their country of origin with a promise of returning after sending financial support for better quality of life, or with a plan to bring them over to the United States permanently.

The migration experience of Latino immigrant families to the United States not only affects parents, but also children. Studies have confirmed that the significant stressors Latino immigrant families face in the quest for a better quality of life contribute
to high levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms (Ptotchinck & Perreira, 2010), and lower levels of child development and emotional well-being (Gershoff et al., 2007).

Pastors of Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Churches in North America have detected a disturbing trend among first-generation Latino immigrant families. Many of the children cease attending church services in late youth and young adulthood. Much of this can be ascribed to the lack of knowledge Latino immigrant parents possess on childrearing practices that can help them navigate through the significant challenges of their migration experience and also help foster a mature faith in their offspring.

The Task

This project was intended to help first-generation Latino immigrant parents obtain a better understanding of the parenting factors that contribute to faith maturity in young children living within the complex society of the United States of America.

This project, however, is theoretical in nature; it has not been implemented. At the time I entered my doctoral studies, though I had been involved with pastoring, I was serving at Three Angels Broadcasting Network, a parachurch media ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Thus, I was not in a position to implement the project within a specific ministry context. Prior to arriving at 3ABN, I had been a church planter among the Hispanic community. My passion to help Latino immigrant parents, which grew from church planting experience, led me develop this theoretical proposal which was accepted.

What follows is a summary of the seminar design and research methodology, conclusions I have reached from my study and work on the project, and recommendations.
Methodology

An Educational Seminar

Research has shown that the most important correlate of a child’s overall wellbeing is the parent’s own personal education (Grossman & Kaestner, 1997; Grossman, 2006). Building on this thought, the methodology used in this ministry intervention consisted of a seven-part psychosocial adult education seminar geared toward Latino immigrant parents of young second-generation children. Recent research (Barna, 2003) suggests, “By age nine, most children have their spiritual moorings in place” (p. 47). White (1954) declares, “The lessons the child learns during the first seven years of life have more to do with forming his character than all it learns in future years” (p. 193). Thus, this intervention was designed specifically for Seventh-day Adventist Latino-immigrant parents of children seven years and younger. Each session was designed to target a specific domain that this researcher has identified from biblical reflection and the literature review as essential for the development of mature faith in second-generation Latino immigrant children.

The specific objectives of the intervention were (a) to develop stronger parent-couple relationships by increasing knowledge and self-awareness of practical relationship skills, specifically in the area of effective communication and conflict resolution; (b) bring awareness and increased knowledge of parenting skills that assist in the transmission of religious and spiritual values, and (c) increase understanding of the construct of parenting styles and their effect on the development of faith maturity in children.
The specific topics to be examined were parenting as a divine gift and the responsibilities entailed, the environment of the home and its lasting effects on faith development, the effectiveness of positive communication in the development and sustaining of healthy relationships, and parenting style and its effects on family dynamics and faith development in children. The sessions and contents were as follows:

1. **1st Sabbath Morning – The Divine Gift of Parenting.** “Children are a heritage from the Lord” (Ps 127:3). Acknowledging the important concept of parenting as stewardship and the responsibilities it entails was intended to give purpose, perspective, and courage for the task placed before every parent.

2. **1st Sabbath Afternoon – The Ideal Environment for Successful Godly Parenting.** This session highlighted the ideal physical, emotional, and spiritual environments necessary to be fostered by the parent-couple in order to provide a godly atmosphere where children can thrive and develop a mature faith.

3. **1st Wednesday evening – Essential Elements of Effective Communication.** Effective communication is essential for all healthy relationships. Two important skills were presented, assertiveness and active listening. The intent was for parents to learn steps on how to develop these crucial skills necessary to create a strong bond of love and understanding among themselves and their children.

4. **2nd Sabbath morning – Sons and Daughters of God: A Call to Peacemaking.** This presentation highlighted God’s call to be peacemakers based on Matthew 5:9. It considered God as the Ultimate Peacemaker, presented biblical examples of peacemakers, and included a call to emulate the Ultimate Peacemaker within the home.
5. **2\textsuperscript{nd} Sabbath afternoon – Effective Conflict Resolution: 10 Steps.** The intent of this session was to help parents learn practical steps to resolving conflicts with respect, thus strengthening their marriage and family relationships.

6. **2\textsuperscript{nd} Wednesday evening – Ideal Parenting Styles and Faith Maturity.** This presentation was on parenting styles, i.e. the types of approach parents take toward their children in providing control and support, discipline and training. Most researchers have identified four types of parenting styles: Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Uninvolved or Neglectful (Plotnik & Kouyoumjian, 2010). Parents were helped to identify their particular parenting style. The presentation showed the importance of incorporating support and control in a parenting style that provides both kindness and firmness for children. Understanding how to implement these principles in a practical way contributes to an environment conducive to development of a mature faith in children.

7. **3\textsuperscript{rd} Sabbath morning – Heaven’s Most Prized Treasure.** The final sermon was based on Jesus’ statement that the kingdom of heaven belongs to the children (Matt 19:14). Recent studies (Barna Group, 2011) however, show that nearly three out of every five young Christians (59%) disconnect permanently or for an extended period of time from church life after age 15. Understanding the infinite worth that God places on children should accentuate the key role that the congregation, as the body of Christ plays in assisting parents in developing a mature faith in their children.

Since Hispanic churches often follow the North American Division recommendation for a Christian Family Month in February, this seminar was prepared to augment that emphasis. With the implementation beginning on the first Sabbath of
February, additional sessions were designed to embrace Christian Marriage Sabbath and Christian Parenting Sabbath, as well as the Wednesdays in between. Session topics for Sabbath mornings were prepared as sermons.

The *Prepare-Enrich® for Couples Workbook* was used, with permission, as a primary resource since it incorporates the psychological construct of parenting styles.

**Pre-Seminar and Post-Seminar Questionnaires**

To assess the effectiveness of the seminar in the achievement of the desired objectives, a pre- and post- questionnaire was developed for the participants. These are:

**Pre-Seminar Questionnaire**

Name: ________________________ Name of Spouse: _____________________

Number of children: _____________

**Directions:** Answer the following questions by circling the number that best suits your answer.

1. How familiar are you with the following parenting styles: *Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Neglectful*?

   1. Not familiar
   2. Slightly familiar
   3. Somewhat familiar
   4. Moderately familiar
   5. Extremely familiar

2. How confident are you in your parenting skills?

   1. Not at all confident
   2. Slightly confident
3. Which of the following parenting styles best describes you?

1. Authoritative
2. Authoritarian
3. Permissive
4. Neglectful
5. I don’t know

4. How familiar are you with the communication skills of Assertiveness and Active Listening?

1. Not familiar
2. Slightly familiar
3. Somewhat familiar
4. Moderately familiar
5. Extremely familiar

5. How confident are you in your couple communication skills?

1. Not at all confident
2. Slightly confident
3. Somewhat confident
4. Moderately confident
5. Extremely confident

6. Which of the following best describes your couple relationship?

1. Not at all satisfied
2. Slightly satisfied
3. Somewhat satisfied
4. Moderately satisfied
5. Extremely satisfied

7. How familiar are you with the concept of “mature faith” or “faith maturity”?

1. Not familiar
2. Slightly familiar
3. Somewhat familiar
4. Moderately familiar
5. Extremely familiar

8. How confident are you when it comes to developing mature faith in your children?

1. Not at all confident
2. Slightly confident
3. Somewhat confident
4. Moderately confident
5. Extremely confident

9. Which of the following do you agree with?

A. The church (Pastor, Youth Leader, Pathfinder Director, etc.) is responsible for the spiritual growth of children.

1. Not at all responsible
2. Somewhat responsible
3. Not sure
4. Mostly responsible
5. Completely responsible

B. Parents are responsible for the spiritual growth of their children.

1. Not at all responsible
2. Somewhat responsible
3. Not sure
4. Mostly responsible
5. Completely responsible

Post-Seminar Questionnaire

Name: _________________________ Name of Spouse: ____________________
Number of children: ______________

Directions: Answer the following questions by circling the number that best suits your answer.
1. How familiar are you with the following parenting styles: Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Neglectful?

   1. Not familiar
   2. Slightly familiar
   3. Somewhat familiar
   4. Moderately familiar
   5. Extremely familiar

2. How confident are you in your parenting skills?

   1. Not at all confident
   2. Slightly confident
   3. Somewhat confident
   4. Moderately confident
   5. Extremely confident

3. Which of the following parenting styles best describes you?

   1. Authoritative
   2. Authoritarian
   3. Permissive
   4. Neglectful
   5. I don’t know

4. How familiar are you with the communication skills of Assertiveness and Active Listening?

   1. Not familiar
   2. Slightly familiar
   3. Somewhat familiar
   4. Moderately familiar
   5. Extremely familiar

5. How confident are you in your couple communication skills?

   1. Not at all confident
   2. Slightly confident
   3. Somewhat confident
   4. Moderately confident
5. Extremely confident

6. Which of the following best describes your couple relationship?

   1. Not at all satisfied
   2. Slightly satisfied
   3. Somewhat satisfied
   4. Moderately satisfied
   5. Extremely satisfied

7. How familiar are you with the concept of “mature faith” or “faith maturity”?

   1. Not familiar
   2. Slightly familiar
   3. Somewhat familiar
   4. Moderately familiar
   5. Extremely familiar

8. How confident are you when it comes to developing Mature Faith in your children?

   1. Not at all confident
   2. Slightly confident
   3. Somewhat confident
   4. Moderately confident
   5. Extremely confident

9. Which of the following do you agree with?

   A. The church (Pastor, Youth Leader, Pathfinder Director, etc.) is responsible for the spiritual growth of my children.

      1. Not at all responsible
      2. Somewhat responsible
      3. Not sure
      4. Mostly responsible
      5. Completely responsible

   B. Parents are responsible for the spiritual growth of my children.

      1. Not at all responsible
      2. Somewhat responsible
      3. Not sure
4. Mostly responsible
5. Completely responsible

10. How would you rate this seminar?
   1. Very Poor
   2. Poor
   3. Acceptable
   4. Good
   5. Very Good

11. What were the most helpful aspects of this seminar? ____________________
    ____________________
    ____________________

12. What could improve? ____________________
    ____________________
    ____________________

The pre-questionnaire was intended to be administered during the second session, and the post-questionnaire was intended to be administered during a special follow-up program 12 weeks later.

**Conclusions Reached in This Ministry Project**

Though this project is theoretical only and has not been implemented, this researcher has nevertheless gained insights on which to reflect and from which to extract valuable conclusions.

**Biblical and Theological Reflection**

The first insight comes with the realization that parenting is of divine origin and is a gift modeled after the Godhead itself. As such, humanity being made in the image of God (Gen 1:26-28) bears the privilege and responsibility of perpetuating that image
through the divine command of parenting. To think that God would still desire to partner with humankind to bring to fruition the restoring of His image is a sobering thought. It is one that personally exudes awe and humility. I am struck with awe because it is hard to fathom why God would continue to trust His most valued treasure (Ps 127:3) to marred, broken vessels such as fallen human beings (e.g. me). I am humbled because the trust He conveys only accentuates the power of His love to redeem that is readily accessible and from which all can draw.

When I find myself observing my firstborn who is now a young freshman in college and my second-born who is a senior in high school, the question arises, “Have I been faithful to the call? Have I done enough?” This experience has brought a fresh conviction of my need to be in constant connection with our Heavenly Father, a renewed desire to emulate Him as Parent and trust that He will complete the work He has begun “until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:6).

Considering this reality from a relational aspect, during this research I’ve found myself asking, “What kind of parenting style have I modeled for my children? Is it one that reflects God as a parent?” As I see the character traits (some admirable, others not) that my children have assimilated, it has challenged me to be a more godly parent.

Professionally, it has challenged me to be more intentional about making this truth more apparent to those I have been called to serve. The more I can do to bring parents to the awareness of this eternal truth, the greater the possibilities of being intentional about doing all it takes to be found faithful to the divine call entailed in parenting.
Literature Review

The resiliency of Latino immigrant families evidenced in their ability to thrive despite the complexities of their migration experience is truly one to admire. Despite the seemingly insurmountable difficulties and risks involved in immigrating and assimilating into the fabric of the North American society, Latinos have placed an indelible mark on this nation and will continue to influence it for generations to come. This is something that has personally brought me an added sense of worth. The unique cultural factors that I was taught as a child, such as familism (*familismo*) and respect (*respeto*), now take on a totally new perspective. I have learned to appreciate and cherish more the times we spend together as a family knowing that these moments will help to develop character and strength for the challenges ahead. It has led to a reprioritizing of time and resources in our family to allow more opportunities for these cultural factors to be nurtured and developed.

Relationally, it has prompted me to desire to more intentionally encourage my children and siblings to find value in spending quality time together with the intent of passing on these values to the upcoming generations.

In the professional realm, it has inspired me to seek ways to enhance these cultural factors with those Latino immigrant families whom I encounter in my ministry. I find myself wanting to motivate them and encourage them to continue going forward despite the challenges, to pursue their desired dreams with the help of God.

My research on the construct of parenting styles and its effects on a family’s dynamics has been by far the most interesting part of this project. Having taken the parenting style assessments and having seen myself as in a mirror has been both exciting
and at times discouraging. To be able to identify my strengths and to have to come to grips with my weaknesses has given me a renewed sense of the importance of self-improvement. To identify resources that are available to make me a better parent to my children gives me hope along with an added sense of purpose.

To know that I can use that knowledge amassed in my literature review to be a blessing to others in my ministry has brought more focus and drive. I am determined to be more intentional about impacting other parents within the realm of my influence to become better, more deliberate about fulfilling their divine purpose.

Developing the Seminar

The development of this seminar for facilitators within Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist churches in North America has given me a renewed sense of purpose. It has not been without it challenges. Trying to identify the best way to distill and disseminate the mounds of valuable information into a practical and relevant series of presentations has invigorated my passion for efficiency. Having to choose what gems to include and which to set aside challenged me to use my personal time more effectively to reap the desired outcomes in what I dedicate myself to, both in my personal life and ministry.

It has also awakened in me the desire to be more directed and intentional in ministry. I have come to see more clearly the church not at just a gathering place but as a learning center in which I can enhance the lives of parents through these timely topics and impact the lives of generations to come. If just one child garnishes the results of developing a mature faith, all the sacrifice represented within these pages will have been well worth it. This is truly my desire.
Recommendations

More research should be conducted within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America to understand more fully the migration experience of Latino-immigrant families and be better equipped to address needs and challenges that arise from this experience. Conclusive research is fundamental to bringing affirmative action to addressing issues of this nature.

There is a need to develop more specialized ministry tools that will address the crisis of attrition of youth and young adults within the Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. It is important that we address this crisis from a preventative perspective. It is this researcher’s perception, based on his personal pastoral experience, that the church has invested much time and resources in trying to retain and regain the youth that have left the church, from the congregational perspective. Yet, little has been done to avert the critical situation from the perspective of the family. The congregation needs to be educated as to what their true role is in regards to supporting families as they seek to develop mature faith in their children. While many parents need to be aroused and equipped to fill their divinely-ordained calling of being the main channels of influence in developing a mature faith in their offspring, parents also need to be reassured that their best efforts at parenting are limited by the choices made by their children. The potential for shame and guilt among Adventist parents is real; parenting ministry needs to include the comfort and assurance that God Himself has granted all His children freedom of choice. His Spirit never rests in His efforts to draw all to Him.
Summary

A general review of the problem, task, and methodology of the project has been presented in this chapter. The problem that was addressed is the perceived lack of parenting knowledge and skills in first generation Latino immigrant families whose second-generation youth and young adults are leaving the Seventh-day Adventist faith. The ministry intervention of this project was the development of a parent education seminar with special emphasis on helping children toward faith maturity. A means whereby change in the participants’ attitudes and understanding could be measured was presented as a pre- and post- questionnaire.

The chapter also included conclusions based on reflections of this researcher as he studied the biblical and theological foundations of parenting, reviewed current literature on the migration experience, and developed the intervention of the parent education seminar. Recommendations for additional research and tools were also included.

Working on this project has helped me better understand that the church is God’s divinely appointed agency to empower, support, and guide parents to reach their highest potential for God and to be a blessing to their fellow man. White (1952, p. 36) avidly states, “If the homes of professed Christians had a right religious mold, they would exert a mighty influence for good. They would indeed be the ‘light of the world.’”

To pretend that a single project can turn the tide of the mass exodus of second-generation Latino youth from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United States may be unrealistic; however, it is the hope of this researcher that it will contribute to the “resources and remedies,” called for by White (1952), to benefit the “home field [that] has been shamefully neglected . . . by many” (p. 35).
APPENDIX
APPENDIX A

Permission to Use Prepare/Enrich® Materials

We are pleased to give you permission to use the PREPARE/ENRICH materials in your research project, teaching, or clinical work with couples or families. Please cite all our materials you use in your project. You may either duplicate the materials directly or have them retyped for use in a new format. If they are retyped, acknowledgement should be given regarding the name of the instrument, the developers’ names, and PREPARE/ENRICH, LLC.

In exchange for providing this permission, we would appreciate a copy of any papers, theses, or reports that you complete using the PREPARE/ENRICH materials. This will help us to stay abreast of the most recent developments and research regarding this scale. Please send this information to research@prepare-enrich.com when you have completed your project. We thank you for your cooperation in this effort.

In closing, we hope you find the PREPARE/ENRICH materials of value in your work with couples and families. Good luck with your project!

The PREPARE/ENRICH Team

Attention to Richard Piñero
July 18, 2017
APPENDIX B

Parenting Style Self Assessment

What is Your Parenting Style?

How would you describe your approach to parenting? From each of the following groups of statements, check the one that best describes you:

GROUP 1
1. I believe children should be seen and not heard.
2. I enjoy the chaos of parenting.
3. I believe children can be children and also practice civility.
4. My children keep to themselves and don’t bother me much.

GROUP 2
1. I think my children need a firm hand to direct them so they behave properly.
2. I believe my children need freedom to learn who they are.
3. I love watching my children discover things for themselves — and I am there if they have questions.
4. My children learn how to behave in school or at child care.

GROUP 3
1. I don’t have a problem saying “no” to my children.
2. I hate saying “no” to my children.
3. Sometimes I need to say “no” to my children, and sometimes I say “yes.”
4. Mostly I just ignore my children’s bad behavior.

GROUP 4
1. Every rule — big and little — must be followed.
2. I don’t believe in lots of rules — when I am with my children I want to enjoy them and have fun, not be a disciplinarian.
3. I have rules that are really important, and I expect them to be followed. But I am willing to be flexible about smaller issues.
4. Having lots of rules is too complicated — sometimes it’s just easier to ignore some behavior.

GROUP 5
1. I think discipline is correcting your children when they misbehave.
2. I don’t believe in lots of discipline — my children need freedom.
3. I think discipline is an opportunity to teach your children.
4. The other parent takes care of most of the discipline.

This assessment is used in this document by permission from the University of Minnesota Extension. It can also be accessed at z.umn.edu/2wvf.
GROUP 6
1. I am okay if my children are unhappy with me.
2. I want my children to like me.
3. Sometimes I need to be unpopular with my children to keep them safe and ensure they do what needs to be done.
4. I am not sure how to get my children to like me.

GROUP 7
1. Children must respect their parents
2. I like it when my children are respectful, but I must admit, that’s not often. Must be the age.
3. Parents need to model the respect they expect from their children.
4. I wish my children were more respectful. I try to ignore it when they are not.

GROUP 8
1. I know exactly what my children are doing, who they are with and where they are all the time.
2. I try to keep up with my children’s comings and goings, but sometimes they won’t tell me.
3. My children and I have an agreement — I will always let them know where I am and they will do the same for me.
4. I don’t keep track of what my children are up to — they seem fine and have teachers and child care providers to watch over them.

GROUP 9
1. I don’t tolerate mistakes — I can see making a mistake once, but after that child needs to be punished.
2. I think that if children don’t feel successful, they will not have the confidence to do well in life.
3. Some of the greatest lessons for children come from their mistakes. I try to help my children learn from their mistakes.
4. Everyone makes mistakes — I don’t get real upset over my children’s mistakes. They will figure it out.

GROUP 10
1. I don’t believe parents should be their children’s friend — you will lose your authority over them.
2. My children are my best friends.
3. My children are friends with other children; I need to be their parent.
4. I really don’t understand how parents and children could be friends — we are so different from each other.

GROUP 11
1. I don’t tell my children much — these are adult matters.
2. I can tell my children just about anything.
3. I let my children know what is going on, especially if it affects them, but some things I need to talk with another adult about.
4. My children don’t need much information; they seem to be doing fine.

This assessment is used in this document by permission from the University of Minnesota Extension. It can also be accessed at z.umn.edu/2wvf.
SOWHAT IS YOUR PARENTING STYLE?

SCORING:

Add up the number of times you responded to a question with a 1, 2, 3 or 4 and put that number in the box under "Number of Times" to the right of the appropriate response number. Look at the response number where you have the highest number of times; this is your predominant approach to parenting, or parenting style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Times</th>
<th>Parenting Style</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dominating</td>
<td>You are a firm believer in rules and have high expectations for behavior. You show your love by expecting the best from your children, but rarely show affection. Communication is generally one way -- from you to your child. Sometimes you can be rigid and harsh in correcting bad behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Permissive</td>
<td>You show your children lots of love, give them what they ask for, communicate openly and let them do what they want most of the time. You have trouble setting and enforcing rules. You prefer to be friendly rather than a disciplinarian. Sometimes you feel like your children walk all over you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>You believe children need your love, but you also have high expectations and believe your children need rules and guidance in order to meet these expectations. You view parenting as your most important job, and serve as a role model for your children by modeling the respect you expect from them. You believe in listening to your children, but when it comes down to it, you have the final say regarding issues involving safety, values and health. Your children know what you expect and they know you will be consistent, fair and firm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Unengaged</td>
<td>You may feel uncomfortable about parenting because you don't spend much time with your children. You may focus more on work or other interests. When you are with your children, you often are preoccupied and not focused on them. You assume the other parent is doing a pretty good job. You aren't sure what you can do that would be helpful anyway.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:
APPENDIX C

Pre-Seminar Questionnaire

Name: ________________________ Name of Spouse: ________________________
Number of children: __________________

Directions: Answer the following questions by circling the number that best suits your answer.

1. How familiar are you with the following parenting styles: Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Neglectful?
   1. Not familiar
   2. Slightly familiar
   3. Somewhat familiar
   4. Moderately familiar
   5. Extremely familiar

2. How confident are you in your parenting skills?
   1. Not at all confident
   2. Slightly confident
   3. Somewhat confident
   4. Moderately confident
   5. Extremely confident

3. Which of the following parenting styles best describes you?
   1. Authoritative
   2. Authoritarian
   3. Permissive
   4. Neglectful
   5. I don't know
4. How familiar are you with the communication skills of Assertiveness and Active Listening?

1. Not familiar
2. Slightly familiar
3. Somewhat familiar
4. Moderately familiar
5. Extremely familiar

5. How confident are you in your couple communication skills?

1. Not at all confident
2. Slightly confident
3. Somewhat confident
4. Moderately confident
5. Extremely confident

6. Which of the following best describes your couple relationship?

1. Not at all satisfied
2. Slightly satisfied
3. Somewhat satisfied
4. Moderately satisfied
5. Extremely satisfied

7. How familiar are you with the concept of “mature faith” or “faith maturity”?

1. Not familiar
2. Slightly familiar
3. Somewhat familiar
4. Moderately familiar
5. Extremely familiar

8. How confident are you when it comes to developing mature faith in your children?

1. Not at all confident
2. Slightly confident
3. Somewhat confident
4. Moderately confident
5. Extremely confident
9. Which of the following do you agree with?

A. The church (Pastor, Youth Leader, Pathfinder Director, etc.) is responsible for the spiritual growth of children.

   1. Not at all responsible
   2. Somewhat responsible
   3. Not sure
   4. Mostly responsible
   5. Completely responsible

B. Parents are responsible for the spiritual growth of their children.

   1. Not at all responsible
   2. Somewhat responsible
   3. Not sure
   4. Mostly responsible
   5. Completely responsible
APPENDIX D

Post-Seminar Questionnaire

Name: ___________________________ Name of Spouse: ___________________________
Number of children:_________________

Directions: Answer the following questions by circling the number that best suits your answer.

1. How familiar are you with the following parenting styles: Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Neglectful?
   1. Not familiar
   2. Slightly familiar
   3. Somewhat familiar
   4. Moderately familiar
   5. Extremely familiar

2. How confident are you in your parenting skills?
   1. Not at all confident
   2. Slightly confident
   3. Somewhat confident
   4. Moderately confident
   5. Extremely confident

3. Which of the following parenting styles best describes you?
   1. Authoritative
   2. Authoritarian
   3. Permissive
   4. Neglectful
   5. I don’t know
4. How familiar are you with the communication skills of Assertiveness and Active Listening?

1. Not familiar
2. Slightly familiar
3. Somewhat familiar
4. Moderately familiar
5. Extremely familiar

5. How confident are you in your couple communication skills?

1. Not at all confident
2. Slightly confident
3. Somewhat confident
4. Moderately confident
5. Extremely confident

6. Which of the following best describes your couple relationship?

1. Not at all satisfied
2. Slightly satisfied
3. Somewhat satisfied
4. Moderately satisfied
5. Extremely satisfied

7. How familiar are you with the concept of “mature faith” or “faith maturity”?

1. Not familiar
2. Slightly familiar
3. Somewhat familiar
4. Moderately familiar
5. Extremely familiar

8. How confident are you when it comes to developing mature faith in your children?

1. Not at all confident
2. Slightly confident
3. Somewhat confident
4. Moderately confident
5. Extremely confident
9. Which of the following do you agree with?

   A. The church (Pastor, Youth Leader, Pathfinder Director, etc.) is responsible for
      the spiritual growth of my children.

      1. Not at all responsible
      2. Somewhat responsible
      3. Not sure
      4. Mostly responsible
      5. Completely responsible

   B. Parents are responsible for the spiritual growth of my children.

      1. Not at all responsible
      2. Somewhat responsible
      3. Not sure
      4. Mostly responsible
      5. Completely responsible

10. How would you rate this seminar?

      1. Very Poor
      2. Poor
      3. Acceptable
      4. Good
      5. Very Good

11. What were the most helpful aspects of this seminar?

      ___________________________________________________
      ___________________________________________________
      ___________________________________________________

12. What could improve?

      ___________________________________________________
      ___________________________________________________
      ___________________________________________________
      ___________________________________________________

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this evaluation form.
Your input helps us to insure the best experience possible for all who participate.
APPENDIX E

List of Topics in Order

1. The Divine Gift of Parenting
2. The Ideal Environment for Successful Godly Parenting
3. Essential Elements of Effective Communication: Assertiveness and Active Listening
4. Sons and Daughters of God: A Call to Peacemaking
5. Ten Steps to Effective Conflict Resolution
6. Ideal Parenting Styles and Faith Maturity
7. Heaven’s Most Prized Treasure
APPENDIX F

Discussion Session Guidelines

Group discussion guidelines in regards to the discussions and exercises need to be clearly established. These are:

a. All sharing with other couples in a group setting is voluntary. Opportunities will be given for group discussions with other parent-couples. The participants should never be forced to share with the group.

b. When sharing in a group, each individual is to speak for themselves and not on behalf of their partners. Participants should be asked to use “I” statements instead of “we” statements. For example, it is suitable to say “I feel,” or “I think” but not “we . . . .”

c. Before sharing anecdotes or facts about their couple relationship, clearance from the other partner is to be granted. Individuals should be explicitly advised to ask their partner before sharing something personal about their relationship.

d. Everything shared in the group is confidential. Confidentiality is defined as not sharing or discussing any information learned in the group with anyone else other than the partner.
### Appendix G

**Sharing Strengths and Growth Areas**

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**Sharing Strengths and Growth Areas**

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22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 22 gentleness, and self-control ... — Galatians 5:22-23

Check what areas you agree or disagree most with your partner.

- **Select three Strength Areas** (most agreement and positive aspects of your relationship)
- **Select three Growth Areas** (most disagreement and areas you want to improve)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTH AREAS</th>
<th>GROWTH AREAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1. COUPLE COMMUNICATION**
  *We share feelings and understand each other.* | |
| **2. COUPLE CONFLICT**
  *We are able to discuss and resolve differences.* | |
| **3. PARTNER STYLE AND HABITS**
  *We appreciate each other’s personality and habits.* | |
| **4. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**
  *We agree on budget and financial matters.* | |
| **5. CHILDREN AND PARENTING**
  *We agree on issues related to raising children.* | |
| **6. FAMILY SPIRITUAL BELIEFS**
  *We actively involve our family in developing spirituality.* | |
| **7. CONFIDENCE IN PARENTING**
  *We feel good about our ability to parent our children.* | |
| **8. FAMILY COMMUNICATION**
  *Our family exhibits healthy communication.* | |
| **9. FAMILY SATISFACTION**
  *We are a happy family and enjoy being together.* | |

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**Couple Discussion:**

1. Take turns sharing what each of you perceive as your relationship strengths. Verbally share one strength at a time, until you each have shared three.
2. Use the same procedure to share and discuss growth areas.
3. Now have a discussion around these questions:
   - a. Did any of your partner’s responses surprise you?
   - b. In what areas did you mostly agree with your partner?
   - c. In what areas did you mostly disagree with your partner?
APPENDIX H

Assertiveness and Active Listening

COMMUNICATION

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. — James 1:19

ASSERTIVENESS AND ACTIVE LISTENING

ASSERTIVENESS:
Assertiveness is the ability to express your feelings and ask for what you want in the relationship.

Assertiveness is a valuable communication skill. In successful couples, both individuals tend to be quite assertive. Rather than assuming their partner can read their minds, they share how they feel and ask clearly and directly for what they want.

Assertive individuals take responsibility for their messages by using “I” statements. They avoid statements beginning with “you.” In making constructive requests, they are positive and respectful in their communication. They use polite phrases such as “please” and “thank you.”

Examples of Assertive Statements:
“I’m feeling out of balance. While I love spending time with you, I also want to spend time with my friends. I would like us to find some time to talk about this.”

“I want to take a ski vacation next winter, but I know you like to go to the beach. I’m feeling confused about what choice we should make.”

ACTIVE LISTENING:
Active listening is the ability to let your partner know you understand them by restating their message.

Good communication depends on you carefully listening to another person. Active listening involves listening attentively without interruption and then restating what was heard. Acknowledge content AND the feelings of the speaker. The active listening process lets the sender know whether or not the message they sent was clearly understood by having the listener restate what they heard.

Examples of Active Listening:
“I heard you say you are feeling ‘out of balance’, and enjoy the time we spend together but that you also need more time to be with your friends. You want to plan a time to talk about this.”

“If I understand what you said, you are concerned because you want to go skiing next winter. But you think I would rather to go to the beach. Is that correct?”

When each person knows what the other person feels and wants (assertiveness) and when each knows they have been heard and understood (active listening), intimacy is increased. These two communication skills can help you grow closer as a couple.
COMMUNICATION

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. — Psalm 19:14

CREATING A WISH LIST

In this exercise, you will each individually make a Wish List of things you would like more or less of in your relationship. Next, take turns sharing your Wish Lists with each other.

Assertiveness is the ability to express your feelings and ask for what you want in your relationship.

Active listening is the ability to let your partner know you understand them by restating their message.

In sharing your Wish List with your partner, you will be demonstrating your Assertiveness skills. In giving feedback to your partner about their Wish List, you will be demonstrating your Active Listening skills.

Make a Wish List of three things you would like more or less of in your relationship.

1. 

2. 

3. 

COUPLE DISCUSSION:
Take turns sharing your Wish List with each other.

SPEAKER’S JOB:
1. Speak for yourself (“I” statements e.g. “I wish...”)
2. Describe how you would feel if your wish came true.

LISTENER’S JOB:
1. Repeat/summarize what you have heard.
2. Describe the wish AND how your partner would feel if the wish came true.

After completing the Wish List Exercise, discuss the following questions:

How good were each of you at being assertive?

In what ways did you each effectively use active listening skills?
APPENDIX J

Ten Steps For Resolving Conflict

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

TEN STEPS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT

All couples have differences and disagreements. Studies show the amount of disagreements are not related to marital happiness as much as how they are handled. Happy couples do not avoid disagreements; they resolve them while remaining respectful of each other, thereby strengthening their relationship. This Ten Step Model is a simple, but effective way to resolve conflict while avoiding the common and destructive patterns. Use this model with an ongoing issue in your relationship, as well as future issues.

1. Set a time and place for discussion.
2. Define the problem - Be specific.

3. List the ways you each contribute to the problem.
   Partner 1:
   Partner 2:

4. List past attempts to resolve the issue that were not successful.
   1) 
   2) 
   3) 
   4) 

5. Brainstorm—Pool your new ideas and try to list 10 possible solutions to the problem. Do not judge or criticize any of the suggestions at this point.
   1) 
   2) 
   3) 
   4) 
   5) 
   6) 
   7) 
   8) 
   9) 
   10) 

6. Discuss and evaluate each of these possible solutions. (Be as objective as possible. Talk about how useful and appropriate each suggestion feels for resolving your issue.)

7. Agree on one solution to try.

8. Agree how you will each work toward this solution. (Be as specific as possible.)
   Partner 1:
   Partner 2:

9. Set up another meeting to discuss your progress.
   Place: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________ Time: ___________________________

10. Reward each other for progress. (If you notice your partner making a positive contribution toward the solution, praise his/her effort.)
APPENDIX K

How to Take a Time Out

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing. — 1 Thessalonians 5:11

HOW TO TAKE A TIME-OUT

Some conflicts become heated as levels of anger and frustration rise. Rather than speaking assertively, partners begin to accuse, criticize, or yell. Rather than listening actively, partners interrupt, belittle, and ignore. Physiologically, the “fight or flight” response is triggered as each person goes into a protection mode with little or no regard for their partner. In this state of escalation, it is not uncommon to say or do things we later regret. Moreover, it is nearly impossible to have a productive conversation leading to a mutually agreed upon resolution. This is when a “time-out” can be beneficial. A time-out provides couples with an opportunity to cool down, identify their feelings and needs, and begin to think productively again about how to approach the issues they face.

1. RECOGNIZE your need for a time-out. Are your fists clenched? Is your face red? Are you breathing fast? Are the tears streaming down your face? Do you feel like screaming or throwing something? Are you afraid of your partner’s intensity? Do you feel emotionally closed off?
   • Learn to recognize the signs that things have become too intense for you to have a productive interaction with your partner.
   • What physical and emotional reactions indicate you need a time-out?

2. REQUEST THE TIME-OUT. Call a time-out for yourself by saying something like “I’m just too angry to talk right now; I need to take a time-out. Please give me an hour to calm down and gather my thoughts.”
   • Remember to call the time-out for yourself. It is seldom helpful to tell the other person “You need a time-out!” Suggest a time when you think you’ll be ready to resume.

3. RELAX AND CALM DOWN. Take some deep breaths. Go for a jog. Take a walk or a bath. Write in your journal. Read, pray, or watch television for a while.
   • Do something that will help you relax and recover from the emotional intensity.
   • What method(s) could you use to calm down?

4. REMEMBER WHAT’S IMPORTANT.
   • Try to identify what you were thinking and feeling that became so difficult to discuss.
   • Think about “I” messages you could use to tell your partner what you were thinking or feeling, and what you need from him/her.
   • Try to spend some quiet time considering your partner’s point of view and what they are feeling.
   • Remember the two of you are a team, and the only way your relationship will “win” is if you work toward a solution that both individuals can feel good about.

5. RESUME THE CONVERSATION. Bring in the skills of Assertiveness and Active Listening and/or the Ten Steps for Conflict Resolution. These structured skills can help contain the intensity as you attempt to resolve a conflict. Honor your commitment to return to the issue when you are ready to have a more productive conversation.
Five Parenting Styles Defined

**BALANCED STYLE:** Sometimes referred to in literature as "democratic" or "autocratic". This style tends to be most healthy because there is a balance of age-appropriate child autonomy and parental control. Independence is encouraged and discipline is consistent and fair. Parenting is warm and nurturing without being overindulgent. Discipline tends to be consistent and fair. According to research, this parenting style is related to the best outcomes for children and teens.

**PERMISSIVE STYLE:** This parenting style allows the child/teen a lot of freedom and choice. Parents may have a hard time saying "No" to their child/teen, establishing and enforcing rules, and creating boundaries. Also called "indulgent" parenting, this style is characterized by high responsiveness to a child's needs and high emotional connection. When extreme and sustained, permissive parenting is related to difficulties for children and teens in taking personal responsibility and learning how to delay gratification.

**OVERBEARING STYLE:** Often referred to in literature as "authoritarian". This style is typically demanding with high levels of control and high levels of responsiveness and closeness. An "overbearing" parent is highly connected to their child/teen and also has high expectations for them to conform and comply with their rules, guidance, and direction. When extreme and sustained, this parenting style is related to anxiouslyness and lower self-esteem for children and teens.

**STRICT STYLE:** This parenting style is characterized by predictability and order, and rules that allow little room for negotiation. Discipline tends to be firm. Unlike the "overbearing" style, however, emotional connection is low. When extreme and sustained, research suggests that this parenting style is related to teens feeling uncared for and a higher risk of substance abuse.

**UNINVOLVED STYLE:** This parenting style allows the child/teen a lot of freedom and choice and few (or poorly-enforced) rules and boundaries, but lacks the emotional responsiveness characterized by the "permissive" style. This style is characterized by low emotional connection with few demands placed on the child. When extreme and sustained, children parented in this style may feel isolated and are at an increased risk for substance abuse and for performing poorly in school.
CREATING A BALANCED PARENTING STYLE

A balanced style of parenting tends to be the most healthy because it balances age-appropriate child autonomy and parental control. Independence is encouraged and discipline is consistent and fair. Parenting is warm and nurturing without being overindulgent. According to research, a balanced parenting style is related to the best outcomes for children and teens.

Balanced parenting is achieved by balancing closeness and flexibility. Below are ideas for increasing closeness or decreasing closeness.

INCREASING PARENTING CLOSEDNESS

Suggestions for Increasing Parent/Child Closeness include:

- Set aside quality time to be available and present with your child.
- Share a special activity, such as Friday night movie night, breakfast on the weekend.
- Help children with homework.
- Prepare and/or eat meals together.
- Have “dates” with each of your children/teens.
- Say no to outside activities that take too much time and energy from your family.
- Volunteer as a family in your community.
- Create family photo albums together or review existing photos.
- Tell your child/children why you are grateful having them in your life.

DECREASING PARENTING CLOSEDNESS

Suggestions for Increasing Child Autonomy and Reducing Parent/Child Closeness include:

- Allow children to have different opinions and interests; value their individuality.
- Respect one another’s space.
- Create an area in the home where there is room for only one.
- Encourage family members to spend time with friends and/or activities outside of the home.
- Could “over-nurturing” be harming your child/teen?
CREATING A BALANCED PARENTING STYLE

Balanced parenting style is achieved by balancing closeness and flexibility. Below are ideas for increasing or decreasing flexibility.

INCREASING PARENTING FLEXIBILITY

Suggestions for Increasing Parent/Child Flexibility include:

- Try sharing leadership and roles to break-up normal routine.
- Exchange household chores for a week.
- Set limits for teens, but allow room for them to grow and think for themselves.
- Allow children to negotiate and be part of the decision-making as age appropriate (e.g. allow a young child to pick out an outfit, a pre-teen to select a restaurant for a family outing)
- Consider your child/teen’s perspective.

DECREASING PARENTING FLEXIBILITY

Suggestions for Decreasing Flexibility and adding structure include:

- Add ritual and routine to family life.
- Set limits and standards for children/teens and enforce them.
- Assign chores to children/teens that are age appropriate.
APPENDIX N

Family Meetings

FAMILY MEETINGS

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. — Romans 8:28

A family meeting is a time for all family members to get together and to share and re-connect with each other. Spending time together helps family members feel supported and it can become an important family ritual.

Guidelines:
1. All family members participate who are old enough.
2. Establish a regular time and place when the entire family is together, such as after a family meal.
3. Encourage discussion by everyone. Do not criticize and critique.
4. Practice assertiveness and active listening—and praise each other for sharing.

FAMILY DISCUSSION:
1. Sharing a Family Strength—one thing each person likes about the family.
2. Sharing a Family Growth Area—one thing each person would like to see changed.
3. Choose one issue to work on that week.
4. Brainstorm possible ideas to resolve the issue.
5. Discuss ideas and select one idea to try out.
6. Plan to discuss progress at the meeting next week.

ALTERNATIVE FAMILY DISCUSSION:
1. What do you feel was the best thing that happened to you or your family this week/or recently?
2. What was the worst thing that happened to you or your family this week?
3. For an issue discussed in the previous question, what could have been done differently?
4. Have each person share what is a strength of your family.


Thompson, N. E., & Gurney, A. G. (2003). He is everything: Religion’s role in the lives of immigrant youth. New Directions for Youth Development, 100, 75-90.


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